

Laura Gray—Socialist And Militant Artist

By Art Preis

NEW YORK, Jan. 12 — One of the most heroic and beloved socialists of our time is no more. Laura Gray, greatest political and social cartoonist of our generation and Militant staff artist for almost 14 years, died Saturday at St. Luke's Hospital here after a two-day illness.

She was hospitalized on Friday with pneumonia. All the wonder drugs of modern medicine could not save her. Her physical frailty was in direct contrast to the strength of her noble spirit. For the last ten years of her life — years of her finest contributions to the emancipating struggle of the working class — she had breathed and lived and fought with only one lung. At 3:30 a.m. Saturday it failed her at last. She was buried yesterday afternoon after a simple ceremony attended by her

closest comrades, friends and relatives.

She had the second longest record of continuous years of service on the Militant staff. Many of her Militant drawings and cartoons had been reproduced by labor and socialist publications in more than 20 countries.

Reviewing the milestones of this gentle, quiet-spoken, lovely woman's life, we can only feel appalled at the series of catastrophic blows she endured and overcame.

Laura was born on Nov. 17, 1909, in Pittsburgh, Pa. She was brought up in a fairly well-to-do middle-class family. Her family name was Slobe. They moved to Chicago during Laura's early years and there she received most of her schooling. She was a bright student and graduated high school at the age of 16.

One activity dominated her life from girlhood on — art. She was a born artist, with immense natural gifts. She entered the famous Chicago Art Institute at the age of 16, the youngest student in its history. While still a student her talents were recognized. She won a number of awards.

She was only 19 and scheduled for her first one-man show in a leading Chicago art gallery. Just before she was preparing to pack her paintings for shipment to the art gallery, her home burned down. Every work of art she had worked so hard and long and lovingly over was destroyed.

SHOWED HER STEEL

Then she first showed her steel. Struck down, she did not yield. She sprang to her feet. She painted new works and finally held her one-man show. She went on to exhibit in the shows of the Chicago Art Institute and out-of-town, winning more prizes and critical acclaim. It appeared that all roads were open to her.

At the age of 22, a brilliant, recognized artist, a second great blow fell. She was stricken with tuberculosis. In those days, there was only one treatment for this dread affliction of the lungs — bed-rest. She was bed-ridden for two years. Thereafter, her health was always fragile.

During the middle Thirties she turned to sculpture and achieved a national reputation in this field. She had a one-man show in 1938 at the Katherine Kuh gallery. She taught for periods

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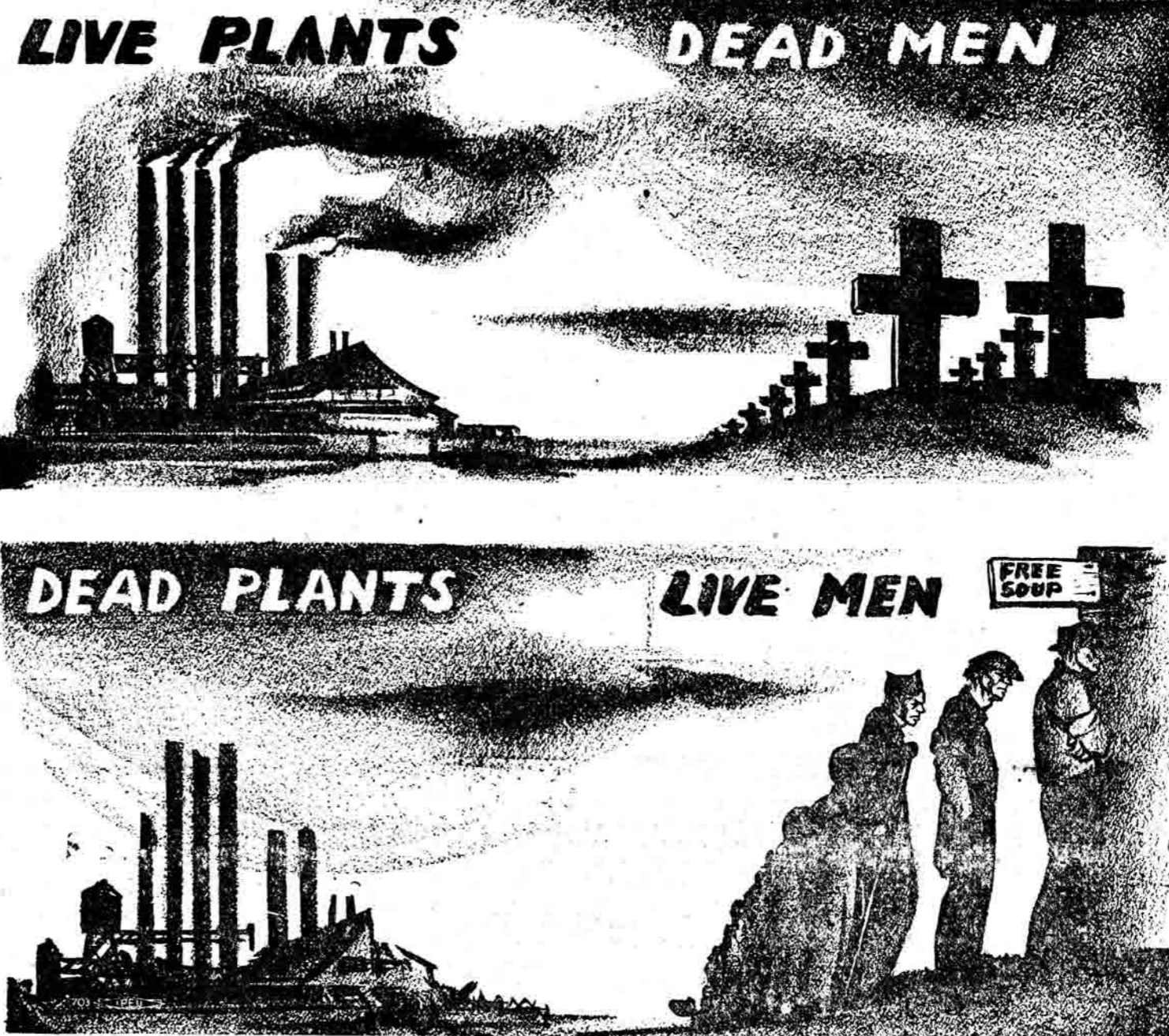


LAURA GRAY

(Nov. 17, 1909 — Jan. 11, 1958)

Reuther Seeks to Knife UAW Shorter-Week Bid

Capitalism in War and Peace



This is one of Laura Gray's most famous cartoons. It was first published in the Militant of Sept. 9, 1944. It has been reprinted in labor and socialist publications in more than a score of countries.

Ford 600 Leader Hits Phony Move

DETROIT, Jan. 15—The growing army of unemployed can take no comfort from the fact that United Auto Workers president Walter Reuther has decided to use Russia's Sputniks as an excuse for dropping the shorter work-week as a demand for the 1958 auto negotiations. The shorter work-week demand was proposed, fought for over the years, accepted by the auto workers generally and finally adopted by two UAW conventions, as an effective method of fighting unemployment. Now, just when unemployment is rapidly rising to pre-World War II levels, Reuther has dropped the demand, substituting instead a vague proposal for a complicated "profit sharing plan."

Meeting in secret session, Jan. 11 and 12, Reuther and the International Union's executive board together with a small, carefully selected group from Reuther's right-wing caucus, in effect vetoed the mandate of the April 1957 UAW convention.

STELLATO STATEMENT

Immediately after the substitute proposals were made public on Jan. 13, Carl Stellato, president of UAW Local 600 said: "I'm sure there are thousands of other UAW members who are just as disappointed as I am. . . I don't know what Reuther can be thinking about. A shorter work week means more jobs and more jobs should be high on any honest union leader's program." Stellato said he would oppose Reuther's scheme on the floor of the Jan. 22-24 special UAW convention, which was mandated by the April, 1957 convention to lay plans for winning the shorter work week with increased pay in 1958.

Officials of one of Canada's strongest UAW units, Local 222, have also announced that they will continue to press for "the six-hour day," in spite of Reuther's action.

CITES MISSILES RACE

Reuther's statement says he dropped the shorter work-week demand because "the problem symbolized by the Russian earth satellites has drastically changed what appeared to be the situation at the time of the 1957 convention." Now, says Reuther, it is necessary for the workers to work long hours in order to contribute to the missiles race. Here is what is wrong with that argument: (1) The shorter work-week demand does not interfere with the full utilization of the country's productive forces. It just means that the companies would have to pay overtime after, say 30 hours, rather than after 40. In other words, the shorter work-week demand means an increase in living standards either way.

(2) The factories are not operating full time, and they aren't expected to do so in the near future, in spite of the increase in the new arms budget. The shorter work-week—with decreased pay—is already here. The thing is to get the shorter week with full pay.

The only way Reuther's argument makes sense is from the premise advanced by the employers and recently implied by Senator Lyndon Johnson, Democratic Party leader in the Senate—that is, that the workers must sacrifice their standard of living to pay for the arms race.

The top UAW brass has invoked the "Soviet menace" before to oppose the 30-hour week at 40 hours pay. Auto workers remember that when the 30-

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Cleveland T-H Defendants Win New Labor Backing

By Jean Simon

CLEVELAND, Jan. 13 — The Cleveland Taft-Hartley conspiracy case represents a "clear and present danger" to the labor movement. That is the main fact that emerges as the trial enters its sixth day, and the most alert unions are beginning to recognize their stake in the case and to sound the alarm.

The following union bodies have voted support for the Cleveland T-H defendants: Ford Local 600, United Auto Workers, Detroit; Amalgamated UAW Local 453, Chicago; Chicago District I and six locals of the Packinghouse Workers; Briggs UAW Local 212, Detroit; San Francisco Longshore Local 6; Ohio Machinists Lodge 2155 and the Ohio Brass Lodge in Mansfield; the Lake County Federation of Labor; Mechanics Edu-

cational Society Local 72; Painters Local 867 and Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen Local 500, Cleveland.

Outcome of the trial is vital for labor since it is based on a new and broadened application of the Taft-Hartley law. The case began when eight persons were indicted here last Jan. 23 by a federal grand jury on charges of "conspiring" to circumvent the "non-communist" affidavit provisions of the Taft-Hartley law. Only two of the defendants, Fred and Marie Haug, have been accused of actually signing false affidavits, a charge they have denied.

They were indicted for this last Jan. 9, but the government prosecutors have never brought the case to trial. Instead they are trying the Haugs and five alleged former Ohio Communist Party officials for "conspiracy" to deceive the National Labor Relations Board, a charge on which there is no statute of limitations and on which it is possible to drag in any number of persons on the basis of guilt by association.

Indicative of the character of the "conspiracy" is the case of one of the defendants, Eric Reinthaler, who is charged solely with "transporting" others in his car to commit the alleged "conspiracy." So flimsy is the government case that just before the trial opened the prosecution dropped charges against defendant Edward Chaka and admitted it did so for lack of evidence.

Industrialist Urges Fight on Pay Hikes

A group of business men and bankers gathered at a Philadelphia luncheon Jan. 13 were urged by a top corporation executive to use the present economic situation in the country as the opportunity to crack down on the unions by refusing demands for wage raises. In a highly belligerent mood, Leland Hazard, vice president and general counsel of the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company told the assembled tycoons: "We in management must begin to refuse wage increases even though we know our refusals will produce strikes. We have been too timid about strikes."

Year Long Calif. Fight On Speedup

MAYWOOD, CALIF., Jan. 10 — The failure of the United Auto Worker leadership's policy on speed-up in the auto industry is clearly revealed in Chrysler in Los Angeles. UAW Local 230 has been waging a militant struggle against speed-up in this plant for more than a year. Despite many unauthorized walkouts and an authorized strike that lasted five weeks, Chrysler has been able to continue its drive to bring its production standards up to the sweat-shop level of those in General Motors.

Chrysler started its intensified drive for speed-up when it began production of its 1957 models. Everyone remembers the "deal" on speed-up referred to by Chrysler Vice-President Frank W. Misch. Before these changes were made last March, a company-wide strike against the speed-up had been averted by a last-minute settlement between Chrysler officials and top officials of the UAW.

This settlement was of no value to the workers in the L.A. Chrysler plant. After a series of walkouts over speed-up, UAW 230 called its authorized strike. This strike coincided with the UAW convention last April and was granted substantial material support by the International only after the convention began.

The strike was settled with an agreement that the rate of production would remain frozen at 516 cars per day for the duration of the 1957 model. However, even this agreement gave Chrysler a large increase in its production standards as compared to 1956. But this increase was not enough for the

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Congress Threatens to Up Ante On Eisenhower's War Budget

Big Business perspectives remain geared to war despite the growing popular desire for an end to international tensions. The Big Business outlook was presented to Congress by President Eisenhower both in his State of the Union message on Jan. 9 and in his budget message on Jan. 13.

The budget message proposes nearly \$1 billion hike in arms expenditures over last year's budget which already called for the highest peacetime military outlay in the nation's history. The new budget calls for \$45.8 billion for the military establishment, 64% of the total budget of \$73.9 billion.

... Congress will attempt to determine whether it [the budget] is adequate to strengthen the nation's security," was the comment of Lyndon B. Johnson (Texas), Democratic floor leader. Actually, according to William S. White in the Jan. 14 New York Times, "... Congressional action to raise rather than lower the budget seems probable."

At the same time that Eisenhower announced his proposal for record military expenditures, he proposed cuts in domestic programs, many of them in the field of education, health and welfare. He thus gave effect to the "less butter, more guns" slogan put forward recently by Commerce Secretary Weeks. Both Republican and Democrats in Congress are expected to resist the cuts. But all that will do is keep these items as well as

housing, flood-control and other badly needed public services in the same state of criminal neglect in which they have been maintained for years.

All that Eisenhower is proposing in order to meet the growing world-wide demand for an end to the arms race is demagoguery. It is true that in his Jan. 12 reply to Soviet Premier Bulganin's plea for renewed negotiations on disarmament, Eisenhower opened the door slightly to talks between the two heads of state. At the same time he advanced proposals designed to make it difficult for an agreement to result even if U.S.-Soviet negotiations are finally engaged in. Such is the demand implied in his letter that the Soviet Union abandon its veto-power in the U.S.-dominated United Nations Security Council.

Clearly the Eisenhower administration has no other answer to the cold war than to keep promoting it. This is also the program of the Democratic Party but there are reasons to believe that the American people have a different view.

Roscoe Drummond of the N. Y. Herald Tribune, Jan. 12, basing himself on Congressional reaction to the President's State-of-the-Union message, guessed that "the American people are far more eager to press negotiations with the Soviets than Secretary Dulles and some others in the Administration have believed." According to Drummond, the President got the biggest response in his Jan. 9 speech when he said that this country "will always go the extra mile with any one on earth if it will bring us nearer to a genuine peace."

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The Record of Speed-Up in Auto

DETROIT — The one all-embracing experience of rank-and-file auto workers during the post-war years has been the steady deterioration of their working conditions.

There are instances where a group of workers say "we held it down this time," or "we were able to get by with a slight increase in the work load." Where this occurs, it is the result of the most stubborn resistance, determination, and self-organization on the job. This takes place despite the company's threats to fire or to discipline, and many times in defiance of the union leadership which, all too often, offers no answers but winds up the dispute by compromising the work standards.

Since the 1954 recession there has been an intensification of the speed-up campaigns everywhere, particularly in the independents and in Chrysler which have been pleading inability to compete.

Wage cuts and speed-up provisions were slapped on the Kaiser-Willis and Studebaker workers in the name of "helping them compete." A delegate from the Toledo Auto-Lite plant to the 16th United Auto Workers convention put it this way: "... We were the most oppressed outfit in the whole United States. . . I say this, and I am sorry to say it, that at one time the pattern was set by the amount of money we earned. We had to be brought down. We had what we called a Utopia in Auto-Lite in Toledo, but not today. . . the top international officers give us very little help."

Reuther's answer to this delegate was: "It is so simple to make all sorts of charges. . . The Auto-Lite workers approved the contract . . . because they thought their job security would be better protected because the jobs were being moved out." But the record clearly shows that it was the International leadership which failed to organize a counterattack to the

phony company arguments that jobs could be saved by giving up conditions. In Studebaker, in fact, the workers first voted down these disastrous proposals, saying instead: "protect us by improving conditions at GM and Ford." They ratified the program only after great pressure from the corporation, the papers, the politicians and—to their shame—some of the union officials.

A LETTER FROM CHRYSLER'S PRESIDENT

It was therefore no surprise to Chrysler workers when they received a letter from Chrysler President Colbert in 1956 saying: "In Detroit just recently several thousand automobile workers have seen their jobs and their seniority wiped out as more than one automobile parts assembly plant has folded up." He went on to say that Chrysler workers would have to compete to save their jobs. "We have also developed," he continued, "new work standards."

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From Laura Gray's Graphic Record of Our Epoch

The Only Victor



Reprinted from the Militant, August 18, 1945

The Mighty Arm of Solidarity



Reprinted from the Militant, March 9, 1946

1951, Fall In!



Reprinted from the Militant, December 25, 1950

But Lots of Young Ones Do



Reprinted from the Militant, April 30, 1951

Watch That Blood Pressure



Reprinted from the Militant, July 9, 1951

The Judgment of History



Reprinted from the Militant, March 16, 1953

"In Our Hands There Lies the Power"



Reprinted from the Militant, April 25, 1952

David and Goliath



Reprinted from the Militant, October 11, 1954

In Honor of Laura Gray

By James P. Cannon

(We reprint the following homage to Laura Gray from the Militant of March 8, 1954. It was written on the occasion of her Tenth Anniversary as staff artist for the Militant. — Editor).

People who never talk themselves up don't always escape the encomiastic comments of others. This is happening right now in the case of Laura Gray, in whose honor the New York Local of the SWP is throwing a party on the occasion of her tenth anniversary as staff cartoonist of the Militant. This is really a nation-wide affair. The New York local is staging the celebration, but all the members of the party and all the readers of the Militant are present with you in spirit. And we are all saying, "Thank you, Laura; Laura, you're wonderful."

The proletarian movement takes great pride in its intellectuals and artists; all the more so since, under the present conditions of the struggle in this country, it can boast so few of them. There is a reason for this scarcity, but there is also a reason why we count on its remedy. The revolutionary workers and the artists need each other, and their union will be a certain consequence of new developments in the coming stages of our struggle for Socialist America.

ARTISTS NOT A SOCIAL POWER

In our present class society, the intellectuals and the artists don't get a fair chance. By themselves, they are weak. They are not a self-sufficient class, but rather a selection of exceptional people, who in seeking to realize themselves — which means, first of all, to be themselves — require the support of a class which represents a power.

Nearly all of them, at the present time, are consciously or unconsciously servants of the ruling power of the dominant class of exploiters, and depend on its patronage. But they pay a price for this allegiance which strikes at their very reason for being. Their inner compulsion is to portray reality, to tell the truth as they see it. But this inner compulsion runs up against the contradiction that the class society, which is founded on lies, has no use for the truth and savagely persecutes those who portray it.

This places the artist before a cruel dilemma. He needs freedom above everything — the freedom "to draw the thing as he sees it"; that is the artist's bread of life. The denial of this right turns the artist's bread into a stone. But there is nothing he can do about it by himself.

THE ARTIST'S NATURAL ALLY

The so-called "ivory tower" is not a place of refuge but of exile from the real world. The salvation of the artist is to ally himself with a power which will permit him to do this work —

"It is well that there is art in the world as well as politics. It is well that the potentialities of art are as inexhaustible as life itself. In a certain sense art is richer than life, for it can both overstate and understate. . . can present the same object in all its varied facets and shed a variety of light upon it."

— Leon Trotsky, Fourth International, January, 1941.

that is, to live and be his real self — and protect and sustain him in its performance. There is such a power, and the artist should recognize it and seek alliance with it. That is the modern working class, represented by its conscious vanguard, whose cause is served only by truth. By that fact, it is the natural ally and protector of all truth-seekers, among whom the artist stands in first place. The alliance of the true artist with the labor movement is the condition for his own emancipation.

If the artist needs the labor movement, no less does the labor movement need the artist. The workers need not only the crude truth which is the ugly reality of their daily existence. They need also the truth which illuminates and inspires, which elevates and ennobles, the truth which shines with a blinding light, the light which only the artist can give. It is a lucky day when our movement finds such a person. And it is the part of wisdom, as well as of gratitude, to cherish the alliance and to celebrate it, as you are doing tonight at the party for Laura Gray.

I don't doubt that Laura made her first appearance in the office of the Militant so quietly and unobtrusively — as is her manner — that scarcely anyone noticed her in the busy hubbub in which a paper always goes to press. But she came into Sandstone Prison, where some of us were residing at the time, with a clatter and a bang. Her first cartoon scattered the gray shadows of the prison like the powerful headlights of a locomotive rolling down the right of way. Every week thereafter we looked for her cartoons, and they brightened the prison day each time they came.

THE ANTICIPATION

The readers of the Militant everywhere, immersed in the prosaic details of everyday life and the routine tasks of the struggle for a better world, have greeted her weekly drawings with the same gratitude and enthusiasm; and have derived from them the same inspiration, the same anticipatory glimpse of a better world wherein all people will express themselves better, more completely, in more effective communion with others; that is to say, more artistically.

I speak of this as an anticipation. For in the socialist society of the free and equal, all will be artists; all will have the means and the opportunity, and the favorable social environment, to tap their springs of talent and their instinct for self-expression in artistic form, which are today hidden, suppressed and denied. The true artists, who feel impelled to draw the true picture of life as they see it, not only as it is but as it ought to be and will be, can find the fullest freedom for the exercise of this impulse today only in alliance with the great labor movement, which is forcing its way, through the blood and filth of capitalist society, to the new world of truth and beauty. In particular, the revolutionary party, which represents the conscious element of this great movement, is the natural ally of the aspiring artist.

Many of them will come to us in the future, and if we are wise we will receive them gladly. Our Laura, cartoonist for the Militant, is the advance guard, the harbinger of the poets and artists to come. In honoring her, on the occasion of her tenth anniversary on the staff of the Militant, we are honoring the paper, the party and ourselves. And we are honoring at the same time, the coming grand alliance of revolutionists and artists in the great battle wherein no one can fail.

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in Oregon and at the Chicago Art Institute.

But that was the decade of the Great Depression, when capitalism scrapped so much of the best trained labor and talents. To exist, she had to get a job on the WPA Art Project. There she created a number of artistic masterpieces. But all we have left of them are their photographs. They were the property of the government. It is reported that her works, along with those of other distinguished artists, were junked. A sculptural construction of metal, a pioneer work in this medium, was turned over to the World War II "scrap drive."

LAURA THE SOCIALIST

This was the tragic side of her life, a tragedy she shared with a great many talented and creative people in this place and this age. The side we turn to, from which we draw inspiration and sustenance, is Laura Gray the indomitable fighter for the socialist society of the free and equal.

She found her way to the socialist movement and to the Socialist Workers Party in the spring of 1942. How characteristic it was of her to join at the very height of the war reaction and jingoism and shortly after the SWP leaders had been tried and sentenced to federal prison under the Smith Gag Act for proclaiming opposition to the imperialist war. She joined the SWP for the purest of motives. She was determined to fight against the war.

Laura did not find herself as an artist through the Socialist Workers Party. But she did find and fulfill herself as a conscious social being. She placed her brilliant talents at the service of the socialist cause. Her cartoons were to become almost a trademark of the Militant and in her own paper — the greatest working-class paper ever published, in my opinion — was to find a political artist truly worthy of it.

But Laura did not become a Militant artist in the first years of her socialist activity. She was always the most modest and unpretentious of people. She did not go around advertising her gifts.

I met her first in July 1942 when I went to Chicago to be SWP branch organizer. During my first meeting, I noted the pale, delicate-featured young woman sitting straight and very quietly at the rear of the hall, up against the wall. Nothing in her outward features ever suggested the source of the tremendous power of her political drawings. There was a lot of talk

Laura Gray — Socialist Artist

"She Left a Heritage So Rich.."

With deep pride and profound gratitude we of the Socialist Workers Party cherish the memory of our beloved comrade Gray. She was a great warrior. Time and again she lifted us up and gave fresh inspiration through her cartoons in the Militant. Subtle humor, savage irony, indignant protest, political clarity and class truth blended effectively in her images. She struck blow upon powerful blow in support of the struggle for a socialist society.

Laura's work was appreciated by socialist fighters the world over. Her timely and timeless cartoons have been printed and reprinted in the press of many countries. She left a heritage so rich that a spontaneous movement has already begun to provide means for publishing a full collection of her material in book form.

A book of this kind would provide a vivid pictorial history of key political issues and events since World War II. It would be priceless as an educator of the socialist cadres. Young revolutionary cartoonists yet to appear would be taught by Laura Gray and inspired to carry on in her great tradition.

Young artists have even more to learn from her. Fame as a cartoonist left Laura unpretentious and undemanding in her relations with the movement. She was an organization woman, giving her talents to the socialist cause with selfless devotion, setting an example worthy of emulation. Her attitude caught the essential spirit of the relationship between the intellectuals and the workers necessary to the forging of a revolutionary socialist party.

Comrade Laura will live in the memory of all who knew her. She was a true socialist.

James P. Cannon
National Chairman
Farrell Dobbs,
National Secretary

at that meeting. It seemed everyone spoke except Laura. But when the call came for volunteers for a Militant distribution, hers was the first hand raised.

Although Laura was a distinguished artist when she came to our ranks, she neither expected nor accepted any special treatment. She came to serve. She would go out, this frail, sick woman, in zero weather, with snow a foot deep, before some plant gate or union hall to distribute Militants or SWP leaflets. She was really endangering her life, and we had to contrive pretexts to keep her from going out in icy weather and confined to indoor tasks.

Before going to Chicago, I had worked for a period on The Militant and knew the paper's lack of a good cartoonist. We require a completely different class outlook and a precision and exactness of political formulation that would automatically disqualify even the most artistically able of the capitalist press cartoonists. The combination of class consciousness, moral courage, political acuteness and artistic capacity required for a Marxist

cartoonist is a once-in-a-generation phenomenon. We were indeed lucky to find Laura.

Symbolically, her first venture in cartooning was in aid of a group of Chicago auto union militants in a struggle. I had been asked to assist in putting out a paper for a group of Chicago Studebaker unionists. I recalled Laura's artistic skill, including a gift for satire I had seen in several of her works. I asked her if she would try her hand on a cartoon for the union paper. From that first cartoon, I knew Laura and the Militant were made for each other.

She visited New York in January 1944. On March 4, 1944, her first cartoon appeared in our paper. From the first, her work added such a fresh, bright, satirical note to the paper that it was enthusiastically hailed by our readers everywhere.

Laura was the exact opposite of the temperamental individualist usually depicted as the characteristic artist. Laura worked as a member of the staff. The general theme and suggestions for pictorial treatment of cartoons were discussed in staff meetings. Laura would take

these bare, rough suggestions and by the marvel of her art transform abstract, verbal political concepts into pictorial images that had tremendous power to shock, arouse, persuade, move the reader at a glance.

Laura did not just toss cartoons off. She concentrated all her consciousness on them. She thought deeply and profoundly on all her work. She brought to her political drawing sincerity, depth of feeling. She wasn't working for a buck to sell other men's ideas. She was working for a cause that was her own. Her cartoons were not light, brittle, witty gags, although she was capable of devastatingly comic and satiric effect. They were profoundly symbolic representations of the world of struggle in which we live.

She summed up the most tragic and the most evil elements of our epoch. What words can depict the tragedy of the young in this period of capitalist decay and war more movingly than her bewildered little New Year baby, weighed down with helmet, uniform and gun, in her New Year 1951 cartoon at the height of the Korean war? What portrait

was ever more true than her figure of Gen. MacArthur, an evil histrionic demagogue, declaiming, "Old Soldier Never Die," amidst the endless crosses on the graves of young soldiers in the Korean war?

It would be not only a fitting tribute to Laura, but an invaluable service to the socialist movement to put out as soon as possible a collection of her cartoons over the past 14 years, from the second world war through the period of the preparations of the third world war. It would provide the most graphic — the most truthful — record of our times that could be brought between two covers.

Political cartoons are a phenomenon of the most profoundly political era man has ever known — the brief age of capitalism. Laura, under half-way normal conditions of life, would have lived out her years creating objects to beautify and enrich man's life and culture. The circumstances of her life, the conditions of the world imposed too great an obstacle to the fulfillment of her rich artistic gifts. The loss of what she might have done is tragic and I would not minimize it. But the loss of the world and the possibilities of mankind's survival would be infinitely more tragic. Laura used much of her meager strength of her last years to help the world to live.

We hear much in recent times from the mouths of capitalists, politicians and militarists of the "calculated risk." By that they mean the risk of war to the lives of other men and women, not their own. Laura, too, believed in the theory of the calculated risk — but for herself.

Ten years ago, in 1947, one of her lungs became so rotted with TB that it had to be entirely removed. No one could have blamed her if she had accepted the warnings of her physicians and lived the quiet, retiring life of semi-invalidism. She consciously chose the calculated risk — to continue with all her energies her contribution to the revolutionary struggle. And by some miracle of will she survived for ten more years and poured her whole being into her Militant cartoons. Let us think of that on this sad occasion.

We will never have another Laura. But somewhere in this land, right now, there are girls and boys, young women and men, who will come to hear of her and see the work she did. And her spark will light a flame in them. They will come forward with their talents and courage to take up the noble work to which our lovely Laura's life was dedicated.

Subscription information for THE MILITANT, including rates for various durations and contact details for Daniel Roberts.

Layoffs Hit Auto Centers Hard Illinois Jobless Told: Take Downgrading or Lose Benefits Los Angeles Aircraft, Auto Plants Cut Back

Labor and the Fight for Jobs

Unemployment in the United States is now estimated at about four million, a figure that tops the 1949, pre-Korean-war total for the same period.

A point is reached in government subsidizing of Big Business when arms spending cannot increase fast enough to meet the expansion needs of the capitalists.

Cleveland Relief Rolls Take Jump By Bob Kingsley CLEVELAND, Jan. 13—Layoffs in this city are "a bonfire that could become a conflagration," says the County Welfare Director who reports a big jump in relief application by people whose unemployment checks have run out.

CHICAGO—Unemployed auto workers in Illinois report that a new ruling is being attempted by the Illinois State Unemployment Compensation Board. If a laid-off employee refuses to accept a downgrading in skill and rate of pay—even to the sweeper's code—he will be refused both unemployment compensation and Supplementary Unemployment Benefits.

By Della Rossa LOS ANGELES, Jan. 15 — A garage in the San Fernando Valley needed a tire changer and 40 men applied for the job. Lockheed Aircraft is located there, and it has laid off 11,000 men.

REUTHER'S PROGRAM

Walter Reuther made headlines in the press when he announced he was deserting the fight for more jobs through a 30-hour week for 40-hour pay decided on at the last UAW convention.

WHAT LABOR SHOULD DEMAND The American workers must raise their own program to combat unemployment. The labor movement should demand a shorter work-week without reduction in take-home pay.

Editor of Daily Worker Quits Communist Party

By Harry Ring The resignation of John Gates from the Communist Party, Jan. 10, brings to virtual disintegration the group centered largely around the staff of the now-defunct Daily Worker which had voiced resistance to the drive of William Z. Foster to reimpose the Stalinist vise upon the party.



GATES

ated and pointedly declared: "... some Party leaders are bamboozled by what they regard as a danger of split in the party."

'Labour Review' Issue Excels

A wonderful and exciting experience awaits the reader of the November-December issue of Labour Review, the British Marxist theoretical journal. Contained in it is a speech made by Leon Trotsky in 1926 to the first All-Union Congress of the Society of Friends of Radio in the Soviet Union.

task. And what prospects it opens before us!" But Trotsky also saw the terrible dangers in scientific progress as long as class society, capitalism, remained in existence. "There is no doubt," he said, "that now, too, we are approaching the beginning of a still more frightful and bloody chapter."

about their own plans for the future. CRISIS CONTINUES The crumbling of the Gatesite opposition to Foster does not signify, however, that stability is in sight for the dwindling, crisis-racked party.

Canadian Unemployment Highest Since Depression

By Ross Dowson TORONTO — Shoppers in downtown Windsor saw a few weeks ago what hasn't appeared on Canadian city streets since the Hungry Thirties — a demonstration of some 400 unemployed — mostly auto workers laid off by Ford, Chrysler and feeder plants in the area.

New York Dr. Otto Nathan

Noted economist and executor of Einstein estate speaks on "War and Peace in the Atomic Age" Sat., Feb. 1—8 P.M. Militant Labor Forum, 116 University Place, Donation 50 cents.

THE MILITANT



A Weekly Newspaper Published in the Interests of the Working People 116 University Place, New York 3, N. Y.

BOOKS - PAMPHLETS On Socialism and the Labor Movement

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I went to Plainfield, N. J. last week to get a story on the walkout at the Mack Truck Engine plant there.

"We walked out because the company laid off 400 men in one unit, without regard to seniority and without giving anyone a chance to bump into other jobs as provided in the contract.

"These experts come from Studebaker and they are the same bunch that worked that famous shell game at Studebaker a few years back.

"And then the company has been trying to push us around too much lately. A while back, the management started having the plant guards take down the badge numbers of anyone who went to the toilet during working hours.

said that some of the workers, those on a bonus system, were taking too much time for personal needs.

"I don't know how other people feel about this, but as far as I'm concerned, a man has got to have some pride.

"It seems that everybody else had also decided not to humiliate themselves any more, and then had been forced by nature to swallow their pride — at 11:30 sharp.

"After that, the company got together with the local union leaders and agreed to stop the toilet tally provided the local official would give all us naughty children a lecture.

... Record of Speed-Up

(Continued from page 1)

These standards are comparable to those of the same jobs at Ford and GM.

In October, 1956, Walter Reuther addressed the Chrysler conference as follows: "On the question of production standards, the leadership in the Chrysler plants must face this problem practically and realistically.

"... Where production standards are too loose the Union has the responsibility of making fair adjustments.

These stories were inspired by a speech by Chrysler vice-president F. W. Misch before the Society of Financial Analysts in New York City.

A special Chrysler edition of Spotlight was published by the top union officialdom which declared that Misch's statements were false and that newspaper reports of 20,000 Chrysler workers being eliminated through speed-up were misrepresentations.

For all the frenzy of the top union leadership in trying to talk their way out of this perplexing situation, the fact remained that the company did speed-up and was boasting about it.

Throughout, the Chrysler rank-and-file indicated their willingness



REUTHER

ness to fight back to the best of their ability and against all odds.

Local 3 Dodge Main News gives us a glimpse of what has taken place in the shops in the recent period.

"When the workers lose their jobs due to automation, it is understandable, but when 800 workers lose their jobs due to changes of assembly system not by automation but by the muscles of the workers, then something should be done to stop it."

Another writer in the Nov. 30 issue said: "Ten Chrysler plants have taken strike votes on problems of speed-up and working conditions; the ABD plant (formerly Briggs) was poised for a strike last week, but a settlement was made at the last minute.

Throughout, the Chrysler rank-and-file indicated their willingness

they decide to respect our agreement."

The Plymouth Engine Plant workers hit the bricks for two weeks last November.

The speed-up resolution adopted at the last UAW convention correctly points out that "in the three years which saw the founding of the UAW, resistance to speed-up was a key element in welding the solidarity of those who brought our union into existence."

The rank-and-file have demonstrated under the most adverse circumstances—by strike votes and by authorized and unauthorized strikes—their readiness to fight speed-up.

What is needed now is to mobilize the power of the union's rank and file—for instance, by forming an industry-wide production-workers' council to control work standards.

Calendar Of Events

New York

MILITANT LABOR FORUM CLASSES. Sundays, 5:30 P.M. through Feb. 16, "The Road to Socialism," Instructor, Daniel Roberts.

Saturday, Jan. 25, 8:30 P.M. A Mid-Winter Party at 116 University Place sponsored by the Socialist Workers Party.

New York Youth

Symposium and discussion on "Israel and the Middle East," Arie Perberg, Israeli student; Shane Mage, editorial board, Young Socialist; Adel Akei, Arab student; Dan Leon, member of Hashomer Hatzair.

SWP Begins Ballot Drive In Michigan

DETROIT, Jan. 13—A drive to collect 30,000 signatures to put a socialist ticket on the ballot in Michigan in 1958 was announced today by Rita Shaw, state secretary of the Socialist Workers Party.

State law requires the submission of 15,315 signatures by registered voters. "But we're not taking any chances," Mrs. Shaw explained.

The 30,000 goal can be met, Mrs. Shaw maintained, because "a leftward political trend is being generated by four factors: (1) Growing unemployment and growing fear of unemployment. (2) Mounting criticism and doubt about the dead end in which U.S. foreign policy is culminating."

Mrs. Shaw asked for help in collecting the signatures not only from socialists, but from all who think that the voters should have something to choose besides the two old parties and who think it would be a public service for socialist ideas to be heard in the 1958 political marketplace.

California AFL Plans Drive on Anti-Labor Bill

By Roy Gale

SAN FRANCISCO, Jan. 4 — Over 1,000 delegates, representing 22,000 workers in over 200 unions, met here last night to map strategy for beating the threat of a California "right-to-work" law that is being prepared in referendum form for the November ballot.

C. J. Haggerty, Secretary of the California State Federation of Labor, told the mass conference that California "has been chosen as a battleground" in a drive to adopt such a measure throughout the U.S.

So far 18 states, mostly in the South, have passed these so-called "right-to-work" laws which ban the union shop and restrict peaceful picketing.

Calendar Of Events

New York

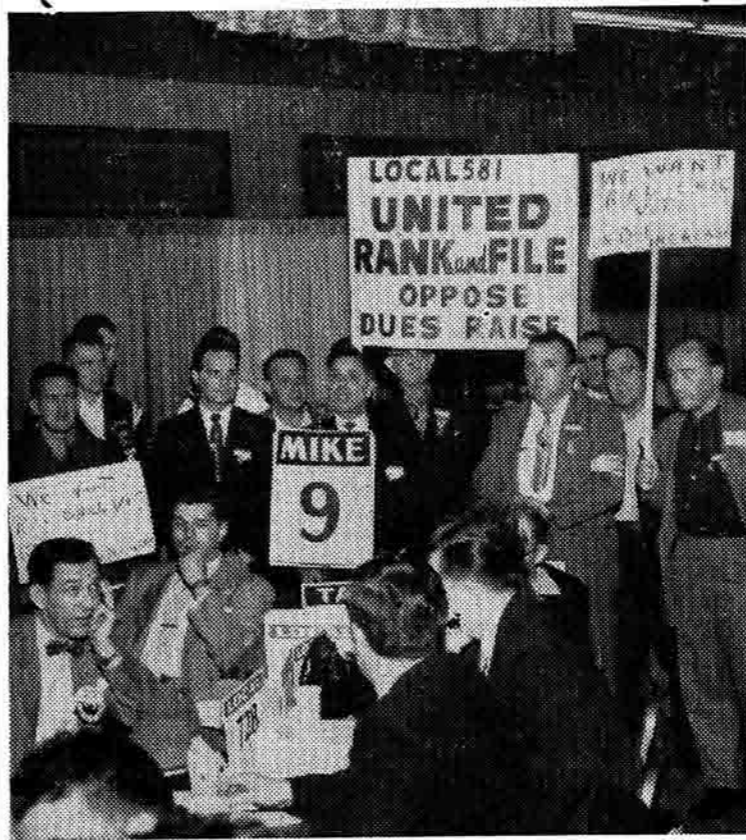
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At 1957 Auto Convention



Delegates from Flint area locals at United Auto Workers 16th constitutional convention last April. Signs express opposition to dues increase proposed by Reuther.

... Los Angeles Chrysler

(Continued from page 1)

Corporation. Management began chiseling on the terms of the strike settlement by eliminating manpower.

By the time the 1958 model was put into production, the company had already embarked on another all-out drive for more speed-up.

On Oct. 30 the situation reached the boiling point. The swing shift staged a walkout in protest, Chrysler immediately retaliated by discharging the chairman of the bargaining committee, Joe Price, and three chief shop stewards.

The officers of UAW 230 asked the members to return to work on the basis that another vote would be taken asking the International for strike authorization.

But the company continued its policy of further reprisals against the union. Chrysler discharged 67 more for their part in the walkout; 148 were given three to five-day disciplinary layoffs; and approximately 800 employees were given warnings or reprimands.

The Corporation has issued threats of more reprisals to come if UAW 230 takes strike action. Local President Tom Smith has been given warning that he will be discharged if another walkout occurs.

To date, the International has not given Local 230 strike authorization.

Socialist Candidate In Seattle Endorsed By Molders Union

By Melba Baker

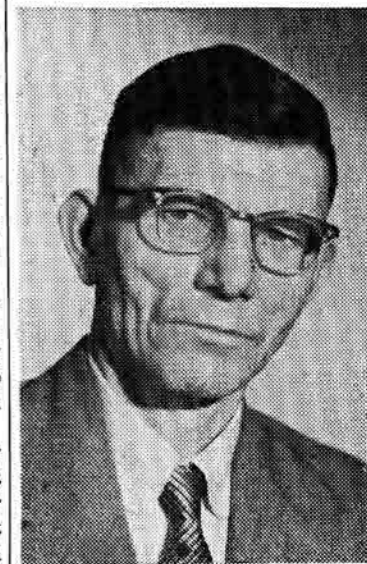
SEATTLE, Jan. 11 — At its regular membership meeting yesterday, Local 158, International Molders and Foundry Workers Union voted unanimously to endorse

the candidacy of Jack Wright for the Seattle City Council. A member of the local, Wright is running for Council with the support of the Socialist Workers Party.

At the opening of yesterday's meeting, Wright's socialist program was read to the membership by the Local Business Agent who then turned the floor over to Wright to speak on his program.

Discussing the problems facing the unions today, he said that with the retreat of the top labor officialdom before the witch hunt a rash of anti-labor laws had been passed locally and nationally.

After the meeting adjourned Wright was surrounded by union brothers extending their congratulations and offering their



JACK WRIGHT

support in his campaign. One brother said enthusiastically: "This is the most forward step this union has taken in years."

Wright is the delegate from his union to the Central Labor Council, the State Metal Trades Council and the AFL-CIO political action group, COPE.

Wash. State Unions Map Fight on 'Right-to-Work'

By Jack Wright

Socialist Candidate for Seattle City Council

Four hundred delegates representing AFL-CIO and independent unions from all over Washington State met, Jan. 4, under the sponsorship of the United Labor Ad-

visory Committee to map strategy to defeat the coming campaign of Big Business to secure a "right-to-work" law through an initiative measure.

I attended the conference as a delegate from the International Molders and Foundry Workers Union, Local 158. The meeting was one of the most animated and constructive that I have had the pleasure of attending in years.

As the events in L.A. Chrysler since that time have conclusively demonstrated, the top officialdom of the UAW is still following a policy that promotes more of these unequal contests.

... Reuther Seeks to Knife UAW Demand

to amount. Reuther presents figures to show that if auto workers' wages had kept up with national productivity since 1940 they would be at least 65 cents higher.

According to the "profit-sharing" scheme, the money the workers might have coming as their "share" of profits would not simply be given to them in a lump sum, but might be used as a fund from which wage and fringe improvements would come.

Does Reuther mean that a good part of the "basic economic demands" will really be tied to the end-of-year "profit-sharing" scheme? The wording is, at least, open to question.

AN INCENTIVE PLAN

The "profit-sharing" proposal is, in itself, nothing more than a glorified incentive plan basically little different from those advanced by Big Business many times in the past to counter union demands.

Militant Labor School Winter 1958 Classes

- (1) "The Road to Socialism." Lectures by Daniel Roberts. Six Sundays from 5:30 to 7 P.M., beginning Jan. 12. (2) "The Negro Struggle for Equality." Lectures by George Lavan. Five Sundays from 7:15 to 8:45 P.M. beginning Jan. 12.

BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS

- by JAMES P. CANNON On Problems of Socialism in America America's Road to Socialism 80pp \$3.50 Socialism on Trial 111pp \$5.00 American Stalinism and Anti-Stalinism \$1.50 The Struggle for a Proletarian Party 302 pp Cloth \$2.75 Paper \$2.80 The History of American Trotskyism 268pp Cloth \$2.75 Paper \$2.00 The IWW — The Great Anticipation 44pp \$2.25 Eugene V. Debs 40pp \$2.25 PIONEER PUBLISHERS 116 University Place New York 3, N.Y.