

Labor Supports Workers Party in Fight for Rights

By JAY LOVESTONE
(Special to "The Worker")

PITTSBURGH, PA.—Hundreds of workers here and in McKeesport attended the free speech and civil rights rallies of the Workers Party, in the face of official terrorism in the latter town.

In Pittsburgh, the Lyceum Theater was filled. The meeting, presided over by J. S. Otis, of the Machinists' Union, was addressed by Andrew T. McNamara, business agent of the Machinists, who greeted the audience as an officer of the American Federation of Labor, and called upon them to support unfalteringly the fight of the Communists for freedom of speech and meeting. The same appeal was made by the Reverend Father A. Kazinsky, of Braddock, the Catholic priest who distinguished himself in the 1919 steel strike by his firm support of the striking workers.

Fred H. Merrick, District Organizer of the Workers Party, spoke on behalf of the Labor Defense and Free Speech Council of Western Pennsylvania and asked for support of the Communists who are soon to go on trial in Pittsburgh. The audience was stirred and responded splendidly.

The writer, to prevent the authorities and press from garbling his speech, read it from the manuscript. He discussed the program of the Workers Party in the political and industrial fields and called on the workers to organize for the building up of a Communist order of society. Ellis Searles, editor of the United Mine Workers Journal, was given the lie by Robert Dunn, acting head of the American Civil Liberties Union, which is cooperating with the Workers Party in the free speech fights. Dunn, in an effective and humorous speech, pointed out that the latest "red scare" press stunt of Searles had fooled no one. The American Civil Liberties Union was always ready to defend anyone regardless of

(Continued on page Two.)

Western Pennsylvania Labor Supports Workers Party Fight

(Continued from page Two.)

political or economic belief, in the fight for preservation of the constitutional rights of the country.

The McKeesport Meeting.

At the McKeesport meeting that night the notorious Mayor Lysle had his police and detectives around the hall which had been rented. When the speakers arrived they were told by the hall owner that they would have to get a permit before being allowed to speak. The owner had not told the renters anything about a permit when the hall was rented, and when this was pointed out to him, he replied, "I don't care! there is the orders." The obviously intimidated owner refused to give any further information, and the police began to wade through the crowd of workers who had gathered around the hall to hear the speakers.

Openly challenging the high-handed authorities, the crowd was led by the speakers to a private lot, to which they were followed by a small army of detectives and police.

The chairman in introducing Fred H. Merrick, said that the meeting was being held in pursuit of the constitutional rights of the Workers Party. While Merrick was telling his audience of the Pittsburgh meeting success, a squad of police closed in on him and arrested him.

Just as Merrick was being led to the patrol wagon, Robert Dunn was dragged from the platform when he mentioned the Constitution, and was brought over to join Merrick.

But the police were not thru with their job. Hearing such outrageous words as "fellow citizens" and "our rights" from the writer, who spoke next, they immediately arrested me. Later we were joined by Pat. H. Toohey, Jr., a miner from Houston, Pa., and another worker, Mikadas, who had held the American flag at the meeting.

Next morning, after a few hours in a most filthy cell, we were arraigned before a local magistrate on a charge of disorderly conduct and

Sabbath desecration. Half the police force turned out as witnesses against us. The magistrate, quite disturbed, angrily found us guilty. A fine of \$25 a piece and costs or 30 days in the work house was imposed.

After paying the fine, and notifying the magistrate that we intended to appeal his decision, we paid a visit to the Mayor, Lysle. We asked him for a copy of the ordinance, which gave him power to give permits. He could not, of course, produce any such document. Instead he blustered about the verbal rights that the Charter gave him to give permits for meetings. Feeling very nervous, he cried, "I have nothing else to say and do not want to discuss it with you." The Mayor then swung wide open the door of his office and left us behind in his sanctum sanctorum still looking for that ordinance.

The Workers Party will go on with its free speech fight until it has finally established its right to hold meetings. The terrorism of District Attorney Meyer and his coal and steel gangmen, and the fire eating regime of the petty czar Lysle will not prevent the onward march of our struggle.

Judging from the spirit and size of the audiences that turned out at the two meetings, the workers of this district will rally wholeheartedly behind the Party in this fight and stand four-square behind us in our campaign to clean house in Western Pennsylvania. For the Party in this district this fight for free speech is a life and death struggle. For all the workers in this district this fight of the Workers Party is a fight for their right to organize. We may look forward to a battle royal in Pittsburgh and McKeesport in the near future.

TEN WORKERS SHOULD READ
THIS COPY OF THE WORKER;
KEEP IT IN CIRCULATION