

Harlem C.P. Set to Launch Housing Project Drive

CIO Insurance Unions Win in Hancock Poll

State Labor Board Tells Firm to Bargain with Boston Local

BOSTON, Jan. 5.—The Massachusetts State Labor Board yesterday ordered the John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance Co. to bargain collectively with the United Office and Professional Workers of America, which won a Labor Board election in October, 1938, by a vote of 334 to 235 among the insurance agents of the Hancock's home office in Boston. The company has refused to bargain or recognize the Labor Board's certification of the UOPWA as bargaining agency for its employees.

Lewis R. Merrill, president of the UOPWA, commented on the Massachusetts Board's decision as follows:

"We trust the order will put an end to the anti-labor policy of the Hancock management, and that it will now recognize the rights of its own employees as established by Congress and affirmed by the Supreme Court.

"It is deplorable to find outstanding institutions like John Hancock and the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, where we won a N. Y. Labor Board election nearly two years ago, resorting to every form of legalistic evasion and anti-labor trick to deny employees their right to bargain collectively. Such conduct is hardly calculated to inspire in the public mind the confidence so necessary to the good name of the insurance business.

"Clearly the continual attempt of the insurance companies to evade the law not only does a grave injustice to the employees but injures the companies themselves as well."

Shoe Rebuilders Win Contract With I. Miller

Shoe Rebuilders and Orthopedic Workers, Local 563 of the CIO, yesterday announced the signing of a contract for the alteration department of one of the largest shoe

Drive Set Goal of 50,000 Signatures to Be Presented to City Council; Leaflet Bares Worst Conditions in City

By Angelo Herndon

Launching a new vigorous drive against bad housing and high rents in Harlem, the Harlem Division of the Communist Party completed last week plans for an intensive campaign to collect 50,000 signatures to a petition addressed to Newbold Morris and the City Council demanding a new housing project for central Harlem.

Efforts will be made to collect the 50,000 signatures within one month and already various Party branches in Upper Harlem have swung into action. Since the beginning of the drive a few days ago, one branch has succeeded in organizing all tenants in a large apartment house and remarkable progress is being made in getting other tenants interested.

The entire apparatus of the Division, including all branches in Washington Heights, East and Lower Harlem, will be thrown into the campaign with full force. Through house committees, the branches will endeavor to involve the whole community of Harlem in the work for the new housing project.

EXPONES CONDITIONS

Stressing the fact that "bad housing is a menace to life and health but good housing is not a dream," the petition to the City Council will also be accompanied with a four page folder setting forth the deplorable housing situation and calling for an end to high rents and racial discrimination.

The initial steps demanded of the City Council in the petition include an investigation of the housing crisis in Harlem; reduction and restriction of rents; rigorous administration of the Multiple Dwelling Violations Law and abolition of Jim Crow restrictions on residence throughout the city.

The fact that 80 per cent of all families living in Harlem pay 50 per cent of their earnings for rent as against 20 to 25 per cent paid generally in the city, is in itself indicative of a consistent Jim Crow policy of the big real estate companies. Being forced to live in a restricted area, Negroes are compelled to pay high rents for dwellings unfit to live in because they are barred from moving into other areas. There is even a dearth in the availability of the worse dwellings, which makes it necessary for an ever increasing population to double

up while the landlords and bankers exact every possible cent out of the populace.

EXORBITANT RENTS

It is a matter of public record that 56 per cent of the occupied dwellings in Harlem charge from \$7 to \$10 or more per room, as compared to 19.7 per cent on the East Side for the same rent range. But as yet, the city fathers have not found it convenient to do anything about it. In the 19th and 21st assembly districts the figure is 87 per cent respectively, while over 75 per cent of the dwelling charge \$7 and more per room.

Another point of major importance for Harlem citizens, and which the Harlem Division of the Communist Party is determined to wipe out, is the fact that 85 per cent of all buildings in Harlem are Old Law Tenements which were built before 1900. These houses have been constantly deteriorating, and the real estate sharks have consistently refused to make any repairs. At least 65 per cent of all houses in Harlem are in need of major repairs and in one section 877 families continue to live in 149 apartments long declared "unfit to live in."

The big banks, insurance companies and realty corporations own 5 per cent of all the houses. The other half are owned, supposedly by individuals, but in reality the insurance companies and banks hold heavy mortgages on all properties.

Obviously, a new housing project in Central Harlem is the prime need of the people. Without it the health and well being of some 300,000 citizens is dangerously imperiled.

Such organizations as the Consolidated Tenants League, the Greater New York Co-ordinating Committee for Employment, the Communist Party and others have long pointed and led struggles against these evils. A concerted drive of all organizations with the Communist Party will win a new housing project in Harlem just as it did in East Harlem.