

2,000 Millionaires Live In Three Miles of Palaces In New York

How Fortunes Have Been Squeezed Out of Workers In the Tenements

(This is the third in a series of articles exposing the conditions under which workers are forced to live in New York City. The *Daily Worker* revealed the conditions in Harlem, where Negro workers are exploited to the limit, and then described the conditions in Lower Harlem, where the discrimination against Porto Rican Negroes is even greater.)

The concluding article this week will deal with the housing and rent legislation of New York State, and conclude with the program of the Communist Party on housing for the approaching municipal elections.)

By SOL AUERBACH.

III.

EVEN as George Washington traced a trail, even as Abraham Lincoln vindicated a cause and as Moses set a standard, so has Park Avenue achieved a status," is written in glowing letters in "The Park Avenue Social Review," published monthly free of charge for the millionaires on Park Avenue.

Park Avenue is a street of two classes. In the three miles from

Grand Central Station to 94th St. lies the most vicious slope of exploitation the world has ever seen. Two hundred feet from the last palatial residence of the rich on Park Avenue the dilapidated tenements of Latin-American and Negro workers.

The Status.

What is this status that the Park Avenue Review boasts? One third of one per cent of the population of New York City live in these three miles. In unfurnished apartments

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THREE MILES OF PALACES HOUSE 5 THOUSAND RICH

Park Avenue Is Street of Two Classes

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that run up to \$35,000 a year, and in co-operative apartments that sell from \$40,000 to \$200,000.

In this stretch of three miles there live 2,000 millionaires.

Five thousand families live in this row of palaces.

The aggregate fortune of these Park Avenue parasites is said to amount to \$5,000,000,000.

The Family Budget.

In 1927 the average spent \$280,000,000 for necessities and luxuries. In 1929 the average will spend \$420,000,000, an average of \$84,000 per family. Of this amount \$185,000,000 will be spent for food, shelter and clothing; \$90,000,000 will be spent for amusement; \$145,000,000 will be spent for perfumes, flowers, liquor and other odds and ends of that sort. Of this amount \$15,000,000 will go to the bootleggers for unadulterated liquors.

For the rick the tracks of the New York Central on Park Avenue are hidden underground. No busses are allowed to disturb the parasites in their slumbers and in their amusements.

When the Tracks Emerge.

They live in palaces, have their own artists to decorate their apartments in Chinese, Bohemian or Greenland fashion. For them it is nothing to spend \$0,000 dollars for an engagement party for one of their daughters.

But where the tracks of the New York Central emerge from the ground at 96th St., 5,000 workers and their families live in one or two city blocks.

It is because the exploiters can make hundreds of thousands of workers live in three miles of tenements that 5,000 exploiters can live in their three miles.

How Possible?

That is the status that Park Ave. has achieved. Its 1,000 millionaires and multi-millionaires own the tenements of New York City, own the industries in which the workers are exploited.

Only in a capitalist system of society, where one-third of one per cent of the total population can live in the luxury of mythical gods, can there be such a street as Park Avenue.

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What Would Happen.

"WHAT would happen if Park Avenue, together with its residents, were suddenly wiped out?"

"What would happen if the city, the country, the world, were sudcauses and the effects, the Mental deny denied the influences, the Energy, which radiate from it?"

One-Class Street.

These are the questions which the organ of Park Avenue, the Social Review, very seriously prints in bold capital letters.

What will happen when upper Park Avenue takes possession of lower Park Avenue?

The most vicious band of robbers and murderers in history will be wiped out.

Park Avenue will become the street of but one class, the working class.

* * *

Consumptive Money.

THE greatest fortunes ever amassed in history have been dragged from the millions of workingclass tenants in New York City. These fortunes have been built on the bodies of dead infants, consumptives, fire victims of the tenements; on the misery of workers crowded into vile homes, debauched, choked and robbed.

The Astor family achieved its "status" by investing its profits, which the original Astor accumulated at the point of a gun from Indian fur traders, in property in New York City.

The Astor Robbers.

The history of the accumulation of this fortune is also the history of the "citizens" of Park Avenue. There are variations, of course—variations in the field of exploitation chosen.

Just as it does now, the Tammany machine from the very inception of the administration of New York City, oiled its cog wheels of corruption and graft to turn out more profits for the exploiters. The first Astor induced it to give him large grants of land along the Hudson River, land which was termed useless because it was partially under water. In this way he procured land along the Hudson from 12th St. north to 57th St. as well as in the Bronx and in Harlem. He made the city government improve the land for him out of the pockets of the taxpayers. Later the notorious Tweed ring, which during its reign of terror is estimated to have stolen between \$45,000,000 and \$200,000,000, helped the Astors acquire more land along the river.

Owner of "Hell Kitchen."

When William B. Astor died in 1875 he owned 700 buildings and left a fortune estimated to be \$100,000,000. The tenement district on the west side, formerly owned by the Astors, is known as "Hell's Kitchen."

These tenements were in such a dilapidated and unsanitary state that the state legislature was forced to hold a fake investigation on housing.

When a committee was appointed by the New York City administration in 1887 to investigate tenement con-

Millinery Local U. S. Workers t

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shook off their responsibilities towards our local and instead began to prepare to break up the local entirely.

Facts Speak for Themselves.

Within a period of two years our rank and file committee accomplished far better results than were ever recorded by the International officials. What the entire paid staff of the International officials could not accomplish in sixteen years, our rank and file committees succeeded in accomplishing in a comparatively short time. In the few years of left wing leadership our local became the second largest local of the Cloth Hat, Cap and Millinery International Union and the largest local of organized women workers in the United States. Our membership increased to nearly four thousand. The working hours were reduced from 50 to 44. The wages were increased and the general working conditions were greatly improved. We created a collective spirit among the trimmers and have succeeded in enlisting the active participation of the rank and file in the organization of the unorganized. We have raised the ideological level of our membership for militant unionism and the class struggle. We established an educational institution consisting of lectures, courses, shop educational conferences dealing with the specific problems of the women workers in our industry and the problems of the working class generally. Our outlook was bright. Our membership continued to grow and were on the road to become the largest local in our International. Our organization drives against the open shops were very successful. The numerous strikes and stoppages conducted by us during the past two years resulted in unionizing hundreds of open shops, enforcing union conditions therein, and improving the general condition of our members. There was no doubt but that the energetic organization activities of our class-conscious and sincere leaders as well as our rank and file committees would have resulted in even greater achievements.

Right Wingers Destroy Union.

About May 1927, the International officialdom began an attack against our local and the crucifixion of our members. In violation of the constitution, in defiance of the explicit instructions of our last convention and against the interest of the Cap and millinery workers, our International officials, in a most dictatorial manner, issued a decree ordering our local to dissolve and our members to submit to the fascist rule of the corrupt socialist clique which dominates the millinery local 24. What made our International officials issue such an order to our local? What constituted our guilt? No charges were preferred against us. No trial was given us. Our International officials violated the fundamental principles of the constitution, cynically laughed at the protests of our members and proceeded with their union-smashing activities. **Right Wing Officials Lead Attack Against Workers.**

In the interest of all the cap and millinery workers, our local demanded at all conventions that all locals of the Millinery Union be amalgamated. When we failed in this, Local 43 demanded from the 1927 convention the establishment of a Joint Board of all millinery locals in New York as a preliminary step towards complete amalgamation. The convention so decided and explicitly instructed the General Executive Board to establish a Joint Board. Instead of carrying out the decision of the convention, which Local 43

ditions in the city, William Waldorf Astor, the owner of miles of tenements, was an outstanding member of the committee.

Fortune Doubled

The fortune of the Astor family in 1875 was doubled by 1892. This fortune was doubled almost exclusively by what is termed the increased "value of the land."

The growth of the Astor fortune depended mainly on the rise in land values—values which are created by no one else than by the workers themselves. As the land value rose, because of docks put up by workers, or office-buildings put up by workers, or dwellings put up by workers, or subways and elevators constructed by workers, the workers had to pay in the form of higher rents for what they themselves had produced.

Having made millions out of the lives of workers on this side of the Atlantic, the Astors went to England, took titles unto themselves, posed as reformers for a time, and now Lady Astor is a conservative M. P., fighting strongly for British imperialism. She is a large absentee landlord and her family still has much money invested in tenements in New York City.

That is the way Park Avenue is made possible.

persistently demanded, the General Executive Board expelled Local 43 and ordered our members to transfer themselves into Local 24. They used the term "amalgamation" as a smoke screen for our expulsion.

According to our constitution of the International Union the General Executive Board has no right to dissolve any local. We appealed against their action and demanded a stay of the execution of this order. We are demanding of the convention that is being held in New York at present to reject the expulsion of our local. The expulsion of locals was carried out with the express purpose of preventing a convention which would represent the interests of the workers. This 1929 convention was hand picked in order