

UAW Convention Faces Issue of No-Strike Pledge

By ALBERT GATES

One of the most important questions now before the locals of the UAW and one which will undoubtedly come before the eighth annual convention in Buffalo on October 4 is the issue of the no-strike pledge.

In the opening article of this series we pointed out that the no-strike pledge was obtained from the labor movement on the basis of a series of PROMISES made by President Roosevelt, none of which has been carried out. The labor officials readily assented to the President's request without prior consultation or vote of the rank and file unionists.

In some cases, only after the labor leaders had already given their word to the President that they would adhere to his request did the matter come before any local unions. But then it was not so much a matter of bringing the issue before the membership as it was to obtain RATIFICATION by the rank and file to an action already accepted by the leadership.

In the UAW, the rank and file was immediately suspicious of this proposal made by Roosevelt. It took a great deal of persuasion to convince the membership to accept the no-strike pledge. As matters have turned out, the sentiments of the rank and file were correct, because the no-strike pledge has turned out to be a noose around the neck of the whole labor movement, and especially of the automobile workers. It has served as the wedge by which the bosses have sought to open the way for a destruction of unionism in the auto industry.

WHO GAVE UP WHAT?

In return for the no-strike pledge, President Roosevelt promised many things: no lockouts by the bosses, limitation of profits, no war profiteering, no war millionaires, control and ceilings on prices, maintenance of collective bargaining, no union busting campaign by the bosses and control of the cost of living.

In each case, however, these have turned out to be empty promises. While the workers have really given up something, the bosses have surrendered nothing.

Someone might object and say: Haven't the bosses agreed not to lock out the workers? The answer to this objection contains the key to the whole problem.

The bosses, that is to say, industry, monopolistic big business and all the lesser lights who fatten on their crumbs, are making a good thing out of this war. Every worker knows that the boss is in this game for only one thing: PROFIT. He profits off the labor of his workers!

War contracts keep industry going at a steady pace every day in the week and every week in the year. If the boss were to lock out his workers that would mean a loss of his income and profits.

Why, then, should big business, in this period, when it is overstuffed with war contracts on a cost-plus basis, i.e., WITH GUARANTEED PROFITS, lock out workers, under any conceivable circumstances. No, its interest is to keep labor working all the time.

THE WORKERS HAVE SACRIFICED

The boss is willing to forego the lockout, because it means giving up nothing in order to keep the worker's nose to the grindstone. If this were a period of economic crisis and the boss agreed to keep the worker on the job, that might be called a "sacrifice." Even then, the worker would only be getting his just due.

Or, if the boss agreed to pay the worker an additional sum as a post-war "contingent wage," that might be construed as a sacrifice, although then too

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Quebec Meeting On Allied Plans

For the sixth time since the United States became a participant in the war, Roosevelt, Churchill and their respective staffs and aides came together for the purpose of mapping political and military war strategy. This time the meeting took place in Quebec, Canada.

The titular heads of the Anglo-American coalition of the United Nations met under circumstances quite different from those of a year or two ago.

In the early meetings, though characterized by the confidence of the participants, the main problems were those of raising the military power of the coalition to meet those of the Axis, to turn the tide of military events admittedly unfavorable to the Allies.

German arms still advanced without serious resistance. The European Continent was largely in Hitler's hands. Britain faced the possible loss of Egypt and the whole Mediterranean. India was in a state of ferment after the loss of Singapore and Burma. The United States was still unprepared for large-scale warfare.

The only bright spot was Hitler's treacherous attack on Soviet Russia. Even though the German legions advanced deep into Russia and the Ukraine, it relieved some of the pressure on the West.

THE TURN IN THE WAR

But for some months now, the military might of the Allied coalition has not only matched the Axis, but in many respects has outstripped it.

Even though Europe is, for the most part, still Hitler's domain, German imperialism has lost a number of important engagements. It was driven out of North Africa in a campaign which stripped Italy of its empire. American and British armies stand ready to invade the European soil. The immediate effect of their victories in Sicily was the collapse of Mussolini and his black-shirted regime.

On the Eastern front, the Russian armies have not only halted Hitler's divisions, but are on the offensive in driving them back, notwithstanding the heavy costs involved.

While there have been no decisive victories in the Pacific, Japan, which advanced so rapidly in the early campaigns, has not only been halted, but even driven back on several fronts.

This is not yet the victory of the United Nations, but it marks a definite turning point in the war. It is clear that victory for the Axis, which appeared so near more than a year ago, cannot come. It has definitely lost the initiative.

POLITICAL CONFLICTS AMONG ALLIES

But this improvement of the Allied military position, however, has only brought forth difficult issues of a political character. Political relations between the big powers have obviously deteriorated. This is evident in the fact that the great strategical meetings are limited to America and Great Britain. The other powers, naturally, are "kept fully informed," but the fact that stands out is that they do not participate as full-fledged partners.

The reason for this situation is found in the absence of agreement between the Anglo-American combination in the United Nations, on the one hand, and Russia and China, separately, on the other.

Each power is largely governed in its respective conduct by purely national aims. Thus, Stalin's Russia, bearing the major brunt of the war against Germany, demands the immediate opening of a second front. Not in the Balkans, to be sure, since Stalin regards that area as his stamping ground, but a second front across the Channel into the Low Countries and France.

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LABOR ACTION

AUGUST 30, 1943

A PAPER IN THE INTERESTS OF LABOR

ONE CENT

F. D. R. STRIKES AT LABOR THROUGH WLB AND DRAFT

By SAM ADAMS

President Roosevelt's latest order to the National War Labor Board is a culminating point in the Administration-big business coalition against American labor. It calls for "sanctions" against unions and workers who refuse to accept rulings of the WLB or who strike as a last resort to obtain their just grievances and demands.

The yellow capitalist press fully understood the true significance of the President's executive order when it heralded his letter to Chairman Davis of the WLB as "sanctions fixed against strikers." This is interesting, because the letter presumably ordered "action" too against companies which refused to carry out any decision by the same board.

But the New York Times remarked aptly enough that "less drastic sanctions" were authorized in respect to business. The order authorized "control of war contracts, of essential materials and of transportation and fuel," whatever that may mean, provided it did not impede the war effort.

That is the whole point! Up to now big business gets away with almost anything and everything, because action against big business "might impede the war effort."

Not so with labor. Against the workers, anything goes. The President has given the board power to withhold in escrow union dues collected under union agreements where plants have been seized by the government because of a strike.

But the most drastic and dangerous aspect of the President's order is the authorization given to the Selective Service System to cancel draft deferments of "recalcitrant" workers, i.e., militant workers, who strike in an effort to win their demands from a rapacious, profit-mad boss class.

One WLB official described the order as giving his agency "a lower set of teeth."

These "sanctions" ordered by the President are in line with the anti-labor provisions of the Smith-Connally Bill, which has now become law. They only add to the penalties against labor provided for in that infamous act.

Thus Roosevelt has put his fine touch to a series of anti-labor actions emanating from Congress and his Administration. These are all in line with wage freezing, job freezing, anti-strike legislation, absence of price control and the unbridled run-away cost of living.

It is in line, too, with the enormous growth in profits of American industry, with the sky-high salaries of the big business men, with the rights which the bosses have to enrich themselves out of the war effort at the expense of the millions of workers in this country.

The first reactions of the labor officials have been in keeping with their craven attitude on labor problems. Some of the labor press, seeking to minimize the effect of Roosevelt's order, sought to emphasize the fact that it is directed at the bosses, too. But they overlook the fact that the bosses do not have to struggle against the high cost of living, for better wages, for shorter hours, or for better working conditions. That is the lot of the workers.

There is an important political lesson to be gained from the recent Roosevelt action: Labor can have no trust in the parties of big business, no matter who their standard-bearers are!

The WLB has become the graveyard of labor demands. Labor must quit this board.

Stalin Withdraws Litvinov and Maisky

The Allied-Russian Crisis

The removal of Ambassadors Litvinov and Maisky, representing Russia in the United States and Great Britain, respectively, brought to a head the sharpened conflicts in military policy and political aims between the Anglo-American bloc in the United Nations and Stalin.

This is not to say that there are no disagreements between Washington and London. As a matter of fact, an announcement from Quebec called attention to this fact, but added that the differences between the United States and Great Britain did not relate to principle!

The removal of Litvinov and Maisky, the representatives of the Russian policy of collective security and the public advocates of an American-British-Russian coalition, has caused great speculation in the camp of the Allies as to its real significance. The liberals are particularly alarmed and there is an explanation to their alarm, though we believe their reasons cannot now be taken seriously.



Litvinov's Removal Was the Forerunner of Pact with Hitler

It is recalled that in 1939 the removal of Litvinov as Commissar of Foreign Affairs presaged the Hitler-Stalin pact, which served to guarantee the Nazis' Eastern front. This was one of the important secondary factors which opened up the war in Europe.

Thus the question is now asked: Does this mean that Stalin is prepared to make a separate peace with Germany? Does it mean that Stalin has already made a deal with certain elements in Germany?

What strengthens such questions is the knowledge that Stalin carefully prepares his steps and never does anything unless it is fully calculated to bring about a desired end.

We do not believe that there is a current possibility that Stalin will make a separate peace with Hitler. But that this thought has occurred to him, and no doubt to some sections of the German ruling class, is certain. It is an eventual possibility, but must be excluded for the immediate future.

Two main questions which sepa-



First of a Series on Post-War Unemployment

20 Million Will Be Jobless

By SUSAN GREEN

There isn't anyone these days who does not harbor in his heart the fear of post-war unemployment. To the worker, unemployment means starvation. To the mogul of big business, a large starving army of unemployed may spell the end of his power on this earth—for there is a point beyond which workers will not tolerate the social system that makes them starve.

The most forthright acknowledgment of capitalist bankruptcy in the face of the unemployment problem has come from Sir William Beveridge, the British "social problems expert," whose "generous" plan for so-called social security would allow about \$1.38 a week for bringing up a child. Here are his own words on unemployment:

"If we have mass unemployment we may not be able to carry out the proposals of my report. . . I don't know how we shall continue productive employment after the war. . . I do not know how it is to be done and do not even know whether anyone else does."

More Baseless Promises

That's not mincing words! No such honest statement has been issued in this country from any capitalist source. The New Deal demagogues, anxious to keep the votes of disillusioned workers, rant about freedom from want and the war against starvation and unemployment.

Thus Vice-President Wallace recently in Detroit spoke bright words about a world free from want and unemployment—and a few days later he assured reporters that "ninety-five to ninety-eight per cent of the corporations are harmless or beneficent and suffer just as much from the small minority as any other group in the population." So it isn't the main body of capitalists who cause the trouble—they are "harmless or beneficent." If it weren't for a few chisellers, according to Wallace, everything would be hunky-dory.

Actually, of course, it is the ninety-five to ninety-eight per cent of these

"harmless or beneficent" corporations, which, for one profit reason or another, keep millions of workers away from the means of earning a living. Was it the few chisellers who created the depression army of unemployed at one time rising as high as 17,000,000?

The demagogues of the Republican Party, anxious to win the votes of the workers away from the New Deal, are just as ardent in their platitudes and vague promises. The more sober contingent among the conservatives, like Walter Lippmann, columnist for the New York Herald Tribune, can offer nothing more encouraging than "we have to learn by trial and error."

It seems, however, that the workers have already learned by sufferings and trials that, as far as they are concerned, tragic "errors" are all they can expect from the capitalist system, whether administered by the Democratic or Republican politicians.

In the meantime post-war unemployment already casts its dark shadow before it. It looms before us when 2,500 to 3,000 workers are dropped at one clip from a New Jersey arsenal. It looms before us when a government contract for \$60,000,000 worth of tanks is cancelled. Such news items presage the end of the war boom, which is now keeping 60,000,000 Americans pretty busy—and pose the vital question: WHAT NEXT?

Optimists whose understanding of economics is gleaned from the conviving advertisements in such magazines as the Saturday Evening Post and other literature of the same level stick their heads in the sand and hope the unemployment problem will solve itself. Why, they say, after the war there will be such a stampede to buy consumer goods that industry will be humming and workers employed to nearly capacity.

There may be, immediately upon the signing of peace, a short flurry of "prosperity." And, while the workers are compelled to "hold the line" for the war program, the bosses have

rate the Anglo-American coalition and Russia are the "second front" and the settlement of post-war boundaries and territories. No agreement exists between the powers on how to solve these questions, and the differences over them have become highly aggravated.

The Russians have organized a world-wide campaign for a second front. Declaring that they have borne the brunt of the war and face the bulk of the German army, they demand aid in the form of a European invasion through the Low Countries and France, i.e., directly across the Channel. From a military point of view, nothing else will satisfy Stalin.

The Second Front—What Kind and Where?

The invasion of North Africa, Sicily and the prospect of an invasion of Italy do not satisfy the Russians. In their eyes this is not a real second front. The suggestion that a real second front may be established in

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WLB Rejects Coal Miners' State of Illinois Contract

WASHINGTON — The War Labor Board has done it again—that is, rejected a legitimate wage increase for thousands of underpaid Illinois coal miners.

Little more than a month ago, the United Mine Workers in Illinois and the operators of that state agreed on a contract which called for a \$1.25 a day increase for all miners. Of this increase, \$1.00 was a compromise agreement on "portal-to-portal" pay and twenty-five cents was to compensate miners for the purchase of tools, dynamite and other equipment, and to increase vacation pay.

Under Roosevelt's hold-the-line order and since the passage of the reactionary Smith-Connally bill, this agreement between the Illinois miners and operators was before the WLB for review and approval.

Lewis and other officials of the union appeared before the WLB to present the case for the miners. While the press then reported that the mine leaders had made a favorable impression on the WLB as a result of their powerful case for wage in-

creases, the board, by an eight-to-four vote, rejected the agreement. The industry and so-called "public" representatives voted to reject, the labor representatives dissenting.

Thus another chapter has been added to the anti-labor record of the WLB. In any case, it has been consistent in the sense that it has persistently opposed the best interests of the American working class.

If any further proof was needed that labor has no place on this board and should resign in a body, this latest action on the Illinois agreement is such proof. The WLB has become the graveyard of labor's wage demands.

But, most important of all, this action on the Illinois agreement has set the precedent for the whole coal industry. It shows clearly that the coal miners can get no redress from a body with a majority made up of industry representatives, an "impartial" rich lawyer and a professor representing the "public."

Labor should get off the WLB.

Anthracite Dispute Before WLB

WASHINGTON — The dispute between the United Mine Workers and the anthracite coal operators highlighted the latest session of the WLB hearings on the coal wage dispute.

After months of negotiations, the anthracite operators refused to come to an agreement with the miners. In the hearings before the WLB, the miners presented a mass of data showing how difficult it is for this body of workers to exist on present wage scales.

Lewis raised the question of "human rights" involved in the case, the high casualty rate in anthracite mining, the low wages, and contrasted them to the profits of the operators, saying that "corporate interests have sucked the life blood out of the industry."

In his statement before the WLB, Lewis declared:

"I never yet heard an anthracite operator, or the anthracite conference as such, ever concede that a single concession was due a single

coal miner in that industry for a quarter of a century.

"These operators never yield anything; they always say no. They employ statisticians, researchers, lawyers, and pay them large salaries to serve the corporations and ignore the human rights in the industry."

Referring to the system of "court-house dockage," where miners are penalized for dirty coal, Lewis said: "Well, perhaps God intended the mine workers to be responsible for every deficiency in a coal mine, but the mine workers don't think so."

In the meantime the WLB has reserved decision on the anthracite miners' demands. But their action on the Illinois agreement is an indication of what they will do here.

The purpose of the WLB in preventing legitimate wage increases is only too clear. Adhering to the "Little Steal" formula, which they too admit does not correspond to the rise in the cost of living, they have "legalized" their anti-labor actions.

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