

## In The Next Issue:

Report of Steel Workers Convention, by David Coolidge.  
Lewis-AFL Conflict, by Max Shachtman.  
Gerald K. Smith and America First Party, by Reva Craine.

# LABOR ACTION

MAY 15, 1944

A PAPER IN THE INTERESTS OF LABOR

ONE CENT

# BILLIONS FOR BIG BUSINESS

## How About Me?



## Nothing For Labor In Senate Bill

By SUSAN GREEN

"We wish to stress again, as we have pointed out in our public testimony, that the preponderance of war contractors are in a sufficiently strong position to weather the period of conversion to peacetime production. The reserves of American industry have never been as high as they are today. American workers, on the contrary, enjoy no such favorable position. When contracts are terminated, the soldiers of production face bleak prospects."

The above paragraph is from a letter sent by the CIO, the AFL and railway labor to Congress in an effort to get that august body to consider the interests of labor in connection with the cancellation of war contracts.

The letter and testimony had as little effect on the capitalist government as a breeze has in moving a mountain. The Senate ignored entirely the demands of the heads of labor unions speaking for 12,000,000 organized workers. It passed in record time the Murray-George contract termination bill providing very liberal cash payment out of the U. S. Treasury to big war contractors—BUT NARY A LINE, WORD OR SYLLABLE PROVIDING FOR WORKERS THROWN OUT OF THEIR JOBS BY THE TERMINATION OF WAR CONTRACTS.

## A Reader Blitzes LABOR ACTION With 60 Subs!

By T. R. COBB

We had just finished feeling smug about the seventeen subscriptions sent in by a Chicago booster of LABOR ACTION when HE walked into our office and asked for the circulation manager.

"That's us," we said. He reached for the inside pocket of his coat, withdrew four long sheets of paper and placed them in our eager fingers.

"I got sixty subscriptions to LABOR ACTION," he said matter-of-factly. "I wanted all of my friends and the fellows I work with to read it. So there they are."

A secretary, who was standing nearby, squealed like a high school girl at a Sinatra broadcast, and the national treasurer of the Workers Party, who had sauntered in, broke out into the kind of smile that is only supposed to come while receiving knowledge of some great victory for workers.

When he recovered from the shock, the circulation manager's dour phiz was transformed from its usual aspect into a beaming thing. Oh, what a beautiful morning!

Yes, there they were—sixty names and addresses neatly typed on four long sheets of paper. Sixty more readers of America's Leading Labor Weekly—sixty more working men and women who will follow the spot-reporting, the lively articles and the

bull's-eye analyses, who will study the practical program of true socialism presented by the Workers Party.

We thanked our friend for his grand achievement and for his concrete method of showing his support of our efforts.

A moment after he had left (it was his lunch hour), we were scurrying about trying to find out if sixty subs at one clip—from one reader—established a record of some sort. We asked one old-timer—who has seen labor papers come and go since long before the First World War—about this, and he told us that it was a great new record, as far as he knew.

"Not even the old 'Appeal' or Oscar Ameringer's 'American Guardian'?" we asked.

"Nope," he replied, "never saw anything like it."

Well, we certainly never did—before. But we hope that our many readers and friends will start shooting at that mark. Naturally, we hardly expect another sixty-sub blitz to hit us immediately.

At twenty-five cents per six-month subscription, though, men and women of ACTION can double the sub list of LABOR ACTION by subscribing for just ONE OTHER friend or shop-mate.

Send 'em in one at a time—or sixty at a time—or a hundred—but send 'em in!

## Missouri Farm Laborers Face Eviction

The poorest people in the richest cotton plantation counties of the country, namely, Southeastern Missouri, are threatened with eviction from government-built houses because of the demands of the powerful cotton growers.

Some two thousand people, the families of sharecroppers and farm laborers, will be the victims of the plan of Democratic Representative Zimmerman and the Missouri cotton growers to dispossess the occupants of these FSA houses and to dispose of them to the highest bidders.

The plantation owners wish to force the sharecropper and farm labor families back to the vacant shacks on the plantations, though they are unfit for human habitation. Colonel Wilson R. Buie, commissioned to "study" the situation, has handed in a recommendation which parallels the demands of the plantation owners.

This plan to force working people out of their homes so that the plantation owners can collect rent for uninhabitable shacks and carry out their anti-labor plans is the concern of all the workers of the country.

The Southeast Missouri sharecroppers and farm laborers have a record of militancy of which the whole labor movement can be proud. Their struggle in 1942 for a minimum wage rate of thirty cents an hour was a splendid example of labor solidarity—and was crowned with success.

Below we print a letter from a LABOR ACTION reader in Southeast Missouri, in which he describes the current situation and asks for the help of the labor movement.

May 3, 1944.

If a certain movement goes through in Southeast Missouri, about 1,500 families, Negroes and whites, will lose their FSA homes. It's needless to think for one minute that these projects are the only cause of all this upstir in this section of the country. Every small town and most of the large plantation are in the same boat, all going down the stream of labor shortage. But the reason is very plain. With the vast number of men called to the armed forces, and a greater number called to defense plants, makes it so. But the people on these projects are not so dumb. They know the labor is not here, and if the projects are closed, they still won't have the labor. The rationing

of gas and tires has made the high-ways less dangerous for walking passengers. So when the projects are closed, there will be a great number of men, women and children found thereon.

### A BALANCE DUE THE BOSS

Most, if not all, the people on these projects were farm people and would have been on the farm today if they had been treated like human beings. Instead, they lived almost out of doors, worked hard, and in the end got nothing but a balance due. Every day you can meet people who made sharecrops in 1943 who say they were from seven to ten bales of cotton and from two to three hundred bushels of beans, and then came out in debt to the boss. Government parity and rental checks on a great deal of the plantations have to be given to the boss also. This brought about the roadside demonstration in 1939, and things haven't changed very much on the farms today. Many a man on these projects will join the Army, if accepted, before they will go back to work on the farm again under such bosses, and in such houses.

Whites and Negroes alike can see

the boss living in his mansion, hiring overseers and building nice houses for them, paying them from \$1,200 to \$1,500 per year and an \$800 or \$900 bonus. While white and Negro labor works for \$1.50 to 2.00 per day, and that for about four months in the year. Large renters, small renters, and even some sharecroppers want to ride around in their trucks, and cars, and have some one to do their work. On Saturday evenings and on rainy days it is easy to find enough such people standing around town to fill a lot of this labor shortage. Instead, one can hear remarks like these: I had a N...r working for me but the son of a b... didn't come back Monday, or he didn't show up this morning.

### POISON OF DISCRIMINATION

The Negroes in Southeast are becoming somewhat suspicious of their white brothers now. The whites don't seem to be conscious of what is going on, as a whole, as the Negro does. The Negro does not feel this way because he is in the minority but because of past events. In March when bills were circulated saying labor was needed in Indiana, Michigan and other places North and East, Negroes were not allowed to go through the employment office. They were told that they could go to the South. And because the whites made such remarks as these at the railroad station in one of these Southeast Missouri counties: "You all take these damn N...rs but you won't take us"—this being in February, 1944. The Negroes think that is why they were not allowed to go North and East. And that, if this is how the white worker feels THEN HE NEEDS SOME UNION TRAINING and that until he gets that, he bears watching.

### THE HOUSING SITUATION

A few weeks ago, the office of Labor of WFA sent Col. Wilson Buie, an Army officer, to study this situation, at the request of Mr. Zimmerman, Democratic representative from

Missouri. He recommends that the FSA take back the homes and sell them to the highest bidders.

This is also very plain to the people of Southeast Missouri. These men listen to a long story from the cotton growers—pass along the road, see a few house tops, and pass on to Washington for a conference, knowing that they will not live in any of the houses, on these farms, anyway. They proceed to satisfy themselves with what they saw and heard. But if the farm laboring people had someone to represent them who knew their problems the story would be a different one altogether.

The writer of this article has two sons serving in the armed forces, leaving him alone with a wife and other children to support. Working four months in the year at \$2.00 per day, lets you know how we get along in Southeast Missouri. Some are less fortunate; many women with husbands in the Army, and four to five children to care for, will have it much harder than a man and wife—and that is the case on some of these FSA projects. It would really be like Hitler and the Hebrews, if we had to move.

We are asking the labor movement as a whole to protest against our being thrown out of our homes. We are willing to work and do work when there is work to do but it is said about us by the bosses that we project folk don't want to work unless they give us their farms. This is not true, as they know. But we understand their position on this matter.

Sometimes we feel that we are isolated from the trade unions. There have been a couple of some type of organizations in Southeast Missouri. But neither one did anything more than make promises. We hope soon that we can be allied with some of the trade unions that's up and doing things. We feel that if farm labor was organized it would be great strength to the whole trade union movement.

## Sell-Out of Tenants by False Leader

CLEVELAND—The fight of the Project Tenants League against rent raises, starting out as one of the most militant Negro movements in Cleveland history, has ended in a disgraceful sell-out. This became evident at a mass meeting in Friendship Baptist Church, when John Holly, president of the Future Outlook League, which took over the fight, announced the results of his agreement with the Metropolitan Housing Authority to a disgusted audience.

The LABOR ACTION group on the committee issued a leaflet informing tenants that they could not go along with Holly's sell-out. The leaflet

was well received by the tenants, who wondered why the representative of the LA group was not given a chance to present his views on the agreement. But Holly did not want him to elaborate on the reasons why he voted against the agreement at the negotiations with the management.

The character of the Future Outlook League will be dealt with in the next issue of LABOR ACTION. The FOL entered the fight because it feared the strength of the newly-organized Project Tenants League. At the last meeting, when seven hundred tenants packed the East End

Community Center and from four to five hundred more were turned away, the most militant members of the Tenants League executive committee succeeded in thwarting the efforts of Stalinists and lawyer-politicians to smash the rent strike. They failed, however, to defeat the efforts of the Future Outlook League.

Preparations were already being made for the posting of the picket lines May 1, but several members of the executive committee who had not attended previous committee meetings, asked that action be held up until John Holly and the Future Outlook League could be dealt with. (Continued on page 3)

## Union Comes Out Strong In Montgomery Ward Election

As the United Retail, Wholesale & Department Store Employees Union, CIO, claimed right along, it is still the collective bargaining agent for the Montgomery Ward & Co. employees. The NLRB election held May 9, under orders of the WLB—yielding to the union-busting tactics of the company—gave the CIO union an overwhelming majority.

The union victory was easily by three to two. In the larger plant the vote was 2,340 to 1,565; in the smaller plant, 100 to 28. Of the 4,894 workers eligible to participate in the election, 4,326, or 88 per cent, voted. The easy majority held by the union makes it unnecessary to rule on the 273 challenged ballots, as any result would still leave the election in favor of the union.

In his press conference on returning from vacation, President Roosevelt made it appear that the whole Montgomery Ward & Co. scandal was simply a case of "seeing things under the bed." Certainly the workers who were fired by Avery for union membership and activity will not agree with the President—for to them Avery's union-busting tactics could have meant no bed at all to sleep in.

Nor is Avery's statement upon the union victory a case of "seeing things under the bed." He still avers his opposition to including a maintenance of membership clause in a union contract, and it is more than apparent that that leopard has not changed his spots.

Another thing that must remain in the mind of every worker is that Avery's defiance of the law and his violent union-busting tactics have been a feeler put out by big business as a whole to see just how far it can go.

It was the excellent strike at Montgomery Ward & Co., supported by all labor, that brought the Avery mess into the open. It will be the rescinding of the no-strike pledge, so that labor can assert its power, that can halt the anti-union drive of big business.

Workers should never forget that failing to resist the likes of S. L. AVERY eventually spells S-L-A-V-E-R-Y!

(Continued on page 3)



## NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE LABOR FRONT

## Cramp Progressives Elected

PHILADELPHIA—In an election contest that brought over fifty per cent of the membership to the polls, members of Local 42, CIO Shipbuilders Union, elected the "New Broom" slate of progressive unionists, with the exception of their candidate for executive secretary.

Al Myers, known to the men as a consistent advocate of progressive policies in the local, was elected president in a four-cornered fight. Myers has a long record of honorable service in the labor movement, particularly in the textile industry. He participated in many of the bloodiest struggles of textile workers, including the famous Gastonia strike. The vote for president was as follows:

Myers	2,301
Craven	1,740
McGee	1,357
Schaffer	162

## CP BEHIND CRAVEN

Craven ran with the support of the Communist Party group in the yard, though he himself has had no previous ties with them. They supported him on the basis that he was the most conservative candidate in the field. His reputation was based on his ability to "speak reasonably to management." However, his program showed all the earmarks of being prepared by the Communist Party-line supporters. It called for a purge of the reactionary senators and a number of other current Daily Worker campaigns, just short of support of the Teheran conference. It is reported that a number of CP supporters refused to back Craven and gave active support to the candidacy of Myers.

In the race for executive secretary, Herbert Moyer, the incumbent, defeated Howard Bailey, candidate of the "New Broom" slate. The vote was as follows:

Moyer	2,697
Bailey	2,428

Moyer received the endorsement of both the Craven and McGee tickets.

Though viewed as a progressive member of the General Executive Board and in opposition to the conservative stand of John Green, national president of the union, Moyer was not viewed as a consistent supporter of progressive policies in the local by the "New Broom" adherents. The close margin of his victory over Bailey shows that this view is held very widely among the workers in the yard.

William Schaffer, incumbent president, received his crushing defeat while running independent of any organized group support. Many of the leading progressives regretted very much to see Schaffer end up in this isolated position after his courageous stand on behalf of real unionism during several crises of the local, above all during two local walkouts. It is his expressed wish that he will again find his place in the ranks of the progressive bloc.

## John Green Bows to FDR on Wage Policy for CIO Shop Union

CAMDEN—John Green, national president of the CIO Shipbuilders Union, secured adoption of a new wage policy for the union which establishes a new low in bowing to the desires of Roosevelt.

Until the new policy was adopted, Green—like most other national labor officials—contented himself with asking for only a nine per cent raise in spite of the cost of living having gone up forty-two per cent. Then, when the War Labor Board ruled against the union, he reaffirmed the no-strike pledge. The new policy will spare Green all this trouble. It calls for an extension of the present contracts for the duration and one year after!

The wage policy was adopted at a recent conference of the Atlantic

## A FIGHTING LOCAL

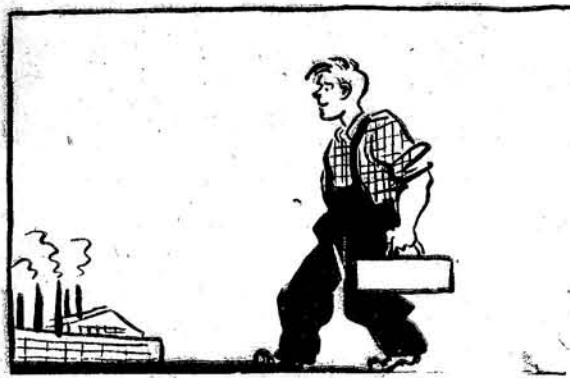
The exceptionally large vote cast in the election—some 6,000 out of a little over 11,000 eligible to vote—was conclusive proof of the high state of union organization and support among the men in the yard. It served as a warning to the company that, regardless of the outcome of the election, management would be faced with the solid and closed ranks of a fighting local that is determined to make Cramp's known from coast to coast as the best union yard of them all.

The other progressive candidates elected were: Charles McFaul, vice-president; Joseph Whitt, recording secretary; Len Young, treasurer; John Wagner, trustee.

In addition to the five posts filled by the election, two trustees remained as holdovers. These seven officials constitute the official board of the local.

Coast locals held here. The discontent of the delegates with the policy was manifested in their refusal to accept the statement when presented for a vote, and by adjourning for a session on the following morning. However, the delegates were without leadership from the floor and had no alternative program to present for adoption. As a result the reconvened session adopted the policy.

Green proposed that the locals approach their respective companies and request that they agree to the extension of the present contracts with the inclusion of some subsidiary demands to bring all sub-normal contracts up to the average. A further analysis of the provisions of the policy statement will appear in a subsequent article in LABOR ACTION.



## Gates Meetings A Success

DETROIT—Speaking at a dinner in celebration of the traditional workers' holiday of May Day, Albert Gates, editor of LABOR ACTION, reviewed the conditions of the labor and socialist movement throughout the world and found the situation favorable for an upsurge in the power and organization of the workers' movement in all countries.

Pointing to the growing disillusionment of the masses of Europe, Asia, Africa and America with the imperialist war, Gates held that only the program of the Workers Party can meet the needs of the people ground down by the war, and that this program would serve as a beacon light which would attract ever greater numbers to the ranks of the Workers Party. He called upon all workers in the United States who are conscious of the need for a socialist society of plenty for all, to join the Workers Party and help in the work of building a new workers' government.

The dinner, which was sponsored by the Detroit branch of the Workers Party, also featured a talk by Martin Harvey, Detroit organizer, who reviewed the past activities and prospects for future growth of the party in Detroit. He stated that the growth of the organization in the recent past paralleled the increasing militancy and restlessness of the rank and file in the labor movement, and that future developments in the labor movement would increase the strength and influence of the Workers Party.

DETROIT, Apr. 28—Speaking to workers from the chief auto shops in this city last night, Albert Gates, editor of LABOR ACTION, called for the withdrawal of the no-strike pledge as the first essential step in building a progressive labor movement and re-establishing the strength and militancy of the American labor movement.

Tracing the development of labor in the United States, Gates pointed to the fierce and militant struggles of American workers against the powerful combination of big business, government and the press to demonstrate that the working men of this country were the most militant in the world. Today, however, he said, that militancy was thwarted by the policies of the leaders of the two great federations of labor—the CIO and the AFL. These leaders agreed at face value Roosevelt's "equality of sacrifice" program, which is nothing more than the sacrifice of labor on the altar of greater profits for the big corporations, and tie labor to Roosevelt's Democratic Party.

To raise the wages and living standards of the workers it is necessary for labor to regain the only weapon it has that the bosses will acknowledge, THE RIGHT TO STRIKE. It must expose the fake "impartiality" of the War Labor Board by getting its representatives off that board. And it must free itself from the parties of big business—Republican and Democratic—and organize its own Labor Party.

Gates concluded his talk by demonstrating the need for progressives in the UAW and the CIO to begin to organize today, in their local unions and throughout the international, on the basis of this program so that at the next convention of the UAW-CIO delegates will be elected who will go all-out for withdrawal of the no-strike pledge and for a militant campaign against the union-busting offensive.

In the discussion that followed, members of a number of UAW locals said that progressive groups pledged to repeal of the no-strike pledge were being formed in their locals. Members of Ford locals especially, working for the most reactionary and anti-union company in the auto industry, rose to oppose the no-strike pledge and calls for its elimination by the next international convention.

It was also pointed out in the discussion that it is essential for labor to back its power on the economic field by organizing independently on the political field and that a start in this direction had been made in Michigan with the founding of the Michigan Commonwealth Federation.

BUFFALO—At a meeting recently held here, at which Albert Gates, editor of LABOR ACTION and assistant national secretary of the Workers Party, spoke on the subject, "The Struggle for Progressive Unionism," he placed at the top of the list the need for rescinding the no-strike pledge. He also stressed the need to fight for the maintenance of the union steward system, grievance committees and collective bargaining.

He pointed out that a progressive union program means extending organization drives to take in the millions of unorganized workers; demanding higher wages, general improvement of the living standards of the workers, and control of the cost of living.

After his speech, in which the speaker pointed up the importance of matching a progressive economic program with a progressive political program via the organization of an independent Labor Party, Gates met with a group of progressive unionists. These unionists asked his advice on problems of the trade union movement today.

An interesting discussion was held by them, and they agreed in general with the kind of program the speaker had outlined.

ALLEDALE, Mich.—Albert Gates, editor of LABOR ACTION, continuing his tour, spoke at a local meeting of the Farmers Union in this area on May 4.

Pointing to the failure of the present system to end the evils of mass unemployment, low farm income, insecurity for worker and farmer, and imperialism war, he held that the only hope for the people lay in a new socialist society. The first step toward this goal, he told the audience of small farmers, must be a break with the Republican and Democratic parties, and the formation of an independent Labor Party supported by farmers and workers.

The speech, which was delivered in the heart of a hidebound Republican district represented in Congress by Jonkman, Engel and Clare Hoffman, was well received and was followed by an interesting discussion period.

## Two Ford Strikes and Their Lessons

## AT WINDSOR PLANT

WINDSOR, Ont.—Local 200, United Automobile Workers, brought a 9-day strike against the Ford Motor Co. of Canada, Ltd., to a victorious conclusion, demonstrating to all auto workers and the whole labor movement how to beat back the union-busting drive of the big corporations.

The trouble in the Windsor Ford plants began with an ultimatum issued by the company announcing a change in the grievance procedure. This change was to the effect that no worker could take up a grievance with his steward or committeeman until he had his foreman's permission, and also that no steward could handle a grievance until he had his foreman's permission to leave his machine.

This company provocation, in line with Ford's policy of smashing unions by striking at their heart—the steward and grievance system—was immediately appealed by the union to the Dominion War Labor Board. The board ruled that the interpretation of the grievance procedure which had been previously agreed upon by the company and the union was to remain in effect until final settlement of grievance procedure had been made. The company ignored this ruling and laid off four stewards for not following the new "interpretation" of the grievance procedure in carrying out their duties.

The union answered this threat by calling a work holiday on April 20. A half hour after the workers left the Ford plants the company announced that it had ended its contract with the union on the ground that the union had "violated" the contract.

## STRIKERS DEMANDS

At a mass meeting attended by 10,000 of the nearly 15,000 Ford workers, the membership of Local 200 voted to remain on strike until the following demands were granted:

1. Reinstatement of the contract. No contract, no work.
2. Reinstatement of the four stewards.
3. No further disciplinary action by the company until the Dominion War Labor Board passed on the question of the grievance procedure.

Roy England, president of Local 200, stated that the company's termination of the contract had been "calculated and planned" and had "been under way for at least the past two months."

"The company's arbitrary restrictions placed upon the operation of the collective bargaining machinery," England noted, "made the agreement virtually inoperative. Company action in formally terminating the contract merely put the signature to a decision that was made long ago."

## STRIKERS GOT SUPPORT

The strikers had public support solidly behind them. Mayor Reaume of Windsor supported the strikers and appeared on the picket line. George Bennett and William Riggs, members of Parliament and representatives of the Cooperative Com-

monwealth Federation, Canadian equivalent to a Labor Party, spoke at the strikers' meeting and gave them their full support. They advocated government ownership of the Ford Motor Co. now and in the future. This proposal was heartily backed by the men, who pointed out in addition that it was the workers who created all of Ford's wealth and it was they who are entitled to control it.

Messages of support were received from many unions in Canada and the United States. An outstanding example of solidarity with the Ford strikers was the message from the workers at Goffredson's, a "feeder" plant for Ford. These men were laid off by the company in an attempt to incite opinion against the Ford workers but instead they voted full support to their Ford brothers!

## STRIKERS WIN

After nine days of negotiation, the DWLB handed down the only decision it could make in the face of such united action. It recommended reinstatement of the contract, reinstatement of the four stewards and certification of Local 200 as bargaining agency in the Ford plants. An early decision was promised on grievance procedure and representation. Ford had no alternative but to accept this decision.

Of special interest is the attitude of R. J. Thomas, international president of the UAW-CIO, throughout this dispute. Against the united stand of the local union he could not carry out his anti-strike program as at the Ford Rouge plant only a short time ago. He merely announced that the company had provoked the strike and quietly kept out of the dispute without giving unequivocal support to Local 200. The committeemen and rank and file union members at the Rouge plant who were fired as a result of a walkout in the aircraft unit will wonder why Thomas didn't remain quiet in their case. Then, with the backing of local leaders Twyman and Grant, he refused to give their union support. The men at Local 200, who united to fight Ford, can supply the answer.

The lesson of the Windsor strike couldn't be clearer. There is only one way to beat back the corporations and build the unions—REMOVE THE NO-STRIKE PLEDGE.

At a mass meeting held on May 2, the Ford employees at Windsor, Ont., again voted to strike. The meeting decided to put picket lines at the gates and men were sent from the meeting to take up their posts and meet workers reporting for the late shifts that night.

The president of Local 200, UAW-CIO, had appealed to the National Wartime Labor Relations Board to clarify the new grievance procedure arrangements, "so that any possible misunderstanding may be avoided." But, as stated by Mr. England, the local's president, the board's proposals were "contrary to and certainly not part of the arrangement concluded with the union."

Having learned the lesson that they can avoid a run-around only by striking, the men unanimously voted to use the same weapon to get satisfaction—or some of the demands won by their previous strike would be lost.

## AT HIGHLAND PLANT

DETROIT—Ford Highland Park Local 400, UAW-CIO, in its handling of a series of short work stoppages in the Ford Highland Park plant, has demonstrated to all auto workers and the whole labor movement how NOT to beat back the union-busting drive of the big corporations.

## LONG LIST OF GRIEVANCES

The issues in the disputes at the Highland Park plant are the same as in Ford plants all over the country—the steward system and grievance procedure. In a carefully planned campaign to smash the local, the Ford company has carried out a program of intimidation, spying and provocation to prevent committeemen from representing union members in the settlement of grievances. The company has fired committeemen for handling grievances without the permission of their foremen, for starting strikes when it was proved that the committeemen were responsible for getting the men back to work, and the company has fired committeemen without giving any reason at all!

The plant has been flooded with stool-pigeons and spies for the company. The speed-up, which gave Ford the worst reputation in Detroit, is back in full swing. To cite only one example, in spite of a state law which requires a seat within twenty feet of any machines operated by women, there are no seats anywhere in the Ford plant. Women who attempt to sit on stock boxes for a few minutes while their machines are being set up are prevented from doing that by their foremen. Even the lavatories have no cots or chairs.

It is a general opinion at Highland Park that conditions in the plant are back where they were before the organization of the union.

In addition, in the Pratt-Whitney department, there is a long-standing dispute on wage rates which is still being reviewed by the War Labor Board. There is as much as fifteen cents per hour difference in wage rates on the same job because of the transfer of workers from the Rouge plant to Highland Park. Instead of paying the highest rate uniformly, the company maintains the differential between Rouge and Highland Park rates.

As a result of these conditions and deliberate company provocations, there have been fourteen work stoppages in a short period. The most recent of these took place in the Pratt-Whitney department on April 27, when the second shift walked out on several floors. It is typical of all the others.

The immediate cause of the walkout was the firing of a building chairman. The walkout was spontaneous and unorganized. After leaving the plant the men and women

gathered in the union hall to discuss what must be done. Instead they heard speeches from union officials.

## WEAK-KNEED OFFICIALS

Ford Director Leonard threatened that "after" investigation of this, I'll recommend that all persons responsible shall be deprived of the protection of the grievance machinery." Martin Jensen, international representative, complained that the company was putting on a squeeze play, that the company was responsible for the walkout, but could only recommend that the workers go back to work and use the grievance machinery, which everyone agrees has broken down.

President Hindmarsh, of Local 400, opposed the walkout because it weakened the position of the men and antagonized public opinion. He didn't bother to explain how the public could help being antagonized when the only statements issued by the officials of the union were bitter attacks on workers who dared to strike to gain their just demands.

The net result of the attitude of the leaders of the local and the international was to divide the union further. Building chairmen and committeemen, who are the backbone of the union, are not backed up by the union. Some refuse to run for these offices because they feel they cannot settle grievances. Others are afraid that merely being elected committeemen singles them out for disciplinary action by the company. The rank and file in the shop is thoroughly disgusted with the situation but has no leadership to show them the way out of the mess.

## ABOUT-FACE IS OVERDUE

Everyone realizes that conditions at Highland Park will continue to get worse until the local makes a complete about-face and answers the threats and bullying of Ford with a few threats of its own. The union must break away from the compromising position of Hindmarsh, Leonard and Thomas. It must state its position clearly and unmistakably—"until we are solidly united against, the Ford company we will only suffer further defeats." The local and the international must be rallied behind the campaign to repeal the no-strike pledge. Until the no-strike milestone is removed from the neck of labor, there is nothing for labor but further retreat.

The lesson of Highland Park couldn't be clearer. There is only one way to beat back the corporations and build the unions—REMOVE THE NO-STRIKE PLEDGE.

Have You Read the  
April Issue of The  
New International?

## Steel Companies Pay Out 1600% More Dividends—Can't "Afford" 17c Wage Increase

Of great importance to the whole labor movement is the status of the steel workers' demand for a wage increase of seventeen cents an hour. Whether the steel workers win or lose will tell the story of whether the "Little Steel" formula stays or goes. For the case of the steel workers is the test case.

The steel companies last week presented their briefs and arguments before the WLB panel. With long faces and gloomy voices the representatives of these barons of big business proclaimed the "poverty" of this giant American industry.

A wage increase will be an "economic disaster"—no less—proclaimed the spokesmen for "Big Steel."

Mr. Fairless, head of United States Steel, warned the panel that the industry would do its usual buck-passing stunt and "the public would have to foot the bill by paying increased prices for steel."

As to the union's demand for a guaranteed annual wage, Mr. Fairless wept and wrung his hands that such a "revolutionary change becomes fantastic unless the eventual insolvency of the steel industry is desired."

But before getting out your own handkerchief to weep into it, here are some figures about the steel monopolists presented by the United Steel Workers of America, CIO:

In the war years 1940-43, "Big Steel" paid out in common stock dividends SIXTEEN HUNDRED PER CENT MORE than was paid out in the 1936-39 period—\$140,000,000 OF WAR DIVIDENDS as against \$8,703,000 of PEACE DIVIDENDS.

The cash reserves of the industry have been increased by \$161,000,000 since the war.

The undistributed profits still in sock have mounted by ONE-THIRD OF A BILLION DOLLARS since the beginning of the war.

The total assets of the industry have risen by OVER ONE BILLION DOLLARS during the war.

Poor things! How can they afford to pay their workers a wage increase!

While the steel companies have been protesting their dire "poverty," the Monthly Labor Review of the United States Department of Labor has come out with a comparison of workers' expendable income in 1943 and 1941. The author of the article, N. Arnold Tolles, concludes that the burdens of war "HAVE BEEN BORNE BY NEARLY ALL FACTORY WORKERS, IN THE FORM OF A REDUCED SCALE OF LIVING OR OF HARDER WORK WITHOUT MATERIAL IMPROVEMENT IN CURRENT LIVING."

Mr. Tolles arrived at this conclusion, not on the basis of the CIO-AFL cost of living figures of a 43.5 per cent jump since 1941, BUT ON THE FALSELY LOW FIGURES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, SETTING THE RISE IN LIVING COSTS AT ONLY 23.4 PER CENT.

The job of breaking the "Little Steel" formula has to be done—and done quickly—to stop the losses labor is suffering while the capitalist class multiplies its wealth.

The case of the steel workers has been postponed to May 16th to allow for the convention of the USW-CIO new in progress. Labor's interests as a whole will be served by the victory of the steel workers. But victory will come, not by reliance upon the action of the WLB, which has already voiced its determination to continue the wage freeze.

Victory depends on the determination of the workers to rely on their own strength. This means they have to be ready to recall their representatives from the WLB and to insist on rescinding the no-strike pledge—that straight-jacket binding labor.

## Union Leaders Clamp Down On Houde Rank and File

BUFFALO—The War Labor Board has handed down a decision on wages affecting Houde workers. This decision was awaited patiently for many months with most union members feeling that justice will win out and that a substantial increase will be granted.

However, as the president of this local stated from the beginning at a union meeting, the directives handed down add up to a wage cut! And as International Representative Halifax says, it is contrary to the previous directives of this same WLB. In effect, the agreement reduces the minimum rates from \$1.05 to 95 cents an hour, affecting 1,500 workers, who, under these orders, could be laid off and re-hired at this lower rate of pay.

Then it was suggested at the local meeting that within the limits of the wage stabilization program—or the Little Steel formula—there was room for raises under the heading of "iniquities and inequalities" among different plants.

The motion to sever all but contractual relations with the company was defeated by a very close vote, and in its place a motion was passed to condemn the regional WLB—and its two labor members who concurred in the sell-out decision—for its infamous recommendations.

## THE REAL SITUATION

There was much discussion on the floor and much heated debate but out of it all there emerges a clear picture of the situation:

1. The REAL wages have steadily decreased, due to rising living costs, bond purchases, greater taxes, scarcity of commodities, black markets, layoffs, etc.
2. The WLB is determined not to give any substantial wage increases (skilled technicians will be granted wage increases because the company feels it can't do without them).
3. Our international union leaders will not fight for our demands with the only bargaining weapon the working man has—the right to strike.

We must stop dealing with the WLB. We must get our members off it! Call for a strike vote! Let the international know we want the no-strike pledge rescinded.



# Labor Action Gets Report From Naples

We print below another first-hand report of the situation in Italy. It was written by a working class militant who is on the spot and in a position to get at the truth and tell it to the readers of LABOR ACTION without mincing words. The reader is advised, however, to note the date on which this report was written—January 30, 1944. Since then the situation has changed, as our readers know, by the formation of the new government of Badoglio, Sforza, the Communists and the Social Democrats.

Naples, Jan. 30, 1944.

As can be naturally expected, all political trends are very active right now. Italy is living in the aftermath of a temporarily frustrated revolution—the temporary character of the setback is all too evident, even to my untutored eyes. In my opinion, the whole thing will boil up again after the fall of Rome. At present, all the political parties have their headquarters in the South, principally in Naples, with Bari as apparently the scene of greatest activity, for reasons I will refer to later.

Naples is far removed from the industrial centers, which are all situated in territory still in German hands. About what is going on in Milan, Turin, Genoa, etc., I cannot tell you much. Judging by what I read in the English press, you should know much more about this than I do. Underground liaison between the North and South, if it does exist at all, can only be of the slightest. The little news that does trickle through seems to show that the industrial

workers of Milan and Turin have not entirely forgotten their militant traditions, in spite of twenty years of brutal fascist suppression.

I must confine myself, therefore, mainly to the Southern scene. You must constantly bear in mind the backward nature of the region. It is almost completely lacking in industrialization, and it is on this background that you must build your estimation of future developments in Italy when the North comes more fully into the struggle for liberation. The main political parties are the Liberal Party (Count Sforza), the Christian Democrats, the Socialist Party and the Communist Party (Stalinists, as you call them). These parties are united in the Committee for National Liberation, a sort of Popular Front, People's Convention. Their main plank is their common opposition to the King and Crown Prince. Sforza is anxious to save the monarchy and wants to see the King's grandson on the throne, with Badoglio as tutor and regent.

### THE CP AND THE MASSES

The CP is by no means the happy, united band of brothers they appear to be in other countries. The leader, Reale, has been a prisoner of Mussolini's for years but this has not diminished his enthusiasm for a Popular Front—an enthusiasm, however, which is not entirely shared by the CP rank and file.

You must remember that for over twenty years the workers of this country had no political life at all. Quite a large percentage, the all-important youth, grew up under fascism. What memories the older gen-

eration has of the CP are of the party of Lenin and Trotsky, the victors of October, the precursors of the World Revolution. Of the struggle between Stalin and Trotsky, of the growth of the International Left Opposition and the birth of the Fourth International, these Italian workers have heard very little, and that in a distorted form.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the more advanced workers should turn to the CP in the present revolutionary crisis, but the dynamics of the current situation compels the CP to play with revolutionary phrases. They have had to resurrect many of the old Bolshevik slogans and publish them in their press. The result of this is that the eyes of many of the CP members, including an important section of the present Central Committee have been opened to the glaring contradictions between Leninism and current CP practice.

You see, it is not a gradual process of a revolutionary party being transformed into a social-chauvinistic party, into a strike-breaking agency, as has been the case in England and elsewhere. Here the CP has not had the chance to practice betrayal, as it had in Britain and Spain.

### REVOLUTIONARY SITUATION

Here the party had to be reformed in a revolutionary situation which inevitably forces the party more to the left than it desires to be. Even the

leaders feel uncomfortable in the role which is being forced on them. When they entered Musso's jails they were accepted leaders of the Italian revolution. Now, instead of acting as midwives for the proletarian dictatorship, they are compelled by outside influences to act as its undertakers. Unfortunately for them, the patient is far from dead. The next flare-up of the Italian social volcano will split the CP from top to bottom, and from the resulting confusion the real leadership of the Italian revolution will undoubtedly emerge. While the workers of the North actively resume the struggle and find the party they are turning to is not the party of the early days of the fight against fascism or in the underground movement, they will know against whom to vent their fury. The days of Stalinism in Italy are numbered and its fall may bring the whole rotten edifice tumbling down.

The Socialist Party is living up to its reformist reputation, but here again the march of events is leading its work. Because of the revolutionary nature of the current period, the SP too is compelled to clad itself in revolutionary garments, but it is casting longing eyes at the Cabinet seats which Badoglio is dangling before them from time to time. Both the SP and the CP are today anxiously sought by ambitious politicians, anxious to create careers for themselves in the coming Italian Weimar.

### POLITICAL GUIDANCE NEEDED

Most hopeful is the rebirth of trade unionism, although the moves are sponsored by the CP, SP and liberals as well as the Catholics, who form their own unions whenever they can. This is a genuine and spontaneous movement of the industrial workers, and it is going at a tremendous pace. But the Italian workers have learned by hard and bitter experience the futility of industrial action without simultaneous political action, and they are groping around for guidance in this sphere.

The Provisional Committee for the Fourth International's manifesto has created a good impression. For a time it was quite prominently displayed in many bookstalls but it has been withdrawn. This seems to be the one tendency which is unpopular with the authorities but perhaps for this very reason it is gaining influence with the workers. The Trotskyists seem to talk the language of the communists of the pre-fascist era and are the only section of the labor movement to recognize the possibilities of the present situation. A growing section of the CP membership is becoming aware of another tendency within the labor movement. If they did not come across the manifesto, their attention is constantly being called to its existence by the violent and frequent abuse which it gets in the CP press.

(To be concluded next week.)

## Support Italian Workers!



## Good Neighbors

American business firms may very possibly find themselves next door neighbors to Nazis in an international fair to be held in Franco's fascist Spain soon. But the State Department evidently is not embarrassed or flustered about the prospect.

It has received and accepted an invitation to become one of the exhibitors at a fair to be held in Barcelona, Spain, on June 10. Forty American firms will be represented and the American government will have an official exhibit, one section of which will be devoted to a display of books dealing with the American way of life. At the request of the State Department, the OWI is preparing such an exhibit. It has asked American publishers to send in books that "project American life, thought and achievement."

In a letter to Random House, book publishers, the OWI, in asking for books, writes: "The United States will, of course, be in competition with the Axis, and naturally we must make the best possible showing before the Spaniards."

Being the polite and diplomatic agent for United States foreign relations that it is, the State Department will naturally have to see to it that nothing offensive to Franco is included in that display on "Americanism." The State Department knows just as well as you or I do that Franco led the fascist forces against the republicans and that he won with the aid of Mussolini and Hitler. So it is a foregone conclusion that it will carefully sift the material that is gotten ready for exhibition to prevent any "impolite" anti-fascist ideas from seeping into Spain by way of the American fair booth.

American acquiescence in the plan to advertise Franco's Spain and to be advertised there, is but another example of the double dealing, sham and hypocrisy that has marked the record of American diplomacy in Spain. Spain is another place where the "war to wipe fascism off the earth" softens up. The American minister to fascist Spain, Carlton J. H. Hayes, promises Spain that the United States "will continue to extend any help we can to Spain, which itself is doing so much with such obvious success to develop a peace economy that can and will carry this country safely into a future period of world peace." Hayes has also described the fascist regime of Franco as "a vigorous economic renaissance under wise direction."

In the arena of world politics, American diplomacy reveals its true nature. While workers are asked to sacrifice their most important labor gains and even the money needed to buy elementary necessities of life, American businessmen are given a pat on the shoulder and encouraged to go ahead with "business as usual."—J. K.

## Billions For Business

(Continued from page 1)

have to commit themselves. It should be noted well that among these absentees were many senators who the labor and liberal leaders were hoping would vote for the Kilgore amendment.

The Murray-George bill, which not only provides for outright cash payments to war contractors; which not only permits minor government officials to make final settlements for such cash payments; which has no adequate provisions against fraud; which is full of jokers and loopholes through which scandalous amounts of public money can flow into the pockets of the rich—has a history worth mentioning.

### THE PRESSURE OF BIG BUSINESS

The bill came out of Senator George's Post-War Committee, as the pet of big business. Counsel of the George committee is Scott Russell. Until recently Scott Russell, who had much to do with the Murray-George bill, was president of the Bibb Mfg. Co., a Southern textile firm. Russell's company was one of those that appeared before Congress last year with loud protests against the renegotiation law which attempts to put a mild check on war profits.

In contrast to the speed—ONLY ONE DAY—with which the Senate passed this big business-sponsored bill and killed the Kilgore amendment, is the Wagner-Murray-Dingell bill for social insurance, including unemployment benefits for the post-war period. This bill has been gathering dust on a congressional shelf for over a year.

The leaders of the CIO, AFL and railway labor stated in their letter to Congress: "You will agree that every contract terminated means the discharge of workers. Certainly, provision for these workers, whose resources must be conserved and fully utilized, is at least as important as settling the financial claims of war contractors."

Ah, but that's just the point! The capitalist government does NOT agree. To its financial claims of contractors are much more important than the claims to the needs of life of the millions of workers. To it, it is much more important to add another pile of dough to the war profits, which will amount to at least ten billion dollars this year; to the cash reserves of big business already estimated at \$58,000,000,000; to the value of government plants that big business has its eye on to the tune of \$20,000,000,000; to the surplus war materials, amounting to around \$75,000,000,000, to which big business wants to be heir.

The Senate was in a great hurry to add many more billions to this fabulous mass of wealth in the hands of big business. It had no time to consider the claims of labor for unemployment payments and other life-and-death needs.

### WORKERS MUST LEARN FROM THIS

It is from such actions as that of the Senate that the working people of the country must learn.

The blatant flaunting of labor's claims by the Senate should make it clear to every working man and woman that the working people cannot rely on the capitalist politicians to take care of their interests. The exploited of the land must rely upon themselves to get rid of exploitation, unemployment and misery.

The vital problems of the post-war period stare the working people in the face and put fear in their hearts. The capitalist government, however, is concerned with the "problems" of the ruling class. Labor must—without loss of time—set itself the goal of a workers' government. Only a workers' government can solve labor's problems.

The first step is the organization of an independent Labor Party to unite and use the political strength of the working people as a class. Thus they will be able to combat their class enemies and march determinedly toward the goal of a workers' government.

## Cleveland Tenants Sold Out

(Continued from page 1)

look League could be called into the dispute. In violation of their pledge to uphold the program adopted by the Tenants League, they also advised against pickets and non-payment of rent.

Because the majority of the committee members are also members of the FOL, and because the FOL does have a reputation of militancy among the Negroes as a whole, they gained the support of the meeting. However, the great majority of those present demanded that rent strike plans be carried out immediately.

After the general meeting, the committee met with Holly. His position was apparent from the beginning. He would assume leadership of the protest, channel it along peaceful, "legal" lines, obtain a few pre-arranged concessions from management and call the fight finished. If the tenants refused to accept the terms, he would be through with them. "Frankly we wouldn't tell a thousand people to go to hell," he told one committee member, "but that is what it would amount to. We'd have nothing more to do with them."

Holly's first decree that there would be no pickets was only partially obeyed. Determined tenants, mostly women, appeared on the morning of May 1 at the rent offices to persuade other tenants not to pay rent. Without placards, these pickets remained for the whole week and turned away about ninety per cent of those who came to pay rent. When Holly saw the determination of the pickets, he gave tacit permission for continuance of picketing.

In his agreement with the PTL executive committee, Holly demanded that he be the chief spokesman in negotiations. Two PTL committee members were to be on the negotiating committee with Holly and the whole executive committee was to sit in.

### NEGOTIATE WITH MANAGEMENT

The committee met the Metropolitan Housing officials on May 4. They were to present a four-point program, a tremendous compromise from the original fighting program offered by the LABOR ACTION group and adopted by the tenants: 1. Twenty per cent withholding tax was to be exempted from income on which rent is levied. 2. The maximum rent to be

charged would be 20 per cent of the tenant's income. 3. Income brackets would be shortened and information on deductions published. 4. Incomes would be reviewed monthly for all of the tenants.

Holly had said at a previous committee meeting that the acceptance of any one of these points would be a victory. The minority protested that only the acceptance of all four points could in any sense constitute a victory.

Holly started off negotiations by stating that "misunderstanding" was the cause of the disputes. The falsity of this statement was obvious even to those members of the committee who had gone along with Holly. The dispute started because the rents were raised. Without these exorbitant raises, all the "misunderstanding" in the world couldn't have caused a protest. The FOL president then, to the amazement of everyone, told the management that if "we don't get the first point, we'll take the second, and if we don't get the second, we'll take the third, and if we don't get the third, we'll take the fourth."

### THE SELL-OUT

The sell-out had begun—or, more accurately, it had come out in the open. It continued with the discussion on the first point. The housing officials claimed that the first point could not legally be granted. Holly answered: "If you will seriously consider the twenty per cent deduction before the next review, we will go along." That is all the management will ever do, if it does even that much, and Holly knows it. After that point had been dismissed in record time, the second point was taken up—the twenty per cent ceiling on rents. This was rejected by management with the statement: "We don't intend to give up OPA ceilings."

The ONE and ONLY concession was granted on point three—shortening the brackets so that rent raises would be less severe at any one time. This, however, affects very few people, as witnessed by the fact that management readily agreed to it. The management also agreed to publish information on minor deductions gained by last year's committee, which it had promised to do before the strike. HOLLY CONSIDERS THIS A MAJOR VICTORY!

The fourth point—review of incomes on a month-to-month basis—

## WORLD EVENTS

By Europacus

### Stalin Gathers His Sheep to the Fold

As the day of the invasion of Western Europe draws nearer Stalin is speeding up the organization of his cohorts. All within the last two weeks we have witnessed the formation of a new Italian government with Stalinists and fellow travelers in a very prominent position—thus sealing the Monarchist-Stalinist-Anglo-Saxon coalition to prevent revolution. We have witnessed a Polish-American Catholic priest visiting Stalin, with the "Reverend Father" and the "Father of the People" in complete agreement as to the urgent necessity of suppressing Polish inde-

pendence and safeguarding the interests of Catholicism.

We have seen a Free Germany Committee being organized in New York by Stalinists and their fellow travelers (with a large assortment of innocents throwing in their lot)—the whole being headed by one Paul Tillich, Protestant professor of theology. (Stalin indeed seems to have "got religion." Some people seem to be taken aback by this recent development but there is hardly any reason for astonishment. "Religion is opium for the people," and that's precisely why Stalin is now sponsoring this sort of religious revival.)

### Stalin's Aim: Counter-Revolution

Anne O'Hare McCormick recently writing in the New York Times, discovered that Stalin is strengthening all conservative forces in Europe. We did not wait for Miss McCormick to make this discovery, but it is always nice to see that the more intelligent observers of European affairs at last—if somewhat belatedly—realize what we have been saying.

Indeed Stalin is now a main pillar of the conservative—or, to say it less politely, the counter-revolutionary forces in Europe. He is now backing with all his might all those reactionaries, monarchists, ex-fascists, who are willing to play in game in order to set up a barrier against any revolutionary movement in Europe.

This, his main aim, explains all the apparently contradictory moves of his stooges all over the world. This also explains why Etienne Fajon, one of his representatives in the de Gaulle pseudo-Parliament, is suddenly weeping crocodile tears at the ouster of General Giraud—the same Giraud

who only a few months ago was denounced as a reactionary tool of United States and British interests by this very same Fajon. This explains why Ferdinand Grenier, another Stalinist representative in Algiers, recently made a speech in which he said textually: "We should now stop the purge of the Army and Navy (i.e., THE PURGE OF FASCIST OFFICERS). The past is dead and what matters now is the conduct of officers and men today."

Indeed what matters for the Stalinist gang now is only the conduct of today. If any of those fascist scoundrels who infested the French army, will now come out with a pro-Russian statement he will immediately be adopted as an extremely worthy gentleman. Remember the indignation of all the fellow traveling crowd over the Darlan deal? But then, of course, it was United States imperialism, and not Russian imperialism, which did the deal—and that's altogether different!

### Citrine at the ILO Conference

While the Stalin-Vatican-monarchist-neo-fascist mutual insurance company against the hazards of a threatening revolution is thus making rapid headway, let nobody think that the reformist labor leaders are a whole lot better than their brethren of a Stalinist stripe. Sir Walter Citrine, head of the British trade unions and British delegate to the International Labor Conference in Philadelphia, has just given a fitting illustration of this basic truth.

Sir Walter developed a fit of rage in Philadelphia, the like of which he hasn't shown for a good many years. Was it because the right to strike is threatened in Great Britain? Oh, no; you haven't got the point at all! The British Parliament has just voted extremely drastic measures against those who "incite to strikes"—but Sir Walter is quite in agreement with these measures. No, Sir Walter got upset, Sir Walter was shocked, because a delegate in Philadelphia dared to say that the German workers are the first victims of Hitler and that they should be helped after the war to rebuild their smashed unions.

That was really too much for the Honorable Sir, don't you know? He shouted that "the rank and file of the German people must be punished along with their leaders... There must be some sort of punishment of the millions of German workers who by their tacit approval, at least, of the war, have made its conduct possible."

Three hundred thousand German workers are in concentration camps—if they have not been killed. Other hundreds of thousands have passed

through Nazi prisons. The German working class daily feels on its back the whip of its Nazi overseers. But Citrine, the same Citrine who knavishly supported the British government, first during the time of Chamberlain's appeasement of Hitler, and now in Churchill's war policy, this same Citrine dares to raise his voice against the German working class.

If there is anybody within the labor movement responsible for this war, it is those social-patriotic labor leaders of Citrine's type who are standing behind their respective imperialist governments approving every move and bowing their backs to every whim of Churchill, FDR and Stalin.

Citrine says that without the submission of the German workers to Hitler, the world would not have been possible. But there was nobody in Philadelphia to remind this scoundrel that the submission to the cause of British imperialism in India and in Europe can be counted as one of the most potent contributory reasons making possible the waging of this world war.

While the German people suffered under Hitler's yoke, Sir Walter was dining in Buckingham Palace; while concentration camps were opened every day because there was no longer enough space in German prisons, Citrine was knighted by the Court of St. James; and while last month—according to reliable figures compiled in London—two hundred Germans were put to death by the Gestapo because they "undermined home morale," Sir Walter, after enjoying a good meal, proclaimed that the German people should be punished.

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# Editorials

## Labor's Great Political Strength

Recent primary elections in the Democratic Party in the South have been won by so-called liberals and New Dealers, in many cases quite contrary to expectation. Not only did Senators Hill and Pepper win the renominations in Alabama and Florida respectively, against the anti-Roosevelt forces, but Representative Joe Starnes, key man on the reactionary Dies Committee, failed to be renominated as representative from Gadsden, Ala.

The hopes of liberals and New Dealers have now risen so high that they expect that the one and only Dies himself may be defeated in the Texas primary in July. There is furthermore the possibility of licking, in the Mississippi primaries, that unique specimen of a man going by the name of John Rankin.

What has turned the tide in the South? The population in the South has changed during the war. There has been an influx of industrial workers to the centers of war production. One county of Alabama alone has 75,000 new residents; in San Antonio, Texas, there have settled 96,000 newcomers. In South Carolina, if all the construction workers voted, they would alone cast more votes than the total 1942 vote; and if only one-quarter of the textile workers in that state voted, they would cast more votes than the total 1942 vote. In Mississippi, the logging and construction workers together could top the entire 1942 vote. And in the Texas district from which Martin Dies comes, if all the votes of the oil workers went out against him, he would be a political dead duck.

The CIO Political Action Committee has been at work to get out this labor vote in the South—and has met with a great measure of success; so much so that many commentators chalk up the defeat of Joe Starnes as the first victory of the CIO Political Action Committee, and state that if Dies and Rankin are defeated, it will be the work of the PAC mustering the labor vote. In a word, THE RECENT PRIMARY ELECTIONS IN THE SOUTH ATTEST THE POLITICAL POWER OF THE WORKING CLASS.

However, to note this fact is far from sufficient. What is so disappointing is that in 1944 the workers are still using their power against themselves! What is so unforgivable is that their leaders—in this case the CIO Political Action Committee—uses labor's political power to play capitalist politics.

The argument is made by those who like to look for excuses for labor's mistakes, that the congressman who replaces Starnes can only be better than Starnes; and that the same can be said in the cases of Dies, Rankin and the other rabid anti-labor, anti-Negro reactionaries. This is the weak old argument that, as between two evils, labor is choosing the lesser.

But this argument holds no water because the field is not limited to two evils—namely, to one or another capitalist politician. There is a third alternative—THERE CAN BE OUT-AND-OUT LABOR CANDIDATES RUNNING ON THE PLATFORM AND TICKET OF AN INDEPENDENT LABOR PARTY.

This third alternative must be chosen by labor! The lesser evil embodied in a "good" capitalist politician is a shifting quantity, determined always by the interests of the capitalist class itself. And what can be better proof of this than the shifting policies of that great "friend of labor," President Roosevelt himself, whose anti-labor turn is

now so complete that he even denies facts about the cost of living in order to maintain the wage freeze!

The primary elections in the South are important in that they show how labor's vote can change a political trend. But they also show that labor's political strength is still foolishly pulling the political chariot of the capitalist class. It is high time for an independent class party of labor.

## The Negro In Politics

Reports received thus far indicate that the Negro vote in the Southern primaries has not increased appreciably, in spite of the Supreme Court decision in the case of the Texas primaries.

Negro and labor leaders, however, are determined to enforce the decision, and it is expected that the Texas primaries in July will see a turnout of Negroes voting for the first time.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People announces its plan to prosecute in the courts every infringement of the constitutional rights of the Negro. As to the attempt in South Carolina to nullify the Supreme Court decision by abolishing the primary altogether, the NAACP believes that more Negroes will be able to vote in the election proper, which will be the real election.

The important thing is that there is every reason to believe that more Negroes will be exercising their political franchise—of course, within the limits set by the still-existing poll-tax, registration laws, intimidation and other anti-Negro discrimination.

Assuming, then, the growing importance of the Negro in politics, the question is being asked: How should the Negro vote? But this is a misleading question. Just as misleading as the question: How should the white man vote? Here is the reason:

**There are different social layers among the Negro people, and there are different social layers among the white people. The question about voting, to make any sense, should be: How should the Negro worker, the Negro farm laborer, the Negro sharecropper, the Negro little man, vote?**

There has recently been organized in Texas a Negro Progressive Voters League to get "all Negroes together on how they would vote." The Negro leaders responsible for its organization will call meetings in other states for the same purpose. The plan of action of the League is to submit questionnaires to all candidates and base its recommendations to Negro voters on the answers the candidates give to the questions of the League. Particularly the questions pertain to the poll-tax, Negro health and education, and the implementing of the Supreme Court decision on primary voting.

If the Negro working class voter follows the plan set forth by the Negro Progressive Voters League, he will be making all over again the political mistakes which the whole labor movement has been making for so many years.

The policy of the League is that oft-timer known as "rewarding your friends and punishing your enemies." But what politician won't become the "friend of the Negro" before election to get the considerable Negro vote—only to forget his "friendship" afterward? What politician ever refrained from making labor all kinds of fancy promises before election to get the labor vote—only to kick labor in the face afterwards?

The Negro working class voter must, therefore, come out with all his strength for the formation of an independent Labor Party, based on the organized labor movement. It is only in such a party that labor as a whole, no matter what the color of its skin, can rely on its own strength for its own advancement.

And it is only through the victory of the independent class party of labor, leading Negro and white working people against the capitalist class, that the Negro people can be sure of the abolition of the poll-tax, of all kinds of restrictions, of lynching, of job and social discrimination—and march on with all labor to final emancipation from the ruling class.

# AFL POST-WAR PROPOSALS

By DAVID COOLIDGE  
(Concluded)

The real essence of the AFL statement comes in the section on "free enterprise." "We believe in free enterprise as an essential in personal freedom. The right to start a business and the right to choose a job are the basis of a free life."

### REDUCING IT TO THE RIDICULOUS

Miners should have the right to open a coal mine, steel workers should have the right to put up a steel mill, sharecroppers should have the right to establish a bank and compete with Chase National. They already have this right. There is no law which forbids a miner to buy a thousand acres of coal land and begin producing coal. There is no act of Congress which tells a steel worker that he shall not put up a mill, and any sharecropper has the right to open himself a national bank.

"By free enterprise we mean a progressive economy which provides incentives and opportunities to individuals and groups to take the initiative and to assume the risks involved in launching new forms of productive activity. Freedom of enterprise means freedom of labor. Thus organized labor means by free enterprise bold initiative for the increase and the range of production."

Capitalism, you see, has not been bold enough. The railway buccaners did not gobble up enough of the public lands. Old Rockefeller was too timid in establishing his oil empire. Bell Telephone had no business to let a few small companies escape in its "trend" toward cheap telephone rates. When Morgan formed U. S. Steel he wasn't bold enough and the reason for this was the absence of "free enterprise."

Brothers Green and Woll want homes for workers after the war but none of this New Deal foolishness. "Private initiative should play a leading part in post-war housing reconstruction..." Of course, there should be "safeguards against speculative abuses." There should be a public works program ready to be "let to private contractors" to supplement "private employment," should a decline occur. "Our accumulated national debt and interest charges thereon will mean sustained high tax rates..." The big bondholders will continue to get their interest while the working class continues to be subjected to the present high income taxes. THIS IS THE WAY THE AFL WILL REVERSE MONOPOLY AND THE CONCENTRATION OF WEALTH.

## We Like This Kind Of Appreciation

Dear Editor:  
Enclosed find eight six-month subs and three one-year subs. Try to get them on the list for the May Day issue. LABOR ACTION, like whiskey, improves with age.  
S. H. (St. Louis.)

## Montgomery Ward Duplicity

# Legality, Capitalist Style

By WALTER WEISS

The Montgomery Ward seizure, besides being important in other ways, furnishes some good lessons in the meaning of democracy (capitalist variety). Congressmen and newspaper editors, trying to outdo each other in hysterics, shout that the seizure is illegal, that Roosevelt is assuming dictatorial powers, and that only Avery has dared to defend liberty and democracy. When the Senate, last May, was discussing the bill which was later to become the Smith-Connelly anti-strike law, the question came up whether the President had acted legally in taking over the mines on May 1. Several senators expressed the opinion—in a calm sort of way—that Roosevelt had exceeded his legal powers.

### LEGALITY AND ILLEGALITY

Yet no cry of dictatorship came from Congress or the press. No danger to democracy was then seen—except in the figure of John L. Lewis. Senator Tydings, an anti-New Deal Democrat, argued that Roosevelt had indeed acted without power (that means, illegally) and that the situation therefore required that Congress should—do what? Perhaps condemn the lawbreakers? Save the country from dictatorship? At least hold an investigation? Not at all! THE DUTY OF CONGRESS WAS TO "VALIDATE" (THAT IS, MAKE LEGAL) THE ILLEGAL SEIZURE.

Senator Connally himself wasn't sure how great the President's powers were but pointed out that one school of thought claimed for him large undefined powers under the Constitution, known as "aggregate powers." (Biddle also referred to these in his opinion on the Ward case.) Connally didn't deny the existence of these powers but thought Congress should play safe and give the President specific and unquestionable authority.

Replying to ardent New Dealers, Connally denied that he was suggesting that there was anything illegal about seizure of the mines, and he agreed most heartily with Senator Lucas that, **WHATEVER THE PRESIDENTIAL POWERS WERE**, practically all senators and all the American people approved of what Roosevelt had done. The lesson is clear. Whenever illegality favors the capitalists, the Congress and the press of the capitalists will praise it, not condemn it. However, they may possibly worry a little and hurry to cover it up.

A few senators, especially Taft and Danaher, expressed the fear that too much private property might be seized under the Connally bill. The workers might get the dangerous idea that private owners were unnecessary. On several occasions Connally reassured them, carefully reviewing all previous seizures to show how

### ANALYZING OTHER AFL DEMANDS

Among many correct demands, such as care of veterans, unemployment benefits for two years, better social insurance, the AFL wants the shorter work week restored. They do not say what the hours shall be. That presumably will be left to the boldness and initiative of the employers. The shorter work week is to be restored "without material reduction in weekly earnings." The workers should not have their wages cut too much because "during the war wage earners have contributed increased productivity...without compensation by increases in wage rates."

The AFL leaders are ready to submit to wage reductions after the war, along with the cut in hours. They agree with the WLB. If we want more money let us work more; if we work less, then we should be satisfied with less money. The workers may work for a lower rate after the war but the income taxes will remain as of today. The workers mustn't do anything to impoverish the employers. It is assumed that the amount of the wage reduction will also be left to the boldness and initiative of the employers.

The unions must be ready with cooperation for the maintenance of full employment. "This implies... review and revision of rules and practices which were developed to protect workers in a depressed economy and severely fluctuating economy." This sentence could have been written in the office of the New York Times, the NAM or the Daily Worker. Perhaps Eric Johnston of the U. S. Chamber of Commerce put this sentence in. The workers are to keep paying the present income taxes, they are to take a cut in pay and they are to reject the measures enacted under labor pressure in the early days of the New Deal. Thus the AFL will usher in the "century of the common man," build up the "public conscience" and promote "free labor."

It is in the section dealing with "equality of opportunity" that these AFL bureaucrats become completely disgusting and reprehensible. Equality of opportunity is denied, say these "bureaucrats," wherever individuals are deprived of their civil and political rights...it is denied wherever workers, because of race, religion or sex do not have an equal chance to get jobs... The AFL is opposed to any and all of these forms of discrimination. For the AFL to say that it is opposed to these prac-

tices is a downright lie. The AFL officialdom has been for decades the main bulwark of these practices in the labor movement. THE AFL IS BUILT ON DISCRIMINATION: DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THE UNSKILLED WORKER, DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THE NEGRO WORKER.

They know they lie. That is the reason they issue such a mealy-mouthed statement on discrimination. If they are for political equality, why is it that the AFL never turned a finger against the poll-tax? Why, right now, do they announce their support of poll-tax Congressman Martin Dies? If they are so interested in eliminating discrimination on account of race, why doesn't the AFL suspend the Boilermakers Union, the Machinists Union and other AFL unions which discriminate against Negroes?

### IN CONCLUSION

This whole statement of the AFL on the post-war world is a compound of ignorance, stupidity, reaction, mush, lies, craft union arrogance and puerile verbiage. Most of it could have been written by any capitalist or by Earl Browder. Most of it can be supported wholeheartedly by the NAM and Stalin's Communist Party in the United States. Green, Woll, Hutchinson and Tobin crawl into bed with Browder, Withrow and Eric Johnston.

Capitalism ("free enterprise") today is a stinking and gangrenous dictatorship exercised by the capitalist ruling class over the working class. The AFL bureaucrats in this statement only proclaim themselves the labor lieutenants and recruiting sergeants of this degenerate social order for the post-war world.

These aging buffoons, bootlickers and traitors seek to drive labor into the imperialist slaughterhouse today, and tomorrow herd what is left into the capitalist pens of exploitation.

The document is putrid with old-fashioned phrase - mongering and platitudes, totally unsuited for this age of international murder, destruction and imperialist savagery. It attempts to deliver the working class to big business right at the time that fascism threatens to engulf the whole world in one form or another. There is not one sentence on independent action by the working class; not one word on independent political action by labor. There is no practical criticism of what is going on today and no guide to labor about what to do to achieve freedom.

## Two Excellent Points

"Here's one for the record," writes a LABOR ACTION reader. "The UAW-CIO found that the average auto worker will produce \$12,000 worth of goods in 1944. Assuming that the average wage in the industry is \$3,000 per year, the worker receives one-fourth of the value he produces. In other words, over an eight-hour period he works six hours for the boss and two hours for himself. This makes a damn good case for the thirty-hour week and an even better one for socialism. The above information was taken from the first CIO News edition of May."

# FOR A NEW WORLD

## Charity by the Baruchs or Social Planning by a Workers' Government

By NANCY NATHAN

Bernard Baruch, one of America's wealthiest men, keeps making the front pages of the newspapers.

Last he had been heard from as the originator of the Baruch plan for post-war reconversion, which is designed to give "free enterprise" a very free hand in grabbing the war plants and war materials valued at many tens of billions of dollars.

### HE GIVES SOMETHING AWAY

This time Baruch makes the front pages, not for grabbing but for giving away. Following the practice of benign capitalists stuffed with more wealth than they know what to do with, Baruch has now donated \$1,100,000 for medical research in a very much neglected field.

It is the field of physical medicine, given publicity by the stiff fight Sister Kenny put up for it in the treatment of infantile paralysis. The belief that disease of, and injuries to, the human body can be treated by such external agents as light, water, heat, electricity, exercise and massage has gained ground in spite of the opposition of the die-hards in the medical profession. A coterie of experts have now advised Mr. Baruch that his million-odd dollars would do good in the development of this branch of medicine—especially in the treatment of crippled and wounded war veterans.

The plaudits bestowed on Mr. Baruch's "generosity" have rung out from all quarters. From Roosevelt newspapers, who consider Baruch their own; from anti-Administration newspapers, who regard charitable donations as a good way to whitewash the tax payments to Morgenthau; and from the Daily Worker, whose latest orders from Moscow require its writers to see nothing but good in the capitalist class and the capitalist system—Mr. Baruch has received his reward in publicity right here on earth.

### WHITEWASH THAT DOESN'T STICK

However, such attempts at whitewashing the capitalist class and the capitalist system are a sorry business, indeed. The whitewash simply doesn't stay on.

First the exploiters of labor, the profit-makers, accumulate their enormous fortunes; then they "generously" hand out a tiny fraction of it to charity.

First they pay low wages which cannot provide adequate food, housing, clothing, medical care, recreation and well-being for the working class as a whole; they keep the conditions of labor in the mines, mills and factories so bad that accidents and industrial diseases are the common hazards of all workers; they reap fabulous profits out of a war which is striving the world with tens of millions of dead, diseased, maimed and wounded. THEN THEY SALVE THEIR CONSCIENCES BY GIVING A MITE TO CHARITY.

This is not a question of good or bad capitalists. Mr. Baruch is undoubtedly a very nice man whose heart bleeds at the sight of human suffering. That is why he parts with a cool million-odd dollars to further medical research—parts with it a lot more easily than the ordinary worker can part with the \$5.00 required for a visit to the doctor. This is a question of the social functioning of a class and of all its members.

As a class, the capitalists are the usurpers of the wealth created by a whole people by means which bring poverty, disease and death—for curing which the wealthy then become "great philanthropists"—but not so great that they deplete their accumulated fortunes nor deprive their children of the unearned family inheritance. No, indeed, not so great as to make a dent in their great fortunes, but only great enough to make of them "great philanthropists."

Furthermore, measured against the enormous profits gleaned by the capitalist class from the world-wide slaughter and maiming of human beings, the few millions in charity they give toward "helping" the maimed to regain health, are like a pimple on a pickle. Measured against the fabulous expenditures for machines of war which bring destruction and annihilation, the donations for medical research are as but a drop in a vast ocean.

What a commentary on the capitalist system, which permits vast fortunes to be acquired by a few individuals, which expends hundreds of billions of dollars for a war to expand the power and profit of these few individuals—but which allows a field of medical research to remain backward and unexplored, until a "good" capitalist comes along and offers to donate a million dollars out of his pile!

### WE REPUDIATE SUCH "CHARITY"

These stark black facts about the capitalist system and the capitalist class cannot be whitewashed by the dubious "generosity" of the Baruchs. They deserve only contempt and repudiation at the hands of the working people.

There is a way to prevent poverty, disease, war and the need for charity which after all these centuries has cured no social evils but only the bad consciences of some capitalist exploiters who perhaps realize how many crimes against society they have been responsible for.

The road for the workers to follow leads to the reorganization of society on the basis of the common good—the wealth produced by the labor of the whole people to remain the common property of the whole people, to be used for their benefit.

What the world needs first of all is the elimination of poverty, disease and war—BY THE ELIMINATION OF THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM. With no capitalist profits, with no capitalist class to connive for profits, there will be no poverty, very little disease, and no wars that kill and maim the multitudes.

A workers' government instead of a capitalist government; workers' control of production instead of capitalist control of production; the full return of their labor to all people who labor, instead of the accumulation of untold wealth at the top—these are the social issues that the Baruch "gift to society" underscores and places at the head of the agenda for solution.

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