

Work for a Workers World;
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LABOR ACTION

NOVEMBER 10, 1947

A PAPER IN THE INTERESTS OF SOCIALISM

FIVE CENTS

Greetings to UAW Convention!

FOR A NEW LABOR OFFENSIVE

It Just Doesn't Make Any Sense!



Independent Political Action Central Plank in a Militant Union Program

By DAVID COOLIDGE

DELEGATES TO THE UAW CONVENTION:

The Workers Party of the United States greets you as you assemble for the eleventh annual convention of your mighty organization. We do not greet you and your convention as "outsiders," as those who "interfere" in the affairs of your great union. We greet you as fellow workers, as fellow toilers in the same struggle; the struggle to build an omnipotent American labor movement which will beat back the common enemy and establish security, peace and happiness for the masses of the people. This is the task you are engaged in, and we of the Workers Party associate ourselves with you.

Your convention is confronted with momentous questions and problems for which you will seek a solution during your sessions. You have your own internal problems and also the problem of devising ways and means to defeat the schemes and designs of the capitalist ruling class, as embodied, for example, in the NAM-Taft-Hartley Act.

POLITICS—BUT LABOR POLITICS!

Your chief internal problem is one which has been forced on you by those in your international who, in one way or other, follow the commands and the political line of the Communist (Stalinist) Party. We want to say right here, before we go farther into this question, that we do not agree with those, in your ranks or outside the labor movement, who take the position of "no politics" in the trade unions. When the political leaders of the two capitalist parties, the Republican and Democratic Parties, talk this way, we know what they mean and what they are after. They mean by "no politics," no working class politics, no labor politics.

The capitalist politicians of the Republican and Democratic Parties made this clear again in the NAM's Taft-Hartley Act when they made it illegal for us to use our union funds and our union publications for political propaganda. These capitalist Republican and Democratic politicians want to tie us to their parties and inveigle us into voting for these two parties. They don't want labor to have its own party and its own labor candidates. The Workers Party understands this and you understand it.

The Workers Party also is not in agreement with those in the union movement who talk about "no politics" in the union. The union movement does have politics in it and that is correct. The labor movement should resort to political action, but this political action should be working class

political action—based on a program for the working class and carried out by our own working class candidates.

When the Workers Party takes this position and says so to you and to all of labor in the U. S., we do not believe that this is "interference" in the affairs of your union. As we said before, we are not "outsiders" and we will not act like outsiders. Yes, we believe in labor politics, working class politics. We believe that we should have a mass working class political party in this country: a mass Labor Party, built on the unions and drawing its main support from the unions. We believe that this Labor Party should have a program for American labor and be fitted into the needs of the working class. The only way that American workers can become powerful enough to aid and do their duty toward labor in other lands is to have a strong labor movement in the U. S.: strong in the economic field and well organized politically.

This is one point at which the Workers Party differentiates itself from the Communist (Stalinist) Party. We are for politics in the unions, but we are against Stalinist politics in the labor movement and everywhere else. We are for working class politics in the union. Stalinist poli-

tics, the politics of the "Communist" Party, is not working class politics. This is so because the Communist (Stalinist) Party is not a working class party. It is a totalitarian party, a police party.

The "Communist" Party in the U. S. is the representative of Kremlin Stalinism, with its record of murder, brutality, imperialism, oppression and all manner of anti-working class and anti-union actions. The Stalinist party and its politics are contrary to all the democratic aspirations of the working class and to all trade union democracy. This is why we say that we are for politics in the unions but against the activities of the Stalinists in the unions.

STALINISTS WILL DESTROY UNION

Your union has been harrassed during the past few months by the machinations, the frame-ups and the usual filthy practices of the Stalinists. Officers of your international who are under the control and direction of the Communist (Stalinist) Party have engaged in a campaign of frame-up, union wrecking and mud slinging, that has become a stench throughout the country.

The Addes-Thomas-Leonard-Stalinist group has concentrated this barrage of (Continued on page 3 in editorial column)

UAW Convention Issues Vital for All U. S. Labor

By WALTER JASON

Two significant landmarks in American political life come within a week of each other. One is the UAW-CIO convention, which properly will be viewed as a source of progressive ideas, program and militant action to spearhead the whole CIO. The other is the special session of the United States Congress. These two conventions are related, for both of them are convened to furnish, in one way or another, answers to the burning problems facing the American people living under capitalism today. One may summarize these problems in two major questions: What program can stop inflation and the coming depression?

What policy can eliminate the threat of a third world imperialist war?

It is a foregone conclusion that the delegates representing Wall Street will give satisfactory answers at their Washington sessions, in the interests of the class they serve, the capitalist class. The "convention" at Washington will gear the administration program to the aims of Wall Street's world imperialist ambitions. A form of the Marshall Plan will be adopted. Any measures to "combat inflation" will give benefits to the capitalists and not the working people.

MEANING OF VOTE

What about the convention of the UAW-CIO? It lacks political power, to be sure, to carry out immediately its program for the benefit of the working man. But it does have at least the duty of adopting such a program, and struggling for the decisive political power required by the workers to achieve their aspirations for a good life.

The convention of the UAW-CIO should be studied in the context of this general outlook, for the convention has value insofar as it provides for the intrusion of the labor movement into the destiny of the nation, and realization of itself as the master and not the servant of society. The great economic power of the UAW and the whole labor movement remains firm. To what extent will this be supplemented, as it must be, with political power? This question is

posed as a guide to evaluating the UAW convention actions in program and policy.

The developments at the UAW convention will revolve around the central axis of a decisive event that has taken place: after two years of sharp factional struggle between the Reuther tendency and the Addes-Thomas-Leonard group which, it

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WALTER REUTHER

More Than One Way to Appease Bosses

Taft-Hartley Dispute Leaves Leaders of BOTH Factions With a Great Deal to Account for to the UAW Ranks

DETROIT—The popping of paper bags sets up a breeze and makes quite a noise. It's like the ammunition being fired in the stage-show battle in the UAW on the question of the Taft-Hartley law. The two sides are shouting "bang-bang" at one another in very loud voices.

Shall we sign the Taft-Hartley affidavits or not? Reuther does not take a very firm position. A number of his followers are known to be in favor of signing. Addes-Thomas and company, at least for the moment, are opposed to signing. The hubbub of their squabble makes it difficult to concentrate on the really vital questions raised by the T-H law.

Thus it comes about that the "Militant," which speaks for the Socialist Workers Party, hails the Addes-Thomas-Leonard group which, it

says, "will fight tooth and nail against this slave oath at the UAW convention." This group, says the "Militant," is part of the fight in the whole labor movement to "call a halt to the leaderships' spineless retreat before the Taft Act." And it brackets these great "militants" with the leadership of the United Rubber Workers Union and the UE which apparently also fall into this great progressive, militant camp.

This is too much. There are no comic strips in the "Militant." Perhaps the editors intended all this to serve instead. Or perhaps their hopeless entanglement in the UAW situation has turned them into dizzy and unwilling comics themselves. Only a well-developed sense of humor will see them through the dark days which lie ahead for them.

Let us first make the position of LABOR ACTION and the Workers Party clear: Every militant in the labor movement should support the fight against the signing of the Taft affidavits. This is an elementary duty of those who would keep the union movement free and independent of the meddling of government bureaucrats. But anyone, whoever it may be, whether he publishes not one but two newspapers, who would reduce the whole question of the Taft law to the question of signing affidavits is throwing us off the track. Such a one helps to cover up for demagogues like the Addes-Thomas group who are "retreating" just as "spinelessly" and just as quickly as the rest of the cringing labor leadership.

The Taft law is a hostile incursion by the capitalist class into the rights

of labor. After this reconnaissance, the pro-boss politicians, judging by the reaction of the labor movement, will either retreat or strike greater blows at the workers. The big question is this: shall the labor movement resist this law by every means possible in order to render it ineffectual or shall it attempt to evade it by a policy of appeasing the employers? If the labor movement appeases the capitalist class, the Tafts and the Hartleys will become more arrogant. If the labor movement resists, they will have to pause.

We oppose the signing of the affidavits because it flows from and is part of a policy of appeasement.

In the UAW the whole top leadership, and that includes the Reutherites as well as the Addesites, have followed a policy of appeasement.

Green is a red-baiter; Reuther is one; the Trotskyists are red-baiters; etc., etc. To the CP the term has one and only one simple meaning; anyone who attacks the Stalinist party or replies to its lying arguments is a "red-baiter."

During the war, the Communist Party denounced those who opposed the no-strike pledge and speed-up plans as "red-baiters." Today this same Communist Party accuses the "red-baiters" of favoring the speed-up and opposing strikes!

But what does the term "red-baiting" really mean? Red-baiters are those who evade the justified demands of the workers or who avoid militant working class action by denouncing the advocates of such action as "reds" or "communists" or "socialists." By appealing to the anti-socialist, pro-capitalist prejudices of backward workers, the "red-baiters" hope to prevent the adoption of necessary, simple, fighting union demands or policies.

A RIGHT WAY AND A WRONG WAY

But this does not apply to the fight against the CP in the UAW. Union militants are not fighting against the Stalinist Party because it is too militant, too radical, too "red"; they are fighting it because it has shown over a period of years that it is a reactionary, anti-labor force which opposes genuine, militant union policies. In fact, the worst (Continued on page 4)

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NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE LABOR FRONT

Reuther, Fenster Debate in Cleveland

By JOE HAUSER

CLEVELAND — Walter Reuther, International President of the UAW-CIO, and Leo Fenster, Recording Secretary of Fisher Body Local 45, met in debate in Cleveland on Sunday night, October 26, to thrash out speed-up charges against Reuther first made by Local 45's leadership on August 10 and widely publicized ever since. The debate was held in the Collinwood High School Auditorium before about 1,000 UAW members, evenly divided in support of Reuther and Fenster. The two speakers covered the same material as has been put out by both sides since the beginning of the controversy. On close examination of the facts, the charge just doesn't stick.

The speed-up charge against Reuther, first made at the Local 45 Stewards Body meeting on August 10, was prompted by a statement released by the National Planning Association calling for increased production as a means of obtaining higher wages. This NPA statement was signed by Reuther, James Carey, Emil Rieve and several other big names in the union movement. While the Stewards Body only authorized a committee to write a letter to Reuther asking him to explain his stand on this matter, the August 14 issue of "The Fisher Body Eye Opener" (Local 45 newspaper) carried a story of the stewards' meeting and also printed the open letter.

Since that time, the "Eye Opener," edited by Leo Fenster who is recognized as a Stalinist spokesman in the UAW, has again and again smeared Reuther with the speed-up charge. The September 12 issue actually devoted over 80 per cent of its space to this smear. 156,000 COPIES OF THIS ISSUE WERE RUN OFF TO SPREAD THE SLANDER. (Local 45 has a membership of 2,300). "FDR," faction organ of the Addes-Thomas-Leonard group, reprinted two pages of this paper in full.

In the debate, Fenster again made the charge that Reuther actually knew that his signature would appear on the NPA statement. He further stated that Reuther had put his speed-up theory into practice by addressing a meeting of delegates from Studebaker Local 5, and advising them to work for maximum efficiency, at the same time that the company was planning to lay off 1,400 workers while keeping up the same total amount of production. Fenster further charged that the Local 5 lead-

ership favored accepting the company's proposition. Other statements by Fenster included the claims that Reuther was a member of the National Planning Association, and that this group was a front for the National Association of Manufacturers; that Richard Gosser, Reutherite Regional Director for the Toledo area, favored speed-up at the Willys-Overland plant; and that Reuther told the General Motors locals to go back to work in the 1945-46 strike before the piece-work issue was settled. Fenster ended his presentations with a plea against red-baiting.

REUTHER REPLIES

Reuther, in his presentation, pointed out that he had been against speed-up, piece work, and incentive pay for a long time. He said that, when the current charges were made against him, he asked the majority in the International Executive Board to prefer charges so that he might have a fair trial, but that the majority refused to do so. He explained that while he claimed the Local 45 leadership had at one time been for piece-work, he was sure the membership was against it.

Reuther presented the record of the 1943 UAW convention in Buffalo, where he led the fight against incentive pay, while the Local 45 delegates there were for it and R. J. Thomas openly called on the workers to raise their efficiency. Reuther pointed out that under the present GM contract, he had helped 12 locals to do away with piece-work; while the United Electrical Workers' union (whose leadership sees eye-to-eye with the Addes group) now has piece-work in every GM plant with which it has a contract.

Reuther, steering pretty clear of red-baiting in his talk, did point out that the very same people who called Roosevelt and Reuther war-mongers during the Hitler-Stalin pact, quickly changed over and labeled Reuther a Hitlerite fascist agent for opposing incentive pay after Russia got into the war. He also showed that "FDR," several other local papers, and the CP official publication in Michigan all carried the present charges against him.

Reuther covered many items in rapid succession, including the fact that he never addressed any kind of delegate or membership meeting of Studebaker Local 5 in the past three years, though he did speak to three

Local 5 representatives in his own office on social security problems alone. He charged that the Local 45 paper had accused the Studebaker union of accepting the job cut and speed-up while, in fact, a meeting of 1,500 Studebaker workers had rejected the company offer; that the Studebaker union membership had just shown its confidence in its Reutherite leadership by voting a complete slate of 16 delegates to the convention by a 4 to 1 majority; that the NPA statement was released while he was on a 14-day vacation due to a broken ankle, and that he had repudiated the statement on his return to his office; that he stood for wage increases out of corporation profits, and not out of increased productivity; that he was not a member of the NPA, but that his name did appear on some of its special reports; in that connection, he produced a gigantic enlargement of another NPA statement, issued March 1946, with the names of Addes, Thomas and Leonard on it.

Reuther said that he would fight for the right of anyone to believe in any political philosophy, but that he didn't want the union used by any group. He showed how he had fought speed-up just recently by authorizing strike action in two GM plants facing company sponsored speed-up and promised to fight out this issue at the convention.

Counter-attacking, he charged that in Jackson, Michigan, the Reynolds Spring Co. was increasing production without wage increases, and that the Addes group was blocking International Executive Board approval of strike action to prevent this; and that, furthermore, the local union president, Cooper, was practically a company stooge, but was protected by the Addes group when Reuther asked to put an administrator in; and, finally, that the company was closing down its Trenton, N. J., plant, shifting the work to Jackson, because the men there refused such bad terms. He also defended Gosser's administration at Willys and said that the workers there had some of the best conditions in the UAW.

Reuther finished up his presentation by pointing out that every decision during the course of the last GM strike was made by the unanimous vote of the executive board, so

that his opposition shares the responsibility. He called for a united fight by all auto workers against speed-up, and predicted a convention victory for his caucus.

FENSTER REBUTS

In the rebuttal, Fenster made a rather weak apology for the 1945 stand of his associates on incentive pay. He said he wasn't there as a delegate, and didn't know too much about it (1), but he thought that those who had been for piece-work might have had close relatives in the fox holes and so were acting on patriotic motives. He also accused Reuther of using most of his time for red-baiting.

Reuther replied by reiterating his opposition to red-baiting, and characterized the Communist Party as a bunch of "political prostitutes" at the service of a foreign power, without trying to link the CP with anyone in his opposition. He again predicted a clean sweep for his group at the convention, and showed that in his home local, 174, he was sure of 235 out of 239 convention votes, while the three leaders of his opposition all had suffered defeats in their home locals—Leonard in Local 227, Addes in Willys, and Thomas in Local 7.

While not much new material was presented in this debate, it was a good thing in that it placed directly before the assembled auto workers two sides of a controversy wracking their union. The speakers had ample opportunity to tell what they were for and against. Unfortunately the debate was more or less limited to the speed-up charge, and nothing was said about solving that and other problems of the auto workers. Here was a good chance to tell the workers about independent political action, about conducting their struggle against the giant corporations, both economically and politically, but neither side did so.

Before the meeting, members and friends of the Workers Party distributed the pamphlet, "Incentive Pay, The Speed-up New Style," with a leaflet attached, relating it to the meeting. They also passed out the latest issues of LABOR ACTION and The New Internationalist, with leaflets advertising a local meeting on "Socialism or World Chaos," with Max Shachtman as the main speaker.

Figures Show Jim Crow Lines Bosses' Pockets

By GERRY McDERMOTT

WEST VIRGINIA — Jim Crow is money in someone's pocket.

Figures on comparative income of white and Negro war veterans in the South prove just how much Jim Crow does pay off—for the boss. A survey by the AFL, based on figures from the Bureau of the Census and the Bureau of Labor Statistics, show that incomes of Negro veterans are 30 to 78 per cent below those of white veterans.

In Birmingham, Negro vets receive 30 per cent less than white vets; in New Orleans, 36 per cent; in Atlanta, 53 per cent less; in Memphis, 59 per cent less; in Houston, 63 per cent; and in Jackson, Miss., 78 per cent less. That means that in Jackson, the capital of the state that produced Rankin, Negro vets earn 22 cents for every dollar earned by a white veteran. On the other hand, it is interesting to note that the Negro gets the highest pay in Birmingham and New Orleans, both Southern strongholds of the CIO.

The figures, which were collected only on veterans, are undoubtedly true of workers as a whole in the South. Not only do these facts point to the very heart of Jim Crow, they demonstrate to the white worker and the labor movement as a whole why Jim Crow is a mortal enemy of labor.

When discrimination is explained away as the result of "ignorance," "prejudice," or such things, that is true enough. When you get a step further and say that such "ignorance" and "prejudice" are DELIBERATELY PLANNED AND ENCOURAGED, you are closer to the truth. But when you see the starvation wages that employers can pay as a result of encouraging "prejudice," you have the heart of the problem laid bare. "Prejudice" in the South—and North—is MANUFACTURED FOR PROFIT.

When you see that a Negro in Mississippi's capital city can be hired for 22 per cent of the wages a white worker receives, you understand that Rankin and his type serve the rich class in their state. Jim Crow is a business proposition and it pays.

But it is not only the Negro worker who loses. From common sense and long experience, the labor movement has learned that when wages are low, the low wages invariably drag down all wages. It is exactly for that reason that unions must be nation-wide. Organized labor must "organize the unorganized" or perish. The wages of the Negro worker in the South are miserably low—and as a result, white workers in the South are miserably underpaid, too.

That is why Operation Dixie, the great drive to unionize the South, must be pushed ahead to complete success. And that is why the labor movement as a whole must fight tooth and nail against ALL forms of planned "prejudice" and "ignorance" that stand in the way of full equality for the Negro.

Let the Negro people note their real enemies. It is not the misguided or uneducated white fellow-worker who falls for the boss' plan. It is the little handful of men who grow rich on Jim Crow.

OK, NOW WE KNOW THAT THEY ARE SERIOUS ABOUT IT

"While some elements of the population have shown a disposition to be critical of President Truman's food conservation program, others, fortunately, have given it their wholehearted support. This is true with respect to the National Pretzel Bakers' Institute, which recently held its annual convention in Atlantic City.

"According to an International News Service dispatch, the pretzel bakers announced they would cooperate 100 per cent with the conservation program.

"Norval Postweiler, president of the Institute, asserted there are 92,000,000 pretzel nibblers in the United States... He also pointed out... that it is almost impossible to eat a pretzel without scattering some crumbs on the table or floor.

"Postweiler's idea is that these crumbs should be saved and made into some nutritious food. Recipes are to be compiled to inform the public how to prepare appetizing dishes made of pretzel crumbs."—From the Cleveland Plain Dealer.

UAW WORKERS! Newark Lecture! The UAW Convention—Its Crucial Importance for United States Labor Speaker: ERNEST RICE MCKINNEY LABOR ACTION HALL 248 Market Street FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 21 8:00 O'Clock

With the Workers Party

All readers of LABOR ACTION are invited to attend meetings, class lectures and socials sponsored by local branches of the WORKERS PARTY. Visit our headquarters listed below to purchase Marxist literature, The NEW INTERNATIONAL and LABOR ACTION. For information of WORKERS PARTY activities in cities not listed below, write to WORKERS PARTY, 4 Court Square, Long Island City 1, N. Y.

- AKRON: Write to Box 221. BALTIMORE: International Fellowship House, 21 West Preston St., 2nd floor. Public forums every second Friday of each month. Socialist Youth League meets every Monday at 8:00 p.m. BUFFALO: 639 Main St., 2nd floor. Office hours: 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Monday through Friday. Open meetings Sunday evenings. Discussion groups Thursday evenings. CHICAGO: 1501 W. Madison Ave., 2nd floor, Chicago 7. Tel.: CHESAPEAKE 5798. Office hours: 3:00-5:30 p.m. daily. Tuesday and Wednesday evenings. CLEVELAND: WP Branch meets Sundays, 8 p.m., in Room 4, Slovenian Hall, 6409 St. Clair Ave. DETROIT: 6341 Gratiot, Room 10. Telephone: PLaza 5559. For volunteer work in election campaign, send your name to local office. LOS ANGELES: 3314 So. Grand Los Angeles 7. Telephone: Richmond 7-2230 (if no answer, phone AX 2-9067). Office hours: 2 to 5 p.m. daily. LOUISVILLE: Write to Robert Durant, Box 1181, Louisville. NEWARK: 248 Market St., Newark 2. Open house Friday evenings. NEW YORK CITY: CITY CENTER: 114 West 14th St., 3rd floor. Open every day from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Wednesday and Thursday until 10:30 p.m. Telephone: WAtkins 4-4222.

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More Ways Than One to Appease--

(Continued from page 1) for withdrawing all no-strike clauses from its contract.

APPEASING THE BOSSES

The UAW has not followed the example set by the mine workers and the seamen. Instead of withdrawing no-strike clauses it has decided to strengthen them. Does this seem surprising? It is not. A resolution on the Taft law passed by the International Executive Board insists that in every contract there be a clause exempting the union from lawsuits by the employers. And how do they intend to get this exemption. BY APPEASING THE EMPLOYERS, BY STRENGTHENING COMPANY SECURITY CLAUSES, BY PROVING TO THE BOSSES THAT THE UAW CAN "DISCIPLINE" ITS OWN WORKERS. The resolution reads: "The contract grievance procedure normally utilized in such cases provides ample protection to the employer and there can be no justification for his resort to the institution of suits in addition to invoking the provision of the contract relating to discipline." Isn't this clear? The employer doesn't need lawsuits because the contracts will allow him to discipline the workers.

And how has this worked out in practice. In the Murray Body contract, the union got a clause exempting it from lawsuits. In return for what? A promise by the local union that it publicly would denounce all so-called "wildcat" strikes. Who negotiated the Murray contract? The Reutherites. And who praised the provisions of the Murray contract. See the Addes sopsheet "FDR" of October 9.

And who negotiated the Ford contract, the latest contract and the one which preceded it? Richard T. Leonard. He negotiated the "company security" contract signed in the middle of the GM strike. This contract contains no less than 17 paragraphs repudiating so-called wild-cats and states categorically: "Any employee or employees found guilty of instigating, fomenting, actively supporting or giving leadership to such illegitimate strike shall be subject to discharge."

And do you know how the great leader of militants, Leonard, handled the question of the Taft law? Here is what he "won" for the workers: "In consideration of the undertaking by the union heretofore provided to avoid unauthorized strikes and work stoppages" the company agreed to investigate for a long while before

instituting any suits under the Taft law.

The Miners Union met the Taft law by withdrawing no-strike clauses. The whole UAW leadership met it by appeasing the employers, by strengthening the no-strike clauses.

HOW IT WORKS

Let no sophist now give us a lecture on how ineffective wild-cats are, etc., etc. We know all about that. But we also know that once the union has pledged itself in advance to repudiate and denounce so-called wild-cats, the employer has a weapon in his hands. He can then provoke strikes and cause division and dissension in the union. What were the results of the notorious "no-strike pledges" during the war.

Let us hear what a smart representative of the capitalist class has to say about this business: Thomas Shroyer, general counsel of the joint Congressional committee to study the operation of the Taft law, speaking at the annual dinner of the Printing Industry of America said:

"There has been considerable talk of by-passing the law, of contracts wherein the employer renounces the right to sue the union for strikes and breach of contract. In those cases, however, the employer has received something in return. It (the International Harvester Contract) provides that in case of a wild-cat strike, the union will immediately post on the bulletin boards a notice to its members to ignore the picket lines, not to support the strike and a request that the strikers return to work. ANYONE FAMILIAR WITH LABOR RELATIONS MUST KNOW THAT SUCH A PROVISION IS WORTH MANY TIMES MORE THAN A RIGHT TO SUE FOR DAMAGES."

The leaders of both factions in the UAW, the Reutherites and the Addesites collapsed in the face of their tasks because they were all anxious to lick the boots of Phil Murray, a "sober" conservative man, and win his favor in the fight for power.

All the fussing of the Addes bloc is only to take our eyes off its miserable, appeasing record on the Taft-Hartley law. They are not baring their fangs to fight "tooth and nail" against the slave law. No. They are just opening their mouths wider to have their teeth pulled.

UAW militants! To fight the Taft law, follow the lead of the miners and seamen, not the lead of Murray, Addes, Leonard and Reuther.

If Mr. Vishinsky Wanted An Answer -- Here It Is!

Dear Editor:

Mr. Vishinsky, a most fitting representative of the Stalin regime, deserves a reply to the question he posed to the correspondent of the New Leader, Julius Epstein. The Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs held a press conference on September 26 during which Mr. Epstein asked him to confirm or deny the authenticity of the protocols signed by Molotov and Von Ribbentrop in 1939. Vishinsky thought he was parrying the question by asking in return:

"I can only ask the persons who ask such questions whether they can confirm or deny the fact that there are many documents which prove that the Trotskyites were in the pay of the German fascists."

The prosecutor of the Moscow Trials who gained his present post by the services he rendered to Stalin at those frame-up trials, shuffles the cards clumsily in his deal to Mr. Epstein. The German documents which fell into the hands of the American army included copies of the secret protocols to which Mr. Epstein referred. Their contents have been divulged in the press of the world. The Russians have never had cheek enough (and that is something they do not lack) to deny their authenticity. It was the Russian representative at the Nuremberg Trials who objected strenuously to the efforts of the German prisoners to refer to these documents and to introduce copies in evidence. Why did they not prove to the world then that these documents were fakes? The answer is that they could not possibly do so. These records stand.

The case is quite different for "documents which prove that the Trotskyites were in the pay of the German fascists." A committee representing a great variety of social and political opinion, sent a document to the prosecutors at Nuremberg, including the Russians, petitioning them (in reality challenging the Russians) to produce even one scintilla of documentary evidence to show that the Trotskyists had had any relations whatsoever with the German Nazis. This petition reached Nuremberg when the key figure mentioned in the Moscow Trials, Rudolf Hess, was on the stand. The Stalinists had claimed that Hess was the go-between. Why were not such documents produced? Why have none been produced since? The Vyshinskys had a golden opportunity to offer objective proof in this matter.

Their silence has a tongue far louder than the brazen one of Mr. Vyshinsky.

A number of students had access to the Nuremberg documents. They have failed to find one single reference to show that the Trotskyists were in the pay of the Nazis. And yet the German documents were remarkable for their completeness in every detail.

Some sections of the press remained silent on the Moscow Trials in the period of 1936-38 when it seemed to concern only some Old Bolsheviks. On the whole the indifference of the press gave encouragement to the Stalin regime to work the same gag on their "democratic" opponents in the Balkan and other countries. The Petkovs owe their fate in part to the failure of the world press to throw the pitiless light of truth on the Moscow Trials when they occurred. That same press now takes for granted the fraud perpetrated in Rumania and Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, just as it occurred earlier inside Russia. Had world opinion made itself strongly felt at the time of the Moscow Trials, Stalinist "justice" would not have made its way so readily across all the borders.

(signed) NORMAN THOMAS JAMES T. FARRELL JACK WEBER

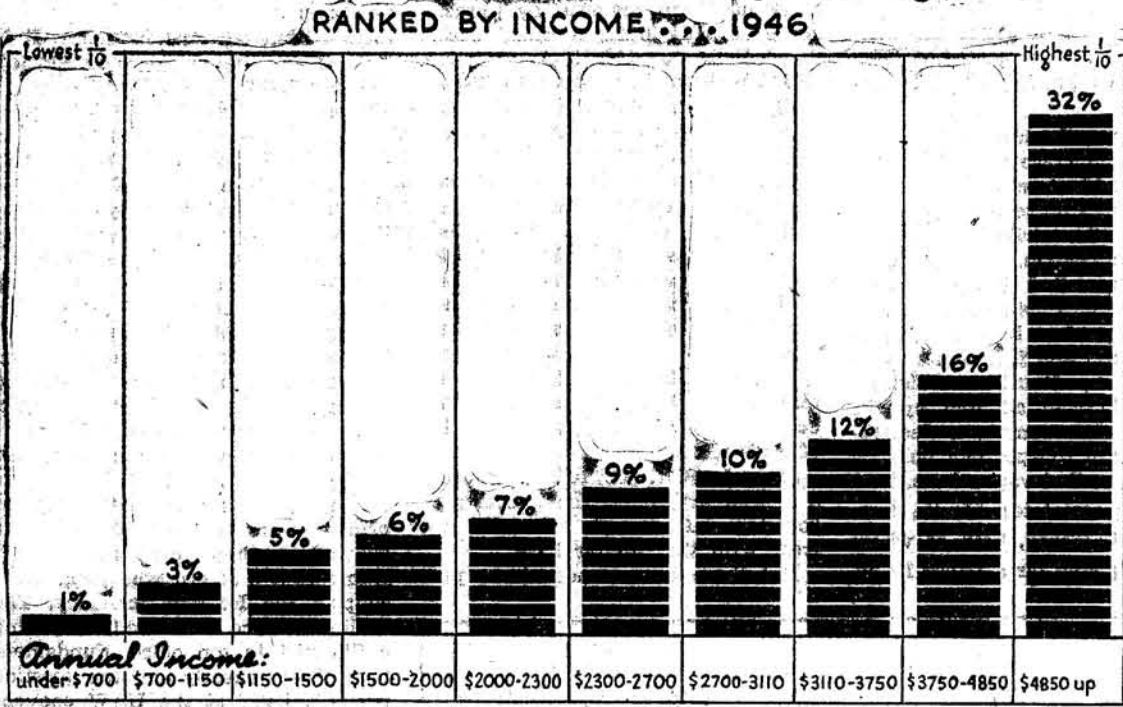
October 25, 1947 (See letter to New York City press on this same subject by Max Shachtman, Chairman of the Workers Party, in October 27 issue of LABOR ACTION.—Ed.)

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Editorials

Who Is Hit Most by High Prices?

Percentage of Total Money Income Received by Each Tenth of the Nation's Spending Units



Ranked by Income in 1946. SOURCE: Federal Reserve Board. The above chart is reprinted from the October, 1947, issue of the CIO's Economic Outlook which is devoted to the problem of food, here and abroad.

For a New Labor Offensive - -

(Continued from page 1) filth on Walter Reuther, the president of your international. The Addes-Thomas-Leonard-Stalinist faction has been joined in this filth slinging and attempted frame-up by the Socialist Workers Party, publishers of The Militant. This party giving aid and comfort to totalitarian Stalinism, in a party statement, accepted the Stalinist slander that the president of your international aimed at setting up a dictatorship in the UAW. This is an astounding position to be advanced by a group which is supporting the Stalinist slate for a union convention.

The Workers Party makes it clear that we make no compromises with Stalinist totalitarianism and union wrecking. We make no compromises with nor offer any trace to the GPU. That is precisely what a victory of the Addes-Thomas-Leonard faction will mean. We do not know what the political affiliation of Addes is; we only know that he has followed the Stalinist political line. That is enough for us. Let him clear himself if he can. Let him clear himself before the voting for officers takes place at your convention, not afterward. We have no reason to believe that Thomas and Leonard are members of the "Communist" Party. They are rank opportunists and captives of the Stalinists. This is just as satisfactory to the agents of the Kremlin assassins as membership.

Thomas is merely a doll and a clown who wants to be president again. He demonstrated that at your last convention. Leonard is the reactionary who was ready to give "security" to the Ford Motor Co. These are the credentials of the leaders of a faction which is seeking to take over the control of your international. The Stalinist Party crouches in the background, with poised dagger, to stab your international in the back and deliver it to the control of its GPU.

WHY WE SUPPORT REUTHER

The Workers Party and its members in the UAW are supporting President Reuther and the slate which he heads for election at your convention. We believe that in this situation Walter Reuther and the majority of his supporters in the UAW represent progressive and militant trade unionism in relation to reactionary Stalinism as represented by the Addes-Thomas-Leonard faction. It is our opinion that if the democratic traditions and the militant record of the UAW are to have even a fighting chance to endure, this can be accomplished only by the defeat of the Addes-Thomas-Leonard Stalinist faction and the election of the Reuther slate.

While giving full support to Walter Reuther in the struggle against the Addes-Thomas-Leonard-Stalinist faction, we of the Workers Party are not Reutherites. We are supporters of the program Reuther put forward in the UAW at the time of the General Motors strike. It was the Workers Party which called this program "The GM Program." We do not believe that Reuther has been a consistent and militant enough defender of this program. Furthermore, the Workers Party is in full disagreement with the continued procrastination and dodging of Reuther in connection with independent working class politics. Reuther remains tied to capitalist politics and the capitalist parties. The program which Reuther announced at the time of the GM strike, and which the Workers Party labelled "The GM Program," is not consistent with support of the two capitalist parties. To carry out such a program requires an independent party of the workers: an independent and militant Labor Party. This is the contradiction which Reuther is in.

We said above that the majority of the Reuther supporters are the progressive forces in the union. That is true, but there are extremely reactionary elements in the Reuther caucus. These are the real professional and reactionary "anti-reds." These union members get their "line" from outside the union just as do the Stalinists.

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WORKERS PARTY INFORMATION BLANK. I am interested in joining the Workers Party of the United States. Will you please send me all information as to your Program and how I can become a member. Name: Address:

WORLD POLITICS

THE EXAMPLE OF KOREA:

Every area of the world is directly affected by the American-Russian imperialist rivalry. Near or remote of minor or major weight in the scales of international importance—all this matters little. Not only illustrative of this fundamental fact of our present world, but also a most revealing example of the respective strategies of the two imperialisms is the sad story of Korea, the distant Asiatic peninsula inhabited by 30,000,000 people.

Korea for two years has been cut neatly and arbitrarily in two, by advance agreement between Stalin and Roosevelt. During that period, two distinctive Koreas have been produced—neither of them free and both images of their creators. A detailed study of the course pursued by the two occupying forces would indeed be a valuable picture. The early phases of the occupation have been excellently described in Harold Isaac's book, No Peace for Asia.

Now the rival occupation strategies have reached their climax. The fate of Korea is the issue. Two counter propositions are before the United Nations, both of which have the same objective—the reduction of Korea to a permanent colonial status, but under different masters. During the course of its occupation, the Russians have created a powerful Stalinist bureaucracy (both political and administrative), with a substantial army at its command. The Russians feel this force is ready to seize control over the balance of Korea (where 20,000,000 Koreans live, as against the 10,000,000 in the Russian zone). Therefore, they demagogically demand immediate withdrawal of all foreign forces! The rest can be accomplished by their cohorts and Quislings. Their preparation for such a coup de main is indicative of purpose and objective that stands behind Russian imperialism—in sharp distinction to the utter confusion and bungling of the American variety.

The American occupants of southern Korea, grasping the situation, have rejected this proposal and instead demand a slow withdrawal, with parliamentary elections to be held within a year. American imperialism, in its fashion, is relying upon the capacity of the various conservative and bourgeois parties it has activated in Korea to create a new army and state machinery that will, given time, be able to halt any bid of Korean Stalinism for power. It likewise believes it can win the elections because of the general dislike for Russia manifest throughout the country due to Russian looting and exploitation in the North. American imperialism thus wishes to delay, to stall, to hedge for time, while hoping for the building up of a solid capi-

talist regime in the nation.

Torn between these two powers, what is the fate of the country? The struggle for independence and genuine freedom not merely remains but is more sorely needed, more desperate, than ever. The example of Korea is a picture of today's imperialism at work in what were supposed to have been yesterday's liberated colonies.

THE EXAMPLE OF BURMA:

Burma has gone further than any of the British empire's Crown Colonies or occupied areas in breaking its ties with the mother country. This former colony has succeeded, to a large extent, in accomplishing what the colonial bourgeoisie of other lands—such as Indonesia and Indo-China—have attempted but failed to do. Burma has actually left the empire and seceded from the famous Commonwealth of Nations. In all likelihood, this marks the ultimate degree of "independence" from imperialism obtainable by the capitalist class of a subject colonial nation. Yet this "independence" must be properly understood for what it actually is—in the words of Lord Llistowel, former Secretary for Burma, "a change in relations between the countries. The relations between the countries will be different but no less friendly or effective."

What did these cheerful words signify? The terms of the British-Burmese treaty, signed October 17 and just made public, give the answer. There has been an adaptation to changed conditions. The Treaty will be effective in January, after Parliament has ratified the Burma independence bill. Some of its terms are revealing of "changed conditions."

A military mission, only from the United Kingdom (size unknown), will remain on in Burma. British military aircraft shall have the peacetime right to fly over the country and shall have facilities at prescribed airfields. Burma shall facilitate and assist the transportation of British military forces in time of war or its approach (this means the British can reoccupy the country at will).

Further, the financial accord of 1947 is to be continued, with guaranteed protection for the commercial interests (partly or fully) held by British citizens. Existing trade preference agreements between the two countries is included in the pact.

In the light of these and other details, then, the so-called independence of Burma emerges as a working agreement, keyed to fit the new times, between British imperialism and the Burmese bourgeoisie. The Burmese ruling class becomes the more direct administrators (co-partners would be a more accurate word) and continuators of the two-century old British rule.

Henry JUDD.



By JACK RANGER

EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN

The long-term pattern of the makeup of the country's labor force, by age and sex, has been considerably upset during the war and since, the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports. The most pronounced effect has been the abnormally large number of teen agers who joined the labor force during the war, and the great number still working two years after the end of the war. This development reverses a steady decline for decades in the proportion of boys and girls of school age, 14 to 19 years old, in the labor force. There has likewise been an abnormal increase in the number of elderly men and women in the labor force, particularly those who have reached the normal retirement age of 65.

Though the labor bureau doesn't say so, the main reason for this increase in child labor and in the number of elderly people at work is due to the skyrocketing cost of living and to the disruption in family life brought about by the war. Millions of fathers were plucked from their jobs by the armed services, leaving families dependent on inadequate government allowances. This meant that other members of the family had to take up the burden.

At the same time, in the last two years there has been a reverse movement out of the labor force of young men and women between the ages of 20 and 34. For this age group, there are 2,000,000 persons less than normal in the labor force, reflecting the high post-war marriage and birth rates, and full-time school enrollment of veterans under GI benefits.

In April, 1947, the country's labor force contained some 8,000,000 teen agers and men and women over 65, more than 2,000,000 greater than normal. These two groups together represented more than one-eighth of the total labor force. There were 3,480,000 boys 14 to 19 in the labor force in April, or 1,010,000 more than normal; and 1,820,000 girls in that age range, or 630,000 more than normal. Thus the number of boys and girls of school age then in the labor force exceeded normal by 1,640,000. About 600,000 of these, aged 17 to 19, were in the armed forces, the bureau estimated. (The bureau's term "labor force" includes all those gainfully employed, the unemployed, and those in the military forces.)

AS TO WOMEN WORKERS...

Contrary to some predictions, women are holding on to the jobs they got during the wartime manpower shortage. This, too, can be traced by the high cost of living, which often makes it necessary for several members of a family to work to meet family expenses.

In New York State, the industrial commissioner recently reported that employment of women, while slightly below the peak of 1944, is still higher than for any pre-war year. A recent survey, reported Commissioner Edward Corsi, showed that at the peak of war production in November, 1944, there were 1,944,200 women employed in the state, or 34.1 per cent of the female population over 14 years old. After V-J Day this number declined to 1,856,000, or 31.1 per cent, by April, 1946. Since then, the volume of female employment has remained almost constant, with 1,848,000, or 30.6 per cent, working as of April, 1947. The present level of female employment is far above the best pre-war year. In 1940 there were 1,453,356 women, or 26.3 per cent, working in the state.

The survey indicated that the factories are successfully competing with "white collar" work for women workers. Women's employment in the basic metal and machinery industry, for instance, rose by 12 per cent between 1946 and 1947, and this year women comprised 15 per cent of all employees in that group, compared with only nine per cent before the war. There was almost no change in the number of women working in non-manufacturing industries in 1946-47, the total in April of this year being 1,274,000. The survey showed that women who were barred from jobs on ocean-going ships during the war are now returning to the sea in increasing numbers as nurses, attendants, stewardesses, telephone operators, kitchen workers and matrons.

ECONOMIC NOTES

The Institute of Life Insurance reports it is growing "uneasy" over the rapid rise of personal debt in the United States. The American people as a whole went deeper into debt in the first six months of this year, the institute reports. The total of personal debt rose more than \$3 billion in the period, to reach a new high estimated at \$45 billion as of June 30. The wealthy insurance companies are particularly disturbed because government curbs on installment selling and consumer credit in general, imposed during the war as an anti-inflationary measure, have expired.

Last year the rise in personal debt showed the largest annual increase on record, more than \$8 billion, and this trend is still continuing. "There are some disturbing implications in the current personal debt situation," reports the institute. "In the last 18 months, aggregate personal debt outstanding has gone up more than \$11 billion, adding a third to the total outstanding at the end of 1945. Such an abrupt rise is unparalleled in the records of personal debt statistics. . . . The prudent course for the average person is to buy wisely and to conserve his savings and other resources until a competitive economy is restored—not to jump on the spending-borrowing bandwagon."

The institute states that a recent federal reserve board study shows that more than one-quarter of the 46,300,000 spending units lived beyond their incomes last year, either by drawing on savings or by borrowing. The biggest increase in outstanding personal debt in the first half of 1947 resulted from the purchase of homes. Consumer credit also increased substantially.

As one of the millions of American bread-winners who is not well enough off to be "prudent" and to "conserve savings" until a competitive economy is restored, I've got an idea for all of us who have had to hit the Morris Plan during the past year. There is no use of both us and the Institute of Life Insurance worrying about how these debt are going to be paid back. Let's let the institute worry about it. . . .

The Alexander Hamilton Institute reports that a survey of rents from 1918 to the present indicates that rents will continue to rise for several years. (Say, it occurs to me all this makes a mighty "blue" column, but don't blame it on me, blame it on capitalism.) With 1935-39 as a base of 100, in June, 1947, the rent index was 109.2, up only 9.2 per cent over the 1938 average of 104.1. If the pattern after the First World War is repeated, rents in the United States will continue to rise until the end of 1953, reports the institute.

Japanese Labor Is Restive

Caught in Wage-Price Scissors, Working Class Presses for Action

By JACK BRAD

The Japanese labor movement shows increased signs of restiveness and discontent with the Social Democratic coalition government. The regime's failure to carry through its announced program, its apparent inability to relieve the daily hunger of Japan's working millions, and its constant retreat before the pressure of the Democratic Party, right hand of the coalition, have caused widespread disillusionment.

The Social Democracy was brought to power by an extremely alert and conscious working class on a program of substantial reform. On every positive aspect of its program, the SDP has surrendered. Its big test came on the issue of nationalization of the coal industry. Although the bill presented to the cabinet was considerably weaker than the British nationalization, and even though in practice the proposed nationalization "would hardly have been more serious than the already existing government regulation," the conservative Democrats opposed it.

There is evidence that the Democrats were acting in this case as the agents of MacArthur's headquarters. They forced the SDP leadership, which is now substantially right-wing dominated, to retreat. This issue marked the collapse of the SDP's leadership in the coalition even though it retains a formal cabinet majority.

LABOR MILITANCY

In the measures for so-called "economic stabilization," measures against the working class, the SDP has been far more successful. It was to secure this program that the SDP was brought to power with MacArthur's blessing, since no outright capitalist regime had been able to put them over.

On February 1, MacArthur brutally broke the abortive general strike by employing police measures against the strike leadership! He then began a widely organized campaign against economic militancy by the trade unions under the guise of opposition to communism, at the same time as a new election was announced for April to replace the reactionary Yoshida government. This government had been the chief object of the general strike and of the militant marches, demonstrations and other activities of the workers. Opposition to Yoshida's regime had been the axis for working class unity around which all the unions and federations, the SDP and the CP had formed. The presence of the reactionary regime had forced the workers into the path of militant extra-parliamentary action.

With announcement of the election, the workers became involved in an organized political contest in which the leadership was securely held by the SDP, which in turn was becoming increasingly conservative as it approached the possibility of becoming a government party. Activity in the ranks lagged during the pre-election period. The workers, securely harnessed to the parliamentary objective of voting out the Yo-

shida government, became quiescent. Equally important, the defects of the general strike were profoundly felt. The militants were in retreat. The leadership of the SDP left wing, Suzuki and Kanju Kato, issued statements repudiating any alliance with the Communist Party in such a way as to proclaim their capitulation to the right wing of Abe, Katayama and Muzutani. The right turn of the SDP leadership increased as it began to dicker for office after the election, from which it emerged as the largest single party. For the first time since the war, the fascist wing of the SDP began an actual struggle against the left under the guise of an anti-communist offensive.

COMPEL RETREAT

In the trade unions the same process took place. The Youth Action Corps, which had been the spearhead and shock troop of united labor action and of the general strike preparations, was dissolved. The number of strikes fell markedly, as did former organization of unions. At various union conventions, the general strike was repudiated and threats to leave the National Congress of Industrial Unions were made by important locals of radio and newspaper workers. Splits occurred in several unions.

Finally, the National Congress of Industrial Unions itself repudiated the general strike, thus joining the right-wing SDP-controlled Japanese Federation of Labor. Policies of class peace and of opposition to "political strikes" were adopted by both the JFI and the NCIU. The Communist Party endorsed these policies officially.

One of the most serious legal rulings was passed at this time. The Yoshida government took advantage of the general retreat to attempt to put an end to workers' control of production strikes. The test occurred over the control of a Tokyo newspaper which was being operated by the local union. The court ordered an end to union control and return of the paper to the publisher, who was in jail charged with being a war criminal. In the Toyo Watch Co. case, the Supreme Court's ruling did not expressly forbid production control but did establish legal limitations against such strike methods.

The black market continues to dominate economic life! Prices remain out of control and continue to rise rapidly. The food situation is increasingly desperate. Distribution of rice rations remains seven to fourteen days behind, with an average of 25 days' rations actually made available each month. Caloric consumption is estimated at 1792 in Tokyo and 1822 in other cities, while 2,400-2,500 are the minimum for work and life. Deficits in rice collections were made up earlier this year by releasing 600,000 tons of food from American sources. However, on September 23, MacArthur's office announced that American sources would "substantially" reduce food exports to Japan. To cope with this situation the government introduced two complementary measures. First, it froze wages

at 1800 yen a month. Second, it organized a program of agricultural subsidies and increased official prices on all important staples. The result of these measures was to place the burden for the desperate food crisis on the working class. It costs 1300 yen a month for the city worker to purchase his diet of about 1800 calories.

The working class is caught in a scissors between decreasing value of wages and increasing prices, both official and black market. The official price of rice increased 300 per cent in September and black market prices 295 per cent. At the same time the government cut the official ration by one-sixth, forcing workers to obtain between 30 and 50 per cent of their food on the black market. Cost of public utilities was raised 300 per cent. Clothing has virtually disappeared, even from the black market. The official ration for a family of five consisted of one undershirt for six months. Meanwhile the American occupation export policy is sending out of the country 60 per cent of cotton goods production to help cover the cost of occupation.

The Katayama government has presented a new supplementary tax bill for 70 billion yen, about 1 1/2 billion dollars, a large part of which is to go for occupation costs. The bulk of this new tax is to be borne by the workers. According to a Kyodo news agency report of October 12, this tax would cost every worker about 5700 yen a year or about three months' pay. Other measures of "economic reconstruction" have resulted in a rationalization of employment, throwing thousands out of jobs and threatening literally tens of thousands of other workers.

NEW OFFENSIVE

Under this combined economic pressure the Japanese working class has become increasingly dissatisfied with the SDP regime. There has been much talk of an "October offensive," which might go into November. Last year the labor movement organized an October offensive of strikes and demonstrations against the Yoshida government. In October, 1946, two and a half million men days were lost due to strikes, with 283,459 workers involved in disputes.

Already, in April of this year, the workers had begun to recover from the effects of the general strike defeat. In that month 218,000 workers formed 1349 new unions. On September 27, 33,000 machine workers went on strike. At present, government workers, who are most seriously affected by the wage freeze, are leading the struggle, just as they did in the general strike.

The form of strike is "absenteeism." Hundreds of thousands of government workers, especially the communications workers, who are very well organized, are staying away from work. The Coal Miners Federation, which contains about 95 per cent of the workers in the industry, has presented wage demands. Suzuki, of the SDP left wing, has finally spoken out against the wage freeze.

CONVENTION'S POLICY DECISIONS WILL HAVE FAR-REACHING EFFECTS

UAW Convention Issues Are Vital for All Labor

(Continued from page 1)

Thomas-Leonard-Stalinist bloc, the overwhelming bulk of the auto workers have decided they prefer the program and leadership personified by Walter P. Reuther.

This fact is crystal clear in the results of the election of delegates to the convention, which contest took on the form of pro or anti-Reuther slates. The Reuther forces enter the convention with roughly 4,500 votes as against the 2,400 of the Addes-Stalinist bloc, with approximately 800 votes not yet tabulated at this writing.

An important conclusion may be drawn from this fact alone. The triumph of the Reuther tendency represents a terrible blow to the Stalinist totalitarian machine operating in the American labor movement. This is a genuine progressive accomplishment because it was the work primarily of the active union militants in the most "radical" big union of America. Only because Walter Reuther and his associates appealed essentially to the progressive and militant sentiments of the auto workers against the reactionary role of the Stalinists in the labor movement were they able to achieve victory of a scope much larger than even Reuther expected.

In terms of the UAW officialdom, this development signifies a drastic sweep and change. The Reuther caucus has announced its candidates for all top posts, and is likely to win. Besides Reuther for president, Richard Gosser is slated to replace R. J. Thomas, John Livingston to oppose Richard T. Leonard, in the vice-presidential posts, and Emil Mazey is the candidate against George Addes for secretary-treasurer. There will be considerable shake-ups in regional directors also.

MUST MEET PROBLEMS

However, if the UAW convention fails to accomplish more than just giving a sound whipping to the Addes-Stalinist bloc—important as this is—the convention will have failed to measure up to the vital challenge and tasks imposed upon it by the economic and political crisis confronting the labor movement and the whole nation.

To meet these crucial problems, the auto workers have been presented with two main platforms, reflecting the character of the contending factions. More exactly, the whole struggle in the UAW has led to the growth of two main political tendencies in the union around the ideas that dominate the thinking of the top leadership. One is the Reuther program, and the other is the Addes-Stalinist program. This is a choice, as LABOR ACTION has analyzed repeatedly, between a bankrupt tendency that is largely discredited, namely, the Addes-Stalinist bloc, and the Reuther tendency, whose program contains a certain minimum progressive content.

The Reuther tendency rallied militants to its ranks by the GM strike program with its central idea of higher wages without price increases. This offered a possible road to a successful fight against inflation. In contrast, the Addes-Stalinist bloc marched backward with its conservative and reactionary opposition to those progressive ideas. Recent attempts to regain lost ground by suddenly using radical and militant phrases have not deceived many auto workers.

For two years Reuther built a careful record of union responsibility and an attempt to achieve unity with the opposition on a sound basis while the Addes-Stalinist bloc exposed itself as irresponsible factionalists, climaxing their mistakes with an attempt to foist the notorious FE merger proposal on the ranks of the UAW.

Debate on those issues at the convention will serve primarily to reaffirm the character of the two factions, including the limitations of the progressive content of the Reuther tendency. In demanding verbatim minutes of International Executive Board meetings, in calling for a board of trustees to supervise international union finances, in asking for adequate unemployment compensation and veterans' departments, Reuther is certain of support of the vast majority of delegates because it is clearly to the interests of the rank and file to have these measures adopted.

REUTHER ON SPOT

The debate on the question of the threat of a third world imperialist war may take various forms. The convention will reaffirm the traditional opposition to universal military training, without much discussion. But the resolution on foreign policy will bring out the differences of opinion in sharp form. No matter what wording is used in the resolution to blur or obscure differences, discussion will bring out the different tendencies and thinking in the UAW.

One thing is certain: the Stalinists will show themselves again as functioning exclusively in the interests of Russian imperialism. They will attack American imperialism with radical phrases to cover up the crimes of Stalinist imperialism. The conservative, pro-capitalist officialdom, represented by the Thomases and Leonards in the Addes-Stalinist bloc, and the Gossers and Livingstons in the Reuther camp, will hide behind the CIO convention resolution on the Marshall Plan and motivate their actions by one main consideration: How will my stand affect my chances of election or re-election? Bureaucratic self-interest, and not the requirements of the working class, will be the motor-force in their thinking and actions.

The man on the spot on this issue is Walter Reuther. At the last convention, the Reuther forces supported a resolution introduced by Victor Reuther denouncing in general terms both imperialisms, American and Russian. At the CIO convention, Reuther demonstrated to Philip Murray his willingness to "be a good boy" and supported a resolution that, in effect, endorsed the Marshall Plan. But here, Reuther is dealing with the militant UAW and faces the pressure of the Addes-Stalinist bloc as well as Murray's pressure.

The convention will be treated to a classic demonstration of the art of evasion and opportunism by Reuther. Confusion and not clarification on vital foreign policies becomes the inevitable result, and the responsibility rests on the entire top leadership of the UAW. An indicated clear-cut stand against Washington and Moscow may be lost in the shuffle.

TAFT-HARTLEY ISSUE

But there is one political issue that can and may—as it should—break through some of the confusion on policy at this convention. It concerns

the acute problem of fighting the Taft-Hartley law and other anti-labor legislation. It can be defined as the question of what kind of political and economic action the UAW must adopt to stop the bosses' offensive against labor, and make the counter-attack in behalf of the working people of America.

In the field of economic action, there will be unmistakable sentiment to return to the militancy of 1937 and 1938. The least that any of the top officials will do is pay lip-service to militancy, all the more so to cover up their lack of courage precisely where it counts most—in the field of political action.

Before discussing this we must point out that one aspect of the Taft-Hartley law problem presents a serious problem to the Reuther tendency in particular, because of the reactionary position its leadership took on the question of signing the "non-communist affidavits." By saying it should be signed, the Reuther leadership hoped to have a weapon for isolating the Stalinists and embarrassing their allies.

Fortunately for the union, the Reuther tendency is not so stupid as to believe that the adamant position of John L. Lewis on the Taft-Hartley law, for the Reuther leaders to make this an important issue. The capitulation of the Reuther leadership to the pressure of the anti-labor drive involved on this question poses a serious problem. On this issue the hope of the UAW depends on the militants to block this move and to keep the union from committing a terrible blunder on this question.

MURRAY'S INFLUENCE

On the fundamental question of political action, the entire top leadership knows it faces an unmistakable demand for an independent Labor Party as the only effective answer to the anti-labor drive. Briggs Local 212, Chrysler Local 7, Local 306, locals in Flint and elsewhere have all submitted resolutions demanding that the UAW take the leadership in calling for a national conference of all unions, CIO, AFL and independents, to choose a platform, candidates and build a Labor Party.

Unfortunately, a resolution on the Labor Party will not pass. In advance, one can predict that the top leadership, carrying the majority of delegates with them on this question, will adopt some kind of resolution paying lip-service to either a third capitalist party or a vague independent political action statement. The reasons for this are important to understand.

Looking over the leadership of the UAW is the influence of Philip Murray, CIO president, who has already committed the CIO to support Harry S. Truman (the strike-breaker of 1946) for re-election. The Reuthers and the Addes find themselves torn between the demands of Murray and the sentiments of an increasing number of the rank and file. Under Murray's pressure, Reuther withdrew from the platform adopted by the national Reuther caucus, a declaration in favor of independent political action, even in that vague form. Two of Reuther's associates, Martin Gerber and Emil Mazey, both of whom have often spoken for a Labor Party,

have maintained an embarrassed silence since.

In the Addes-Stalinist camp, the question of political action has followed the gyrations of the Stalinist Party. The big talk about a third party has been replaced by phrases of "eventually build a broad coalition." It is doubtful if this faction will dare to put up a fight for Henry Wallace for President. In a word, this bloc is divided, confused and in retreat.

Fortunately, the fight for a Labor Party will cut across factional lines, and serve to expose to some extent the limitations of the whole top CIO and UAW leadership. The main aim of the top leadership will be precisely to avoid such an exposure. Thus the auto workers face the harsh prospect of being politically impotent in the 1948 elections due to the conservative and reactionary policy of its leaders.

Since LABOR ACTION is printing a special article on the question of "outside influences," we will not treat with that matter here. But there is one more issue pre-

ented to the convention that merits more than passing attention. In the matter of a struggle against Jim Crow, the Stalinists have cooked up once again a scheme calculated to exploit the sentiments of the Negro delegates and keep a majority of them within Stalinist influence. It is the demand that a Negro be elected vice-president.

In order to understand this question, a refresher of previous events is required. At the last Michigan CIO convention, the Stalinists tried the same maneuver. They made indignant speeches about giving Negroes their just rights, and they demanded a Negro be elected to a top office. There was just one little thing wrong with their whole program. A Negro already was first vice-president of the Michigan CIO and he was re-elected on his merits. Negro delegates themselves pointed this out to expose the shady character of the Stalinist attack.

The Stalinists were not interested primarily in having a Negro as a top officer—they voted against Bill Humphries, a Negro who happens to support the Reuther tendency. The Stalinists were interested in getting a Stalinist in top office. Fundamentally, this is exactly how the question presents itself at the UAW convention. Nor is it likely that the Stalinist demagoguery will fool many of the Negro delegates on this question.

PROGRAM WILL DECIDE

Although this convention will retain the turbulent character of previous conventions, there should be one important difference. Last year, none of the major issues got a real hearing on the convention floor. The main discussions took place at the caucus meetings, which are part and parcel of the convention.

This is good. Let the factions present their views fully and clearly, and with responsibility, before the delegates. This feature will make it more difficult for the usual character assassination, smear techniques and rumor-mongering—the hallmark of the Addes-Stalinist bloc methods—to play any role.

In conclusion, the true measure of the progressive character of the UAW convention may be evaluated clearly by weighing in balance the program it adopts around the three major tasks before labor:

(1) The immediate formation of an independent Labor Party based upon the organized labor movement and all the mass organizations which fight for the people. For an uncompromising opposition to all the capitalist politicians and a complete break with the Republican and Democratic Parties.

(2) A plan of action against the Taft-Hartley Act that relies on the coordinated, independent mass action of the workers in the form of strikes, demonstrations, mass rallies and picketing, etc. No reliance on capitalist politicians in this fight. Every legal and constitutional device to be employed without deluding the workers into giving exaggerated importance to them. No reliance upon judges and courts and lawyers.

(3) Labor, and not the liberal capitalist, to become the true champion of all sections of the population who suffer oppression and discrimination in any form. The organization by the union movement of a Labor Veterans Legion, mass tenants' associations, popular mass committees of Negro and white workers to fight against every form of race discrimination.

Not All Politics Is "Outside Interference"

Can Auto Workers Escape Politics? - -

(Continued from page 1)

"red-baiting" group in the entire labor movement is none other than the... Communist Party! It is the worst enemy of the militants in the union. It has fought them for years. It has mobilized, or attempted to mobilize, the most backward, the most conservative elements in the union, against the real fighters. Like the typical red-baiter, it justifies its anti-militant, anti-union policies by denouncing its opponents as "Trotskyists."

If we do not allow ourselves to be hypnotized by the CP's mumbo-jumbo about "red-baiting," we will be able to see where Reuther is right and where he is wrong in his manner of combatting the influence of the Communist Party.

When Reuther points out that the Communist Party and all its followers in the UAW have "changed their spots in keeping with the changes in foreign policy of the Soviet Union," and that it has been for or against Roosevelt, for or against strikes, for or against incentive pay and speed-up, for or against the war—all in order to "reflect the shift in the foreign policy of the Soviet Union," he is 100 per cent correct. It is all absolutely true.

When Reuther says that the policies of the Communist Party are not based upon the needs of the working class, that these policies are anti-labor, reactionary... it is all absolutely true.

But... when, on the basis of these correct facts about the CP, he leads members of the UAW to believe that all so-called "minority" political groups stand for and practice "interference" in the life of the union and that it is therefore necessary to be on guard against such alleged "interference" from all political groups, he is way off the mark.

The Addes-Thomas group, it should be noted here, which is allied with the CP, states in its report to the membership: "We oppose control of our union by any outside group, by the Communist Party, the Socialist Party, the Republican Party or any party or group."

MANY POLITICAL CURRENTS IN UAW

What is wrong with the CP is NOT simply that it is a "political group" but that it is a certain kind of political group, namely: a reactionary, anti-labor group which serves the interests and aims of the Stalinist regime in Russia. The crime of the Addes-Thomas-Leonard bloc is not simply that it is allied with a political group but that it allies itself with and protects this reactionary Stalinist political group. When Reuther shifts the burden of his criticism away from the CP in particular and onto political groups in general, he enables the anti-Reuther bloc to cover up

its rotten alliance with the CP with the smoke-screen of fighting for democratic rights.

There are many, many political currents and sub-currents in the labor movement as a whole and in the UAW. How could it be otherwise? The vast majority of the CIO is well convinced that political action is a vital necessity for the working class. Don't we all realize that pure and simple, old-style unionism is not adequate? Even the leaders of the AFL are learning this simple fact. But what kind of politics is necessary? Differences of opinion are inevitable. Especially now, when more and more workers understand that the old policies of supporting "friends of labor" in the two old parties are not good enough. What shall we replace these policies with? All UAW members, all workers, have the right and the duty to argue for and to fight for their respective political views.

There are only two types of people who could think otherwise. One is the backward, uneducated worker who is against all political action and who looks upon it all as an "interference" with the "legitimate" functions of the union. In many AFL unions, any and all participation in political action is looked upon as outside "interference." The other type is the Stalinists who aim to wipe out democratic discussion in the labor movement. Wherever they have the power, they outlaw all other groups, as in the United Electrical Union, so that they may have a total monopoly of rights in the union for Stalinist politics.

The Reuther group itself is a political group and tendency. More accurately, it is a combination of two major political tendencies. The fact that the supporters and leaders of the Reuther group do not admit this fact or are not even aware of this fact themselves does not change it in the slightest. In the Reuther group we find (1) those who believe in continuing the present CIO policy of supporting so-called liberal Democrats and (2) that growing militant section of the union which is becoming dissatisfied with the old policy but does not yet know what to replace it with.

Those union leaders who propose on election day that we support liberal Democrats... are they not proposing "outside" interference? Are they not proposing "outside" connections for the UAW? And these "outside" connections are not only "outside" of the UAW... they are connections outside of our class, the working class. They propose, in brief, outside connections with the political representatives of the capitalist parties.

SOCIALISTS AND LABOR MOVEMENT

We of the Workers Party constitute one of the

political tendencies in the UAW as in the labor movement as a whole. We believe in a change in policy for the labor movement. We believe that it is necessary to fight for a workers' government in this country; that it is necessary to take big industry away from the monopolists and run it for the benefit of the people. As a step in this direction, we propose the immediate formation by the unions of a new political party, an independent Labor Party. To summarize: we stand for and advocate socialist politics for the labor movement.

Now it is true that we are a "minority" political group. We are, however, part and parcel of the labor movement. We are in and of the labor movement. We are an "inside" political group. Our followers are union men who join in all the struggles of the working class. The Democratic Party, however, is an "outside" group. Its connections with the unions are maintained through the top union officialdom. Those leaders of the union movement, therefore, who advocate support to the Democratic Party have no moral right of any kind to criticize political groups in the union, merely because they are political groups.

At one time in the labor movement, the advocates of the industrial union form of organization were a "minority" in the labor movement. Today, advocates of this policy are the leaders of the mighty CIO. The advocates of socialist unionism and socialist politics for the unions are a minority today. Tomorrow, however, they will be the majority. All these questions, however, can and must be decided by the workers on the basis of the fullest, the freest and most democratic discussion of all problems, union problems as well as political problems.

The Communist Party is one and only one political tendency among others in the labor movement. However, because of its ideas and its program it is a reactionary and anti-labor tendency. That is why we must fight it to the death. The fight against Stalinism, too, must be conducted on the basis of full and free discussion. In the last analysis, Stalinism can be fully and finally defeated only when the labor movement itself adopts socialist labor politics and thereby makes impossible the winning over of dupes to Stalinist politics by demagogic appeals.

The correct slogan today in the fight against Stalinism would be: Against control of the UAW or any other union by the Stalinists, and their allies. For the complete destruction of the Stalinist influence. For full democratic rights to all in the labor movement.

FRENCH LABOR IN COMBATIVE MOOD

De Gaulle Election Successes Sharpening Class Relations in France

PARIS, Oct. 23—Yesterday all 24 ministers of the government resigned and the opening of the French Parliament was pushed ahead from the second week in November to October 28. This new political crisis followed Sunday's elections in France's 38,000 municipalities. The political crisis has been met temporarily by Ramadier through a reshuffle of the cabinet, reducing its personnel by half and, in effect, constituting it as a makeshift emergency cabinet.

When the Parliament opens it will have before it not only the problem of De Gaulle and his party, the RPF, which won the greatest vote in the municipal elections; there will be also before it the demand for a 50 per cent wage increase in the minimum wage level of the French workers, which is now about 7000 francs per month. The Stalinist leaders of the CGT's (General Federation of Labor) 6,000,000 members have made this demand and have threatened a general strike if this is not granted. The dilemma of French bourgeois democracy is reflected in the reaction to this demand by Robert Schuman, Minister of Finance, and MRP (Liberal-Catholic Party) member, who is reported to have told Ramadier that the present weakness of the franc could not withstand this inflationary rise and that he would resign if the government accepted the CGT terms.

MIDDLE CLASS SHIFT

The elections have shown that while the middle classes have defi-

nately shifted to the "strong man" solution of De Gaulle, the working class continues to follow both the Communist Party and the Socialist Party. The latter parties more or less held their own with 30 per cent and 15 per cent respectively, compared to De Gaulle's 40 per cent. This of the votes cast. Thirty per cent of the electorate, an unusually heavy percentage, abstained from voting.

Hence, more than ever, the Stalinists are determined to keep their hold on the working class. They are once more taking an aggressive stand in their presentation of the workers' demands. But note their evolution in the past two weeks. At the beginning of the subway and bus workers' strike, which was called by an autonomous union, the Stalinist leaders of the CGT followed their old pattern of first coming out against the strike and then putting themselves at the head of it when, despite their efforts, the strike began to spread. The strike was on when the elections took place last Sunday. The results of the elections made the CGT more determined than ever that the strike end with a victory of the workers. They threatened the government with a general strike if it did not capitulate to all of the workers' demands, chief of which was the demand for a 25 per cent wage increase. The government leaders, particularly those of the SP, also acquired a new concern for the workers. Last Tuesday they gave in to most of the workers' demands and the strike ended. The SP leaders are now trying to

associate themselves with the demand for a 50 per cent increase of the minimum wage. Le Populaire (SP paper) record with what cordiality and sympathy Daniel Mayer, SP leader, met the delegation of the CGT. The disintegration of their middle class ally, the MRP, has forced the SP to renew its efforts to win the workers from the Stalinists. They are encouraged in this by the fact that in the elections they unexpectedly won support in some workers' centers which up to now had followed the Stalinists.

Next Sunday there will be runoff elections where majorities have not been obtained and there will also be the election of mayors by the new members of the municipal councils. The Stalinists are making a strong appeal for a bloc between themselves and the SP against the de Gaullists on this score. While both the CP and the SP are aware that De Gaulle is an "apprentice dictator," to use the words of Leon Jouhaux of the CGT, the SP leadership is undecided about such a bloc though in some localities discussions are already taking place between the CP and the SP.

Having campaigned for the salvation of the "democratic republic" against the dangers of a de Gaullist and a Stalinist dictatorship, the SP leaders find it a little difficult now to yield to the CP appeal. The more so as they have chosen to work on the basis of the Marshall Plan and have vigorously attacked the efforts of the Stalinists to draw France into the orbit of Moscow. As the de Gaul-

list fascist danger increases, such an attitude is bound to play into the hands of the Stalinists, who will put the responsibility of a divided working class on the SP.

There is no doubt that De Gaulle's victory represents a defeat for the working class. The shift of the middle classes from MRP to the RPF is an indication of its shift from neutrality to desperation and its increasing desire to put the fate of the nation in the hands of a dictator standing for "order."

STALINIST GAME

The Stalinists made every effort to secure a victory in the elections. They had lists in all of the 38,000 municipalities and even the RPF, which spent a fortune in the campaign, did not present as many candidates as the CP. Every kind of an appeal was made: linking of the RPF with the Vichyites, the Nazis, and the Cagoulards; demonstrating that with the elimination of the CP from the government six months ago prices had risen by 100 per cent; for the independence of France from the domination of the Marshall Plan and American imperialism; promises to the workers, the farmers, the middle classes and even an appeal to the old papas and mamas.

Every appeal was made except that which would open up a revolutionary perspective. The CP effort to reenter a bankrupt government inspired no one. As between Moscow and the Marshall Plan, the country definitely

chose the latter, which under conditions of mounting inflation seems more realistic. Add to that the increasing tensions between Russia and the Western world, particularly America, and the fear of war and Russian domination, and one can see why the "anti-communism" of De Gaulle met with such great success among the thoroughly frightened middle classes.

The SP played the game of the capitalists, but the Stalinists disrupted the working class and the middle class. A part of the latter is still not for De Gaulle and is in opposition to his fascist aims and to all the reactionaries who have rallied around him. About 15 per cent of the expressed electorate still follows the Radical Socialists and the MRP and one must also include in the hesitating category the 30 per cent who abstained from voting altogether. They are potential material for either side, but one must admit that now the tide is with De Gaulle.

DE GAULLE'S STRATEGY

The de Gaullists in the Parliament are as yet a small group but every day more and more deputies of the middle class parties desert to the RPF. The latter's attraction extends even to the SP. Some of the neo-Socialists will undoubtedly go over to De Gaulle. In a few of the municipalities the SP ran on the same list with the RPF.

The de Gaullists are not, in any hurry to head the government though

if they wanted to they could do so almost immediately. Ramadier, who has learned nothing, can be depended upon to continue the Parliamentary farce until it suits the "strong man" to take over. Malraux, the former leftist writer, who in his disillusionment with Stalinism came over to De Gaulle and is now his chief publicist, has indicated that the Parliament itself will provide the means or make possible the referendum which will alter the constitution, giving De Gaulle the executive powers that he wants. But the more authoritative voice of Colonel Remy, chief of De Gaulle's private cabinet, says: "The victor will be called to power and their will be a new strong government which will govern by decree and which will push Parliament aside."

Both of these approaches complement each other, the one showing by what means De Gaulle will come to power and the other showing how he intends to rule. The development of De Gaullism into fullblown fascism is therefore being prepared. Like Hitler, De Gaulle wishes to have not only the army and the people at his disposal, but a mass base in the middle class. To break the organizations of the French working class one can expect the intervention not only of the forces of a reactionary state but of French storm troopers.

WAR NOT YET LOST

The reactionaries have now taken the offensive and this has only served

to strength the illusions of the workers with regard to the Stalinists. This more than anything else must be the explanation for the poor vote obtained by the few Unité Révolutionnaire lists in the elections. While the extreme poverty of the PCI (French Trotskyists) and the Socialist Youth League prevented them from presenting more than seven lists (out of 38,000), their total vote came to no more than 2,000. The workers saw the elections as a contest between the RFP and the CP and overlooked the small revolutionary wing. That is the most discouraging aspect of the elections, since it is certain that the Stalinists can only organize another defeat for the workers.

However, while the French workers have lost an important battle they have as yet not lost the war. The disorienting politics of the CP has not reduced the working class to impotence. They are still in a combative mood and well organized. Many battles still lie ahead and the revolutionary left has more influence in the working class than the elections indicate. There is still the hope that in the coming battles the workers will disengage themselves from the Stalinists and rally around the authentic communism of the Trotskyists. Here the time element is most important and if conditions in France remain at the present miserable level, then time too is running out fast.