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# LABOR ACTION

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A PAPER IN THE INTERESTS OF SOCIALISM

FIVE CENTS

## How Stalin "Saved" The Polish Jews...

One of the most frequent defenses which American Stalinists offered for the Hitler-Stalin pact was that when Stalin marched into Poland he thereby saved thousands of Jews from falling into the hands of Hitler. The argument, for all its speciousness, succeeded in attracting, if not enthusiasm for the pact, then a certain tolerance among Americans, especially American Jews. That Stalin, by signing the pact, helped Hitler march into Poland in the first place either did not occur to them or seemed irrelevant to the actual problem of what to do once Hitler did attack Poland. That is the way semi-Stalinists thought and it was on this line of thinking that the CP and its Jewish section harped with especial vehemence.

Now, however, that many of the secret documents with regards to the Hitler-Stalin pact have been revealed a new light is thrown on this matter. We read in a memorandum by the State Secretary of the German Foreign Office, one Weizsaecker, issued on December 5, 1939, that:

"Colonel General Keitel telephoned me today on the following matter: Lately there have been repeated wrangles on the boundary between Russia and the Government General (of the Nazi occupation in Poland—Ed.) into which the army, too, was drawn. The expulsion of Jews into Russian territory, in particular, did not proceed as smoothly as had apparently been expected.

"In practice, the procedure was, for example, that at a quiet place in the woods, a thousand Jews were expelled across the Russian border; 15 kilometers away, they came back, with the Russian commander trying to force the German one to readmit the group. As it was a case involving foreign policy..." (the report continues by discussing inner Nazi relationships with regard to how to handle this problem.)

These are sentences that should be read very carefully, not once but twice and three times.

For they give the lie completely and irremediably to the Stalinist claim that the Russian invasion of Poland was motivated by a desire to help the Polish Jews. Here we discover that when the Nazis themselves tried to push Jews into the Russian zone, the Russians—rather than welcoming the Jews, rather than taking them into their area and saving them from Nazi death camps—proceeded to drive them right back to the Nazis!

Notice, further, that the document quoted above speaks of this not as an isolated event but mentions it as an example of a procedure, a pattern. In other words, the incident must have been repeated many times, otherwise why should the Nazi General Keitel have complained?

What will the American Stalinists say to this? What will their Jewish paper, the Freiheit, say? Will they still continue to speak of the Hitler-Stalin division of Poland as a means of "saving" the Polish Jews? Or will they try to brazen out the scandal by silence?—I. H.

## Gandhi Assassination Stirs Crises In India

By HENRY JUDD

The tragic death of Mahatma Gandhi, assassinated by the hand of a young Hindu fanatic, brought to a peak the crisis caused by the partition of the Indian sub-continent and the continuing fratricidal war between rival Hindu and Moslem communities. The immediate effect of this black deed has been the release of powerful emotional feeling among the masses of India, expressed in great demonstrations of sorrow and mourning for the man who enjoyed a popularity and esteem unknown to the Western world. At the same time, popular action was taken against various organizations and newspapers connected with the Hindu Mahasabha, the reactionary movement of fanatic Hindus who desire war with the Moslem community and their subjugation to Hindu rule. This, too, reflects the symbolic significance of the slain Gandhi, so far as he represented the widespread desire for an end to communal warfare and strife. But it would be wrong to believe

that an era of Hindu-Moslem good will and accord can come about now. Gandhi's death opens the way for a political showdown in the ranks of his Congress party, now the ruling party of the Dominion of India. Gandhi was the binding link between the openly reactionary, capitalist-industrial wing of the party and its popular, middle-class democratic wing headed by Nehru, the Prime Minister of India. The right wing, anxious to quell India's rising labor movement and establish the authority of capital throughout the country, has already thrown out the hint that "left wing forces" were involved in Gandhi's assassination. This is an omen of sharp future struggles over power, relations between India and Pakistan, the labor and radical movement, etc., already in preparation. Gandhi's death opens a new phase in the history of India—a phase in which nationalism ceases and internal class struggle takes over. It will be marked by major political regroupings impossible as yet to fore-

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## Reports from Russia Show Preparations for Purge

By E. SAUNDERS

In the past two weeks, the New York Times has carried a number of articles about internal affairs in Russia which, put together, add up to the obvious fact that all is not running well in the bureaucratic apparatus. Eugene S. Varga, Russia's number one economist, has been stripped of his post as director of the Institute of World Economics and World Politics in the Soviet Academy of Sciences. Varga and twenty other Russian economists are in disgrace for allegedly refusing to reject the theoretical positions which Varga arrived at after a study of capitalist economy.

Although the book has not been seen, it purportedly was concluded at the beginning of 1946. Number 4 of the 1947 volume of the "Bulletin of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR" contains the report of the discussion of Varga's book held by twenty top Russian economists.

The theories put forward, according to this report are the following: (1) There are no economic reasons which must cause a conflict between Russian "socialism" and American capitalism, in the first post-war decade. (2) There is no likelihood of an economic crisis in western capitalism during the first ten post-war years. (3) The experience of war economies under capitalism shows that a democratic capitalist state can engage in

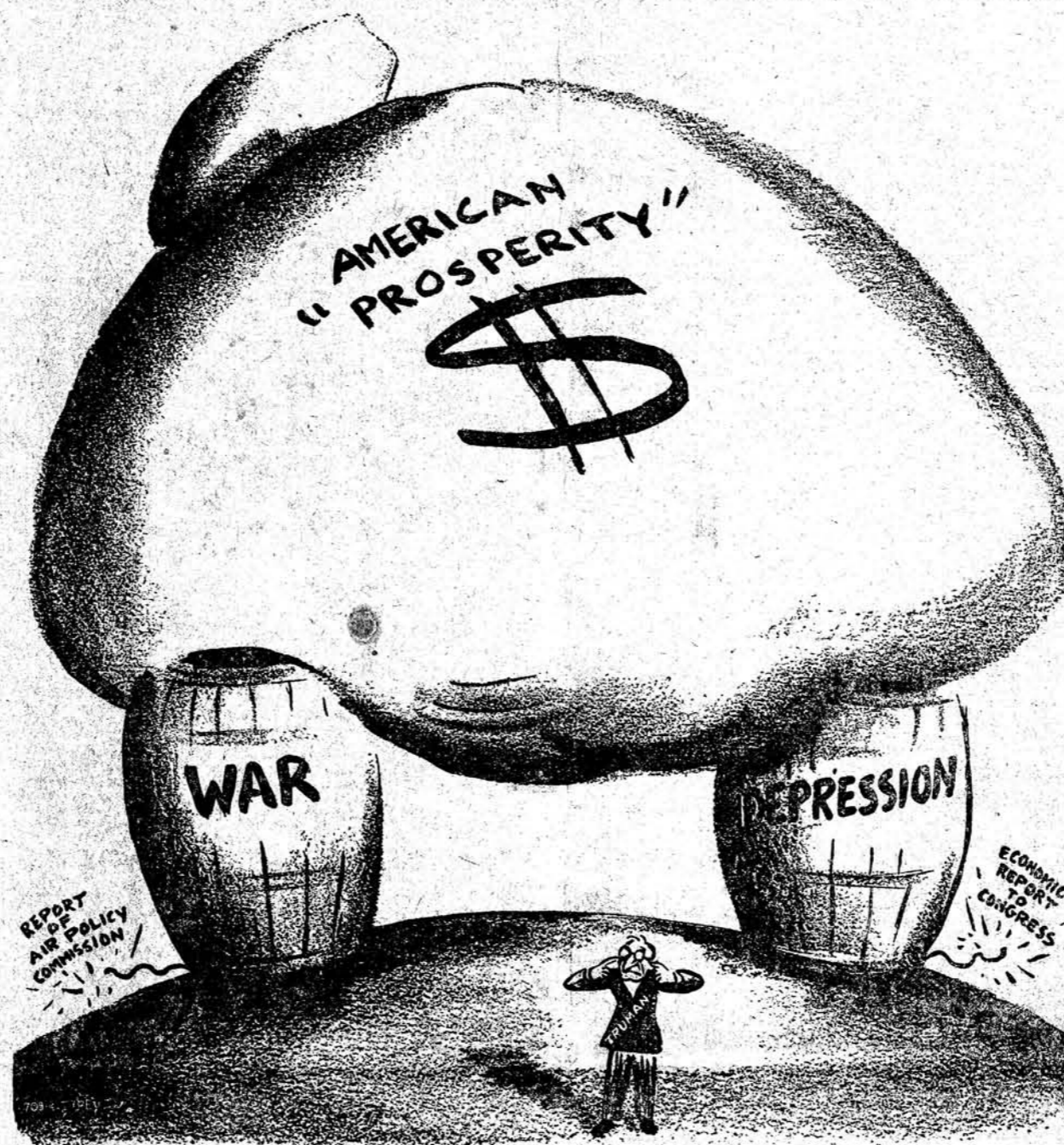
effective planning in the interests of the economy as a whole. The state can bring about the subordination of the profit motive to the national economic interest. (4) During the war the economic condition of the more exploited workers in western democratic countries, improved. The state was able to assure tolerable living conditions at the expense of the profits of the monopolists. (5) Capitalist



countries didn't enrich themselves by the war, but spent their resources toward the point of pauperization to achieve victory. (6) Capitalist countries have mitigated or abolished many forms of colonial exploitation. (7) The economic development of Europe will be determined by the western capitalist countries far more than by Russian satellite countries in

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## Labor Movement Prepares Action For Enforcement of Wage Demands



While Congress concerns itself almost exclusively with the issue of cutting taxes—particularly those affecting higher income brackets and corporations—and slashing the President's proposals on aid to Europe, there are mounting indications of an approaching wave of militant action on the part of the American labor movement within the next weeks and months.

All the real issues facing the country—inflation, rising prices, threatened shortage of foods and meats, the soon-to-be ending of rent controls, etc.—are being brusquely shunted aside by the reactionary Republican-dominated Congress now sitting in Washington. For over a month this Congress has sat and done absolutely nothing on such issues—above all, nothing to halt the constant tendency of prices to rise. Both parties in Congress have exclusively concerned themselves with the narrowest of political issues, each aiming to put the other on the spot for the '48 election campaign.

## Green Copies NAM, Urges Longer Hours

By SUSAN GREEN

Every once in a while William Green, President of the AFL, comes up out of obscurity to express himself. The other day he raved front-page billing when testifying before ideas on inflation, not necessarily his the Senate Banking Committee in hearings on various bills presumably to check inflation. Mr. Green also has own. Certainly the one featured in the news stories is most reminiscent. The president of the AFL, an organization of over seven million workers whom he is supposed to serve, came out with the proposition that the work-week be lengthened to forty-five or forty-eight hours. Of what is this anti-labor scheme reminiscent? Why, it is the very thunder from the speeches of the industrialists at

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But organized labor cannot continue to accept these conditions without serious danger to itself. Beginning with the UAW-CIO's campaign for General Motors (see article by Walter Jason, page 1 of this issue), there are sure signs that the labor leadership is preparing for action, necessary and long overdue action. John L. Lewis has just informed the bituminous coal owners that the United Mine Workers are "free to take any independent action necessary" to win their proposed pension plan of \$100 per month for all miners at the age of 60 who have toiled for 20 years in the mines. The coal bosses are in a turmoil, because they know that strike action may well be what "Big John" has in mind, although they claim they do not know exactly what his letter means. It means his intention to get a workable pension scheme adopted—that is clear—and to take whatever steps are necessary to win.

"America is now experiencing a lull before the storm," warned the conservative bureaucrats of the AFL's executive council, in session at Miami. Collective bargaining contracts are expiring rapidly, and "the worst wave

## Pittsburgh Ranks Hit UE Stalinists

Defiant Local Leaders Attack Stalinists' Attempt to Foist Policies on Union

By STAN O. LAUREN

PITTSBURGH, PA., Jan. 29—The United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers Union's top Stalinist leaders, protected from opposition for years by the totalitarian control over the union that the Communist Party has exercised, were faced with a defiant group of rank-and-file members when they came to face the District Six, Pittsburgh area locals.

Two meetings were called, at which Albert J. Fitzgerald, Julius Emspak, and James Mattes tried to jam the Wallace Third Party, anti-Marshall Plan talk, and double-talk on the Taft-Hartley Law problem into a neat package, to be accepted with a fight for higher wages in current contract negotiations.

The first meeting was for officers and stewards of Westinghouse Local 601, largest in the International, and Local 610, held at Turtle Creek High School.

Mattes began with a speech on wage negotiations and tapered off with remarks on the T-H Law. He said there is no escaping the law but later went on to say that signing the non-Communist affidavits was optional. These remarks provoked union stewards who had just witnessed the loss of their union at the Westinghouse plant in Meadville, Pa., where the workers were organized into the UE but lost out when the NLRB ruled them out of the ballot. This left a choice of voting for the IBEW (AFL) or no union. The UE leadership told them to vote no union but the workers, afraid to be left without organization, voted unanimously to take the IBEW.

William Peeler, a member of the executive board and chairman of the Beaver committee of Local 601, demanded the right to question Mattes when he finished. The request was refused. Emspak then took the floor and talked against the Marshall Plan. Again a rank-and-file tried to question him but Fitzgerald, who chaired the meeting, prevented him. Fitzgerald ended off with a talk on why they should not sign the non-Communist affidavits and demanded support for Henry Wallace.

ONLY LEADERS CAN SPEAK

When Fitzgerald finished, a rank-and-file member then asked if he could speak. Fitzgerald who had previously said that discussion could take place after all three speakers

finished answered by shouting, "Send your leaders up here, not your stooges." This display of Stalinist disregard for the opinion of rank-and-file members revolted the audience and started turmoil. But so that the Stalinists would not shut off the rank-and-file completely, the opposition picked three spokesmen. They were William Peeler, one of the leaders of the rank-and-file, Charles Copeland, another rank-and-file leader and business agent of the local, and Sam Falvo, an assistant chief steward of Local 610. Peeler alone

was given the floor. Peeler began, "I have heard so much this afternoon about freedom, but I have seen very little of it practiced." The Stalinists, he said, "fought for a foreign power rather than the rights of the individual or the demands of social welfare." He said that the Stalinists supported Wallace for Russian foreign policy interests. But Peeler didn't give the anti-labor reactionaries comfort either, for he said that he knew the Marshall Plan "is a European union-buster and I do not believe that the inten-

## UAW Prepares Showdown With Big Three In Auto

By WALTER JASON

DETROIT, Feb. 1—In an effort to hasten negotiations with the auto corporations on wage demands, the UAW-CIO leadership advanced the meeting time of the scheduled Chrysler union delegate conference to February 14 and 15. This will enable the UAW-CIO to immediately open wage discussions with Chrysler, and test the reaction of the auto industry to the third round of wage demands since the war. The idea of the UAW-CIO leadership is to see if Chrysler may be a "soft spot," among the big three, before taking on General Motors in the decisive struggle.

At the Chrysler conference, the delegates will be presented two alternate propositions. Norman Mathews, Chrysler department director, has been reported to be recommending the straight 25 cents wage increase, and 5 cents for medical care. Walter P. Reuther, UAW-CIO president, might ask the Chrysler delegates to adopt a program similar to that of the recent General Motors conference, which included 15 cents straight increase, 10 cents per hour for a pension plan, and 5 cents for hospitalization and medical care.

Unfortunately, the Chrysler delegates will be unable, under the contract in effect now, to take up the vital question of eliminating section 6 of the contract, known as "company security." Also Section 2, under which management reserves the full right to determine all pro-

duction. These sections have jeopardized the standing and work of the union stewards. However, many burning wage inequalities and classifications are subject to change, and the delegates are expected to devote considerable attention to these problems.

REUTHER HEADS TALKS

The importance of the move against Chrysler is emphasized by the fact that Reuther is going to head the union negotiators. Meanwhile, at General Motors the corporation has shown that its arrogant and autocratic attitude towards the UAW-CIO hasn't change one bit. The corporation tried to force its own insurance plan down the throats of the GM workers without even attempting to bargain with the union, as the supplemental agreement of 1947 calls for. As a result, the UAW-CIO was able to get the NLRB to force the corporation to stop this flagrant violation of collective bargaining procedure by a temporary court order restraining GM.

Another indication of GM's attitude is the recent demand of C. E. Wilson, GM president, for a 45 hour week in the auto industry. Likewise, GM officials have declared they are going to ask for other concessions from the union! Union delegates from General Motors shops will meet again on February 24 to talk over the entire contract with GM which expires on April 28.

tion of the plan is to feed the European people."

In this connection he said he was against Truman who was anti-labor, but likewise he was against Wallace who differed only in that Wallace had a pro-Russian foreign policy. Then he started on the Taft-Hartley Law and explained that the law and its non-Communist Affidavits were both vicious anti-labor measures.

But he said, "Whether or not the leaders of the union signed" the law still existed and asked what could be done, short of signing the affidavits, to save the Beaver plant on February 19, when the NLRB will permit only the IBEW and "no union" on the ballot for the UE members to choose from.

At this point Fitzgerald grabbed Peeler's arm and tried to pull him away from the mike. Mattes jumped up and started to talk and stated that 70 plants had been organized and re-organized since the Taft-Hartley Law. Peeler, still holding on to the mike despite Fitzgerald pulling at his arm asked in rejoinder "What about

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of strikes in the country's history" is being predicted by these gentlemen. They are, of course, most anxious not to experience a strike wave and blame everything on the Taft-Hartley Act. William Green has fearfully predicted strikes as Spring approaches and labor swings into action for its third-round of post-war wage increases.

The real issues before labor are not exhausted by the fight for repeal of the T-H Act, nor by the question of strikes. The point is that economic pressures are rapidly making unbearable and impossible the heavy strains on the American working class and the workers' families. Shortages, inflation, prices, rents—these are the issues. Congress has no answer, Tru-

## Not a Peep from Moscow On Hitler Pact Disclosures

It is now more than ten days since the State Department published the captured Nazi documents relating to the Stalin-Hitler alliance. So far, no peep of refutation has come from Moscow. The Stalin government has chosen to ignore the whole business.

This silence must be viewed in connection with the fact that these documents constituted devastating evidence that

● The Russian invasion of Poland in 1939 was a purely imperialist venture, executed in consultation with the Hitler government;

● The Stalinist propaganda line that this invasion was to "safeguard" and "liberate" the population of eastern Poland was a cynical lie;

● Stalin and Hitler had come to preliminary agreement for an imperialist division of the world.

In short, the documents accuse the Stalinist apparatus of being a clique of imperialist bandits. And since it cannot deny the facts, the Kremlin

propaganda machine has "no comment." The "consolation" is, of course, that the American imperialists are bandits also, and the Stalinists are making the most of that. Thus, the Moscow radio complains now of US bombing planes in North Africa, of American warships in Italy, and so forth.

LABOR ACTION spends a great deal of its time exposing the war plans of American imperialism, and we have no reason to object when the Moscow radio does the same. We do wish to suggest, however, that it is not enough to expose one side in this conflict of rival bandits, and that no crime of Yankee imperialism can explain away the criminality of Stalinism.

If, as the Daily Worker put it in 1939, "... The Soviet Union makes no secret treaties ... it does not say one thing and practice another," then why don't they explain the new documents that prove the opposite? We're still waiting, Radio Moscow!





