

CIO CONVENTION HAS TO FACE PROBLEM RAISED BY STEEL STRIKE—

It's Tough Going for Strikes Today: What's CIO's Answer?

Convention Faces Challenge to Knit Labor Front Against Boss Offensive

By EMANUEL GARRETT

The week has had its full share of rumors, many of them blessed by the usually "well-informed" sources close to the White House, that the steel strike will end within a matter of days. But in the realm of verifiable fact the situation remains very much as it was last week—a major contest between capital, represented by the steel profiteers, and labor, represented by the CIO's Steel Workers Union.

It is, however, possible that such action may be taken within the next few days as can hasten the end of the strike. On labor's side, we refer to the decisions of the CIO convention which opens its sessions later this week. We have no pipeline to the arrogant minds of the steel bosses, but we do not doubt that they are eyeing the CIO convention, calculating how far they can go in their attack.

WHAT STEEL IS AFTER

As we have observed in previous issues of LABOR ACTION, the steel companies, masterminded by the fabulously gilded U. S. Steel, are not making a stand merely to avoid paying non-contributory pensions. It has been demonstrated over and over that the cost involved cannot possibly be the issue for Big Steel. They try to make it seem so.

The day before Olds spoke his latest piece, former Ambassador to Germany James W. Gerard, one of the largest stockholders in U. S. Steel, attacked the company's refusal to accept the fact-finding board's recommendations on pensions. Gerard, asserting that his family owned more stock in U. S. Steel than the board of directors, challenged the lie that the company cannot afford to pay employer-financed pensions.

The opinions of Gerard will influence the board of directors' little. They know the facts themselves. If Gerard does not wish to play ball with their political-economic objectives, they view it as his headache. What they are after is beating down—not breaking or destroying (an utterly impossible thing)—but beating down the steel union on its defenses, no matter what they are, to assert their mastery over labor, to compel the unions into docility, to buttress the structure of Taft-Hartleyism.

CAN PICK UP CHALLENGE

Conversely, the steel union is fighting for more than pensions. It is defending labor's battle positions—against Taft-Hartleyism, against employer domination. And this is pre-

cisely where the CIO convention comes in. Here at the CIO convention a substantial section of U. S. labor can pick up the challenge.

The CIO convention has before it the important business of the Stalinists, their split orientation, and related matters. These we discussed in last week's issue. Stalinism, which is alien to the working class, must be dealt with, and it is consequently an issue of central importance for the delegates. But no matter how that is handled—well or poorly, properly or improperly—it is not and cannot be, whatever its immediate importance, the sole occupation of the convention. Beyond the problem of settling with the Stalinists lies the over-all problem of settling with the bosses.

It goes without saying that the steel strike will come before the convention. The executive board has already announced that the CIO unions have

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Detroit NAACP Wars on Restaurant Jim Crow

By LOU JAMES

DETROIT, Oct. 23 — The Detroit branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People has formed a Committee Against Restaurant Discrimination to launch a mass campaign against the restaurant discrimination that is so prevalent in this city despite the Diggs Law which forbids it. This is a long-needed program and is finding support among both Negroes and whites of the city.

Several meetings of CARD have been held, and the complete program of strategy has not been developed, but one of the first tactics is to literally "flood the court" with discrimination cases, to assure the tribunal that they mean business and bring psychological pressure to bear. The theory is that it will make it more difficult to render the usual verdict of "not guilty" in cases by the hundreds.

This campaign will gather support from the unions, since large numbers of Negroes and whites from locals will enlist in this fight.

The first case was completed on Friday, October 21, under the notorious Judge Gordan, who is well

By BEN HALL

The CIO national convention, scheduled to open this coming week, faces deep-going problems more important, in the long run, than the problem of Stalinist influence in its ranks which we dealt with extensively in last week's LABOR ACTION and which will undoubtedly be the most attention-compelling issue in Cleveland.

The basis of the problem can be given in a few words:

The Fair Deal won a "great victory" in '48—but strikes have become long, and hard, and exhausting.

Two local stoppages ended after five months on the picket line. At Singer, in Elizabeth, N. J., unionists resumed work without winning their main demands, accepting minor concessions from the company. Not a single demand was won by the Bell Aircraft workers (Buffalo), who have called off their strike with an agreement to arbitrate all disputed questions. But the company, still out for blood, locked out more than twenty militants and presses hard for criminal action against strikers who carried the ball on the picket lines. The discharges, too, will be arbitrated.

Strikes in coal and steel cast the most disturbing shadow, for here we meet two most powerful unions. The coal diggers are still striking for their pensions. And after paring its demands to the barest minimum, the Steel Workers Union cannot get a settlement as its strike enters the fourth week. The two strikes are linked up; both come up against U. S. Steel, the stubborn and unyielding representative of the monopoly with tremendous captive mine holdings, financially and commercially intertwined with companies producing the bulk of America's coal. No end of the struggle is in sight.

THEY DON'T EXPLAIN WHY

Ford workers are voting on an agreement which squeezes out a pension plan but gives little else. By previous UAW standards, the proposed contract is poor indeed. Although an active and articulate opposition would reject it, Ford workers will probably vote yes reluctantly—not because they have lost their militancy but because they hesitate to strike now under disadvantageous conditions.

A sober and realistic estimate doubtless leads them to conclude: (1) that such a strike would be drawn out and bitter; and (2) that any foreseeable contractual improvements would not outweigh the sacrifices necessary to win them. Without a strike, the new contract gives them as much as the steel workers will get with a strike; the prospect of winning substantially more now, in the auto industry alone, seems dim.

Such are the facts. Spectacular gains cannot now be made by mere strike threats nor by swift and easy stoppages. But why? The CIO officialdom shut their eyes at just this point. The falling of labor leaders today is not simply that they accept small strike gains but that they misrepresent the poor settlements as good ones. And as a result, they do not and cannot explain to unionists why the fruits of their struggles are so meager.

What are the aims of the big industrialists? James H. W. McGraw Jr., publisher of more than 40 industry magazines, explains that "An influential group of employers have raised their sights beyond their immediate economic interests and have taken on a battle for a principle important to every business in the land. They have decided that the time has come to stop appeasing labor leaders."

BIG BUSINESS CALCULATES

How does the battle for this "principle" look in practice? When U. S.

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N. J. Loyalty Oath Killed by Court

The New Jersey loyalty-oath law, which required candidates for governor and the legislature to take an "anti-subversive" oath, was declared unconstitutional on October 19 by the state superior court, reversing a lower-court ruling. The court's ground was that the legislature, which had passed the law unanimously, had no right to supersede the oath already prescribed in the state constitution.

The invalidated law would have made it mandatory for candidates who did not take the oath to have placed on the ballot next to their names the legend "Refused oath of allegiance." Suit had been brought by James Imbrie, Progressive Party candidate for governor.

The state attorney general says he will appeal the ruling to the Supreme Court. Not hit by the Superior Court decision was another part of the law which applied the loyalty oath procedure to state employees.

PROTEST PLANNED

On the heels of this case, a mass meeting will be held on Friday, October 28 at St. John's CME Church, 2009 St. Aubin Street, which is expected to draw a large number of Negroes who have not found a way to function in the NAACP before. The week following the mass meeting, CARD plans to divide the city

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Cast a Socialist Protest Vote In the New York Election!

All the major and minor parties in the New York City and State election this year are appealing for the support of the working class; and the organized labor movement, divided in its loyalties, spearheads the day-to-day electoral activity of both leading candidates. Yet, despite their energetic participation in the campaign, workers have no way of casting a ballot for their own class on the line of any of the big political machines.

Such is the ironical result of the present political policy of the trade unions, a policy which emphasizes above all the need to collaborate with the parties of capitalism.

The Candidates

Mayor O'Dwyer, Democrat, opened his appeal for re-election at the state CIO convention, calling for the defeat of the "party of Taft-Hartley." A joint AFL-CIO committee carries on his campaign while the regular Democratic machine pushes feebly in the rear.

Newbold Morris, Republican, recruits bellringers from the Liberal Party, staffed by the International Ladies Garment Workers Union. His ticket wins votes of workers not by its moralistic exposés of bookmaking but because of the miserable record of the incumbent administration on transit, housing, and rent control, coupled with O'Dwyer's links to Tammany.

Vito Marcantonio and his American Labor Party finds party activists among workers who are, in one degree or another, adherents of the Communist Party line or who are convinced by his promises of lower fares and effective rent control. He picks up votes from among workers whose plight is worst and whose political experience is least.

Herbert Lehman, Democratic candidate for Senate, like the others calls for support from labor against "reaction." Dulles, his opponent, faces such hostility from the labor movement that this Republican strategist has not bothered to make a major speech in any of the five boroughs of the city.

WHOEVER WINS, LABOR WILL BE RESPONSIBLE. BUT WHOEVER DOES WIN, LABOR ITSELF WILL NOT WIN.

The Parties

The Morris-Republican-Liberal-Fusion ticket is a conglomeration of divergent elements with no significant public program, even on so elementary a question as rent control. Its national hookup makes it the embarrassed local representative of the party of Dewey and Taft.

The American Labor Party is now the private domain of the Communist Party, abetted by the personal machine of Marcantonio. Its prime role is to bolster the foreign policy of the Russian bureaucracy. A vote for its candidates is a vote for the supporters of Stalin's totalitarian slave-labor system.

Labor supporters of the Democratic ticket call for support of Truman's Fair Deal administration. But the "great victory" of '48 has left things as they were. Rent control is emasculated; the Taft-Hartley Law remains on the books; and worst of all, the Fair Deal Democrats announce their agreement with the principle of injunctions against mass strikes and egg on the anti-Democratic witchhunts of the cold war.

No wonder that the unions face a confident and aggressive capitalist class in wage negotiations and strike struggles of 1949! Support to the Democratic Party wins little for labor, it fails to protect its rights, and above all it hinders the formation of a new, independent Labor Party.

The New York City election underscores the unlimited political resources and power of labor. Labor united and independent can win New York City! But its leadership refuses to wield its power toward that end. Timidly, it remains satisfied with tidbits or promises of the same, from its capitalist political "friends."

Vote Socialist!

None of these parties, we repeat—not one—permits workers to vote clearly and decisively for their class. The only alternative to capitalist or Stalinist politics in its many forms is to VOTE SOCIALIST IN THE NEW YORK ELECTIONS.

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Vote for one of the socialist candidates on the New York City mayoralty ballot:
Socialist Party: Joseph Glass.

Socialist Workers Party: Michael Bartell.

Socialist Labor Party (appears on ballot as Industrial Government Party): Eric Haas.

French SP, CP Lose Hold on Labor As the Government Crisis Deepens

By SAUL BERG

PARIS, Oct. 18—The fall of the Queuille cabinet, over the wage-and-price issue that has been exacerbated by devaluation, led to a short-lived attempt by Jules Moch of the Socialist Party to form a government.

No more fitting symbol could have been selected for the degeneration and corruption of the French Socialist Party, and its lack of contact with the workers' movement, than the selection of Moch for premier. Moch is known to unionists as the No. 1 policeman of France. As minister of interior in the last three cabinets he carried the responsibility for mobilizing the hated Security Police to smash the giant strikes of 1947 and 1948.

Moch's attempt to form a government had no future from the start. His vote of investiture as premier, the lowest in French history, with 311 votes as against a constitutional requirement of 310, was obtained by offering the vaguest possible program: on the "dirty war" in Indo-China—"peace," with no specification as to the terms or even with whom it is to be negotiated; on wages—a bonus for one month only to bring workers who receive less than 15,000 francs (\$40) a month up to that figure; on prices—a subsidy to bring down the cost of butter, perhaps some other subsidies later; on the budget—economy, somewhere, somehow.

On the basis of this program, he tried to hold together a motley crew extending all the way from the SP to René Pleven's semi-Gaullists and the conservative parties of the right. The one group that could not possibly be satisfied by his government's program was the organized trade-union group. The most conservative trade-union federation, the reformist Force Ouvrière, condemned Moch's program as completely unsatisfactory, while the others (the Catholic CFTC, the Autonomous Federation, the Stalinist CGT) all had a stronger series of demands than Force Ouvrière.

CP DOESN'T DRAW

At the same time that the SP once again showed its complete lack of contact with the working class, there was also a convincing demonstration of the inability of the Communist Party to mobilize its supporters.

When Moch formed his government, the Paris region of the CGT, which theoretically leads one half the workers in the region, called for a three-hour work stoppage and demonstrations. This call was totally ignored in the center of Paris and affected only forty of the largest factories, in which a miserable 15 per cent of the workers walked out at the appointed time. A typical example was the Renault plant, where 17,000 workers out of 30,000 voted CGT in the last factory-council election. Less than 5,000 walked out there, and most

of them did not even bother to attend the small, spiritless demonstration held outside the plant gates.

Last month the CP ran a "peace campaign" involving a tremendous flood of propaganda. As its climax a rally was held on October 3 at the Porte de Versailles in Paris. Everything possible was done to mobilize for this rally. Yet the party that mobilized one million workers for its May Day demonstrations in 1945 and 1946 was able to rally only 30,000 this time.

It seems evident that, dissatisfied as they are with the government, the workers are entirely fed up with the Communist Party. Their support of the CP is dreary, hopeless, negative electoral support, and nothing more. They steadfastly refuse to be drawn any longer into CP-sponsored political strikes and rallies.

There is all the more reason, then, for the strong independent left-wing minorities in the non-Stalinist unions to drive for unity of action around their program of demands. By uniting the growing number of federations in the different unions that support a militant program of struggle, the left wing can begin to offer an alternative to the bankrupt SP and the totalitarian Stalinists. The tremendous political vacuum in the French labor movement still exists; the social crisis is unresolved. It remains a problem of forging the movement to fill the vacuum and to offer the independent socialist solution to the crisis.

