

LABOR ACTION

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Mass Strike In Barcelona Defies Franco

By GORDON HASKEL

GENERAL STRIKE IN BARCELONA! These words in the headlines of the daily papers on March 12 are like a flash of lightning across a gloomy landscape.

"More than a quarter of a million workers in Barcelona took part in a general strike yesterday against the high cost of living and burned an ambulance during a fight with armed police before the City Hall in the most general movement of defiance that Generalissimo Francisco Franco's government has ever had to face."

Just twelve years ago Barcelona surrendered to the Franco fascists—January 26, 1939. The workers' movement was crushed. Thousands were thrown in jail and thousands executed. Over the piles of bodies of the revolutionary working class of Spain, Franco built the structure of his totalitarian dictatorship.

From that day to this the workers of Spain have had no democratic rights whatever. The standard of living of the people has been reduced below subsistence. Any man or woman who showed an ounce of resistance to the regime was dragged off to prison. The workers, deprived of the right to organize trade unions, were subjected to the most intensive exploitation. The general poverty of the country was increased by the unspeakable corruption which permeated every section of the government and the economy.

U. S. HELPED FRANCO

So rotten has this dictatorship been that its possible economic collapse became a matter of concern to the government of the United States. In its search for allies against Stalinist totalitarianism, and spurred on by the Catholic Church and the more reactionary section of the American capitalist class, the American government in recent months has sought to shore up the structure of the Franco regime. Loans have been granted, and more are being considered.

Finally, only last month, with that callous disregard for the

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To Rise, or Not to Rise ...?



LET THEM SPEAK UP!

"Local trade unions are straining at the leash. They are anxious to lead the protest parade. Many have planned for early meetings and are appealing to national labor leadership for speakers.

"It is taking all the strength of the top labor organization to hold back the rank and file until further plans are formulated. These will be drawn up at meetings in Washington on March 20 and 21."

"Apparently the strongly worded protests of the labor spokesmen have caught fire among their local members. Telegrams, letters, telephone calls have swamped the offices of the American Federation of Labor, the Congress of Industrial Organizations, the International Association of Machinists and the Railway Labor Executives Association."—N. Y. Times, March 11, dispatch by Louis Stark.

Let them speak up! Let the members in the shops, the locals, the stewards and committeemen elect their delegates to a vast representative Conference of Labor to plan labor's fight against the government-big business squeeze!

By BEN HALL

The wage-freeze impels the whole labor movement toward unity. For two months, every major tactical move has been directed by the United Labor Policy Committee, representing every important union except the United Mine Workers. Delegates of the CIO, AFL, railway brotherhoods, and machinists act in unison to prepare a common defense.

The surge toward common action is symbolized by the drawing together of the two rival meat-packing unions of the CIO and AFL.

In the catastrophic strike of 1948, these unions fought one another and settled separately with the employers. When their strike was called off on the employers' terms, they engaged in bitter jurisdictional warfare. Now their contracts are threatened by the Wage Stabilization Board. In self-defense they have founded a permanent unity committee looking toward eventual merger of the United Packinghouse Workers (CIO) and the Amalgamated Meat Cutters (AFL).

On March 20 and 21, Washington will be the scene of one of the most significant assemblages of labor since the founding of the CIO.

At the call of the ULPC, leaders of all city and state bodies of affiliated unions gather to map out a program of action. On the first day, the CIO, AFL, Machinists, and brotherhoods will meet separately; on the second day, they will convene in one single session as the delegates of united American labor.

Form Unifying Conference

We need not speculate on what discussions will take place and what decisions will emanate from these discussions to understand the deep significance of this convention. Here for the first time, in the face of a grave crisis, all unions sense the need to convoke a unifying conference to decide upon labor's program, labor's plan of action.

As will be explained, this is not yet the united Conference of Labor, representing the elected delegates of the rank and file in their local unions, that LABOR ACTION has so often urged but it is a noteworthy step in that direction.

This is not the first time that labor has desperately needed a unifying policy.

The 1945-46 post-war strike wave saw every important union locked in struggle to win some small return for the sacrifices and losses of the no-strike war years. In 1948 came long strikes to keep wages in pace with rising living costs—the steel strike, mine strikes, rail strikes. At each turn the unions faced the subtle interference of fact-finding boards and the heavy-handed persecution of injunctions, fines, and military rule. But the unions sought salvation from Democratic "friends" in Washington; they hoped for well-timed favors from President Truman.

Focus on Real Source of Danger

Now we enter a new period of war mobilization. As billions are allocated for armaments, as taxes are pushed upward, as inflation threatens, as compulsory draft-labor is suggested, labor must and does begin to ask: Will a new brood of war millionaires be born? Who will pay for war—the rich or the poor?

By choosing the capital as the site of its convention, the ULPC focuses attention on the real source of danger.

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Rockefeller Point 4 Geared To War

Capitalism, Imperialism Stand in Way of Real Aid to Backward Nations

By MARY BELL

"Partners in Progress" is the pretty title of the report recently issued to President Truman by the International Development Advisory Board headed by Nelson Rockefeller. The report makes recommendations concerning the United States policy, popularly known as "Point Four," toward "underdeveloped areas." It is of interest, in the light of the current recommendations of the Rockefeller Board, to recall the claims made by President Truman in his speech before the American Newspaper Guild in 1950:

"Point Four is a successor to the old colonialism idea, the exploiting idea of the middle seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. We want to have a prosperous world that will be interested in buying the immense amount of surplus things that we are going to have to sell. And now to do that they have got to have something to give back to us in order that they can buy our goods. I want to keep this factory organization of ours going to full tilt. In order to do that we must help these people help themselves.

"Point Four is an investment in a peaceful and prosperous world. It is a program which will bring increasing results over the years. It will bring about a chain reaction in economic development. It will serve to create economic health where poverty existed, and to equip the people of underdeveloped areas to carry forward their economic gains and preserve their independence."

The President approved the report of his committee and sent it on to congressional representatives. The major idea of Point Four when it was originally presented in summary form had a direct relationship to the ideological war with Russia and was the response of the "welfare state" to Stalinist imperialism.

War Governs Every Aspect

What the course of events would have been if war had not broken out in Korea is, of course, speculative. What is before us is the report of the International Development Advisory Board as keyed to the war. There is no question that the war and preparedness for war governs every aspect of the report and the recommendations contained therein. Of the "two main threats" that face our society, it declares that the first of these is "military aggression and subversion," and the second, "hunger, poverty, disease and illiteracy."

"Our first imperative," it reads, "must be to rebuild sufficient military strength to resist aggression . . . strengthening the economies of the underdeveloped regions and an improvement of their living levels must be considered a vital part of our defense mobilization."

"Considered from the point of view of the strategic dependence of the United States on these regions, it must be emphasized that we get from them 73 per cent of the strategic and critical materials we import—tin, tungsten, chrome, manganese, lead, zinc, copper—without which many of our most vital industries could not operate. They send us more than half of all our imports."

Thus war and the strategic materials necessary for war, supplied by the underdeveloped areas of the world, are the guiding considerations for rendering economic assistance to, or stimulation of investment in, these countries. Though not explicit in the report, it is unquestionable that a corollary aim is to ally these countries to the U. S. in the struggle against Stalinism, thus preventing a "third camp" evolution.

No Humanitarianism!

When Senator Taft urges the ending of Economic Cooperation Administration (Marshall Plan) aid and proposes instead "Point Four assistance so long as it is conducted on a limited basis and isn't a global giveaway," he is, aside from expressing Republican isolationism, being his usual demagogic self. The Rockefeller Board is not in the least interested in gift-giving, but in the strategic interests of American capitalism. If it is not concerned with any particular sector

of capitalist interests, it is concerned with the over-all interests of capitalism in the present war phase.

It is nowhere in the report proposed outright to raise the living standards of the underprivileged countries, regardless of cost, as the humanitarian thing to do. Rather, "Efforts to stamp out disease or to train young people vocationally should be integrated with what is attempted in the way of expanding production of strategic (my emphasis—M. B.) materials and food." Examples are given so that the most troglodytic of capitalists may see. "Before a new ore body can be tapped in many countries, malaria control may be necessary," the report patiently explains. Elsewhere it says, ". . . in Central Africa the discovery of new drugs to combat sleeping sickness holds out the hope that several million acres of new land may be brought under cultivation." If anything, the report goes out of its way to avoid any identification with "global giveaway."

To accomplish its program of development, the Board recommends (1) the appropriation of a half-billion dollars for governmental assistance; (2) a single administration to replace the network of agencies now handling foreign investments; (3) increasing the strategic materials from these countries by 50 per cent; (4) the "prime reliance upon private enterprise and private capital," with the aim of more than doubling the present level of foreign private investment of less than one billion dollars to two billion dollars per year.

The Gray report, which preceded the Rockefeller report, also paid attention to this aspect of foreign policy. It found that 74 per cent of the \$800,000,000 1947-49 average of all net foreign private investment was channeled to the countries having profitable petroleum resources. Only \$128,000,000 went to Latin American republics above this petroleum investment and only \$28,000,000 went to other underdeveloped areas. In other words, disregarding oil investments, the role of American private capital has been negligible in Latin America; in Asia, where 52 per cent or 800,000,000 of the world population lives, its role has been virtually nil.

Private Capital Fears Risk

These figures must be borne in mind when reading the report's recommendations that American capital investment must be doubled. There are many inducements offered to stimulate the flow of American investment capital, such as tax incentives which would free business from a United States tax if it were taxed in the country of investment; bilateral treaties to free American businesses from discriminatory taxes levied abroad; government underwriting of risks by private investors; special administrative assistance on the part of the government to aid investment, etc. Nevertheless, the past performance of American private investment capital abroad has demonstrated neither venturesomeness nor risk.

What the government has spent thus far on overcoming the poverty of backward countries amounts to \$40 million, which is only one-tenth of one per cent of the U. S. military budget. This figure, too, must be considered in appraising the Rockefeller recommendation for an appropriation of \$500,000,000, and the probable fate of the latter in Congress. The report merely recommends, and its recommendation must be considered as the most favorable variant by all odds of any possible appropriations for international development.

One must consider, besides the certain congressional cuts in appropriations proposed by the Board and the reluctance of American investment capital, the specific reluctance of the native capitalists within the underdeveloped countries. All these countries are within the capitalist orbit, but their underdevelopment consists in their lack of industrialization caused in most cases precisely by the course of capitalist growth in the developed countries, and economic and political domination by the latter. The bourgeoisie of the underdeveloped countries is often intertwined with and dependent upon the bourgeoisie of the developed countries. And because of the weakness of capitalism in the underprivileged

nations, society and government is dominated by other classes—feudal and landowning.

The strength of pre-capitalist classes and the lack of a modern, industrial society in the colonial areas of the world points to the inherent weakness in application of a plan conceived as an expansion of capitalistic methods and geared to a capitalist economy. In political terms this obstacle is easily visible when one looks at the political allies of the United States in these areas—the Latin American dictators, Asian despots and proto-fascists of every stripe.

The report makes obeisance and nothing more to the problem of democracy. It speaks of "reforms, where the people want them, fair and rising living standards, a living wage, full participation in the benefits accruing from increased wealth or income, the removal of discrimination based on race, color, nationality, religious belief, caste or sex . . . training in democracy . . . the right of trial by jury, the right to work, the right to self-organization, to strike, to vote, as well as steady progress toward freedom from want."

If aid is administered, in whatever curtailed form and with whatever strings attached, given the present social organization in the underdeveloped areas, it will be administered by reactionary regimes. The real development and flowering of these depressed areas would require nothing short of a social revolution. But this plan is no stimulus to a revolution against reaction.

Socialists for Economic Aid

Socialists favor economic aid to all countries—but without strings attached. The most flagrant example of what is likely to happen to economic assistance under the present administration is the relation between the U. S. and India today. In the teeth of the Indian famine with its inestimable toll in human life, the United States is withholding wheat because India is not in total agreement with American foreign policy.

A genuine Point Four remains to be developed. The best way perhaps, to show the Rockefeller report in proper perspective is to compare it with some aspects of "A Total Peace Offensive," the Point Four proposal initiated by Walter Reuther, president of the CIO United Automobile Workers, and a "left" version of this type of economic assistance.

The first difference is in amount. Reuther proposes an annual sum of \$13 billion for a hundred-year period. This figure he derives from the equivalent money cost to the American people of World War II—\$1,300,000,000,000. The money is to be obtained through a reimposition of the war-time tax on business, an upping of the tax on incomes of over \$15,000, new tax monies from new employment, and current government expenditures. The plan would be administered through the United Nations and would be conditional upon acceptance of total disarmament by the participating nation. This is a "laborite" attempt to offer a political program in opposition to that of Stalinism and some means, other than military force, to overcome Stalinism and gain the allegiance of the peoples of the world.

Where the Reuther Point Four program departs from the Administration program, it appears laudable. It is not geared solely to considerations of profitability for private capitalism. It rejects the concept that Stalinism can be successfully defeated by military force alone. Its monetary proposals come close to being a serious effort to realize the magnitude of the problem of economic development necessary in the backward areas. But it appears pitifully Utopian where it proposes to act through the United Nations and in its proposals for total disarmament.

Truman is correct in saying that the Point Four scheme is not eighteenth or nineteenth century colonialism. Rather, it is twentieth century "welfare" imperialism. It is not even new, having been applied in more limited form numberless times. It does not envisage aid given freely and universally to poor nations victimized for a hundred years by that "old colonialism idea." It would be their needs to the interests of modern, total war. That is why Point Four is a political and economic fake.

INDEPENDENCE FOR MOROCCO: The Liberation Movement States Its Case

The following document is of the greatest interest in acquainting our readers with the important mass nationalist movement of Morocco which struggles against French imperialism, the Istiqlal (Independence) Party. It is transmitted to us by our Paris correspondent with the note that it is accurate and reliable. For another document of the Istiqlal movement, see "Morocco and the Atlantic Pact" in LABOR ACTION for October 9, 1950.

The present document is the text of the presentation of the Istiqlal position given at a press conference in Tangier by the leader of the movement, Allal El Fassi, on February 23 last.

The Istiqlal is a nationalist-democratic, not a socialist or Marxist, movement. The reader will note the references by Allal El Fassi to his stand on constitutional monarchy headed by the sultan, to "private initiative" in the economic system, to the "principles of Islam," and other references which indicate the bourgeois-democratic ideology of the Istiqlal leadership.

It is, however, THE radical and militant independence movement of the Moroccan people, largely supported by the Moroccan workers, as the Istiqlal leader indicates. Its struggle for independence (or, as Allal El Fassi proposes as a first step, effective autonomy) has the wholehearted support of Independent Socialists.—Ed.

By ALLAL EL FASSI

Everyone should know that the Istiqlal is at present the victim of an exceptionally virulent campaign by certain reactionaries. Unfortunately, these reactionaries are able to wield, as their weapons, a great many means of publicity not only in France but also in North Africa. Their aim is clear: to give the world, and particularly the generous French people, a picture of our party which equals in horror that of Attila's Huns. This would then be used to justify the most horrible and merciless repression.

Gagged, reduced to an illegal existence, without any means of expression, we are condemned to silence, and some are willing to interpret this silence as concealment. We have appealed to you [the press] to come to this talk with us because we cannot express ourselves on the situation while the sword of Damocles hangs over the Moroccan nation.

All you know about the Istiqlal, everything which could trickle out under the crushing pressure of propaganda, is in danger of being swallowed up under the flood of calumny and lies. That is why it is necessary to talk to you today about the real facts on the Istiqlal.

What Is the Istiqlal?

The Istiqlal is, first of all, a political movement which is the logical outcome of the policy followed in the country. The legal and de facto absence of civil liberties in Morocco forces the movement into illegality, which hurts it very much and opens the door to all kinds of lies.

The Istiqlal is run according to organizational statutes and rules which the [French] administration well knows, and which are modeled after those of political organizations in other countries. If we are "totalitarian," then so is the French Socialist Party, the MRP [French center bourgeois party], the Labor Party or the Democratic Party.

Does "totalitarianism" consist in the existence of discipline and the absence of internal anarchy, such as characterizes every healthy organization? The function of our party is the same as any other party: to educate its members, develop their sense of responsibility, in a word to train them for political life.

The Istiqlal also prides itself on taking on certain functions which other parties do not. It supplies forces for free education and carries on a determined struggle against illiteracy throughout the territory of Morocco. Can it be called an "SS corps" when our valiant comrade Medkuri is the founder and manager of several rural schools in the Casablanca region—and, as you know, he has just been condemned, in defiance of all principles of justice, to two years in prison and 300,000 francs fine.

Of course, the Istiqlal gives financial aid—not to puppet newspapers abroad [a slap at the traditional policy of the French government]—but to needy students whom the administration refuses to help. Under the stimulus of their party, the Moroccan workers (who constitute the majority of the Istiqlal), in spite of the absence of trade-union rights, have organized themselves in

the existing trade-union federations and have formed their own groups. Is it a "combat organization" because it tries to put the worker in a position where he can defend himself against exploitation?

Furthermore, everyone knows that the elected leaders of the chambers of commerce belong to the Istiqlal. And so bourgeois, workers and intellectuals fight side by side within our party; and it is no accident that men like Glau & Co. have no place in our ranks. [Glau is a Southern Morocco leader who supports the French Protectorate—Ed.] His recent attitude proves that we have no ties with feudal elements, still less with feudal elements who flout the elementary principles of Islam, the fundamental basis of our party. Glau is ill-advised to set himself up as an inquisitor, a role which is alien to Islam; if such an inquisition existed in that democratic and tolerant region, Glau would be its first victim.

Charge of Collusion with CP

In the same way we are accused of collusion with the Communists. But you know that we have rejected proposals for a united front which the so-called "Moroccan" Communist Party has been continually making to us. Furthermore this party has found us to be an opponent which bends every effort to destroy its influence.

It will be remembered that in 1946 the CP—profiting by its freedom of action, including legal existence, public organ, headquarters and its influence in the labor federation—extended its influence over a good part of the peasants of the Tadla region. It was due to our militants in the Tadla region that its influence has been wiped out. The same thing happened in the Agadir and Midelt regions.

We did not resort to coercive measures, as the administration claims, since we were able to rally the peasants peacefully. It can be stated without any exaggeration that it is thanks to us and to the principles of Islam which guide us that Communism has not taken root in Morocco. If, in spite of that, efforts are being made to introduce it, it is the administration and it alone which is responsible.

Istiqlal Is Not Anti-French

In his interview with a special correspondent of *Parisian Libéré*, General Juin [head of the French Protectorate] called us an anti-French nationalist party. I protest this assertion with the utmost vigor.

Our supporters and friends gave a correct expression of the party's opinion, at the time of the last Government Council, when they dissociated the "country and people" of France from its system of colonial administration. If General Juin believes, as he says, that they are one and the same thing, he alone bears the responsibility for that thought.

As for us, we do not confuse them; and we loudly declare: our movement, following the example of our beloved sovereign [the sultan], proved that when France went through the most painful time in its history [the Nazi occupation—Ed.], it is indeed shameful that we should be accused of being anti-French by the same men who betrayed the French people and who, profiting today by their generosity and clemency, seek to line them up against a friendly nation by means of slanders and lies.

In addition, we have always maintained direct contact with the French people thanks to the fact that an important Moroccan colony exists in France. To counteract the healthful work of our Paris representatives in bringing about good relations and understanding with the French people, it is alleged that the Istiqlal has two faces—one, in France, humane and democratic; the other, in Morocco, monstrous and anti-democratic. I declare, in the name of the Istiqlal Party, that I am in complete solidarity with my comrades in France.

As for the rest of it, the democratic character of our party is to be clearly seen in its structure and program. All the bodies of the party, from top to bottom, are constituted democratically. If at present we cannot convene a real na-

tional convention of the party, the reason for that is very simple. Public meetings and even private meetings are absolutely prohibited (viz., the recent arrest of eight at Mazagan).

Istiqlal's Program

As for our program: the Istiqlal is for the establishment of political democracy. It is for a constitutional monarchy with a government responsible to an elected parliament. The Istiqlal is for social and economic democracy guaranteeing the civil liberties and rights in the universal declaration of the rights of man. On the economic field, it is for a regime which will assure a rational exploitation of our resources and which will encourage the private initiative necessary to strengthen our country. This regime, at the proper time, will take as its example the socializations undertaken by the democratic powers such as France, Great Britain and the United States.

What are our present demands? These are summarized in the very name of our party: Istiqlal-Independence. This has caused us to be called extremists and utopians. I am therefore going to give a precise content to the word independence.

From 1934 to 1944 the nationalist movement demanded only the application of the Protectorate treaty. You can see for yourselves what the result has been. On the eve of the 39th anniversary of this treaty, the most elementary rights and liberties are still denied to Moroccans. In addition, His Majesty the Sultan and Mr. Robert Schuman are denounced in Morocco. The country is stripped of cadres: there are 12 doctors, a score of lawyers, 120 students.

The two elected premiers who began to take hold of public affairs were brutally removed. The suppression of the imperial cabinet, which has been in existence for only a few months, has been demanded by the [French] *Residence Générale*. For the rest, the Protectorate regime is only a juridical fiction. All observers and investigators, French as well as foreign, recognize that there is only a system of pure and simple direct administration. I shall not refer here to the way in which the failure of the regime has been demonstrated; that has been done many times, and the fact is recognized by all discerning people.

Therefore we demand that the agreement which ties us to France be remodeled on new bases which would assure the development of Morocco with the cooperation of France. That is a token of our good faith. What extremism, indeed, is there in our desire to arrive at a healthy basis for collaboration with France?

We are charged with being negative. The truth is that they will have nothing to do with us. We are not afraid of any form of alliance; the responsibility for taking the initiative is France's. It is in the nature of things that it take the first step.

But instead of listening to us, they counter with brute force. Instead of trying to understand us, they employ the lowest maneuvers against us and try to condemn us under gag. We do not reject a common attempt to seek free and effective means of collaboration.

From another side, it is objected that we declare ourselves to be supporters of Arab fraternity, and that this is incompatible with collaboration with France. We do not believe that France is an enemy of the Arab peoples. On the contrary, France flatters itself on being the Moslem and Arab power *par excellence*. If French-Arab relations suffer from disquiet, it is precisely because of the Moroccan and North African problem. You have an idea of how rich would be the consequences of solving the "Magrèbien" problem. It would transform the situation in the Mediterranean to the benefit of France. France would recover its role as a great power, strong in the union, alliance and friendship of the people, Arab and Moslem included.

The Moroccan people, rallied around its beloved sovereign, extend their hand to France. We are convinced that the firmness and wisdom of His Majesty will triumph over intrigues and provocations. We are sure that democratic France will no longer tolerate the undermining of French-Moroccan friendship.

Time To Form Labor Party --

(Continued from page 1)

The "cynical hoax," the "blow at the living standards and security of the rank-and-file workers," the threatened end of rent controls, the "legalized robbery," the "great wrongs perpetrated on the American people" . . . to mention only a few phrases from the manifestos of the ULPC . . . are not the evil work of some individual employer or a single giant monopoly. They are the calculated acts of the government as the collective representatives of employers.

But this has to be made more precise. The political danger emanates not only from the "reactionary Republicans and Southern Democrats" but also from the Truman administration itself!

After excoriating the administration for its domestic policy from top to bottom—wages, prices, taxes, labor controls, rents, big business domination of government bodies—the ULPC contemptuously waves aside Truman's efforts to dodge responsibility. "We are offered the lame excuse," it replies, "that on other important policies the decisions must be made by a Congress which is not cooperating with the administration. There has been no affirmative action to meet our basic position."

And if labor's "basic position" is ignored by its false friends, its "own" administration, then it cannot meet this crisis as it has in the past. As its representatives meet in Washington, the unions must begin to organize themselves independently, self-reliantly, without old illusions, to carry on the fight in the interests of all the people, against all who stand in their way.

The Washington conference is a spectacular confirmation of the need for a new political policy. Labor is fighting its battle without support from the very men it lifted into office. It faces an almost unanimously hostile press.

Where are all the so-called Fair Dealers? As we read the roster of Democrats supported by labor in election after election, as we recall the "liberals" and their stirring addresses at labor conventions, we wonder . . . where are they now? If a fighting progressive remains silent now, when is he supposed to speak up? So far, we have not heard of a single Democrat who has mounted the public rostrum to say to labor: You are right! I applaud your actions and I am with you. Not one!

The unions face their own internal political crisis. Up to yesterday, they found only kind words for Truman; they taught their rank and file to rely on liberal Democrats. Day in and day out they preached that the answer to every knotty problem was to elect more of these saviors of the people.

Almost without warning we now learn that our friends have vanished. From James Carey we hear: "Truman doesn't even bother to pay lip service any more on social legislation. What remnants of the Fair Deal were left have been completely junked. Not only is labor's advice being disregarded, it's not even being sought any more. With a few exceptions, everyone in inner administration circles is now practically openly hostile to labor."

CENTURY OF PROFFERING

And Louis Hollander, conservative president of the New York State CIO Council, finds that the same forces are at work in Washington as in Albany, and both are at work to "make this a century of proffering."

White suddenly becomes black. Such a dazzling quick-change has to be explained. What happened and why? But above all, what comes next? And the rank-and-file unionists are entitled to an explanation.

The political policy of the labor movement is bankrupt. The responsible leaders of the labor movement, now in the United Labor Policy Committee, have the duty to justify their course to the members of their unions. The full depth of the crisis must be explained and the alternatives thrashed out before the rank and file. And for this, there is no bet-

ter instrument than what is already implicit in the actions of the ULPC.

It should convoke a representative National Congress of Labor, elected by the union members from the shops, their locals and their internationals. Let the members, the committeemen, the stewards and the locals elect delegates, hear the facts, and reach decisions.

The Washington conference of the ULPC cannot be a substitute for such a gathering; it can only be a preliminary preparatory body. To this conference, only the leaders of city and state federations will come. The big tasks confronting labor demand more than a gathering of paid officials.

They demand the mobilization of the full power of the workers and require a sweeping shift in political policy. Hollander remarks: "It is possible that we may have to develop an independent political party—not a third party, but a first party of the American people."

It is not only "possible"—it is vitally necessary. Now is the time to take this perennial hint off the table and put it on the agenda for action.

FOR A LABOR PARTY

For a long time, labor lived off noble sentiments and lofty words from Truman and his political associates. Now they hardly bother to compose fine phrases.

And if they were more careful in their speeches? Could labor revert to its placid acceptance of the Democratic Party merely because worn-out "liberals" summon up their remaining energies to utter new lip service to Fair Dealism? A genuine Fair Dealism, in action not merely in speeches, can be reinvigorated to inspire all people in the fight for progressive policies only by admitting what everyone should know: the Democratic Party, root and branch, is a party of big business, decorated with dusty and crumbly liberal trimmings.

For the formation of an independent Labor party! This is so clearly and simply the lesson of labor's fight, crying out for fulfillment. And such a step would only be the logical next move in the direction opened up by the labor movement when its representatives withdrew from all war boards.

The shunting aside of all labor's demands, the treatment of its representatives with utter contempt, the arrant adjustment of all national policies to the demands of big business—all this could evolve so smoothly and so quickly only because the unions were so tractable and so quiescent.

FAILED TO SPEAK OUT

The mine strikers were hit by injunctions and threats of fines, Truman-inspired. Efforts to repeal the Taft-Hartley Law were abandoned in Congress, Truman-inspired. Social legislation was cut off to a trickle. The rail strike was broken by the army-Wilson-Truman decree.

But union officials failed to speak out in vigorous public protest, and point the finger of blame at the administration it helped

elect. No wonder Dunlop, the "public" representative of the Wage Board, could reply: "It's just a bluff" when labor first threatened to quit the WSB.

No indignity, no humiliation seemed likely to rouse the unions. They seemed destined forever to drag along stoically as captives of Truman. Occasional complaints, a little whining, might be heard in private conversation. But nothing to pay any attention to.

When labor stopped muttering to itself and began to act aggressively in opposition to its "own" administration, its demands gained a public hearing for the first time. The tiny concessions and hints of concessions, meager as they were, the temporary retention of the escalator clauses in existing contracts, these were won by leaving the wage board and threatening to fight.

Yes, labor has been fighting the administration, the Truman administration. Only a trained sophist could twist this fact away. And after arousing the ranks of labor, after beginning an out-and-out battle, the United Labor Policy Committee can hardly be satisfied with a few

ornamental trifles. It is not merely fighting for a few extra wage nickels; in the words of Reuther, it is "fighting the battle of all the American people." It has repudiated and rejected the total domestic policy of the administration on every key question and it demands a full reversal of the whole political trend.

To a television audience, Reuther denies that labor has "broken" with Truman. IF NOT, WHY NOT?

Why continue in the camp of an administration whose policies run counter to the needs of labor, not just in this or that minor detail but in basic orientation? To stay in the Democratic Party now only leaves the last shreds of "window dressing" on an anti-labor platform.

Nothing that has happened in the last few weeks and nothing that can happen in the next can make any significant or basic alteration in Truman's line. He has given Wilson public assurance of his support. Both pretend that they are "puzzled" by labor's actions, which they find perplexing. There is one simple remedy for this artificial confusion.

Labor has its own program. It needs its own independent party and its own candidates to fight

for it. How quickly everyone will then understand that we face not a squabble of personalities or a ruffling of injured pride but a serious political crisis in American life!

If not the formation of a Labor Party, then what? Labor officials are leaders of millions of workers. They have to give some sort of reply. They cannot live on day-to-day improvisations. They seriously toy with the prospect of returning to the war boards, there to continue the ill-lusory and futile effort to restrain the administration "from within."

But whatever the next step, one elementary fact is clear. The role of the labor movement in the battle for people's rights is to be determined. The destiny of the rank and file is at stake and they are entitled to a voice in making the crucial decisions.

What more democratic method can be devised than a national conference of all labor, a convention which assembles the regularly elected delegates chosen by the unionists in their shops and locals? Let the union leadership explain to such a convention what has happened and where it proposes to go. The Washington conference can be a first preliminary step.

Barcelona Strike --

(Continued from page 1)

wishes of the American labor movement and of socialists and democrats throughout the world, the United States government exchanged ambassadors with the bloody dictator Franco.

Twelve years of totalitarian suppression! These are just words. Twelve years in which the working class of Catalonia and of all Spain had no legal organization; in which no man dared express his opinions of the government to anyone but a trusted friend; twelve years during which only the most determined dared to keep their underground organization going at the greatest risk to themselves and their families; twelve years during which the world seemed to have forgotten the workers of Spain.

And at the end of this time, the totalitarian regime of the Franco government is faced with a general strike in Barcelona.

SPARK FOR GENERAL STRIKE

The information on this strike is meager. But the event itself is so significant that detailed information can only add to our understanding of the depth of its meaning.

During January the streetcar fares were almost tripled. The workers started a passive strike against the fare increase, refusing to ride to work on the streetcars. The whole population supported them in this movement. Only the police rode the cars, and large numbers of them had windows broken by flying stones.

Last week the fares were reduced to their previous level. The workers had won. But the strike did not end. Once having tested their solidarity . . . once having seen that the workers could win in a concerted movement . . . the strike against riding the cars was continued as a protest against the general rise in the cost of living.

Then, on March 12, a full-scale general strike started. This was obviously the result of widespread and well-coordinated organization. It is reported that many workers received orders from the government "trade unions" to strike. The heads of the unions claim these orders had been counterfeited—which means that the whole movement had been carefully planned.

The workers not only stayed away from work but marched on

the city hall of Barcelona. According to one report, they had planned to burn down the building, but were frustrated by armed police in a fight in which at least thirty people were injured.

The papers reported that by March 13 over a hundred persons had been arrested, that a number of employers had joined the movement, that the cabinet had met in an all-night session to discuss the situation, and that troops were being moved in to reinforce the police and other armed bodies on the spot.

STALINISTS WEAK

Of course, the government is blaming the strike on "Communist agitators." Until more facts are available, it is impossible to say whether or not the Stalinists have played any role whatever in the Barcelona events. However, it is well known that Stalinist influence has always been weak in Catalonia, and that the workers there have traditionally joined the anarchists, syndicalists and the anti-Stalinist Marxists of the Workers Party of Marxist Unification (POUM). It is also known that the underground movement of the POUM has continued to thrive in Barcelona even under the most difficult conditions.

Thus we have every reason to believe that the movement of the workers of Barcelona is Stalinist neither in its leadership nor in its purposes. Starting over the relatively minor question of a resistance to a fare increase, it has turned into an act of defiance of the whole totalitarian structure of the state.

It would be folly to attempt to predict the future of this movement without a good deal more information. The general strike may be crushed by the soldiery, and it is quite possible that it may be called off by its leaders after lasting a short time. Whether it was planned long in advance or not, it is clear that it has tested the will of the workers of Barcelona and the neighboring industrial cities of Catalonia to struggle, and has found them ready.

And even though it may be suppressed tomorrow, it has disclosed in one flash the fact that the twelve-year-old dictatorship of Franco has not broken the will of the working class of Spain.

The American labor movement opposed the exchange of ambassadors with Spain and the grant-

ing of loans to that country. But this opposition was chiefly a verbal one. When Washington went ahead and took Franco's bloody hand, the labor movement in this country heaved a sigh of discontent—and resignation. The labor leaders did not denounce this act as a betrayal of democracy, and they certainly did not even contemplate withdrawing their support of the government's foreign policy.

IT WAS NOT IN VAIN

But now the workers of Barcelona have spoken . . . in the only way in which a totalitarian dictatorship permits them to speak. They have let the world know, once more, that there is no one Spain which must be wooed as an ally in the cold war, but that there are two Spains: one of the dictator Franco and his political and economic supporters, and the other of the working class and masses of the people. And their action is a living proof to the American labor movement which supports, however grudgingly, the policy of its government which is propping up Franco and his similars throughout the world against the common people.

All over the world, wherever people are languishing under totalitarian rule, the Barcelona general strike will serve as a heartening portent. The Czech workers, the Ukrainians, the masses of all the nations ground under Stalin's heel will lift up their heads an inch higher. They know what totalitarianism is, how solid and all-powerful it appears to its victims.

But the working class of Barcelona has demonstrated once more that the hard, dangerous underground preparations are not in vain. That however long may be the night, the day is bound to come when the working class will regain the historical initiative and the totalitarian structures of oppression will be toppled into the dust.

For us in America, where the working class is not crushed nor democracy dead, the Barcelona events should be a double inspiration. We must fight twice as hard to win the American labor movement to a policy of real democratic internationalism and away from its suicidal policy of support to the machinations of the State Department. Only thus can we keep faith with the striking workers of Barcelona.