

LABOR ACTION

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FIVE CENTS

STRUGGLE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Malan Government Incites Riots

... page 6

Anti-Semitism: A Stalinist Policy

... page 2

An Economic Program for Britain

... page 3

N. Y. Socialist Vote Results

Figures on the votes received by candidates of the minor parties in the recent elections are not yet available for the nation as a whole. We believe, however, that the figures for New York state, which have just been published, will be of interest to our readers.

The socialist vote declined sharply from the 1948 figures. That this would happen could be expected as a result of the exceptional pull which Stevenson exercised on liberals and intellectuals, and of the labor leadership's pre-election predictions of direst consequences for the nation if the Republicans should win. Nevertheless, the decline was greater than had been anticipated by most socialists.

Darlington Hoopes, Socialist Party candidate for president, received 2664 votes in the state of New York. Dobbs of the Socialist Workers Party got 2212, and Haas of the Socialist Labor Party 1560. (The SLP candidate ran under the designation "Industrial Government Party.")

The candidates of the three groups for United States senator received somewhat higher votes: Bartell, SWP 4263; Glass, SP

3382; and Karp, SLP 2451. This would seem to indicate that a number of voters sought to express their socialist leanings by casting their vote for a senatorial candidate who was not willing to "risk" a Republican victory for the presidency.

The 1948 vote for the candidates of the three parties was as follows: Norman Thomas, SP 40,879; Teichert, SLP 2729; Dobbs, SWP 2675. Even when all other factors are taken into account, it is quite probable that a considerable portion of the decline in the SP vote can be attributed to the fact that Norman Thomas' name had been able to attract many votes in the past which were not specifically SP votes.

Anyone who followed the campaign of the three socialist groups during the pre-election period knows that none of them proved capable of carrying on a serious campaign, even within the limitations imposed by the political situation in the country. The SLP and SWP succeeded in getting a good deal of radio and television time, but this was not backed up by any significant campaign work in other fields. This was even more true of the Socialist Party which seemed to be virtually paralyzed throughout the campaign in most of the few states where it was on the ballot.

Colonial Fight for Liberty Hits Western Allies in UN

By GORDON HASKELL

The weaker countries, the countries with dark-skinned populations have found a good use for the United Nations. They are doing their best to transform it into a pillory for the imperialist powers, for the governments which maintain a policy of white supremacy. And they are succeeding in exposing the bonds which tie the great "Western" powers together, even when their specific projects of exposure fail.

If any one of the governments which holds colonies in subjection is accused before the UN of various crimes against its colonial "dependencies" or the peoples in them, all the colonial powers hang together like a well-organized criminal

syndicate. And their answer to the small powers who are seeking justice is always the same: this is not the business of the United Nations. It is the internal affair of the ruling power. Any attempt to bring such problems before the United Nations will simply destroy it without accomplishing anything for the benefit of the peoples on whose behalf intercession is being made.

A few weeks ago the racist government of South Africa was in the dock. India and other governments brought charges that the Malan gang was oppressing the Indian and Negro minority in Africa, and urged that a UN commission be set up to make an investigation of what was going on. South Africa (and here it must be

made clear that in this article the name of a country is being used as a shorthand term for the government of the country, with humble apologies to the mass of its inhabitants) will naturally have nothing to do with such a procedure. It announced that no such commission would be permitted to enter South Africa, as the treatment of the majority of the population there by the small white minority is a matter solely concerning South Africans, and no one else.

U. S. BACKS MALAN

The United States delegation backed the South African government on this. The American delegate stated that although his govern-

(Continued on page 5)

Report from the National Convention at Atlantic City

The CIO Faces an Uneasy Future

By BEN HALL

Adlai E. Stevenson appeared at the Atlantic City convention of the Congress of Industrial Organizations before cheering delegates who could not allow themselves to understand his message. In decoratively phrased but obscure generalities he recorded that unions had "accomplished all manner of improvements," cautioning that "you dare not gamble with these advances because now there is too much to lose." The job of the future, he told them, "is the proper exercise of organized labor's vast responsibility, not just to the workingman but to the country." And in a final literary flourish, he announced "the twilight of the era of your great gains." The New Deal was thus embalmed in history and shoved out of practical politics as a guide for further advances.

They applauded too when he said: "The election should not be considered a disaster or even a misfortune for labor. What would be a misfortune and perhaps even a disaster would be to think so and, preoccupied with fear, lose sight of labor's larger responsibility to a nation which is also groping its way into a new era." The CIO, which extravagantly predicted catastrophe if the Republicans won, now wants to believe that nothing amiss has happened. But a sense of political reality warns it to beware.

The shadow of the first Republican administration since the founding of the CIO hangs over the labor movement. Like everyone else, CIO leaders stand uncertainly before Eisenhower and Congress hoping for the best. But they fear the worst. This uneasy attitude of "wait and see" was expressed in the convention resolution on political action.

Political Action Resolution

"We can expect, and must be prepared for, a determined effort by the coalition of reactionaries in both parties . . . to destroy every vestige of the New Deal and the Fair Deal," it reads, "These purposes of the reactionary coalition in Congress must be exposed and fought every step of the way." But is the Eisenhower administration part of the reactionary coalition? The CIO will wait and see. "We must be prepared to support recommendations that may be sent to Congress by the new president in the fulfillment of his campaign pledges to preserve and extend the gains of the last 20 years." Then, listing Eisenhower's promises, it repeats: "We shall not be obstructionists but will offer our sincere cooperation in the hope that he will and can carry out the commitments he made to promote the public interest."

But the resolution warns that if necessary

the CIO will fight: ". . . as free Americans we have the duty and reserve our democratic right to challenge and oppose the policies and acts of his administration when in our judgment they are not in the public interest." And elsewhere: "Although we shall be heavily engaged in blocking reaction, we shall continue to press our program attacking poverty, disease, discrimination, insecurity, and social, economic and political injustice."

It alerts liberals in Congress to be ready. "We pledge our whole-hearted support to liberal members of both parties who are prepared to defy the coalition of reaction, to define the issues, and to stand up and be counted. Only through such determined and unwavering opposition to this reactionary coalition by all liberal and progressive forces shall we be able to draw the lines on which the campaigns of 1954 and 1956 must be waged to obtain a clear mandate for the cause of human progress and world peace." How many congressmen can pass this test of liberalism? That remains to be seen.

The current CIO line can be defined as follows: fight the reactionary coalition, with Eisenhower if possible, against him if necessary; and in any case true liberals will be tested in the struggle. Plank number one in the program of action reads: "Rally the maximum strength be-

(Turn to last page)

The Struggle in South Africa:

Material Gathered from Eye-Witnesses Proves Police Foment Violence

By HARRY S. WARNER

That the defiance of unjust laws campaign in the Union of South Africa was peaceful, disciplined, and non-racial in character is beyond argument. In less than six months it spread to most large towns, and caught the imagination of the Non-European peoples as no previous political movement had done, but not a single violent incident could be attributed to it.

During the trials of the African and Indian leaders of the Campaign (twenty leaders are on trial in Johannesburg and fifteen in Port Elizabeth) the Crown witnesses have admitted under cross-examination that the Campaign was conducted in a well disciplined manner, that it was not aimed at the Europeans but at unjust laws, that it was a peaceful protest against grievances without any encouragement or suggestion of violence.

Most of these witnesses were detectives from the Special Political Branch of the C.I.D., who had attended numerous public meetings held to further the Campaign and had reported the speeches of the leaders and organizers. There was evidence of large groups of volunteers being arrested by a single policeman. There was evidence that where witnesses were ill-treated, they remained calm and refused to be provoked.

Indictment Refused

At the end of the preparatory examination in Port Elizabeth (where the campaign had its greatest success) the magistrate refused to indict the accused persons on a charge of incitement to public violence, even in the highly technical sense of that term in South African law. He said he was satisfied from the evidence that the Campaign was peaceful and nonviolent.

Then suddenly, between October 18th and November 9th, at the point where the Campaign was threatening to become a mass movement in the towns, and was beginning to spread to the countryside, violent clashes with the police took place in four towns, widely separated.

The first occurred on October 18th in New Brighton Location, Port Elizabeth, where eleven people were killed and at least twenty-seven were injured by gunfire; most of them seriously. The second occurred on November 3rd at the Denver Hostel, Johannesburg, where three Africans were killed and five injured. All had been shot by the police. The third occurred on November 8th at No. 2 Location, Kimberley, where thirteen Africans were killed and at least seventy-eight injured, again all as a result of shooting by the police. The fourth occurred on November 9th at East London where thirteen people were killed and at least fifty injured.

Here again all the Africans who had been killed or injured had been fired on by the police. Actually the number injured is far greater than stated here. In each case the first action of the police, after "quiet" had been restored, was to go around the hospitals and arrest all those they had shot, on the theory apparently that the receipt of a bullet wound was proof that the victim had been rioting. The result is that numerous families are concealing their wounded even to the extent of not calling medical assistance.

Europeans Killed

Three Europeans who were in the New Brighton Location, and two who were in the East London Location at the time of the events, were killed by rioting Africans. Those killed in New Brighton were the owner of a cinema, his son, and a man who was taking some of his workers home on his lorry. Those killed in East London were a Catholic nun, who had been working as a medical practitioner in the location, and an insurance representative. The murders of these people, some of them people who were in a real sense friends of the Africans, has dismayed responsible opinion in South Africa, Afri-

Americans for South African Resistance in their current bulletin dealing with the struggle of the native peoples for their democratic and national rights, carries an account of what has happened there in recent weeks. The bulletin describes the author of the report as a "highly responsible man who has had occasion to investigate professionally the recent riots, and who writes under the nom de plume of Harry S. Warner."

We are reprinting his report because we believe it to be an authentic description of events there, fully corroborated by press reports all over the world. His document points up the factors behind the struggle and the role of the highly reactionary, nationalist government of Malan, as the instigator of the violence and oppression of the native people and the thousands of Indians who reside in South Africa. From time to time LABOR ACTION will take up other aspects of the African situation, but we believe this story is an excellent introduction to understanding what is happening in one part of that great continent.

Needless to say, LABOR ACTION does not necessarily agree with all the views expressed by Mr. Warner.—Ed.

can as well as European. They have alienated much sympathy which many Europeans felt toward the Defiance Campaign. Among the more irresponsible Europeans they have created something near to panic and hysteria, and the entire Union cabinet have used the events to unloose a campaign of anti-African and anti-Indian race hatred and terrorism such as even South Africa has seldom seen.

There has been a rush by European civilians to buy arms; women's organizations have called meetings to demand more police protection; farmers are offering the services of themselves and their rifles to help "handle" the situation; there is pressure to call out the Skiet Kommandos, the armed pro-Malan, civilian auxiliary of the Defense Force.

But the facts about the riots, particularly the immediate causes, have not been made available to the public. Although urged by large sections of the public and press to hold an enquiry, the government refuses to do so. The facts cannot be discussed in the newspaper now, because they are sub judice; while the police carry out leis-

urely investigations with a view to criminal prosecution sometime hence. All the public are left with the police reports which are suspect because the police were participants in the riots, and the statements of cabinet ministers which are even more so because the cabinet ministers are making the most unashamed and reckless political capital out of the events.

Mr. Swart Has Explanation

Mr. Swart, minister for justice, has given an immediate and all too ready explanation—the riots are the direct result of incitement by the leaders of the Defiance Campaign. He has stated that the riots "were simply anti-white." He and other ministers have said that they are an extension of the Mau Mau movement to South Africa. Dr. Verwoerd, minister for native affairs, has blamed the New Brighton riot on the "liberal" policies of the Port Elizabeth City Council, the inference being that anything resembling decent treatment of the African population must lead to riot and murder. Other ministers have blamed the English language press for supporting the Defiance Campaign, the United Nations and the overseas press for its hostility to the Malan government and hence encouragement to the African population. (With a general election coming off next April, there is a clear purpose in all this.)

This wild and contradictory clamor is intended to stampede European voters away from the United Party, and gain their support for the strong-arm Native policy of the Nationalist government. Now the true facts about the riots are beginning to be known, mainly as the result of investigations by lawyers engaged in the defence of persons arrested and facing charges arising out of the riots. They reveal an appalling state of affairs; that the police on the direct instigation of Mr. Swart, their minister of justice, have been firing on the slightest provocation, and in some cases without provocation, killing innocent people, stirring up riots by indiscriminate shooting, then justifying the shooting as being necessary to put down the riots. These are grave accusations but they are made with a realization of their gravity; the evidence leaves little doubt that they are true.

Let us deal firstly with the charge against Mr. Swart: that he deliberately instigated the shootings. Well, on this we have Mr. Swart's own admissions. On November 2nd at Klipkoppies he stated:

"The police have instructions to take drastic

Shoot First, Talk Later

action where there is a threat of a clash between Europeans and non-Europeans. They will strike when necessary and they will shoot when necessary. So-called innocent bystanders should get out of the way when there are signs of trouble. If they are so innocent what are they doing at trouble spots? The police have instructions to act and to act swiftly and they have my support. The organizers of the Defiance Campaign should heed this warning."

Note that this order requires the police to shoot, not in defense of lives (the only time a policeman or anyone is legally permitted to shoot) but when there is a threat of a clash between Europeans and non-Europeans. Not even a clash but the threat of one. What amounts to such a threat is a question for the police officer to decide, and his decision will of course depend on how frightened or how trigger happy he happens to feel. If he thinks angry looks amount to a threat he is entitled to shoot, and he would have Mr. Swart's support for his action.

On the 15th of November, 1952, at a Nationalist Party meeting in the Free State, he again admitted that he had given these orders to the police:

"I have instructed police officers not to wait until their men are killed or wounded in riots be-

Malan Government Provokes Riots

fore they fire. They have been told to shoot first. The government will deal with the unruly elements with all the force at its disposal."

This conception of a shoot-first-and-talk-afterwards police force is in line with Mr. Swart's way of thinking. On the 30th of April, he complained that the police "are sometimes a little too soft."

On the 6th of August he said:

"If the police go beyond their powers in isolated cases, they should not be condemned in view of their difficult task. It is just too bad if people get hurt."

On the 19th of September, he said:

"Only the police can save South Africa from chaos," thus leaving no doubt that in Swart's mind South Africa will in future be ruled by the police.

After such persistent and unambiguous incitement to shoot is it any wonder that the police soon found occasions to do so? Is it any surprise that if there were no occasions they soon started manufacturing them?

Police Break Up Meeting

In East London the trouble started when the police came to break up an open air prayer meeting. Although there was a ban on all meetings in the Location, special permission had been granted by the chief magistrate to hold this one. While the preacher was reading from the Bible to a crowd of about two hundred, two lorry-loads of armed police drove up. The preacher was reading about the oppression of the Israelites. The policeman in charge, a junior officer, decided that he could not permit such subversive theology, permission or no permission, and he ordered the crowd to disperse within five minutes. The meeting immediately broke up.

In less than two minutes and while people were walking away, the police officer ordered the African constables to make a baton charge which was immediately followed by a bayonet charge by the European constables. Before the crowd was driven off the square, shots were fired and a man was killed. Almost everyone injured on the square whether by batons, bayonets, or bullets, had been attacked from behind. The police then climbed into their lorries and drove up and down the main streets of the Location firing at anybody and into houses. One man was killed while sitting in his kitchen reading a newspaper. One man was killed and two wounded while having a beer party in a house. Dozens were injured. A woman belonging to one of the religious sects, wearing a red robe and carrying a cross, came round a corner unaware that there was trouble. A policeman jumped off the lorry, ran up, and bayoneted her, severely injuring her leg. Then the police returned to the police station. Nobody had attacked the police in any way—it would have been suicide to do so.

Mr. Gwentshe, the chairman of the African National Congress in East London, went to the police station and asked to be allowed to drive through the Location in a car with a loud-speaker to calm the people. Permission was granted. Mr. Gwentshe returned to his house and was fitting the loud-speaker to his car when he saw that the police had followed him in their lorries. He saw a policeman taking aim at him with a rifle; the shot killed a man standing next to him.

Then the police again drove through the Location firing into the houses. There are bullet holes in houses all over the Location, many several miles from the scene of any rioting. Now rioting started, first with stone throwing, and later with the burning of buildings. It is believed that at this stage the Europeans were

killed. The police did not stay to put down the riot which they had stirred up. They packed off a few more people at random, fired into some more houses, and then drove back to the police station. They were not on hand to stop the burning of buildings, the municipal offices, a welfare centre, and church, which they certainly knew about because they could see the flame and smoke. By then it was evening. That night they stayed at the police station, which is on the edge of the Location, with guns propped on the window-sills firing into the houses.

The Denver Shootings

At Denver, Johannesburg, the police sniped at Africans standing on the balconies of the Hostel at a time when there was quiet and no threat of disturbances. Earlier there had been some trouble in which stones were thrown and windows broken, but nobody injured. Feelings were high in the Hostel on that day, because the municipality had raised the rents by 80 per cent, and the tenants had decided not to pay the increased rental until they had made representations to the Native Affairs Department. One man did not abide by the decision and went to pay the increased amount. A crowd tried to mob him and he ran for safety into the superintendent's office. Then a crowd of tenants joined by some people from a nearby beer-hall began throwing stones, breaking windows outside the Hostel. Several lorry loads of armed police arrived, and the stone throwing immediately stopped. Most of the people in the Hostel had taken no part in the stone throwing.

As the police gathered at the gate, the Hostel tenants stood on the balconies, which surround a quadrangle, watching the police gathering at the gate below. For half an hour nothing happened. Then someone must have remembered Mr. Swart's orders, because suddenly there was a burst of firing by the police. A man on the first balcony was killed, and one on the second balcony injured. People disappeared from the balconies into the rooms behind. The firing stopped, and the people thought that it was safe to come out. As they did so the police began picking them off. Again they disappeared and waited for some ten minutes before coming out again to attend to the dead and wounded. Again the police waited and sniped at them as they came out. All those killed were shot through the head. Of those injured two were shot in the head and one through the chest.

Then to round off the day, the police arrested the three wounded men and the three leading figures on the Tenants Committee. They are being charged with public violence. Two of the three committee men were not even at the Hostel that afternoon. They were discussing the new rents at a meeting with the Tenants Committee of a neighboring Hostel, and they arrived back only when the shooting was over. And this, more or less, is the pattern of the other riots.

Kimberley and Port Elizabeth

At Kimberley there had been dissatisfaction about the management of the municipal beer-hall, and a boycott had been organized. In enforcing the boycott, an argument took place with some Africans who wanted to enter the beer-hall. A policeman assaulted a woman by hitting her on the head with his handcuffs. This infuriated the bystanders and they began throwing stones; then they overturned and burnt a municipal lorry parked nearby.

A bus-load of police armed with rifles and stenguns arrived and although their arrival put an end to all disturbances, they fired point blank into the crowd of Africans gathered around the beer-hall. Then, as in East London, they drove through the streets of the Location firing at anyone they saw and into the houses. Among those killed was a woman carrying a six-months-old baby on her back. Then, having stirred up the entire location, they returned to the police station. After that furious mobs set fire to the location offices, the beer-hall, and other evidences of the white man's administration.

At Port Elizabeth, a railway policeman had tried to arrest an African for failing to pay an extra charge for a tin of paint he was carrying with him on the train. An argument started and a friend of the man came to his assistance. There was a scuffle and the railway policeman pulled out his revolver and shot and killed the friend. This was witnessed by a crowd, mainly women, on the railway platform. They ran screaming into the location and spread the story. After a while several hundred Africans came out of the location to the railway station, some of them throwing stones. Police reinforcements arrived and again they fired point blank into the crowd. Again, they drove through the location firing into the houses. When they left, a furious mob ran through the location, burning down the cinema and killing the owner and his son; they burnt the post office and other buildings and they killed a European bringing his workers home on a lorry.

How to Stir Up a Riot

There is one thing the police have learned from these events—how to stir up a riot. There is in all the locations and townships a feeling of dumb frustration and subdued anger which requires only a spark to set it off. In addition to this there is a criminal element known as Tsotsis. This element, consisting mainly of young gangsters, has been produced by slum conditions, by poverty, and most of all by the workings of the pass laws, which make it difficult for many youngsters to obtain work. They give up the attempt to work and live by crime. They prey on their own people by robberies and assaults and many of them rob and assault the Europeans. When there are shootings and the people's anger is aroused, the conditions for the Tsotsis to take control are created. They do so, leading the violent outbursts of burning and killing.

One would think that if the government genuinely wished to stop riots they would permit responsible African leaders, such as Mr. Gwentshe, to remain at the leadership of their communities, particularly when events of this sort take place. But this is not the policy of the government. Throughout the Eastern Province all the well known leaders have been prohibited from attending "any gathering." What this means is not quite clear; that is, whether they are prohibited from standing in bus queues or attending cinemas or sitting down to eat with their families. It is clear, however, that they may not address any public meetings. As one of these leaders has said: "The government are putting the Tsotsis in the leadership of the African people."

This is not as far-fetched as it sounds. There are other signs that the government do not wish a responsible leadership to develop. In the Western Native areas of Johannesburg, where a gang of hooligans have dispossessed two hundred law abiding families of their houses, forcing them to live on an open square, no action whatever has been taken against the hooligans. It is the government's policy to create as much unrest as possible and then to shoot down all signs of it. There is no other explanation for the events described in this article.

The Passive Resistance Campaign, peaceful, disciplined, and non-racial, was something it could not handle by ordinary means. It has decided to convert it from a passive into a violent campaign.

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CIO Faces Uneasy Future — —

(Continued from page 1)

hind the true liberals in Congress, in state legislatures, and local governing bodies. Encourage them to make strong fights for measures in the public interest and against raids of special vested interests." The word "encourage" is a diplomatic euphemism. It seems to mean: "demand, put pressure upon, insist."

The Reuther Election

In this mood of mobilizing for difficult days, the convention elected Walter P. Reuther president of the CIO to replace the late Philip Murray. Joe Curran, head of the National Maritime Union, seconded Reuther's nomination, calling for a cold and sober analysis of the political scene. We need a fighting, dynamic leadership down the hard, long road ahead, he told the delegates, and Reuther can give that kind of leadership. The big unions wanted a man who could arouse the enthusiasm of the ranks and whose name, stature, and past career could appeal to the broad public.

After election, Reuther called upon the CIO as he has called upon his own UAW, to "recreate the crusading spirit of the CIO." He warned "the fat men on the plush cushions in the cocktail bars of the millionaires clubs" that any attempt to crush the labor movement would be repulsed. The CIO, he declared, was ready to settle its grievances by amicable discussions around the bargaining table; but if need be, the unions would stand together and march unitedly on the picket lines.

In the same spirit, the convention voted unanimously to reopen unity negotiations with the AFL. At the opening session a cheering audience heard Maurice Tobin, secretary of labor, call for reunification. "The past gains of the American workingmen and women are in jeopardy. Their future progress is in doubt. This is a time to close ranks and present a united front against labor's enemies. This is a time, more than any other, for unity in the American labor movement."

Unity without Capitulation

But the enthusiasm for unity was no sign of capitulation to craft unionism. Emil Rieve, president of the Textile Workers Union, and Allan S. Haywood, CIO executive vice-president, adamantly insisted upon unity based on equality. Rieve demanded terms that would allow industrial unionism "to live and to grow." In electing Reuther, the leaders of big industrial unions were choosing a man to lead them who could exact favorable concessions from powerful and jealous craft unions.

To cement cordial relations with the AFL, the convention telegraphed unanimous congratulations to Martin Durkin upon his selection as secretary of labor. The telegram undoubtedly served another purpose: it proffered a conciliatory hand to Eisenhower, who had just announced that he felt the Taft-Hartley Law might be amended to satisfy labor. This conciliatory fact was ignored. A resolution on the T-H Law emphatically demanded outright repeal.

Unanimity prevailed on every issue, except one: election of a president to replace Murray. Here a bitter fight raged that for a moment posed the ominous possibility of a split. Even after defeat was certain, Haywood stubbornly insisted upon a roll call vote to demonstrate the strength of Reuther's opposition. But by the time the chairman's gavel sounded out adjournment, the looming cloud of split seemed dissipated. Reuther and Haywood, and the spokesmen for all the big unions publicly pledged to stand united. Reuther promised no reprisals against his rivals. His opponents promised loyal support. Their sincerity seemed genuine, above all, because their common interest binds them together. On this note of harmony, the convention ended.

Official Unanimity

In true tradition of official unanimity, the real fight never reached the floor; a public vote couldn't be avoided, but the delegates heard only polite nominating speeches and a formal roll call. In normal times, all labor leaders are officially noble, able, self-sacrificing, and exuberantly devoted to humanity.

But an irrepressible, if concealed, struggle erupted after Murray's death. It raged in conference chambers before the convention and in hotel rooms during the sessions in Atlantic City. Reuther was negotiating with the big unions and required no public rallies or caucuses to reach the few strong international leaders. Mike Quill, head of the Transport Workers Union, organized a temporary mass caucus of small international unions and tiny unattached locals to insure their last ditch support for Haywood; but in private, shielded from the curious investigations of reporters or visiting CIO members.

Ludicrous cloak and dagger devices were invented to penetrate the mysterious doings at Atlantic City. One reporter was supposed to have hidden in a closet to ferret out Haywood secrets. Another pretended to be an international board member to gain admittance to a meeting of a big union. Joe Curran tried to sit in at a Haywood caucus of "small locals." "What small union do you represent?" asked chairman Mike Quill. "The same kind that you do, Mike," was the reply. But Curran was forced to leave the meeting for these "disruptive" tactics.

What happened on the convention floor sheds little light on the significance of Reuther's victory; an examination of the opposing forces and their aims is necessary.

Basic Unions for Reuther

When Secretary James Carey concluded the roll call, the vote stood at 3,079,181 for Reuther to 2,613,103 for Haywood. [Some 600 delegates cast votes in proportion

to the number of members they represented. An intricate arithmetical device was employed to inflate the total membership of the CIO which obviously cannot claim 5,700,000 members. If anything, this device exaggerated Haywood's relative strength.] But these figures alone do not fully explain the line-up. Haywood had the support of the Steel Workers, the Communications Workers, and the Packinghouse Workers. But that ends the list of decisive mass unions which voted for him. His column was filled out by the votes of small, minor unions, of 119 out of 131 tiny local unions, and of most of the local industrial union councils. If Haywood had the claque, Reuther had the votes. The decisive mass unions were for him: Auto (of course), Amalgamated Clothing, Textile, Oil, Rubber, and the Electrical Workers.

As at all national CIO [and AFL] conventions, the majority of delegates were not workers in the shops but officials of international unions and paid members of the central staff. Obviously, the element of "rank and file versus leadership" which is often intertwined in inner union struggles was not present here. Neither was it primarily a dispute of "small unions versus large unions," although Haywood tried to give it that character.

The line-up of opposing forces could be roughly summarized in the following formula: on one side: the small-time CIO organizational staff of appointed and dependent officials, given power by a conservative Steel Workers union and backed by an even more conservative Communication Workers union. On the other side: a progressive UAW backed by the entrenched leaders of powerful, independent, mass industrial unions.

Haywood's Supporters

As executive vice-president, Haywood commanded the CIO apparatus staffed by his loyal aides. Through this post he dominated or controlled isolated local industrial unions which depend directly on the national, state or city central bodies. He influenced small internationals, too weak to stand on their own, frequently pushing his men into key posts. In the same way, he could swing the votes of industrial union councils. R. J. Thomas and Richard Leonard, defeated in the UAW some years ago by Reuther, came to this convention as delegates. They both found berths on the CIO staff through Murray and under Haywood. Leonard cast the votes of the small Insurance Workers Union; Thomas, of the Department Store Organizing Committee. When their choice was announced—for Haywood, against Reuther—no one was astounded. They typify other less known but numerous and articulate Haywood supporters.

This staff (with the Steel union), bound by personal loyalties, resigned to sliding along in the same old rut, constituted a conservative, right bloc. Off the record, they denounced Reuther as a radical surrounded by socialists and longhairs. They cannot quite understand Reuther and so they suspect him. All those beholden to Haywood faced the elections with trepidation. The defeat of their chief and sponsor could be a life and death matter: the staff faced a possible shakeup followed by the tragic necessity of seeking work of some other kind.

These men were preoccupied with posts and perquisites in the narrowest sense. The public speeches for Haywood, oozing with nostalgia and sentimentality expressed their view of life. Is it too much, they asked, for a man who is coming to the end of his allotted span, who has given unflinching service to the workers, and who remains as one of the dwindling number of first founders to finish his career in glory amid grateful followers? By insisting on a roll call they defied protocol and tradition. They put on an amazing demonstration of strength and solidity to the very end, resisting all temptation to climb on the winning bandwagon.

And they finally won important concessions. The post of executive vice-president, previously filled by presidential appointment, was given constitutional status and specific powers. Haywood was elected by the convention to fill this post. He and the staff at his disposal won a certain independence from the new president, Reuther.

Labor's Broader Interests

Despite these concessions, however, the election of Reuther was a triumph of the broad interests and aims of the labor movement and its officialdom over the narrower interests of the Haywood officialdom. Not that Potofsky, Rieve, and the others necessarily represent inner democracy any better or cherish their own posts any less. But they could afford to think of other matters. They are entrenched leaders in their own right. Regardless of who was elected their positions were secure. Not faced by any disturbing possibilities, they were free to choose with their eyes focused not on office chairs but on the broader needs of the labor movement as they interpreted it.

They had not come merely to give reward for past services. An entire convention session became a Murray memorial service devoted to eulogies from Potofsky, Adlai Stevenson, and Father Owen Rice of Pittsburgh. For four days, speaker after speaker rendered homage to the memory of the dead leader. Perhaps that seemed like enough recognition of the past. It was, above all, necessary to prepare for the uncertain future, when strong leadership capable of rapid adjustment to changing times had to be at the helm. And that, under the circumstances, meant Reuther.

In retrospect, some of Reuther's closest followers consider his election the most natural, if not inevitable, thing in the world. He heads the largest union; his abilities are outstanding; he is respected nationally and internationally perhaps more than any other American labor leader. And he faced the election with more than one-third of the total votes already in his pocket.

Yet, he had to campaign intensively for weeks; his rival made an impressive showing; and the defection of only one or two of the larger unions meant defeat. His victory, while definite and unmistakable, was narrow. To

pave the way, he prepared not simply in the few weeks before the convention, but in the whole period since his final victory in the UAW. He cautiously worked to overcome the distrust of the labor leaders who finally selected him. In this he succeeded. But to reach the goal, he had to modify and restrain his own distinctive "Reutherism."

What Was "Reutherism"?

Reuther fought his way to the top of the UAW by heading a movement of the most militant sections of a militant union against a discredited leadership. A rank and file upsurge put him in power. In his fight he showed that it was possible to defeat the Communist Party, not by bureaucratic methods but in open political discussion.

Reuther attracted those who wanted vigorous, clean unionism, who were distrustful of bureaucratism. He criticized union officials, without naming them, who sought high salaries and ruled their unions by undemocratic means. In the face of opposition from Murray, he raised the slogans: "Wage Increases Without Price Increases" and "Open the Books" in the General Motors strike of 1945-6. The UAW, he proclaimed, would become the "vanguard in America and the architect of the future."

In 1948, he called for a new political realignment through the formation of a new progressive party, pledging to devote himself to this objective in the years to come. And in 1951, when this goal was permitted to recede, he promised to call for an emergency political conference of the labor movement in preparation for the 1952 elections. Although it was never incorporated into a formal, written program, this is what became known as "Reutherism," a distinctive current in the labor movement. It stamped him and the union he led as the left wing; that is, as the most radical wing, in the mass workingclass movement.

Reuther, not Reutherism

He has now consummated a burning ambition. He has become Walter P. Reuther, president of the CIO. But the labor leaders who elevated him to this coveted, lofty post chose Reuther but not his Reutherism. He had to make this possible for them by deemphasizing his own past. The convention heard nothing from Reuther about political realignment and of course the convention resolutions ignored it. Emil Mazey, formerly a public advocate of the formation of a labor party, managed to address the delegates on the subject of politics without distinguishing himself from anyone else. Not a labor party, not a progressive new party, not a new party of any kind did he deign to mention. These pledges are confined to periodical speeches in the UAW and are not allowed to intrude into the general councils of labor.

In nominating Reuther, O. A. Knight of the Oil Workers Union told the delegates that when Reuther became UAW president, the union was torn by factionalism; now it is united. He conveniently forgot that Reuther was one of the factionalists, even if the one who gained final victory. What intrigued Knight was not how Reuther came to power, i.e., by democratic rank and file struggle, but how he was able to wipe out caucus and faction life after coming to power.

In sum, Reuther's course in the past years has convinced the majority of the CIO leaders that he is safe, sane and responsible or more accurately that he will not go beyond what they consider to be safe, etc.

But this does not mean that they chose Reuther because he was just like Haywood, or even because he was just like themselves. For that, Haywood would have been adequate. If they did not endorse Reutherism, neither did they repudiate it. Reuther is a fitting and acceptable instrument for the CIO leaders precisely because his Reutherism remains suspended. But this has two aspects: (1) they need not be embarrassed by radical proclamations or ventures which they are not ready to endorse, and (2) Reutherism is held in reserve if the need arises. And this coincides exactly with the uncertainty with which the CIO faces the future.

Step Forward for CIO

Reuther has not yet become the authentic leader of the CIO, although he is its president. For that, he would have to become more or less indistinguishable from those who elected him, or they would have to move toward what Reutherism symbolized. At the moment, he is the instrument which they have selected to carry out their program of today or tomorrow.

Reuther has spurred the role of left-wing spur to the labor movement in favor of the more tangible prestige and powers of office. His election does not passage a swing to the left or a radical new policy for the CIO. It implies rather, a groping for a somewhat more decisive policy. It signifies that the door is held open for such a turn if and when mighty events force the labor leadership to seek new paths.

Reuther and the group around him have not fulfilled the great promises of their own program and thus have dodged the responsibility which the auto workers placed in their hands: that of reorienting the labor movement. The election of Reuther nevertheless marks a step forward for the CIO. It frees it from the heavy hand of conservative-petty machine domination, and makes possible an easier transition to a new policy.

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to speak your mind in the letter column of LABOR ACTION, "Readers Take the Floor." Our policy is to publish all letters of general political interest, regardless of views. Keep them to 500 words. Letters must be signed; names withheld on request.