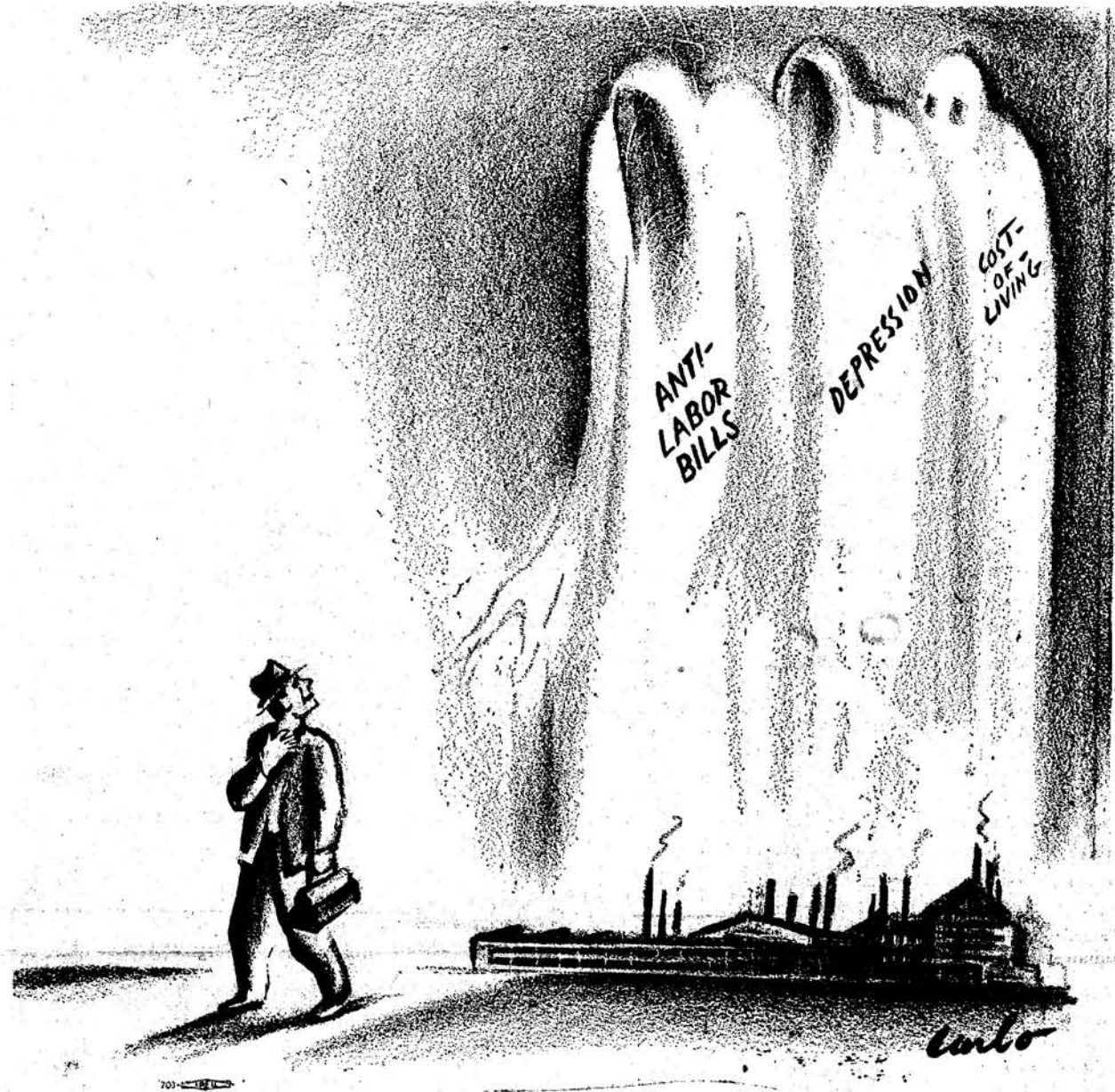


INDUSTRY-GOVERNMENT PRICE BOOST ROBS LABOR OF PICKET LINE GAINS!

And the Companies Want Security!

Labor Must Answer by Organizing For Independent Political Action!



LABOR ACTION EDITORIAL

What labor is winning on the picket line is being stolen from labor in Washington. In a telegram to President Truman, Walter Reuther, leader of the General Motors strike, charged that prices, not wages, had become the "major issue" in the current strike struggle. That's true. Big Steel and GM are quite prepared to accept the miserable wage increases recommended by the President's "fact-finding" wage-fixing boards. They are holding out for substantial price increases that will effectively crack what

remains of price control. All the powerful business lobbies are behind them. And the government too! Yes, the government too! Truman is haggling with Big Steel over the size of the price increase. That's all. The principle is agreed on. The question now is simply how large the price increase shall be! Shall it be \$4.00 or \$6.25 per ton of steel? Everyone knows that an increase in the price per ton of coal directly affects the effects of a few cents more for a can of soup. But an increase in the price of steel is of no less concern to us. No, we do not buy steel. Steel sells to industry, to the makers of railroad cars and refrigerators and irons. But the in-

crease is passed on right down the line until it is we, the great mass of people, who pay for the increase. What happens then to a meager increase in pay? It is wiped out! Labor has already suffered severe cuts in take-home pay. Even with the additions granted by Truman's new "Little Steel" formula—averaging between 15 and 19 cents an hour—take-home pay will be less than it was during the war. These additions will be cancelled out by price increases! Elsewhere in this issue we detail the record of the Administration on price controls. One after another these price controls are being lifted with Administration approval to the point where, today, (Continued on page 3)

Unify the Fight to Hold Price Line!

By WALTER WEISS

"Wages are no longer a major issue... The major issue now is prices." So Walter Reuther, vice president of the United Automobile Workers, declared in a telegram to President Truman on February 2. "Industry," he added, "spearheaded by steel and the General Motors Corporation, is determined to hijack the American people and the American government into accepting unjustified price increases that would

provide the most outrageous profits in history." It is true that wages are no longer the major issue. It is true because the union leaders have yielded all along the line. They have accepted Truman's new version of the Little Steel formula—a 15-19 cent formula, which is coming to be called the Big Steel formula. The corporations, however, are not yielding. They are out to make their

fabulous war profits look like nothing at all. One of their methods is to get "company security" clauses in all contracts and thus make it easier to institute speedups. If this is not a "major issue," it is only because various union leaders have connived with the corporations to deceive the workers as to what is going on. The other method of the monopolists is, as Reuther says, to break the already weak structure of price control completely. To be sure, some of them profess to favor ceilings—provided these ceilings touch the sky! Steel magnates, for example, claim that they have long been entitled to \$7 more a ton, even without a single cent in wage increases. To pay Truman's compromise 18 1/2 cent pay raise would require another \$6.25 per ton, according to the chairman of U.S. Steel. The monopolists in meat and electrical equipment talk among the same lines. Then there are the clothing manufacturers, admittedly hoarding millions of shirts and hundreds of thousands of men's suits in the face of a terrible shortage, in the confident expectation that OPA will soon become more "reasonable." Henry Ford II goes further. Having granted higher wages, he now weeps that he is losing \$300 on every car, and he modestly suggests the abandonment of all price controls. When Reuther warns of outrageous profits, of hijacking the American people, and of the danger of serious inflation, he is definitely not talking through his hat. But what does Reuther intend to do about this situation? His solution

seems to consist of an appeal to Truman "to call upon the American people to rally behind you in support of price control." He winds up his plea with this little pep talk to the President: "The fight of the General Motors workers is your fight and the fight of every American. It demands your immediate and militant support." Is Reuther really serious? Truman can't and won't rally his own appointed subordinates to hold the price line. Truman can't, in fact, rally himself. He is known to be debating—more or less publicly—how much in extra profits he can allow the big monopolists without wrecking his political future. Truman's Secretary of Agriculture suggested not so long ago an 18 (Continued on page 4)

Congress Threatens Anti-Labor Legislation

By MARY BELL

Anyone who still clings to a shred of the myth of the impartiality of the government—the belief that President Truman, the senators and representatives are non-partisan mediators sitting in lofty judgment above the moil and toil of the struggle between capital and labor—needs only to take a sidelong glance at the labor legislation now up before Congress. The most sensational and drastic bill to curb strikes and weaken the organized labor movement is the Case bill. This bill was sired by the Republicans and the Bourbon wing of the Democrats. Another, less drastic and in a sense more insidious strike-curbing measure, is Truman's own bill (HR 4908). Both bills limit the right to strike by enforcing a "cooling off" period while an impartial government board takes charge of the dispute. Truman's

bill makes a hypocritical concession to the open-the-books demand of the United Auto Workers Union by calling for fact-finding boards. But, as LABOR ACTION has reported before, the secrets of profits and production are to be revealed not to labor and the public, but only to the government agents on the fact-finding board. MUREAY'S INDICTMENT Philip Murray, CIO president, correctly nailed the anti-labor provisions of the Case bill: "The bill imposes compulsory arbitration. It carries an enforced 'cooling-off' period of 35 days before a strike can be legally called. It makes any form of assistance to a strike illegal. It revives the hated labor injunction, outlawed fourteen years ago by the Norris-LaGuardia Act.

"It robs workers of the protection of the National Labor Relations Act. The manner of introduction to the House betrays its real purposes, despite the loud protestations of its sponsors. The bill was not studied in committee. Instead, it was jammed through a packed group in the Rules Committee, which functions only to delay beneficial legislation and to hasten reactionary measures." One of the main features of the Case bill is to loosen up the injunctive restrictions of the courts so that they may be used against labor. Of the many injunctions now being used against the struggle of organized labor on the picket lines to secure a living wage, that employed against the Homestead steel strikers illustrates best the use to which this technique is put. The pickets had been massing by hundreds to prevent scabs, foremen and supervisory agents whom the company wants to

use as a back-to-work movement, from entering the plant and breaking the solidarity of their strike. The writ, issued by Republican Judge Soffel, who ought, if he isn't, to be in the pay of the Carnegie-Illinois Steel Co., forbids strikers to bar anyone from the mill and limits the pickets to ten, paced ten feet apart. This use of the courts in strikes is in the classic style. As the CIO-PAC News Service states, although "the bill purports to deal with violence in labor disputes, it says nothing about the use of tear gas by employers to break strikes, about the resort to terror by employers, about the notorious Mohawk Valley formula, etc." Or, "Similarly, the bill exposes labor organizations to the novel sanction of suits in the federal courts for breach of contract, but says nothing about the widespread flouting of War Labor Board directives by employers

which today has resulted in the denial to workers of back pay awards of over \$20 million." A STRUGGLE OF CLASSES The CIO-PAC limits its criticism of the Case bill to calling it "one-sided, punitive, irresponsible." But if you accept the basic premises of the CIO's Political Action Committee, which is the premise of Truman, the Democratic Party and also of the gang of Republicans and Democrats who authored the Case bill, you cannot call this proposed legislation of Truman's bill "one-sided." These basic premises are: the capitalist system is the best system ever; the capitalist government is the best form of government; the interests of labor and capital are fundamentally identical—"one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all," capital and labor alike. (Continued on page 2)



WALTER REUTHER

Promote Your Paper, Support the Sub Drive!

By EMANUEL GARRETT

Reva Craine, our press manager, has invited me to address the readers of LABOR ACTION through her Press Column on the subscription drive which began on February 1. It is an opportunity I gladly take because it is, to my way of thinking, as important an issue as any in the world, and a good deal more important than most. LABOR ACTION is not merely the paper of those who actually write its columns, mail it, and so forth. It is, in a far more fundamental sense, YOUR paper. And we feel that the responsibility of circulating it (and writing for it, too) should be shared by us collectively, and "us" includes every reader. There is a need for LABOR ACTION that cannot be filled by any other paper. In explanation we stand on our record of vigorous, uncompromising intervention on every issue of the class struggle against the bosses. LABOR ACTION was the first, and only, paper to publish a revolutionary socialist manifesto against the war. LABOR ACTION is the only paper in the United States that consistently champions the interests of labor—veterans, Negroes, men, women—against ALL the imperialisms of the world. Those of you who are perhaps familiar only with the last few issues will nevertheless have seen ample demonstration of its un-

swerving devotion to the cause of the working class. Thousands of you who received LABOR ACTION for the first time on a picket line in Detroit, Reading, Lackawanna, Harrison or any one of a dozen places saw in LABOR ACTION a paper that did more than give unstinting support to the strike actions that have swept the country. Yes, more! We do not merely "cover" the strikes as a capitalist newspaper would. Each strike struggle is ours. Every picket line has LABOR ACTION marching with it in spirit. We have campaigned for a democratically coordinated strike strategy council to unify the various strike actions. We have campaigned, as we are in the greatest part of the issue you are now reading, to organize for political action as well as for economic action. In every respect we have shown bias—yes, bias! For we are biased and proud of it. We are biased on the side of labor, we are out to destroy capitalism and to replace it by a system of society in which workers, black or white, of any national origin, rule according to the needs of society as a whole. To be sure, we have severely criticized the labor leaders while pledging our 100 per cent support to the struggles they lead. That too we understand as our duty. When the policies of a union leader injure the interests of labor either in the immediate or longer sense, we say so. We discuss such policies, analyze them, explain wherein they are wrong, and in opposing them, give our view as to what

is right. We do not hide from any issue of the class struggle, but enter into it vigorously as socialists, as unionists, as militant members of the labor movement. Ours is a paper for veterans, for Negroes, for the oppressed everywhere. That is why we ask you to help us spread it. We'll speak of our plans for a larger paper in a few weeks when these plans are worked out. In the meantime, let us put LABOR ACTION into the hands of 5,000 new worker-subscribers by May 1. The first three days of the drive brought in over 150 new subs. That's good as a beginning. But only as a beginning. We take it for granted that Workers Party branches will swing into a real sub-getting stride. How about the rest of our readers? Below is the list of subs received in the first three days of the drive and the quotas that the Workers Party branches have undertaken to fill:

Branch	Quota	Subs as of February 4
Akron	200	5
Baltimore	10	1
Boston	10	1
Buffalo	200	—
Chicago	350	5
Cleveland	100	4

Connecticut	10	—
Denver	25	—
Detroit	1000	9
Hibbing	100	3
Los Angeles	250	17
Louisville	50	—
Madison	25	—
Newark	150	30
New York	2000	42
Oregon	10	—
Philadelphia	500	10
Reading	75	4
San Francisco	200	2
San Pedro	250	8
Seattle	200	9
Streator	25	—
St. Louis	25	5
Syracuse	10	—
Youngstown	25	—
Miscellaneous	—	4
TOTAL	5800	159

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE LABOR FRONT

Miners' Entry in AFL Poses Serious Questions

By DAVID COOLIDGE

The entrance of the United Mine Workers of America into the AFL has resulted in a great deal of speculation and prediction as to the significance for the trade union movement as a whole of this shift in the labor scene.

This is true of the labor movement and also of the "friends of labor." There are those who predict that the return of the UMWA to the AFL is the signal for a raiding expedition on the CIO. If not this, then the AFL, under the influence of Lewis, will experience a resurgence of "Gompersism," particularly on the question of the relations between the government and unions on the one hand, and the unions and the employers on the other.

A third position is that the entry of the Mine Workers into the AFL will be a blow at industrial unionism. A fourth contention states that the return will be a setback to the political development of the working class and a blow against the formation of an independent Labor Party.

HISTORY OF THE SPLIT

To be in a position to deal with the questions raised in connection with the entrance of the UMWA into the AFL it is necessary to go over some of the history of AFL-CIO-UMWA relations during the past few years. First, it is important to recall how the miners got out of the CIO because it was the events leading up to leaving the CIO, which the UMWA had done more to found than any other single organization, that created difficulties both for the UMWA and the CIO.

In a reactionary outburst in 1940, Lewis announced his support of Willkie and promised that if Roosevelt was re-elected he (Lewis) would not remain as president of the CIO. Roosevelt was re-elected and at the 1941 convention of the CIO, Lewis announced that he was not a candidate for re-election. The Stalinists, who feared Murray because they were of the opinion that he would institute a CP purge if he succeeded Lewis, put on a 45-minute demonstration for Lewis, demanding that he stand for re-election. Lewis kept his "promise," however, and Murray was made president. This was the beginning of the rift between the UMWA and the CIO.

The breach was widened later when, at the instance of Lewis, Murray was removed as vice-president

of the UMWA. The situation was not helped by the Stalinists when, with their usual opportunistic approach, they climbed on the Murray bandwagon and began the organization of an anti-Lewis campaign in the CIO and the whole labor movement.

While all of this was happening, the rank and file membership of the UMWA was being fed an anti-CIO diet. The top leadership of the CIO did not deport itself in such a way as to clarify the issues for the miners and lead them to understand that the CIO was not anti-UMWA. Any one who attended the convention of the UMWA in 1942 and 1944 could very easily detect this tragic situation, which was deliberately fostered by Lewis and which the CIO leadership aided and abetted by its stupid attitudes during the numerous strikes engaged in by the miners.

The fact that the top leadership of the UMWA and the CIO was indulging in the most impermissible forms of bureaucratic internal prestige politics was in itself enough to disorient both the miners and the workers in the CIO, especially during the mine strikes. To this, however, was added the machinations of the Stalinist betrayers, who by this time had gone over to full support of Roosevelt and the war. They crawled into bed with Murray.

The fact that Murray and the Stalinists were both ardently supporting the war gave the Stalinists greater prestige and influence in the CIO. This and the opportunist attacks on Lewis by the Stalinists, combined with the Stalinist attacks on the miners' strikes, infuriated the rank and file of the UMWA and served to turn them against the CIO. Neither the leadership of the CIO nor of the UMWA turned a finger to correct this situation or to effect a reconciliation between the two organizations.

The workers of the UMWA and of the CIO were made mere pawns in a game being played by their leaders. The Stalinists were always present and active, keeping the witches' brew boiling and bubbling and creating trouble such as only the Stalinists know how. The whole struggle between these bureaucrats at the head of the UMWA and the CIO expressed itself in the support of Roosevelt by Murray and Co. and opposition to Roosevelt by Lewis and Co. Murray and the Stalinists supported Roosevelt, and Lewis supported Willkie and Dewey against Roosevelt. Not one of them made any proposals for independent political action by their organizations, or by the working class as a whole. Such fratricidal strife could only

lead to a split in the CIO and the establishment of the UMWA as an independent unit in the labor movement. This was the end of the road for the miners after the events of 1941 when Lewis refused to remain as president of the CIO.

AFL OR CIO?

It is pertinent, in light of the above, to ask the question: What business did Lewis have leading the UMWA out of the CIO? There was no valid reason. His reason was an extremely petty one. It was based on the outcome of an election which in no sense should have been a determining factor in deciding the course of a leader of a working class organization. His action was reactionary for the reason that his basing of his course on the outcome of a contest between two ruling class politicians subordinated the interests of labor to the interests of the capitalist ruling class.

The fact that Murray performed in the same manner cannot be advanced in mitigation of the course pursued by Lewis. He was the outstanding leader of labor in the U. S.

In the circumstances, and with the background detailed above, it would have been, and still is, unrealistic to take the position that the UMWA should have entered the CIO and not the AFL. We do not say that it was impossible but extremely unlikely that such a consummation could have been achieved. Also one must be careful not to establish a difference in principle between entering the AFL and becoming part of the CIO. There is no difference of a principled sort between the two organizations.

The leadership of both organizations are class collaborationists. In a fundamental sense, the programs of both organizations limit the struggles of the working class to the framework of capitalist society and capitalist democratic procedure. This is illustrated by the fact that both organizations supported the Second Imperialist World War. Both gave a no-strike pledge during the war. The leaders of both organizations oppose the formation of an independent Labor Party in favor of support to the two capitalist parties and their candidates.

There is a difference of course between the AFL craft union movement and the industrial union movement represented by the CIO. This difference is important and determines the preference of real militants, progressives and revolutionaries in the labor movement. The AFL, in so far as it advocates craft unionism, represents the interests of the "aristocrats of labor" and not

the decisive mass of workers in the mass production industries. Any strengthening of craft unionism is therefore reactionary. The CIO is the organization of the real toilers; the millions of laborers in the mines, fields and factories. To organize these millions of workers in the decisive sections of modern industry into industrial unions is progressive, over against craft union division and organization.

For these reasons it can be said that it would be better for the UMWA to become a part of the CIO. It does not follow from this, however, that the entry of the miners into the AFL is a blow at industrial unionism. The UMWA is an industrial union and will remain so. Its influence in the AFL will not be such as to strengthen craft unionism. Furthermore, the spirit of the times, the temper of the working class and the structure of modern industry are not conducive to the increase of craft unionism. The presence of the miners in the AFL might well become a source of increased tendency away from craft unionism.

ON GOVERNMENT'S ROLE

Lewis is not an heir to the philosophy and teachings of Gompers in any basic sense. Lewis does not believe that the "time has come for capital and labor to sit together around the council table and arrive at decisions to the mutual interests of both groups." At least he does not adhere to this position in the way meant by Gompers. Lewis believes that labor should sit with capital around the table, but he knows that the interests of the two are not mutual. He does not practice such an attitude in his negotiations with the coal operators. True, as we said above, Lewis practices class collaboration, but his collaboration is not identical with that of Gompers and Bill Green.

Lewis has been correctly criticized for taking the same position as the AFL leadership in the dispute with the CIO leadership over the question of the role of the government today in the affairs of the working class and its organizations. Lewis takes a very conservative position. This is based largely on his inability to understand the political needs of the working class, and a naive belief that if the government keeps out he can beat the employers back. He does not understand that the role of the government in a capitalist society, whether headed by a Roosevelt or a Willkie-Dewey, is to stop a labor organization from bringing the employers to their knees.

Murray and his followers of the CIO do not understand this question any more fundamentally than does Lewis. They have a glimmering notion about the inevitability of government intervention. They understand vaguely the need for government aid and assistance to the masses of the people in a period when capitalism faces disruption and is not in position to provide plenty for all.

But Murray, too, in his approach to this question, is just as reactionary as Lewis. His program is also inadequate and does not fill the political needs of the working class. He has the naive belief that the capitalist government will function in the interest of the working class if it is

headed by a Roosevelt. Neither Murray nor Bill Green nor Lewis understands or supports the idea that labor must resort to political action and establish its own government.

A SETBACK FOR LABOR?

Will the entry of the UMWA into the AFL result in a setback to the political development of the working class? To say this is to attribute to Lewis ideas and a position on this question which he does not hold, or to say that the political development of labor is in some significant sense dependent on Lewis to the exclusion of other more potent factors. The working class today in the U. S. is in motion politically. The movement is slow and not very articulate. But it is there, and not even Lewis can stand immune from any ferment in the ranks of labor, whether in the economic field or the political field.

Lewis organized the CIO but he did not create it. He organized an industrial union movement which was erupting in the ranks of the mass production workers because the mass production workers had long felt the need for such a type of organization. They were ready for the program which Lewis formulated and presented to them.

It is true that there could have been no CIO merely because there was a need for an industrial union. There had to be some organization in existence ready to project itself on the objective scene with a program, money and a staff of organizers. This was what Lewis did, but the importance of this must be properly estimated. Lewis seized on a situation created by the development of modern capitalist industry, and exploited that situation.

It is not excluded that Lewis and other labor leaders like him might be propelled toward the advocacy of independent political action by the working class, just as he was pushed toward industrial unionism. Lewis or Murray may not forever be able to say "NO" to the demands of labor for independent political action. What Lewis or Murray may do in the future cannot now be answered by them, or by us.

Any attempt on the part of Lewis or the AFL to raid the CIO in the interest of craft unionism, should be roundly condemned a reactionary in the extreme. Perhaps Lewis has such a step in mind; we do not know. Even if such a reactionary course should be attempted we do not believe that it will succeed. The working class of today is not the working class of 1900 or even of the first Roosevelt Administration. It is a far more advanced working class than of those periods. There will be no advance by craft unionism in the days to come.

We believe that the above considerations are the relevant ones in connection with the entry of the UMWA into the AFL. The new shift may or may not prove beneficial to the labor movement. That remains to be seen. The AFL is not the AFL of Gompers, nor is the CIO the organization which it ought to be as an industrial union set-up. The working class is not the working class of Gompers' day, nor of ten years back. Should Lewis practice the militancy of the miners' strikes of '42 he will not only serve to improve the situation in the AFL, but such an AFL will certainly not be an obstacle to the development of the CIO and industrial unionism. And such an AFL will not be a hindrance to the development of independent political action by labor.

Pickets Defy Attack By Western Union, Police, Press, Court

By P. PRENTISS

The Western Union, Corporation has been using every means at its disposal to break the strike of the 7,000 ACA-CIO workers. The company continues in its refusal to grant the union its demands for wage increases and has bent all its efforts toward breaking the solidarity and spirit of the picket lines. The Western Union workers, though hard pressed after four weeks of tramping on the picket lines, are returning blow for blow.

As the strike proceeds, it is being clearly revealed on which side stand the local government agencies and institutions.

BULLETIN:

The Greater New York CIO Council has announced a two-hour work stoppage of all CIO union members, Monday, February 11, in support of the Western Union strikers. Over 600,000 members in 300 CIO unions are expected to participate.

1. The New York police during the last few weeks have been active in forcing scabs to break through the mass picket line, which is being maintained at 80 Hudson Street. The "impartial," "law and order" cops have been clubbing pickets and arresting them on charges of disorderly conduct. But the strikers continue to hold their line against these assaults. They have not only picketed the company buildings but have marched in front of the homes and residences of scabs, carrying signs which read "A Scab Lives Here." The answer to the attacks of the cops and scabs has been stronger and bigger picket lines.

2. The courts—the impartial American courts—function in their customary manner on the side of the company. Injunction proceedings against the mass picket line at Hudson Street were started by the company two weeks ago. This is the legal method of trampling on labor's rights. If the company wins its application for an injunction against the union, it means the importation of strike-breakers and the legal smashing of

the picket line. The clubs of the police will then have a legal covering.

Just how impartial the court will be in this case was revealed by a statement of Supreme Court Justice Aaron Levy, who is hearing the injunction case. He has already instructed the police to see that people with "legitimate business" in the struck building are not molested by the pickets. "Private property," he said, "is still the law of the land and it is imperative that these rights be preserved." The union has answered these injunction proceedings by supporting its fight in court with rallies and demonstrations.

3. The larger New York newspapers are carrying ads for the Western Union Company denying that the strike is effective, urging people to send telegrams and stating that the ACA-CIO has refused to accept wage increases.

4. The Department of Welfare has been one more link in the chain. The ACA-CIO applied for special emergency relief for the hard-pressed workers who have now been out of work for a month. Under provisions of the state unemployment insurance law, strikers are not eligible for unemployment compensation until the eighth week of a strike. In answer to the request of the Western Union workers for a speed-up of city relief, an official of the welfare department stated: "The city's policy is not to discriminate for or against a striker."

The workers have turned to their own organization for relief. They have set up their own union emergency relief headquarters at 5 Beekman Street where only those in the direst need apply for such things as milk for the baby or medical care.

Neither clubs nor hunger have yet been able to drive the Western Union workers back to their low-paid jobs. They have rallied the support of the whole CIO behind them through a Joint CIO Strike Support Committee. By holding strong to their picket lines, by winning the support of the mass of the other workers, the Western Union workers are learning the time-tested and time-honored way to win a strike—Independent working class action.

With the Workers Party

- BUFFALO HEADQUARTERS, 639 Main St. BROOKLYN—276 Fulton St.—every Thursday evening at 8 o'clock. HARLEM — 2143 Seventh Ave., Room 106—every Thursday evening at 8 o'clock. MANHATTAN—Labor Temple, 14th St. near Second Ave.—Every Wednesday evening at 8 o'clock. Every Thursday evening at 8 o'clock. CITY OFFICE—114 West 14th St.—open all day until 7 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday—open until 10 p.m. The Workers Party School announces a lecture on Marx's "Capital," the last open session of the seminar on Vol. I, at the Stuyvesant Casino, Second Ave. and Ninth St., Room 42, on Friday, February 13, at 8:00 p.m. sharp. Admission, 25 cents. PHILADELPHIA HEADQUARTERS, 1105 Walnut St. SAN PEDRO LABOR ACTION HALL, 1039 So. Meyer St. For information of other Workers Party branches and LABOR ACTION offices, write to the National Office, 114 West 14th St., New York 11, N. Y.

Anti-Labor Bills in Congress --

(Continued from page 1)

It is on this basis that Congress and Truman propose their legislation for labor and capital. However, this concept, basic to capitalism (although the capitalists and Truman know better) pretends to ignore the classes that exist in society and proceeds to equate unequal things. In every capitalist country there are two nations—the capitalists and the workers, the exploiters and the exploited, those who own the wealth of the country and those who have only their ability to work. Hence the struggle of the exploited, impoverished workers against the wealthy capitalist exploiters to better their lot. Hence the impossibility of any government which represents the dominant, ruling class in society of passing impartial legislation.

The struggle of the working class, which has as its only economic weapon

on the right to strike, to withdraw its ability to work, cannot be squeezed in the vise of "impartial" labor legislation. The CIO and AFL instinctively recognize and oppose the threat in this anti-strike legislation to the simple struggle to gain a better living, to get what Reuther of the UAW calls a "down payment" on what is owed labor.

What the CIO and AFL leaderships do not recognize is the fundamental nature of the class struggle and the necessity to replace the capitalist ruling class with a government of the working class, in order to erase exploitation and ultimately to wipe out the class struggle in society by the elimination of classes altogether. Philip Murray, as president of the PAC can oppose Truman's anti-strike bill; immediately after his declaration, his cohort, Sidney Hillman, chairman of the PAC, can state

his approval of Truman's wage recommendations.

But in order that the gains of the rank and file of organized labor which are won on the picket lines are not defeated in Washington, labor must undertake independent labor political action. The PAC must be detached from the capitalist parties. The Sixty Families who own and control the wealth of the country must be expropriated and their industries, mines, mills and farm-lands turned over to democratic committees of the workers. The hands that do the work of the country must manage production and run the government in the interests of all.

This is the only way to guarantee an end to all anti-strike bills, whether of the drastic Case or the mild Truman variety.

Readers of Labor Action Take the Floor...

Clarification on France Editorial

Your editorial "On Our Slogan for France" in the February 4th LABOR ACTION is quite correct but includes one poor formulation, an illegitimate interpretation of the National Committee's statement on France which was published in the preceding issue. The National Committee statement said that if the slogan of a government of the Socialist and Communist parties and the Confederation General du Travail (trade unions) would lead to seizure of "state power" by the Stalinists, we would not support the slogan. By "state power," it made clear, was meant the situation in Poland, Yugoslavia, etc., where the Stalinists have established totalitarian regimes.

By "state power" is NOT meant the appointment of Communist Party members to certain cabinet posts. True enough, we prefer to see Socialists or CGT leaders rather than Stalinists in charge of the ministries of the army and police—Defense and Interior—but this preference is, as it

was, our own special concern and a secondary matter. Because, although we don't minimize the risks involved to revolutionists and other class-conscious workers if Stalinists head those ministries, nevertheless, to lead a ministry under the given conditions in France bears little resemblance to the Stalinist control of the army and police in Stalinist-totalitarianized countries like Poland and Yugoslavia. Our French comrades have already undergone the experience of persecution at the hands of Stalinists heads of ministry, such as the arrest of some comrades in a factory at the instigation of a Stalinist Minister of Aviation; but obviously there is a profound difference between the proportion of such persecutions and the persecutions in the Stalinist-totalitarianized countries. Hence, far more important than the risks of Stalinist-headed ministries is the value to the development of the understanding of the workers if they could force their "own" parties to form a CP-SP-CGT government.

Hence it is misleading when the LABOR ACTION editorial writes, in its interpretation of the National Committee statement, that "if the

SP-CP-CGT slogan meant that real governmental power, i.e., control of the basic instruments of state power, the Ministries of Defense and Interior, would fall into the hands of the Stalinists, we would oppose such a development." Under the actual conditions it is very unlikely that the Stalinists would get the Ministries of Defense and Interior, but in any event we would not make a condition of our slogan that they should not get those ministries. Because getting those ministries would NOT mean "state power," would indeed mean little more than Socialists holding those ministries, that is, would mean that there would be no decisive change in the situation.

The conflict between Comrade R. O. V. and the editorial is over a poor formulation. The problem of the Stalinists in France, as is pointed out in the letter, is not the superficial one of whether Stalinists hold such ministerial posts as head of Defense and Interior. The formulation in the editorial to which the letter refers is open to such a construction and is,

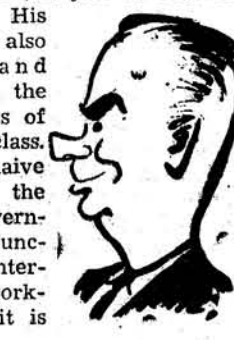
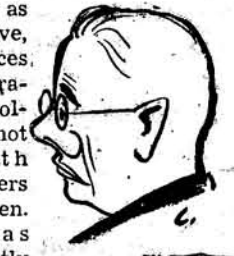
therefore, erroneous. The Workers Party, in speaking against any movement or slogan that would assist the Stalinists to state power, which signifies in their case totalitarian power, refers precisely and essentially to such situations as exist in Poland and Yugoslavia. Such a situation does NOT exist in France today, nor will or can it exist tomorrow—as is pointed out not only in the letter of R. O. V. but also by the editorial as a whole.—Editor.)

GI's Return to Southeast Missouri

Editor: Southeast Missouri sharecroppers have stood it as long as they can. The boys is coming home with a pocket full of money and some of them can't work, but they got you in the road again looking for a house for your family, I told you so. You see, the men that have never farmed before they went to war will now, for the Big Boss is going to give them \$100 a month to farm on, and you the air if you don't mind. Some men tried to rent land for the last three or

four years but since the boys is coming home we got to let them have it and we got to go. Well, we held the land and kept things going till the boys come home. Well, if lots of people are in the road this time—! [The writer refers to the roadside demonstrations of the sharecroppers which have taken place in the past.—Ed.] Some don't know whether they farm or not. Well, the boss made fair. Two-thirds of the beans are in the field and lots of corn. The boys have not got them out yet. They have not stopped the rain and cold yet. They just won't let the sun shine. It looks bad in Southeast Missouri. John Jones, Essex, Missouri.

P.S.—I know of a soldier who got a \$100 check last week. He got 80 acres of land, him and his wife. I got 14 in the family and cannot rent 10 acres from the boss, but I can sharecrop all right for him and the boys. I was one of the boys in '18 and I would like to have some gravy if I cannot get the meat. (The real argument is not between the soldier and the sharecropper. It's really an argument of soldier and sharecropper against the bosses.—Ed.)



A PAPER IN THE INTERESTS OF LABOR

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Editorials

Labor Needs Its Own Party--

(Continued from page 1)

the entire price control structure is threatened with collapse.

Of course, the government goes along with industry—saving face perhaps by making it appear that it is trying to protect the price ceilings while it recommends a “smaller” increase, but an increase nevertheless.

Labor had to resort to strike action, or the threat of strike action, to force the wage increases. It took to the picket line. And on the picket line it could have won its original wage demands for 25 per cent or 30 per cent, according to what the workers in a given industry had computed as their minimum need, and it could have protected its interest in lower prices.

THE LEADERS' RETREAT

But the union officialdom retreated from what labor could have won by yielding to the government's recommendation, to the capitalist government's recommendation. They relied on Truman's “fact-finders” instead of on the strength of the powerful union membership. And Murray and Reuther are doing the very same thing today in respect to prices.

Reuther performed a service to labor by raising a public clamor over the price steal, charging that the corporations are taking with one hand what they are giving, in smaller measure, with the other hand. But Reuther, who leads a union that raised the level of union struggle in the demands made on GM, is also guilty of performing a terrible disservice to labor.

He writes that “industry, spearheaded by steel and the General Motors Corporation, is determined to hijack the American people and the American government into accepting unjustified price increases that would provide the most outrageous profits in history.”

Absolutely true—except for the implied nonsense that the interests of steel and the government are not identical. The government will be only too willing to grant price increases if labor can be made to swallow them. Obviously, government is very much involved in the matter of maintaining price controls. The question, however, boils down to WHOSE government?

The government today represents the corporate interests. It is a capitalist government and Washington is its seat. That is why we say: what labor is winning on the picket line is being stolen from labor in Washington.

Any number of anti-labor bills are now before Congress. The Case bill is merely first on the list. Injunctions are again being issued. The men voting on the anti-labor bills, issuing the injunctions, are NOT our representatives. Equally, the men conspiring with industry to fitch our meager earnings through price increases are NOT our representatives. They represent the employers!

WORKERS NEED OWN GOVERNMENT

The logic is inescapable. We need our own workers government, staffed by our own representatives, and to get it we must have our own party: AN INDEPENDENT LABOR PARTY.

The GM workers, when they included in their strike demands a provision against price increases, were definitely on the right track. They understood that it would take labor action to protect the people's interest in lower prices. But it is more than a question of General Motors and the price of automobiles. There is Big Steel. And there is Ford. And there is every big industrialist. All of them are working to lift the lid off prices.

The GM workers may be able to hold the line at GM, although the spinelessness of the auto union leaders has seriously weakened their fight. The whole union movement needs to be involved in any case, and in political action as well as in economic action.

To advance our interests in Congress we must have OUR Congressmen. To use the government in our interests against the exploiters, we must have OUR government. To get our Congressmen, to get our government, we must have our own candidates, running on our own ticket. Not in the style of Hillman's Political Action Committee, which acts through deals with the capitalist parties and for capitalist candidates. But our own exclusive, independent LABOR PARTY.

This is an issue of tremendous importance. Today, when labor's fighting spirit is high, when millions of working men and women have shown their readiness to take to the picket lines in fighting action, when our purses are being robbed by the double steal of lower take-home pay and higher prices, today is the time to press for this—in the unions, in the shops, everywhere labor congregates: **FOR AN INDEPENDENT LABOR PARTY! FOR A WORKERS' GOVERNMENT!**

WORKERS PARTY PROGRAM FOR ORGANIZED LABOR IN THE RECONVERSION AND POST-WAR PERIOD

FOR THE UNEMPLOYED AND VETERANS

1. Full Unemployment Insurance
Full unemployment insurance beginning with \$30 a week for single men and women and graduated upward for dependents to all workers for whom government and industry do not find jobs.

2. Less Hours—More Pay
Absorption of all workers thrown into unemployment during reconversion by reduction of the work-week with no reduction in weekly take-home pay.

3. Jobs and Full Opportunities for Veterans
Two years' base pay grant to all demobilized veterans, with the option of trade school and higher educational facilities at government expense, guarantee of adequate family maintenance and guarantee of decent jobs.

FOR THE POST-WAR WORLD

4. Jobs For All at a Guaranteed Annual Living Wage
A job for every worker with a guaranteed minimum annual wage of \$2,500 per year. A rising standard of living, by means of government planning to insure the highest national production and income.

5. A Planned Rise in National Income
A guaranteed \$5,000 annual income to all workers' families by means of a planned rise in the national income and a thirty-hour maximum work week.

6. For a Democratic Peace
which means no land-grabbing under any pre-against peacetime military conscription of text; no reparations; no slave labor. Complete independence for all colonies and subject people. American youth! For a truly democratic peace,

ples and the right of all people to democratically decide their own future.

7. Full Social, Political and Economic Equality for Negroes
Complete democratic rights. The right to vote, to run for and hold any elective or appointive office, North or South. The right to equality in employment; to hold any job, skilled or unskilled. The right to be free from insult, segregation and Jim Crowism; anywhere and in any place, North or South.

THESE AIMS TO BE ACHIEVED THROUGH

8. Slum Clearance
A \$250 billion five-year program to provide decent housing for all, extensive public works, rural electrification and modernization.

9. Nationalization of Big Business
Nationalization of the banks, big industrial monopolies and transportation systems, and no handing over of government-built and owned plants and facilities to private ownership.

10. Taxing the Profiteers
A 100 per cent tax on all war profits above a five per cent maximum on invested capital; a \$25,000 ceiling on total individual income, and a graduated capital levy on all accumulated wealth over \$50,000 to cover war costs and provide post-war security for labor.

THIS PROGRAM TO BE CARRIED OUT BY

11. Workers Control of Production
Control of production by democratically-elected workers' committees.

12. An Independent Labor Party and a Workers' Government—For a Socialist America with Plenty For All!
Make the machines that now produce only for war and capitalism produce for the needs of all the people!

International Socialist Notes

Irish Trotskyists for WP-SWP Unity

The Revolutionary Socialist Party, the Irish section of the Fourth International, recently issued a statement advocating the immediate fusion of the Workers Party and the Socialist Workers Party of the United States. A summary of their statement follows:

“Though the WP and the SWP differ in their analysis of Russia, the two parties base themselves on the same programmatic fundamentals. Yet even though the membership of the WP does not believe that Russia is a degenerated workers' state, they ‘objectively defend the nationalized property by virtue of the fight they wage for the victory of the international socialist revolution.’

“The re-entry of experienced comrades and the addition of the new cadres recruited by the WP would strengthen the SWP in its fight to halt intervention’ by United States imperialism and Stalinist Russia—the two most powerful counter-revolutionary forces in the world today—in the unfolding of the revolutionary situation in Europe.

The support of the concept of fusion is not decisively based upon the recession in importance of the slogan of the defense of Russia and its replacement by the slogan of the defense of the European revolution from imperialism and the Stalinist state. Were this so, a turn in international events which would menace Russia would raise again the question of two separate parties.

FUNDAMENTAL AGREEMENT

“Irrespective of the military situation of the USSR, the basic revolutionary task of overthrowing imperialism still confronts the workers of the world and it is because there is agreement on this fundamental problem that we regard fusion as imperative.”

Will the danger be created, the statement continues, of internal controversy paralyzing the work of the party? That is possible, but it is part of the necessary overhead of a party based upon democratic centralism.

Would the WP members split the

party again? To help guard against this it is proposed that “the WP leaders publicly, before their own supporters, admit their breach of Bolshevik discipline in 1940,” which would in some measure safeguard against this contingency.

“With regard to the dispute over the character of the USSR, we be-

lieve an international discussion should be begun on this question, published in the theoretical organs of the various sections. Even though it may be contemplated that no new conclusions of a fundamental character will be reached, it is still none the less necessary to review and evaluate the evolution of the USSR since ‘In Defense of Marxism’ was written.”

Italian Party Leader Dies

NICOLA DI BARTOLOMEO, National Secretary of the Partito Operaio Comunista (Workers Communist Party), Italian section of the Fourth International, has just died in Naples, we learn as we go to press.

In his last letters received here Comrade Bartolomeo had been able to send the happy news that the IV INTERNAZIONALE, organ of the party, had at last won the right to appear legally.

A warm partisan of unity of all the Trotskyists in the United States, Comrade Bartolomeo recognized the Workers Party as an authentic Trotskyist tendency and supported its proposal for unity with the Socialist Workers Party.

A fuller biography of Comrade Bartolomeo will appear in a later issue of this paper.

The statement is signed by Robert Armstrong, secretary of the Revolu-

tionary Socialist Party, Irish section of the Fourth International.

The Workers Party can only commend the general point of view of the Irish comrades. It is based upon a genuine concern for the welfare of the revolutionary socialist movement in the United States. As such it stands in healthy contrast to the majority leadership of the SWP, which only toys with the question.

In proposing immediate fusion the Revolutionary Socialist Party confirms what we have contended but what the bureaucratized majority leadership of the SWP finds it hard to swallow, namely, that our political differences are not such as to preclude our membership in the same party.

GUARANTEE OF UNITY

The best guarantee for the preservation of a united party, however, we find not in admitting to a non-existent “breach of Bolshevik discipline in 1940,” but in having the simple right to publish our own internal bulletin within the single party.

On the proposal for a discussion within the International of the Russian question, we are in hearty accord. And not only the Russian question. There is a series of other problems, among them the national question, which are of extreme importance. Events have vindicated the position assumed by the Workers Party on these questions with exemplary completeness. It is time to draw the balance sheet and to begin the necessary theoretical rearming of the International.

The concept of Cannon that we were outside the current of the Fourth International existed only by virtue of bureaucratic fiat in any event. Our revolutionary policies are making their way.

The statement of the Irish comrades is ample proof of that. It is not the only one nor will it be the last one from within the ranks of the Fourth International.

—J. M. F.

OFF LIMITS

By JAMES M. FENWICK

HOW TO FEEL LIKE A NEGRO

If you were a white enlisted man in the Army, keep on reading. For you will have a rare opportunity offered you—a chance to change your skin for the next few minutes, a chance to change your white skin for a black one. You will be able, in a small way, to find out what it feels like to be a Negro.

This is possible because the contemptible life led by the white enlisted man in the army bears a great resemblance to the life led by the Negro in civilian life.

For the two of them it is a system worked out in the minutest detail. For the white enlisted man it is summed up in the initials RHIP—Rank Has Its Privileges. For the Negro it is summed up in the phrase Jim Crow.

A STRIKING PARALLEL

Similar social distinctions exist. The best seats in army theaters are reserved for the brass. The GI's get the poorer seats. In civilian life the Negro is either rigidly confined to a certain section of the theater, as in the South, or “directed” to the balcony, as in the North.

On railroad trains the plushy accommodations are always reserved for the officers. The GI gets what's left. If the GI walks, the officer rides. For the Negro in civilian life there are Jim Crow cars and Jim Crow sections on buses, particularly in the South. And they are universally the worst accommodations.

Officers have separate messes and billets, from which the GI is excluded, just as the Negro is excluded from the best restaurants and hotels.

Since they walk in beauty and since their metabolism is of a celestial order, officers have separate entrances to buildings and toilets for their olympian bottoms, separate from the GI's. The Negro is discriminated against similarly in civilian life.

THE BENDED KNEE

Accompanying these caste distinctions in the army is the servile attitude forcibly imposed upon the enlisted man. It is designed to keep him continuously aware of his inferior status. He must always address an officer as “Sir”; he must always remove his cap indoors in the presence of an officer, he must always salute him, he may leave an officer's presence only when dismissed, he must submit to the filthiest abuse silently, he must preserve a deferential attitude at all times, he must leap when called for. Only a blind person could fail to see that this is the normal condition of Negroes in society today.

As is done in regard to the Negroes, the myth is carefully cultivated that the enlisted man is a semi-brute, incapable of independent thought, and that he must be carefully watched and restrained lest he step out of his place.

LEGAL AND JOB INEQUALITY

The Negro in civilian life and the white enlisted man in the army are both discriminated against before the law. The Negro is customarily tried before white magistrates and white jurors and usually receives a longer sentence than a white man convicted of a similar offense. Similarly in the army! The white enlisted man is always tried by a board of officers (never by his peers—other enlisted men) and given excessive jail sentences for offenses which if committed by an officer are lightly punished—or passed off merely as a joke.

Like the Negro in civilian life, the white enlisted man in the army does all the dirty, hard, and servile work of the army. He digs the officers' toilets and fills them in. He erects the officers' tents. He cooks the officers' food. He serves it to them. He washes the officers' dishes. He gets their laundry done. He takes care of their equipment and transports it. He always chauffeurs them. He takes them to their billets when they're drunk and cleans up the filth after their parties.

ECONOMIC DISCRIMINATION

The Negro, of course, forms the lowest paid section of the working class. As a consequence, his standard of living is low, his pleasures limited.

The same is true of the white enlisted man in the army. He is miserably paid. Unlike the officer, he cannot support his wife near his station if it is in the U. S. His family, in fact, probably has difficulty in getting along. The soldier himself cannot dress as well as an officer or as comfortably. He cannot enjoy all those small but important advantages of travel, food, entertainment, and other pleasures which are so easily accessible to the officers.

How many times have you, as a white enlisted man, under the pressure of that brutal, boring, dangerous life, felt that one more minute of it and you would blow your top?

Many times, if you were like me. Do you know what was happening to you? You were being treated as the Negro is treated in civilian life, but with this difference: THE NEGRO ENDURES SUCH TREATMENT, AND WORSE, FROM THE CRADLE TO HIS JIM CROW GRAVE!

Now ask yourself how it must have been in the army for the Negro, where he was subjected to all the inhuman treatment accorded the white enlisted man—but multiplied a thousand-fold because of the color of his skin.

Do you understand a little better now what we socialists mean when we speak of the oppression of the Negro?

The régime in the army, which presses down so harshly upon both white and black, is a reflection of the capitalist society which produced it.

As long as capitalism exists we shall have wars. And as long as capitalist armies are maintained to fight them we shall have authoritarian régimes within these armies.

Only the establishment of socialism will abolish war and all that follows in its wake.

That is a job for Negro and white workers alike.

NEXT WEEK—

LETTER FROM A GERMAN TROTSKYIST

PAULEY AND THE HOIL SCANDAL

UNO EMPIRE SQUABBLES

India's Year of Decision

By HENRY JUDD

What with frontal attacks by Stalin's Russia, open revolts in Palestine, Indo-China and the East Indies, and mass strikes in Singapore, Colombo and African colonial cities, the British Empire is facing difficult days. His Majesty's Labor Government, dashing about from place to place in desperate efforts to stem the breaks, is developing a case of the one-armed paper hanger with the hives.

And perhaps Britain is about to confront the most difficult problem of all, in a new, heightened form—that is, the eternal problem of India and the demand of its 400,000,000 people for full national independence. For several weeks now, in the great cities of Calcutta and Bombay, things have been stirring—strikes, riots, armed clashes with the British police and soldiers.

These events are familiar stories in India's history, always heralding a revival of a movement that can never be crushed. During the war, the British held power by open military force. At one period it had no less than 25,000 leaders and members of the India National Congress in jail (or better, concentration camps). Since the war ended, however, a large portion of these nationalists—although by no means all of them—have been set free. The revival of colonial nationalism has, of course, had its effects upon India and now things are stirring.

NO COMPROMISE POSSIBLE

In recent elections for the Central Legislative Assembly (a small parliamentary body without any independent powers), fewer than 500,000 out of India's 400 million people were permitted to vote. That is, 1/8 of 1% have the right to vote! Yet even in these “rich man elections” as they are known, the Congress party won a clear majority. In local, provincial elections to be held this month and March, it is certain that the party standing for independence will win even greater victories, since more people will vote in these elections.

The British, as is well known, are not particularly popular among the workers, peasants and middle-class people of India. Their universal unpopularity holds despite any communal or religious differences among the Indian people themselves. An AP correspondent, writing from Bombay, reports the widespread belief that “by March there will be bloody uprisings and that the full force of the British Army still in uniform in India will be required to suppress it, if suppression is possible.”

Since the war's end, the British government through Prime Minister Attlee and Viscount Lord Wavell—have made various efforts to compromise the problem of freedom through some sort of constitutional measures. These offers have been uniformly unsuccessful. Even the most conservative Congress party

leaders, men like Gandhi, Patel and Nehru, have rejected the various approaches made to them for participation in a joint, coalition government with the British. The atmosphere and feeling of the people, now facing difficult economic times, is such that even these leaders have been forced to reiterate the “Quit India Now” slogan, and stick to the Congress demand for full freedom, without strings.

Now a new offer is being prepared. “It seems fairly safe to say that, barring a sudden change of plans, India will have a clear indication of the British Government's intentions by the middle of February.” (N. Y. Times, January 30.) Of course, the Indian people know only too well these intentions—they haven't changed for 200 years! To hold onto India, no matter what the cost; to continue to exploit, rob and plunder the labor and resources of this, the world's greatest colony.

FAMINE THREATENS

Behind all the fancy maneuvering of the conservative Congress leadership and the imperialist labor government of Attlee, there stand far graver and more menacing problems. On top of unemployment and rising living costs caused by the abrupt end of the war, there is the permanent spectre of mass famine that has haunted this country for so long. In the great Bengal famine of 1943, in which the government admits that a minimum of 1 1/2 millions died of outright starvation, a situation developed that threatens now to repeat itself.

Crop shortages, due to inadequate imports of food, and crop failures in the Punjab and South India, are

about to threaten 100 million people. The only solution is a tremendous import in food from America and other sources. It is estimated that 2 million tons of food are needed to prevent immediate famine, but plans exist today to import less than half of this amount. The areas most in danger are farming, peasant areas—Burma, Madras province and southern India—the home of at least 100 million people. The whole question is now being debated in the Central Assembly, where the government spokesmen, while recognizing and describing the situation, fail to propose any solution or measures.

The war has ended for the Western world, but the great masses of colonial people in Asia still continue under the same bondage as before. For them, the war has meant nothing. Its conclusion has simply meant that their white masters from England, France, Holland and America can now devote their full, undivided attention to keeping them enslaved. The colonial people of Indo-China, Indonesia, Palestine and the Near East have already begun their reply to all this. Now the time for the people of India is approaching once again.

LABOR ACTION will report their struggles to its readers as it has done for the struggles of all peoples, everywhere. Meanwhile, LABOR ACTION sends its greetings to its comrades in India, the valiant members of the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India, who organized their party and kept it alive during the war and who now participate with the people in the fight for national independence of their country.



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of Special Interest To Women

By Susan Green

Throughout the war and the post-war period LABOR ACTION and the Workers Party have urged the formation of price-control committees of workers and housewives because the problem of price control can be handled in the interest of the working people only by the people themselves. Sad to relate, there have been no people's organizations systematically demanding access to production statistics and the power to fix rationing and ceiling prices, as well as to enforce rationing and prices through their own neighborhood groups.

Today, like a popular song that you hear on every radio program and out of every jukebox, the unceasing refrain of the capitalist class is: "HIGHER PRICES!"

The steel magnates demand a price boost even though their unprecedented profits can amply cover the wage increases asked by the steel workers, and this boost will be reflected in a thousand things we buy. The meat packers, heavily subsidized by the government out of public money and reaping greater profits than ever before, ask for upped meat prices, giving the wage demands of the packinghouse workers as their excuse. Civilian Production Administrator Small blames the OPA ceilings for the hoarding of men's shirts and suits by manufacturers in order to achieve higher prices. OPA officials themselves come out for lifting price controls on so-called "non-essentials." Strong capitalist combines are working overtime to prevent the extension of OPA controls—such as they are—beyond June, 1946. Big farm corporations contemplate holding on to wheat and feed for higher prices in view of an anticipated grain shortage. Though there is an oversupply of both poultry and eggs, and officials pretend to be very much worried about spoilage, prices are still maintained at levels that prevent consumption of these foods by those who need them most. Top all this with the operations of the black market, which, having subsided for a while after V-J Day, is now back with newer and better get-rich-quick formulas.

Where will it end? While everyone talks of "preventing inflation," the housewife knows it is already here by the shrunken size of her dollar. With the line-up for even higher prices, her dollar is doomed to buy diminishing quantities of the things necessary for bare living existence, to say nothing of good living.

So we say once more: The problem of price control can be handled in the interest of the working people only by the people themselves.

THE FATE OF WOMEN WAR WORKERS

When I was in Linden, N. J., looking for the way to the picket line of the General Motors strikers, I asked a woman waiting for a bus for directions to the GM plant. Her instructions were so explicit that I commented on it, and she said: "I ought to know where it is. I worked there as a welder during the war. All of us women were fired." "Well," I said, "then what do you think of the demands of the GM strikers?" She replied: "To tell you the truth, I don't really know too much about it because I'm not working there any more." I asked her if she was looking for a job. "No," she said. "My husband is working and I'm going to take it easy for a while. And believe me," she continued, "I don't mind if I do and that's why I don't take much interest in strikes and such things."

This woman in Linden is one of the great army of women workers fired after V-J Day—as a reward for their wartime services. By the end of September, one million had been thrown out of the manufacturing industries. Month by month the number has mounted. Some of these women can't afford to take it easy for a while. Their husbands may not be working, or their husbands may not be earning enough to maintain the family on a decent standard, or their husbands may have been victims of this useless war, or they may be single women with sisters, brothers, mothers, fathers dependent on them. If, like the Linden woman, they may be able to take it easy for a while, for how long? How secure is the husband's job? How soon will the multiplying demands of the family require her financial help?

This army of women ex-war workers is still part of the working class. When labor strikes for higher pay, for shorter hours to provide more jobs, for no price increases, for more power to the unions, the fight is that of every member of the working class. Every woman ex-war worker is a member of this class. Let her not fool herself. Her protection in a class-torn economic set-up can come only from the labor movement. She must make their struggles hers. This is what I said to the woman in Linden.

BROOKLYN RENT STRIKE

In a tenement in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn, long-suffering tenants went on a rent strike.

Cold water from the hot water taps didn't compel this action. Ice radiators in frigid weather didn't stir them to do this. A broken dumbwaiter and shaft which acted as a catch-all for disease-spreading refuse were not enough to cause a solid front against the landlord. Rats, mice and roaches invading the flats were taken in stride. But when a child and her mother screamed with terror on finding a dead rat in the child's bed, those screams shocked the tenants into a rent strike.

Why did they take so much? Why do people pay their money for rodent and vermin-infested places without heat, hot water or painting, with dirty halls, stairs and basements?

The answer is the housing shortage, which is today so critical that family life itself is threatened.

The economy of this country was able to provide battleships, bombers, submarines, tanks, bombs, guns and the atomic bomb, all valued at many times what it would cost to build the houses needed for healthy and comfortable living. Yet the housing problem is merely nibbled at by the city, state and federal governments of the capitalist class—while 7,000,000 families double up in the space barely adequate for half that, while millions live as do these Williamsburg tenants or little better, while others wander from pillar to post unable to find any housing at all.

But a workers' government would use the wealth of the nation in the interests of its people—and build houses as quickly and efficiently as the capitalist governments build death-dealing war matériel. Do the working people have to wait for a nation-wide invasion of rats before getting together in an independent Labor Party that will establish a workers' government to serve the people?

UNO Debates Spoils of War

Big 3 Preside at "Peacemakers" Brawl

By IRVING HOWE

The first meeting of the Security Council of the United Nations Organization—hailed by its supporters as the one force which could bring peace to the world—has turned into a bloody verbal brawl between Britain and Russia.

This brawl, a thousand times more than diplomatic platitudes about "international cooperation," reflects the true state of the imperialist struggle taking place among the nations which won the war—and are now fighting so sharply with each other for the lion's share of the booty.

The conflict came to a head on the issue of Greece. Russia, represented by Andrei Vishinsky, the infamous prosecutor of the Moscow Trials, charged that British troops were being maintained in Greece in order to prop up an unpopular and weak reactionary régime against the wishes of the Greek people. But surely nobody—not even the London correspondent of PM or The Nation—could take seriously the spectacle of a creature like Vishinsky shedding tears over the lack of democracy in Greece. There are limits to everything, and even vaudeville performers sometimes show restraint. And for the Stalinist dictatorship, which had installed puppet régimes in Eastern European countries without the slightest regard for the wishes of the peoples of those countries, now suddenly to become indignant about the lack of democracy in Greece—well, that was something for the books.

A CLASH OF EMPIRES

Yet it IS a fact that there is no real democracy in Greece, that there has been a reactionary terror buttressed by British tanks and bayonets. To point out, as we do here, the totally hypocritical and two-sided nature of the Russian charge

is not in the slightest degree to whitewash or support the role of Britain in the Mediterranean.

For apparently everyone understood that the verbiage about democracy which Vishinsky and Bevin hurled at each other at the UNO meeting was not to be taken seriously. What was the REAL issue? The correspondent of the New York Times, James Reston, wrote on February 4:

"It is generally admitted here that this is no common dispute over the mysteries of Balkan politics or a clash of personalities. It is seen instead as a clash of empires, a new phase in the old Anglo-Russian struggle for influence in the Mediterranean and the Near and Middle East. And it is seen as the beginning of a showdown before the Paris Peace Conference redrafts the map of the Mediterranean."

This, as you can see, is delightfully frank. And accurate, too. Greece occupies an immensely important strategic position in the Eastern Mediterranean; it lies on the path to the Near East and to that "jewel" of the British Empire, India. If Britain were to lose control of that pathway of empire; if she were to face an unfriendly Greek government, one which leaned to Russia; if she were to have the Near Eastern Arab-Jewish struggle explode in her face—then the Empire would indeed be in complete jeopardy. Which is why, even under the aegis of the "socialist" Foreign Minister, Ernest Bevin (who boasts of his working class origin, even if he can't boast of any working class policies), Britain still clings desperately and clutchingly to its wobbly control of the Near East. And if she were to lose Greece...

But the Stalin régime realizes all this as well as anyone else. What Britain wants to cling to, the Stalin dictatorship wants to snatch away;

it has big eyes and long fingers. Greece is, for it, merely a stepping stone. Russia has demanded bases from Turkey, has indicated a desire for bases in the Dodecanese Islands and has demanded "UNO trusteeships" for the Italian colonies of Tripolitania and Eritrea. Stalinist imperialism thereby clashes with British imperialism in the latter's "heartland"—and that's why Ernest Bevin shouts so thunderously at the UNO.

AND THEY TALK PEACE!

There is the reality, the unadorned and simple fact. What about the UNO, then? In its first session, it is already shown for what it is: a talk-shop, a maneuvering ground in which the major imperialist powers—Britain, Russia and America—were indignant about the imperialist plunder of EACH OTHER, but in which not the slightest, not the tiniest, genuine step for peace can be taken. It is the power relationships that prevail—inside the UNO as well as outside. Whoever has the strength wins—and no speeches change it. The giant imperialisms of America, Russia and Britain predominate because they have the guns; and the other nations play follow the leader.

How could it be otherwise in an imperialist world where powers fight over the spoils of the last war and uneasily prepare for the next? The UNO has no power and no meaning aside from the strength of its dominating members, and their irreconcilable conflicts dominate the proceedings. The liberals may publish weekly sheets full of crocodile tears, but socialists who understand what is going on expect nothing else.

In the meantime, there's even a certain refreshing aspect to the spectacle of the big powers telling the truth about each other. It reminds one of the delightful cartoon of the great socialist artist, Art Young, in

which he has two capitalist politicians of opposing parties standing on soap-boxes and pointing to each other while saying "He's no good!" Of course! Russia exposes Britain in Greece. Britain exposes Russia in Iran. Russia exposes British imperialism in the Dutch East Indies. And, turnabout, Britain inquires skeptically about Russian intentions in Tripolitania.

Occasionally, while you're reading the newspaper reports of these shop-keeper squabbles at the UNO, you suddenly remember: Good Lord, these miserable creatures are arguing about countries in which millions of people live, people who also want democracy and the right to decide their own destiny. But their voice is not heard at the UNO. Only the other week, the Russians announced that the United States and Britain had agreed to cede to them the Kuriles Islands and the southern half of Sakhalin. Now, people live there. What do they think and what do they want? Nobody asks them. Do the Greeks want British troops? Do the Javanese want Dutch and British troops? Do the Iranians want American, British and Russian troops?

The bargaining continues in the UNO and at the secret "peace" conference. Just think: a few diplomats sitting in secret deciding the fate of millions, cutting up maps—and dividing the wealth of the world among them. The giant of capitalist imperialism, the United States, sits at the head of the table; its junior partner, Britain, sits next to it; and across it sits the new imperialist tycoon, Stalinist imperialism. You take this; we take that.

And it is this repulsive spectacle which taffy-brained liberals tell us will bring peace to the world!

Litchfield - A Product of Army System

By JACK WILSON

The mistreatment of American GIs at the notorious Litchfield, England, reinforcement depot, "concentration camp," finally has reached public print, as a result of the courts-martial of seven guards, and two junior officers.

The story of army brutality there was a familiar one. Prisoners were beaten, a regime of terror and drastic punishment for the most trivial "offenses" prevailed, and Litchfield became known as a real hell-hole. When one soldier died under "mysterious" circumstances, the scandal became too great to silence. So minor functionaries at the depot are now on trial. Colonel James A. Killian, commanding officer, and directly responsible for the guardhouse policy, has not been placed on trial.

Of course, the indignation over the brutality is real and justified. Life at Litchfield was very much like life at Dachau. At least GIs who were there so thought. Of course, the guards and officers deserve severest punishment for terrible treatment of the GIs. And the failure to courts-martial Colonel Killian speaks volumes about the army system of injustice.

COMBAT—OR LITCHFIELD!

The liberal press has a good moral right to be violently indignant over this scandal. We are too. But moral indignation explains nothing, and gets nowhere.

Litchfield was a hell-hole because it was supposed to be one. Not because Colonel Killian was a louse personally. Not because some of the

guards were psycho cases, and sadists. But because it was army policy.

The real story of Litchfield, and many other similar depots was explained in the testimony of Major LoBuono, former provost Marshal at that camp. "We've got to make life so tough for these prisoners they'll be glad to get back into combat." That is the real reason why Litchfield was a hell-hole.

Each army has a harsh discipline, for only discipline that is greater than the fear of death can make men risk their lives in imperialist combat. When men are moved by great social ideals, when they are willing to die for a cause, the problem of discipline is relatively easy. Discipline in that kind of an army concerns itself with team-work, combat efficiency, and operation control.

Even in Trotsky's Red Army, fighting for the greatest idea of mankind, the world socialist revolution, there were deserters and cowards who were dealt with sharply. The violence of war creates a harsh discipline. But such actions in the Red Army of old (today's "Red Army" is like any imperialist army) were exceptional. For the Red Army in those days had an orientation. They had discipline, and morale based on political understanding.

The Litchfield hellhole was a classic example of the substitute for morale. "We've got to make life so tough for these prisoners that they'll be glad to get back into combat." A greater fear than the fear of death was required. It was the fear of life in a Litchfield hell-hole. Most soldiers get the point quickly. They are too smart to get themselves

caught in a Litchfield depot. And the more notorious the reputation of a depot, the greater the efforts of the GIs to stay away from it.

It is not accidental that the chief complaints about treatment at Litchfield came in the winter of 1944-45 when the break-through at Ardennes startled the American army, and GIs saw how quickly their lives might be snuffed away by Brass Hat blunders. Nor could there be a stirring call to arms to block Von Rundstedt. For who believed in the war? The Brass Hats got reinforcements the only way they knew how. For "slackers," there was always the nightmare of Litchfield.

AN IMAGE OF CAPITALISM

Thus the whole Litchfield scandal testifies, above all, to the character of the war and its instrument for victory, the capitalist army. It was a war in which the GIs had very little faith. At best it was considered a dirty, if necessary, job. Not the Wall Street profiteers, nor their Roosevelt government, nor the army itself could sell enthusiasm to the GIs.

This is illustrated in the entire combat training program followed by the army. Battle-hardening was understood by most soldiers, for they saw no way out of fighting, and obviously a well-trained outfit stood a better chance than ill-trained troops. Technical proficiency was readily acquired. However, the other side of the question, the "know-why," was something else. Here, political orientation was imperative. And the result: the biggest joke in the army was the orientation program. The politest word ever used to describe it was "baloney."

Unify the Fight to Hold Price Line - -

(Continued from page 1)

cent increase for a pound of butter. Mr. Anderson is still Secretary of Agriculture. John W. Small, Civilian Production administrator, who is supposed to see that consumers get what they need, has just suggested that price increases would not be the worst thing that could happen. Truman's housing experts are all set for a program of new houses to sell for a mere \$10,000 each and of new apartments to rent for \$80 or so a month.

Even that lone and lonely hero of price control, OPA Chief Chester Bowles, who is a darling of the liberal and labor press, "defends" himself by circulating a secret memorandum showing that OPA has granted 6,300 price increases or exemptions since V-J Day, thus maintaining OPA's glorious wartime record of "holding the line." Actually that doesn't begin to tell the story, but the significant point is that Bowles feels it necessary to appease, not the long-suffering people of the country, but the few profit-fat corporate giants.

Is Reuther really serious? How does he expect to influence Truman, when Philip Murray, the CIO's chief, is unwilling to wage a fight on the price issue? Granted that the major

issue now is prices—it became so in connection with the steel strike. Yet Murray, president of the steel union, remains blind, deaf and dumb in the situation. Only Reuther speaks. Murray adopts the reactionary political line of John L. Lewis—but without any of Lewis' fighting spirit as compensation. He considers profits none of his business. "Open the books" and "No price increases"—those are new-fangled, socialist slogans, so he'll have nothing to do with them.

WHAT POLICY IS NEEDED?

As Reuther undoubtedly sees, it is of the utmost importance to the working class to have higher wages without higher prices. AT THE PRESENT TIME, the American and world demand is such that the corporations can easily boost prices to an extent that will far exceed their higher wage bills—if they are allowed to get away with it.

There is every sign that they are getting away with it. Murray helps them by playing blind. Reuther helps them by urging reliance, in every word he utters, on the capitalists' own government machinery. Wall Street reacts by sending stocks to peaks they have not seen for many a long year.

The working class needs its own policy—a policy that will achieve a real rise in the standard of living for the American people—a policy that will give the workers a bigger share of the wealth they produce AT THE EXPENSE OF CAPITALIST PROFITS. No other policy can meet the needs of the situation.

The working class needs a UNIFIED policy—not a Murray policy pulling in one direction and a Reuther policy pulling half-heartedly in another. Such a policy is not emerging from the secret pow-wows and half-secret bickerings of the top

leaders. What is required is the voice of the ranks. That is why LABOR ACTION urges the proposal of the Workers Party; a national strike council, democratically elected by the ranks, to formulate and unify policy.

The working class needs to aim at control of the political machinery of the country in the name of the vast majority of the people. The futility of depending on "friends of labor" in the capitalist parties, whether Republican or Democratic, is once more being demonstrated. That is why we urge a completely independent Labor Party.

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The Meaning Of Company Security Plans

By Ben Hall

This is the second of a series of educational articles by Comrade Ben Hall on the Kaiser-Frazier and Chrysler plans. In the first article, which appeared several weeks ago, Comrade Hall discussed the incentive pay scheme. In this article he discusses certain aspects of the company security plan. Other aspects of this plan have already been discussed in LABOR ACTION, as in the article by Comrade David Colledge in last week's issue. We propose to continue hammering away against this scheme.—Ed.)

The workers who man the picket lines in defense of their union rights and working conditions see the fruits of their inspiring solidarity slipping out of their hands as union officials concede one form or another of so-called "company security" plans. Contracts with Ford, Chrysler and Kaiser-Frazier already incorporate provisions for punishing participants in "unauthorized" stoppages. The penalties range from discharges to fines to the loss of wage bonuses. Other companies, encouraged by the capitulation of the union leaders to the demands of the auto monopolists, are demanding the same concessions. General Electric and Westinghouse, for example, are insisting upon some form of company security as a condition to signing new contracts with the United Electrical Radio & Machinists Union.

A "NO-STRIKE" PLEDGE

The Chrysler contract reads as follows: "The union will not oppose the discharge or discipline of anyone who instructs, leads or induces another employee to take part in any unauthorized strike."

All through the war the labor movement was shackled with a no-strike pledge. To the aggressive union militants who fought to free their organizations from these chains, the official labor leadership replied: "Don't you know there's a war on? You can't strike now."

But now the war is over and... the same labor leaders propose another no-strike pledge under a new name—COMPANY SECURITY.

"But," one might answer, "the no-strike pledge renounced strikes under ALL conditions. The unions agreed not to authorize ANY strike, no matter how justified. Now, however, the leaders simply agree to punish unauthorized strikes but do not promise that they will not authorize strikes themselves when they are justified."

True, there is a certain difference between the pledge made during the war and that made now, but we must understand that despite this incidental difference both pledges are based upon the same fundamentally false idea that the workers and the capitalists have common interests and must cooperate amicably for their mutual benefit. During the war, the labor leaders preached the myth of national unity between the workers and their employers. The capitalists of this country—so went the hypnotic dream—after capturing the markets of the world would establish a life of plenty and prosperity for all. The no-strike pledge was part of the "higher strategy of labor" to achieve our "brave new world."

The new no-strike pledge has more modest but similarly illusory aims. The latest fantasy which has captured the imagination of the labor leaders goes as follows: If the company has security, production will rise. The capitalists will get richer. If the capitalists get richer some of this increased wealth will dribble down into the hands of the working men in the form of increased wages.

This is no wild guess. Read, for example, the joint statement by Norman Matthews, UAW Chrysler director, and Robert Conder, labor relations director of the Chrysler Co. Here is what they say: "In reaching the new agreement, which will run until January 26, 1947, the union recognizes the importance of company security against unauthorized strikes and the need for productivity on the part of the employees."

WAGES AND PRODUCTIVITY

All the big companies have argued, and still do, that they cannot and will not grant substantial wage increases until they are guaranteed increased productivity. What does this talk signify?

The productivity of this country is already the greatest on earth. The experience of the war has demonstrated that with its present productive capacity, the United States could raise the entire population to a higher and genuinely decent standard of living—to PLENTY FOR ALL.

What stands in the way? The capitalist class wolfs the greatest share of the fruits of this productive capacity.

The working class, the men and women who actually produce the goods of life, has been fighting on the picket lines to raise its own share of the national income at the expense of the share ALREADY received by the idle capitalist parasitic class. The capitalists, on the other hand, fight like the wolves they are to guard every ounce of their unearned share. If the workers were defenseless and without unions and democratic rights, the capitalist class would rejoice in the ability to buy labor as cheaply as possible. Then they could pay the workers only enough on which to live and to raise new families of workers.

But the working people are NOT defenseless. They have formed powerful and aggressive unions. The capitalists must therefore be a little more modest and choose the second best method of dealing with their workers. "We refuse to reduce our share of the national wealth and income," they say, "but if you will work harder for us, if you are loyal enough, if you pledge yourself to strain even harder to enrich us, then out of our immediately swollen profits we will consider giving you a modest increase in pay." Thus they propose incentive pay, production bonuses, piece work, and company security.

While the workers battle to increase their share of what they already produce, their labor officials, adopting the outlook of the capitalists, agree to increased productivity through company security as the means to gain wage increases.

Now you can understand why the anti-labor Detroit Free Press praises Richard T. Leonard, Ford director of the UAW, and Norman Matthews, Chrysler director, for their "statesmanship in industrial labor conflicts." You see, they had just agreed to scale down their wage demands below that of the GM strikers and to accept company security.

A "labor statesman" is a labor official who accepts the point of view of the big capitalists. When the workers are able to win big gains, the labor statesman is always able to "win" half as much. Then he goes to his members and says: "See what I won for you. Of course you will now have to work harder and more loyally than before."

But company security plans as a means of buying wage increases with the workers' own sweat are a dangerous trap for the union movement. We will discuss this again in a coming issue of LABOR ACTION.