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LABOR ACTION

MARCH 18, 1946

A PAPER IN THE INTERESTS OF LABOR

ONE CENT

THIEVES FALL OUT OVER WAR SPOILS!

GM Program Will Be Issue At UAW Meet

Two most significant developments on the labor front this week were the move to support Walter Reuther for president of the United Automobile Workers, CIO, and the unanimous handing back of the Ford contract by the national conference of 100 presidents of Ford locals for renegotiation between the union and the company.

On Saturday, presidents of seventeen Detroit locals issued a statement backing Reuther for president, followed on Tuesday by thirteen locals representing auto unions in western New York. There is no doubt that behind the booming of Reuther for president lies the sentiment for a more progressive union leadership. The General Motors local which Reuther heads has waged the most prolonged and militant strike and put forward the most militant demands of the post-war strike wave.

The Ford contract, accepted by the entire top auto union leadership, including Reuther, represented an inexcusable retreat in the battle between the auto barons and the unions. It contained a notorious "company security" clause. Its rejection testifies to the temper of the workers, who, having sacrificed their rights during the war, want to recover lost ground and are vigilant about any new encroachment on their rights.

These two events will converge at the coming UAW convention, where the leaders will be accountable to the ranks. The GM strike, settled or unsettled, will be THE issue of the convention, not because it is the longest of the post-war strikes, not because General Motors is the behemoth of the auto industry, but because of the UAW-General Motors PROGRAM.

The UAW-General Motors three-point program to increase wages thirty per cent, to stop price rises and to open the books (which, in effect, would give labor a voice in determining the relationship of prices, profits and wages) is the mightiest weapon yet produced in the arsenal of labor in its post-war battle against corporate wealth. This GM program is the lever that forced the 18 1/2-cent wage increases from war profiteer after bloody war profiteer, in many instances without the loss of a single day's work.

The GM program has won to labor's cause millions of the middle classes who suffer from high prices. The GM program has given all of organized labor and the little people a new insight into the relationship of wages, prices and profits. It will be an issue in every labor struggle to come. The candidacy for president of

**NEXT WEEK:
UAW
ISSUE**

Don't fail to miss next week's analyses of the issues confronting the auto workers—by LABOR ACTION'S top writers!

United Nations!



Steel Local 2715 for GM Program

READING—Striking steel workers in this area are gradually returning to work as the companies are settling with the workers along the lines established by the U. S. Steel settlement. But none of the workers has any illusions about the real nature of this settlement, which was accompanied by a tremendous price hike. These workers are beginning to assimilate the lessons during this situation and one can sense a new awareness on their part as they critically scrutinize the policy and methods and leadership of the USA-CIO.

Local 2715 adopted a statement at its strike meeting of Wednesday, March 6, which summarized the attitude of militant workers on the empty victory handed them by Philip Murray. This statement reads:

"On September 11, 1945, the National Wage Policy Committee of the USA-CIO launched a campaign to win a \$2.00-a-day increase for each member of the USA-CIO. The International pointed out that the steel corporations had coined piles of wealth but that the steel workers, themselves, had suffered tremendous cutbacks in their take-home pay. The \$2.00 a day was meant to only make up the difference. In connection with this, it was said, a new principle must be established which would assure that this country would not suffer another disastrous depression. This principle is that a larger and

larger share of purchasing power must be put into the hands of the working class in order to prevent such a depression. This principle has meaning only when we think of it in terms of a greater and greater PROPORTION of the wealth that must be directed into the hands of the workers to prevent such a situation. Thus we were also struggling for a principle upon which the whole economic future of the country and its citizens rested.

"On January 21, one week after President Murray arbitrarily postponed the strike at Truman's request, 750,000 steel workers struck for 18 1/2 cents per hour. Not long before, President Murray reduced our hourly wage demand to 19 1/2 cents per hour and said that was the lowest rate to which he would go. Thus, without the democratic consent of the rank and file, Murray reduced our demands and accepted Truman's wage-fixing formula. We are faced with another Little Steel Formula.

"After being granted a tremendous price increase, against which not even a feeble voice was raised by the International, U. S. Steel signed the contract and the rest of the country began falling in line.

"President Murray hails this as a victory. Millions of workers dissent from this statement. The International is trying to conceal the fact that it delivered an empty victory. The

International retreated before we even began fighting and capitulated to Truman's formulas. What we gained on the picket line has been and continuously is being stolen from us in Washington. Thus the reliance on "good friends of labor" is again reaping its bitter fruit. President Murray should have known better, at least in Truman's case, for it was on December 4, 1945, that President Murray said: 'The federal administration is embarked upon a policy of continued appeasement of American industry—the CIO is opposed to the basic policy pursued by the administration.' What has happened to change this estimate? And the International capitulated to this administration before the fight really began. We were fighting with the cards stacked against us from the beginning. We were fighting with our hands behind our back.

BACK GM PROGRAM

"The General Motors workers originally set the real demands that labor should have supported and fought, and united for. Had the entire labor movement courageously rallied behind the demands that the GM workers raised we would have seen a real victory and not the present uninspiring spectacle that we see today. The GM workers have been left in the lurch. And their gallant strike is drawing to a dismal close.

"The GM workers demanded a substantial wage increase without an increase in prices. They further demanded that industry open its books so that labor can see what happens to all the wealth it produces and expose the cry of poverty that industry always raises. Such a program, if seized upon by the whole labor movement, could have gotten the support of the great public. It would have meant a real battle against the present masters of the economic system. These were new and bold demands. It would have been the beginning of running industry for use and not for profit. It would have been the beginning of democratic workers' control of industry. But it would have meant a real battle with the big monopolies. BUT THIS IS THE ONLY WAY WE WILL EVER GET ANYTHING SUBSTANTIAL AND HOLD ON TO IT. Otherwise, as is the situation now, our picket line gains will be stolen from us in Washington.

"But what did the International do? It capitulated to Truman's formula and stepped aside so that the monopolists and their government could shadow box over how high an increase industry should get in its prices. And one thing that we really should get indignant about is that Bowles and those who held out for a smaller price increase for industry against Snyder and the higher price (Continued on page 2)

By IRVING HOWE

The pall of powder smoke has hardly risen from the battlefields; the corpses of the Second World War—in their millions a gruesome monument to the inhumanity of capitalist civilization—are not yet wedded to the earth to which they were so prematurely sent; and hunger—universal hunger, the universal accompaniment of war—grips and chokes the children of Europe as surely as if it were a deliberate murderer.

And yet this very world, wracked and torn and tortured by the aftermaths of the Second World War, learns in horror and in fright of the talk in diplomatic circles about a Third World War. Still in the terror of the Second World War, the war of jet

planes and buzz bombs, we feel the anticipatory terror of the Third World War, the war of the atoms.

Picket Smith Meeting in Philadelphia

PHILADELPHIA, Mar. 7—Sneaking into town unadvertised because of previous hot welcomes extended by labor groups, and speaking before an invitational audience, the Gerald L. K. Smith Christian Veterans of America held an organizational meeting here last night.

Despite only last-minute knowledge of the meeting, members of the Workers Party, the Socialist Workers Party, the American Veterans Committee and other individuals rallied a hundred-man picket line before the hall, protesting against the appearance of this native fascist riff-raff.

To a small audience composed largely of old men and women, with a sprinkling of veterans, speakers of the Gerald L. K. Smith movement appealed for the creation of a veterans' organization to secure adequate housing and a bonus. The Smith underlings who spoke were obviously making a play for discontented veterans so as to strengthen their fascist organization.

The meeting also served as a buildup for coming appearances of Smith, Father Coughlin, the infamous Jew-baiter, Kister, and the unfrocked priest, Terminiello, whose forthcoming appearance in Philadelphia was announced.

There is little doubt that Philadelphia labor will be eagerly waiting for them.

Speakers praised Franco, the South American strong man, Peron, the strike-breaking Philadelphia police, Churchill (for his blast against Russia), approved the arming of Germany and Italy for a war against Russia, condemned the "Communist" leaders of the CIO, the "Jewish international bankers," the "Young Zionist organizations seeking to establish a world state," the loan of money to England, the court-martial system in the Army, the lack of aid to old people and the "Commies" who were picketing the hall.

The speeches were catch-alls appealing to almost every prejudice current in American life.

The first on the scene in force, members of the Workers Party, distributed copies of LABOR ACTION to persons in the picket line, describing previous demonstrations against Smith. A gratifying number of subscriptions were also secured for the paper.

Preparations are already afoot in union circles for the proper welcoming of the labor-hating Smith when he and his vicious friends arrive.

The thieves of war are falling out! The world is split into two opposing camps: American and British imperialisms with their satellite powers; and Russian imperialism with its dragooned satellites and Stalinist party agents.

Gone and forgotten are the noble words—they were never MORE than mere words!—which sent millions of boys to rotting graves; gone and forgotten is "democracy"; gone and forgotten is "peace"; gone and forgotten is that promise of the Atlantic Charter: self-determination for peoples.

Every land succumbs to the military and financial paws of the two great imperialist power blocs. Who can think of the promise in the Atlantic Charter of self-determination for peoples without laughter?

Self-determination for India? Britain will not permit it.

Self-determination for Iran? Russia and Britain and America will not permit it. Russia demands that it be allowed to rob oil from northern Iran if the American and British imperialists can do so from southern Iran. (And Stalin says, with the cynicism which he has learned by long observation of the way Allied imperialism treats its subjects, that he will discuss terms of payment TEN YEARS AFTER his exploitation of the oil fields has begun.)

PREPARATIONS BEGUN

Will there be war tomorrow? Probably not. The powers are not yet



ready. It takes time to prepare for a war, especially the war of the future. It takes time to recover from the effects of the one just ended. The talk in capitals and in the press is largely to intimidate opposing nations, to get populations at home jittery and inflame them with new nationalist prejudices.

But the preparations have begun. Just as the Second World War was the continuation of the first, so will the third be the continuation of the second—if the masses of people permit it to take place. All the squabbling now is merely the quarrel over the spoils of the Second World War!

The factories of Manchuria: shall (Continued on page 2)

BULLETIN:

As we go to press we learn that the General Motors strike has been settled. The settlement calls for an 18 1/2-cent an hour increase. We will discuss the strike and the settlement in detail in the next issue of LABOR ACTION.

the UAW of Walter Reuther, who represents the GM union and who has been most closely associated with the GM program, will be bound up inseparably with that program.

Properly understood, a sharp rejection of the policies of this top leadership is implicit in the GM program. For the program logically demanded union militancy, and not dependence on capitalist politicians. And it obviously called for an attitude of class independence from the capitalist politicians, POLITICALLY AS WELL AS ECONOMICALLY.

LABOR ACTION backs the GM program as the necessary minimum for the support of candidates in the UAW convention elections, and urges every progressive to get the entire union behind that program.

You Can Help Us Get the 8-Page Labor Action!

By EMANUEL GARRETT, Editor LABOR ACTION

We have got to have an EIGHT-PAGE LABOR ACTION! And we shall have it! We have, in fact, already set a date for the appearance of the first regular EIGHT-PAGE LABOR ACTION—June 17!

The Workers Party has inaugurated a drive for a \$15,000 expansion fund. This fund will be used to finance new organizational activities and a vigorous publishing program. Part of this fund, by decision of the Workers Party, will be set aside to help us expand LABOR ACTION TO EIGHT PAGES.

Quotas for the fund drive have been allocated to all the branches of the Workers Party. (Turn to page 2 for a list of the quotas.) Workers Party branches will come through on their quotas. Of that we are sure. We ask, however, the help in this drive of every sympathizer, of every reader, of every friend.

Our readers know LABOR ACTION as an uncompromising revolutionary socialist paper. Our readers know it as an indispensable weapon in educating and FIGHTING for socialism. Our readers know it, too, as a paper that does not content itself with abstract articles unrelated to the struggles and vital problems of the working class.

On the contrary, they know it as a paper that enters into every

struggle, every picket line, as its own. They know it as a paper that probes to the heart of every political event and interprets it in the light of working policy and interest.

Through the war years we unremittently challenged the war makers, as we challenge and expose them today. We fought the no-strike pledge, and championed a genuine program to raise the standard of living of the American working class. The dramatic slogan of the GM strikers, "Open the Books," first appeared in LABOR ACTION years ago. We have campaigned for an Independent Labor Party, for Workers Defense Guards against the menace of fascism, for a program of economic and political demands that mean REAL SECURITY for labor.

Socialism, for us, is a living, breathing necessity that has its reflection in every phase of our lives. That is why we must have the space to discuss in detail every event and issue of significance. We do not have the space now.

Problems that need comment are multiplying, yet we are compelled in each issue to omit much that is important. We are unable, in a four-page paper, to discuss the ramifications of international politics as they affect the working class. The developments in Spain today are of extreme interest, yet we have to delay publication of

our analysis of these events because we do not have the space in a four-page paper. Nor have we, for example, had the space to present the facts on Stalinism and its international anti-working class policies and activities.

We are planning something different for the EIGHT PAGER. In addition to the regular four pages as we have them now, we will have a MAGAZINE SECTION. In the magazine section we will publish articles of a more analytical nature than we have found possible in the four pages. We will have special educational material and a variety of features.

On April 1 we are going to publish a sample copy of the EIGHT PAGER! Our readers will then see what we have in mind.

We are confident that the sample EIGHT PAGER will provoke a great response towards making it permanent. There is, however, no need to wait for the SAMPLE EIGHT PAGER. \$15,000 will give us the permanent EIGHT PAGER, as well as give the Workers Party an operating fund with which to expand its work. Make your contribution today. Fill in the attached blank. GET BEHIND THE DRIVE FOR AN EIGHT-PAGE LABOR ACTION BY JUNE 17!

The first issue of the eight-page paper will appear on June 17. On April 1 a sample copy of the eight-pager will appear so that all our readers may see for themselves what a great advance this expansion will represent.

The thousands of dollars required to make this advance must come from our readers. We appeal to every reader to send us a contribution to make the expansion possible. Make all checks and money orders payable to LABOR ACTION, 114 West 14th Street, New York 11, N. Y.

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On Karl Marx and the 75th Anniversary of the Paris Commune

They Showed the Way to Labor Emancipation!

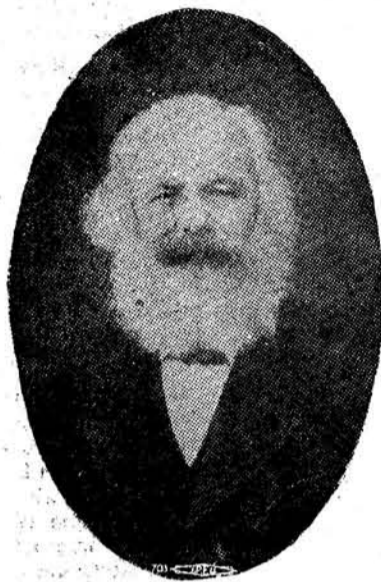
By J. R. JOHNSON

The American working class is not yet as familiar as the European working class with the history and traditions of the revolutionary socialist movement.

U. S. Workers and Marx's Heritage

As the international crisis deepens, the American proletariat will rapidly increase its interest in the great thinker whose whole work was based upon the proletariat as the most progressive force in modern society.

In Marx there was not the slightest trace of mysticism. He was a master of English political economy, German philosophy, and French political science. These he used in his monumental labors to establish that the social movement had the inevitability of a process of natural history.



ceded by the conflict of interests and passions, complicated by all the bewildering phenomena which attend the daily activity of hundreds of millions of human beings.

Perhaps today it would be as well to recall an aspect of his doctrine too often forgotten. No man had a more elevated conception of the destiny of the human race.

A New Vision for the Working People

In his great work, CAPITAL, over and over again, he pointed out that as capitalist production became more scientific, the actual labor of the worker was more and more deprived of intellectual content and educational potentiality.

Such was his vision that this student of political economy and the labor process has unfolded perhaps the most poetic and far-seeing perspective for human society ever propounded by any philosopher or poet.

Yet scientist and philosopher as he was, with an unquenchable faith in the inevitability of socialism, Marx was no mere man of the study.

In 1871, when the workers of Paris established the Commune, Marx hailed it as one of the greatest events in human history.

The First Working-Class Government

France had been defeated by the armies of Germany which stood at Versailles, a few miles away from Paris. The leaders of French capitalism, statesmen and soldiers, were on their knees before the German conquerors.

Working in the closest association with the German invaders, the French ruling class attempted to disarm the Parisians but the workers of Paris, emaciated by a five month's famine, did not hesitate for a single moment.

What exactly was this Commune? There have been many interpretations. The interpretation of Karl Marx remains unchallenged in its simplicity and its penetration.

It was essentially a working class government, the product of the producing against the appropriating class, the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economic emancipation of man.

What the Paris Commune Symbolized

The Paris Commune was first and foremost a democracy. The government was a body elected by universal suffrage. None of its functionaries was paid more than the wages of a skilled worker.

It lasted for 71 days. It was destroyed by a combination of its own weaknesses, chiefly a lack of decision, and the treacheries of the French bourgeoisie in shameful alliance with the German army.

European civilization, until the days of Hitler and Stalin. Today, to the American proletariat, there are many lessons to be drawn from the history of the Commune.

It was a symbol in that it showed the real women of Paris—heroic, noble and devoted like the women of antiquity. It was a symbol in that it showed the world: "working, thinking, fighting, bleeding Paris—almost forgetful in its incubation of a new society, of the cannibals at its gates—radiant in the enthusiasm of its historical initiative."

It was a symbol in that it admitted all foreigners to the honor of dying for the immortal cause.

It was a symbol because even before peace had been signed with Germany, the Commune made a German working man the Minister of Labor.

It was a symbol because under the eyes of the conquering Prussians on the one hand, and the Bonapartist army on the other, it pulled down the great Vendome column which stood as a monument to the martial glory of the first Napoleon.

The Important Conclusion

Most important, however, Marx drew a great theoretical conclusion from the experience of the Commune. He showed that the capitalist army, the capitalist state, the capitalist bureaucracy, cannot be seized by the revolutionary proletariat and used for its own purposes.

Today the advanced American worker needs to know the history of the international struggles of the proletariat. From these he will most quickly learn to understand his own. Marx's pamphlet on the Commune, THE CIVIL WAR IN FRANCE, is a profound and moving piece of writing.

Wheat Is Burned as 500 Million People Face Starvation

By SUSAN GREEN

According to the food experts, there are 500,000,000 people in Europe and Asia who, between now and next harvest, will face dangerous malnutrition or actual starvation.

There are several reasons for this critical scarcity of food, and varied as are these reasons they are all the fault of the capitalist system.

For the war-devastated farmlands in Europe and Asia made useless for food production, we have the imperialists of the world to thank. For the bomb-riddled docks and transportation facilities which are holding up what food can be produced and could be distributed, we owe our profound gratitude to the same source.

For the uncontrolled floods that ruined the crops in parts of China, for the drought that blighted crops in India and North Africa, diminishing further the food supplies of the world, capitalism must also be blamed.

Finally, the operation of private enterprise in this country, where food is most bountiful, has led to withholding from human consumption millions of bushels of wheat and other grains.

The 500,000,000 hungry humans in the world are, therefore, the tribute we pay for continuing the capitalist system, the price for allowing the ascendancy of the power of money over the needs of man.

UNRRA DOESN'T DELIVER

Back in November, 1943, the United Nations created the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, ostensibly to stem the ravages of disease and hunger among the war-torn peoples of the world.

oils and fats, UNRRA has shipped practically nothing to speak of.

The recent gestures emanating from the White House are a mockery of the urgent needs of the hungry. On February 6 the President promised to send 6,000,000 tons of wheat to feed 2,000 calories a day to 50,000,000 people—only one-tenth of the estimated need.

"Builders" Slate Elected in UAW Local 719

CHICAGO — The Stalinist Party-backed slate for local officers and delegates to the national convention of the UAW-CIO from Local 719 (Electro-Motive) has been defeated by a margin of 150-300 votes.

The campaign was marked by vicious personal attacks by the Stalinist group on one side, and red-baiting with the aid of the reactionary Chicago Tribune and Hearst press by the "Rank and File Union Builders" on the other.

There is no doubt that the margin of victory of the latter group over the Stalinists and their misguided stooges would have reached the proportions of a landslide had they not stooped to enlist the aid of the reactionary boss press.

Progressive unionists have always opposed soliciting the aid of the boss newspapers in order to settle their differences in the labor movement. The capitalist newspapers are the instruments of the employers, and only open their columns to one side or another in an intra-union dispute in

order to be better able to attack the union as a whole. One has only to read their daily attacks on the GM strikers and the labor movement in general to see that this is true.

Next we heard that ex-President Hoover, mixer of food and politics of post-World War I fame, was called in by the President. The former President was going to go Truman one better. He would ship 8,000,000 tons of wheat to feed 67,000,000

books to the negotiating committee. Toward the establishment of a genuine independent Labor Party.

Against any and all discrimination because of race, creed or color and for legislation to enforce this principle. For a fair tax program based on the ability to pay.

The future will tell whether or not the "Builders" take their program seriously or merely used it as a stepping stone to victory in the local with the intention of discarding it once they are in power.

Unrestricted collective bargaining. Against "cooling-off" and "fact-finding" legislation.

Against a no-strike pledge in any form. Full employment insurance during strikes and illness.

A guaranteed annual wage based on the cost of living. Annual opening of the corporation

people—still a long cry from what is needed. Mr. Hoover's idea is to put famine relief on a voluntary basis. Let the American people pull in their belts to the extent of twenty-five per cent of their present consumption.

nations are scheduled to meet for a talk-fest this month.

PRICE OF GRAINS GOES UP

No, begging your pardon, it is not correct to say that the problem remains exactly as before. The government has decided to increase the prices of grains. Reporting the glad news, the New York Times wrote: "The government announced tonight increases in the prices of six major grains as a step to carrying out the country's program to help feed hungry people."

Also, let the working people save what food they can and send it to their starving brothers. But let them do so on their own—not as Hoover plans, through the medium of the capitalist government, which has evaded and stalled and increased the profits of the profiteers, while human lives hang in the balance.

This is the way a capitalist government evades the life-or-death problem of feeding 500,000,000 people, hungry and starving. Feeding profits to the capitalists is hardly the way.

The working people of America should be concerned about the famished of Europe and Asia, especially since the great majority are their class brothers. Between now and next harvest, instead of spring and summer rejuvenation and bloom, millions will die of starvation and disease unless they receive immediate help.

What must be done? Hoards of grain held for higher prices must be seized and released for shipment. The government seized plants to break strikes. Let it seize food to prevent starvation. The Army and Navy must be made to disgorge food from their overstocked warehouses to provide relief abroad. The black market supplies must be unearthed and similarly utilized. No time can be lost. Labor has to make these reasonable demands from the government at once.

Sub-Drive Passes Half-Way Mark!

By REVA CRAINE, Press Manager

LABOR ACTION's drive for 5000 new subscriptions is swinging into the second half as this week's scorecard shows a total of 2523 subs.

This week, the second branch of the Workers Party went over its quota, reaching 121 per cent. We received from the Hibbing Branch the following communication:

"Dear Comrade—Well, last Sunday, J. and I went after the subs again. After meeting at ten o'clock we drove over to Chisholm and went to work. The mine workers and their families that we met in our house-to-house canvass received us favorably and a high percentage of them bought a sub.

The Louisville Branch, from whom we have been waiting to hear, came in this week with 41 subs, fulfilling 86 per cent of its quota. The Reading Branch follows close on its heels with 80 per cent of its quota completed.

From Philadelphia we learn:

"Within a half hour fifteen members of the Workers Party in Philadelphia rallied to a picket line in front of a meeting called by the Christian Vets, a fascist outfit of Gerald L. K.

Smith. We distributed LABOR ACTION and without effort six subs were gotten from the bystanders and pickets.

"Last Sunday, several members of the Workers Party went into the neighborhood of the General Electric plant with LABOR ACTION. The residents of that area witnessed the police brutality last week. They read the pro-corporation articles and editorials in the daily press and immediately recognized the need for a labor paper, for LABOR ACTION. In less than one hour, fourteen subscriptions were sold.

"Though a little late in getting started, the Philadelphia membership is enthusiastic in its response.—M. W."

The April 1 issue of LABOR ACTION will be EIGHT PAGES—a forerunner of the regular Eight-Pager which will appear on June 17. Every member of the Workers Party and every LABOR ACTION booster will now have the living proof of what we mean when we say that we are going to EXPAND the SIZE AND CIRCULATION of LABOR ACTION.

Only 2477 more subs to go before we reach the 5000 mark—and then, OVER THE TOP is our watchword!

SIXTY CENTS WILL BRING YOU LABOR ACTION FOR A YEAR!

Table with columns: Branch, Quota, March 11, Total, Percent. Lists subscription progress for various cities like Akron, Baltimore, Boston, etc.

Subscription form for LABOR ACTION magazine. Includes fields for Name, Address, City, State, and a section for a special offer: 'FOR \$1.00 SEND FOUR SIX-MONTH SUBSCRIPTIONS TO THE FOLLOWING:'