

Work for a Workers World;  
Join the Workers Party!

# LABOR ACTION

SEPTEMBER 1, 1947

A PAPER IN THE INTERESTS OF LABOR

FIVE CENTS

## The Death of Bilbo And the Death of Two Negro Children

By KATE LEONARD

Theodore G. Bilbo is dead.  
White Supremacy Bilbo, that is.  
Race-Hate Bilbo.  
Back-to-Africa Bilbo.  
K.K.K. Bilbo.

They buried him from the Juniper Grove Church in Poplarville, Mississippi. They hunted long for something to say, and his political friends filled the pews to hear it said.

But the workers of Mississippi were not there. Hookworm and cotton, cheap labor and terror, ignorance and lynch-law press heavily upon them. "Get back in your place, Nigger!" "Dear Dago," "Kike" ring in their ears.

Bury Bilbo, the Democrat, despised by them.

The Mill Basin section of Brooklyn is a working class section, as anyone who rides the Flatbush Avenue trolley can see.

Last week tragedy struck there, when two children of the Hutchings family, Vivian, 17, and Gerald, 11, were drowned.

The Hutchings are the only Negro family in the neighborhood, and when they moved there five years back the going was rough. Nobody spoke to them, and every morning the father and some of the children had to erase the scrawls from the sides of their house.

This situation had changed in five years.

Perhaps grief should be permitted privacy, but even in the maudlin Sunday News story, the neighborhood solidarity stands out!

Over 400 neighbors—all white—attended the children's funeral. The Gargano children, who had tried to rescue Vivian and Gerald, were there. Milton McMan and his wife, Josephine, scoutmasters, led the color guard. Jimmy and Philip McMan, away at camp, had written postcards to Gerry, addressed to "My best friend." Cards he could not receive. The whole Mill Basin mourned with "probably their best known and most loved family."

The Mill Basin section of Brooklyn is a working class neighborhood, as anyone who rides the Flatbush Avenue trolley can see. Some democrats live there, too.

## Gov't Statistics Show Wages Below 1939!

This Is The Way To Stop'em!



"Average weekly earnings in the U. S. hit an all-time high of \$48.46 in May," writes the CIO News in commenting on the latest report issued by the government Bureau of Labor Statistics, "but that pay of \$48.46 was worth only \$29.99 for a man with a wife and two children when expressed in 1939 dollars."

In this comment you have a real picture of the present wage structure. While profits remain exceptionally high for big business, the standard of living of the masses of people, in terms of what they can purchase on the basis of their real wages, declines.

Accompanying this decline in real wages and responsible for it is the continuous rise in the cost of living. With an ineffectual price control law during the war, the increase in prices was slow and since the government provided for nominal wage increases to meet higher prices, the disproportion between prices and wages, while high, was nothing like what exists today. As soon

### Isthmian Sailors Win Strike!

NEW YORK—The strike of the Seafarers International Union and the Sailors Union of the Pacific against the Isthmian Steamship Company ended last week in a complete victory for the unions.

By winning a closed-shop contract at Isthmian, the SIU-SUP has succeeded in organizing the last of the big open-shop companies in the maritime industry. A subsidiary of the U. S. Steel Corp., Isthmian has been the last to maintain a large-scale company hiring hall for seamen for many years.

When the SIU won an NLRB election at Isthmian some time ago, the company at first flatly refused to sign a closed-shop contract. With the effective date of the Taft-Hartley bill close at hand, Isthmian (and with it, no doubt, the operators of the rest of the industry) thought that here would be a chance to put an end to the union hiring hall in the shipping industry.

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## Politicians Challenge Rader, WP Candidate

Special to Labor Action

PHILADELPHIA—The County Board of Elections of Philadelphia has accepted challenges against the nominating petitions of Jack Rader, Workers Party candidate in the Fifth Councilmanic District. Also challenged was the Socialist Workers Party candidate, Irene Le Compte, candidate in the Seventh District. At the same time, the County Board

and are attempting to forestall such a party by eliminating all minority organizations from political existence. The denial of places on the ballot to independent candidates would be an infringement on the democratic rights of the voters in Philadelphia to vote for whomever they please.

More than 3,400 registered voters in the two Councilmanic Districts, better than double the legally required number, signed the nomination papers of the two candidates. (Continued on page 4)

BULLETIN: A telephonic report from Philadelphia advises LABOR ACTION that the County Board of Elections has reserved decision on the challenge against the WP and SWP until next Tuesday. The hearings revealed that a lawyer named Minnick, who is attorney for the Democratic Party City Committee filed the challenge against the WP and SWP on the ground that they threatened the victory of the Democratic Party! Since neither the WP or SWP recognizes the jurisdiction of this Board, they will take their case before the Common Pleas Court.

summarily struck off the ballot the name of the sole Communist Party candidate for the First District council seat on grounds that the Communist Party believed in "violent revolution."

The challenge to the Workers Party and Socialist Workers Party petitions are unspecified. The Election Board would only state that its charges are "general" and "technical." The exact nature of the charges has not been revealed to us. The board's policy is to wait until the Wednesday hearings, at which time we will be challenged by as yet unrevealed accusers and on grounds against which we have no means of preparing, since this information is being deliberately withheld.

In the face of this obvious attempt at keeping working class candidates and minority parties off the ballot, a joint defense committee has been established between the Workers Party and Socialist Workers Party. The statement of this joint committee reads as follows:

JOINT STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF IRENE LECOMTE AND I. JACK RADER, INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES FOR CITY COUNCIL

AUGUST 24—The Socialist Workers Party and the Workers Party will jointly oppose the objections made to the County Board of Elections against the nomination papers of their respective candidates for City Council, Irene LeCompte, in the Seventh District, and I. Jack Rader, in the Fifth District.

An effort is being made to prevent any minority parties from appearing on the ballot in the November election, to perpetuate the political monopoly of the Republican and Democratic Parties. Major party politicians are fearful of the establishment of a new, independent political party of labor

Toward the UAW Convention

## Reuther Caucus Meets to Map Program

By WALTER JASON

DETROIT, Aug. 24—Nearly 200 key people, the secondary leadership of the UAW-CIO, which supports the Reuther tendency, met here this week end for the first national conference of the caucus to take up the questions of program, personnel and victory at the forthcoming national convention of the UAW-CIO.

This conference was called by the Executive Board members and Walter P. Reuther, UAW-CIO president, to present their program and outline their ideas of how to win the international union from the Addes-Stalinist bloc. Although three times as many people wanted to attend this conference as were chosen by the regional directors, the Reuther top leadership limited it—and thus restricted its democratic nature—to what they considered a workable size.

Once again, the ideas, personality and leadership of Walter P. Reuther decisively dominated the conference. While much of what he said and thought in regard to program has already appeared in LABOR ACTION, there were some, very important decisions on program and policy that need careful attention and consideration.

The discussion on the Labor Party is a case in point, and we'll report on this in proper place in this article.

The background of this conference was the taste of victory in the FE merger fight won decisively by the Reuther forces. In fact, there seemed to be a touch of overconfidence, if anything, in viewing the problems of the coming pre-convention discussion and the convention itself.

Reuther spoke for nearly two hours, giving details of the factional struggle raging in the UAW since he was elected president. He has built up a devastating case against the Addes-Stalinist bloc on their factional record in this period. He scarcely bothered with R. J. Thomas, whom everyone considers a dead duck. Target No. 1 of the Reuther caucus is George Addes, secretary-

treasurer of the UAW, and his Stalinist supporters. The most exact and detailed scrutiny of finances has been made and the results may prove very embarrassing to Addes and company.

WHAT THE CAUCUS DID

Just one example. The Addes majority handled the organizing drive of Thompson Motor Products in Cleveland. It cost around \$500,000 and yet the UAW suffered four defeats there. The place is still unorganized. The director of this drive, Ed Hall, one-time vice-president of the UAW, handled the job for 107 weeks and he was paid \$16,000 in salary and expenses. But he spent 87 per cent of his time, as proved by an audit of Addes' records—away from Cleveland, going on dozens of trips everywhere, engaging primarily in faction work!

Reuther emphasized his belief that the UAW could eliminate half the staff members, get double the work from the others, and thus the rank and file could get something for their money, if these factional pay-offs were eliminated.

Two of the important organizational changes which the Reuther conference adopted in their program directly affect Addes. A constitutional amendment will be introduced to have the convention elect three trustees to supervise the finances, just as exists in each local union. Another is to have verbatim minutes of the International Executive Board as a permanent feature.

The fact is that on the question of sound, militant unionism versus the "rule or ruin" policy of the Addes-Stalinist gang, Reuther is going to win wide support of the men in the shops.

On the report on program, Reuther again did most of the explaining. Higher wages without price increases, guaranteed annual wage, repeal of the Taft-Hartley law, a sound pension plan, FEPC, etc.—the conference reaffirmed its previous stand. There was little discussion and no disagreement. But then came the question of how this program is going to be carried

out. Reuther has two answers. The first is that victory of the Reuther caucus at the convention would provide the UAW with adequate leadership to fight for its achievement on the economic front, if victory was big enough to smash the Addes-Stalinist clique and thus end the vicious factionalism in the UAW. There was no serious disagreement on this point. But the second answer, concerning political action, caused the only real and lively discussion at this conference.

Four delegates spoke strongly and effectively for the adoption of a Labor Party plank as part of the con-

vention program of the Reuther caucus for the convention.

Reuther had introduced a "compromise" proposal on political action. It was indistinguishable from the Stalinist "build a third party eventually" clap-trap. The proposal spoke for independent political action. It spoke for a new party eventually, based on the workers, small farmers, etc.

LABOR PARTY ADVOCATES

Karl Sheir, a delegate from Chicago, urged adoption of a resolution, to build a Labor Party now. A delegate from the Buffalo region, Don

Slaiman, quoted Reuther on Reuther, to point out that more than half the program adopted could only be achieved by having a Labor Party take control of Congress.

"The UAW-CIO is the spearhead of the labor movement in America. The future of this country depends on the course of the CIO. So says Brother Reuther, and I agree. So let's spearhead the labor movement on this question. Let's lead in the fight to build a Labor Party." The applause given this and other Labor Party speeches showed a

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## Illinois CIO Parley Drubs Stalinists

CHICAGO—The purge of the Stalinist forces at the Illinois State CIO convention held in Chicago over the August 22 weekend was a good lesson on "How not to fight the CP."

Power politics, brawls, screaming headlines featuring the fist accomplishments of delegates were some of the highlights of three turbulent days at the Amalgamated Center.

The convention concerned itself solely with ways and means of carrying out the new top CIO strategy of eliminating Stalinist forces wherever possible.

The convention assembled and the strategy of the Murray forces was to put through a constitutional amendment electing six board members from different international CIO unions at large. Heretofore each international would have a board member selected by themselves in caucus. This proposal would mean that one holding a majority of votes would sweep clean. It was a foregone conclusion that the Murray boys would win because they practically had enough votes in the Steel Workers and Amalgamated delegations.

The first brawl took place in the heat of the fight around the constitutional amendment and thereafter there were several other incidents where CPites got roughed up by "sergeants-at-arms."

AMENDMENT ON BOARD

The amendment carried and the Murray slate swept in. Joe Germano, regional director of Steel, was elected state president. His opponent had been a token candidate from the Mattson-CP-UAW group. Germano's speech of acceptance was a lulu. He waved the flag against those "minorities who were trying to take over our unions, and country!" The Executive Board election also carried five of the six posts to this group. The other post was left open for representation by the CP.

The purge was no victory in any sense except organizational. It was no victory for those who realize the dangers of Stalinism but also are wary of bureaucratic degeneration along the lines of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union. No principled political fight was put up against the DeMaio, Oakes, Marshs. No ex-

planation of how they subordinate the trade unions in which they work to the foreign policy of Russia. This could not have been possible because since June 21, 1941, there has been a man-and-wife honeymoon relationship between the leading Stalinists and the Germanos, Doughertys, Levins and McElligotts. To have raised the lessons of the past would have exposed their own duplicity in past events.

BEHEAD THE BREAK

The marriage was broken only when relationships between the U. S. and Russia had reached a breaking point. What was difficult to accomplish at the last national CIO convention has been done in Massachusetts, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and over the past weekend in Illinois and Indiana.

The conduct of the majority at this convention was not one of education and adoption of a fighting policy to defend the interests of the workers organized under the CIO banner. Instead they followed the old line on political action and did not represent or reject the outside interference of Republican Governor Dwight

Green, who told the convention that "Free collective bargaining between responsible (sic) representatives of labor and capital with a minimum of governmental interference must continue to be our American goal." After all, hadn't he made Frank Annunzio, Steel PAC director, a member of the State Board of Health, or something; and wasn't this a proof of the value of sticking by your friend, that a Labor Party was not necessary?

The UAW Reuther forces joined the Murray bloc. Their hatred of the Stalinists and the disruptive role they have played in the UAW blinds them as to what was occurring. Their candidate for the state board was pro-Labor Party Fred Jacobi of Electro-Motive Local 719. A question that comes to mind that should be asked by every militant fighter for democracy and free expression in unions is this: "If, at the 1948 convention, a pro-Labor Party group has a sizable delegation pledged to fight for a Labor Party now, will they get a similar reception from the Germanos, Doughertys, Levins and McElligotts?"





