

LABOR ACTION

Independent Socialist Weekly

APRIL 2, 1951

FIVE CENTS

GREETINGS, UAW DELEGATES!

—See pages 1, 2, 3, 8

**Spain — the Beginning of Hope:
Reports on the Barcelona Fight**

... page 6

Carey on the Profit Swindle

... page 3

THE UAW FACES TWO MAIN ISSUES: BOLD PROGRAM, UNION DEMOCRACY

Ranks Balk at Reuther Stress On Dues Hike, 2-Yr. Convention

By WALTER JASON

CLEVELAND, March 23—While the whole labor movement prepared to watch closely the deliberations of the 13th convention of the United Auto Workers (CIO) for leadership on the vital wage-price issues of today, the 2,400 delegates are finding themselves far more preoccupied with an internal conflict whose outcome will inevitably influence the future role of this 1,300,000-member organization.

In dealing with questions of national policy including the terrible problem of mounting inflation, the UAW may be expected to proclaim a militant program which includes:

- (a) All-out fight for the escalator clause as a defensive measure against the ravages of skyrocketing prices.
- (b) Insistence that the annual-improvement factor, providing

for a four-cent hourly wage increase each year, be kept untouched by any wage formula cooked up in Washington.

(c) Refusal to adopt any no-strike pledge; a fight against war profiteering and the inequality of sacrifice now obvious in this country.

(d) A blast at the whole wage-price policy of the Truman administration with criticism of Harry S. Truman by name. This will be followed by a call for a political realignment.

But will the UAW make a complete break with the Truman administration and the Democratic Party? Or will it piece together some patchwork compromise with Truman? The convention meets at a time when these questions arise once again. How sharply they are posed was outlined in last week's **LABOR ACTION**.

In political matters, the UAW will overwhelmingly follow the leadership of its only influential top leader, Walter P. Reuther, incumbent president. The convention proceedings, however, will reflect not only his known predilection for becoming the militant spokesman in the top hierarchy of the union movement but his limitations and deficiencies as well.

At this critical moment, the convention should, of course, re-

(Continued on last page)

By BEN HALL

The United Auto Workers convention meets only ten days after the United Labor Conference in Washington. Auto worker delegates can begin where that conference left off, to do what it failed to do, and above all, to forestall any retreat from the militant program of action initiated by the labor movement when its representatives resigned from the Wage Stabilization Board.

Events have moved with almost dizzying rapidity. A surface calm still prevailed in November. All was in order: labor's enemies seemed to be only the reactionary Republicans and the Southern Democrats; its friends still seemed to be the so-called liberal Democrats, Truman and his co-thinkers. Angels had wings; devils had tails.

By December, these simple and clear distinctions became cloudy. UAW leaders warned their ranks that their contracts were threatened by the administration.

By January and February everything fell into a hopeless jumble when the Truman-appointed wage board drove out labor's representatives by insisting upon a fraudulent price-wage decree.

Two weeks later, Eric Johnston, C. E. Wilson and Truman had joined in forcing through decisions over labor's vigorous protest.

Union leaders stood firm. They quit all war boards in protest; they geared their membership for strike action; they rejected the humiliating terms of a compromise suggested by the president. A United Labor Policy Committee

(Continued on page 2)

UAW Can Lead the Way to a Labor Party

The delegates to the convention of the United Automobile Workers (CIO) met at a time when a major political crisis confronts the American people.

The administration of the government of the United States is in the hands of the direct representatives of big business. This fact was recognized by the recent United Labor Conference in Washington, and formed the basis of the speeches delivered there and the program adopted unanimously by the representatives of over fifteen million organized American workers.

On the one hand, the Congress is controlled by a coalition of Southern Democrats and Republicans which represents big business and the most reactionary political and social elements of the country. The Fair Deal Democrats, instead of conducting a courageous and open struggle against this coalition in the defense of the interests of the American people, have trimmed their sails to the winds of reaction.

The Truman administration, elected by the joint support of the workers and farmers in 1948, has openly and brazenly turned over the whole mobilization and stabilization machinery of the

government to the tender mercies of a clique of industrialists and bankers.

It has abandoned any pretense of pushing for the social program of the Fair Deal. It has dropped the fight against the labor-shackling Taft-Hartley Act, has turned price control over to the profiteers, rent control to the rent-gougers, manpower controls (control over the lives of the workers) to men who favor a labor draft, and housing to the real-estate interests.

And to cap all this, it proposes to freeze the wages of the workers solidly, with total disregard for existing contracts as well as for the needs of the vast number of workers who still suffer under substandard wages and working conditions.

This is the indictment brought against the government by the leaders of the American labor movement who supported the Democratic Party in 1948, gloried in its victory, and proclaimed that this victory ushered in a new era of social and economic gains for the American people under the standard of the Fair Deal.

These are the fruits of the political policy pursued by the Political Action Committee of

(Turn to last page)

New York City

PICKET FRANCO!

**For release of 5000 Strikers
jailed by the fascist regime!**

The Spanish workers have struck a blow at the Franco regime with the Barcelona general strike. They have appealed to workers and socialists everywhere to come to their support in every way possible.

To demonstrate their solidarity with the courageous workers of Spain, the Independent Socialist League and the Socialist Workers Party are organizing a picket line in front of the Spanish consulate. Other organizations are being contacted for participation. Picket Franco to demand:

Immediate release of the 5,000 imprisoned as a result of the Barcelona general strike, and of all other political prisoners!

SPANISH CONSULATE, 515 MADISON AVE.

(between 53rd & 54th Street)

Sat., April 7—12 noon sharp

Detroit: Wildcats and Low Union-Shop Votes

Auto Workers Restless, Get No Lead To Involve Rank and File in Struggle

DETROIT, Mar. 25—In spite of all the superficial outward signs of cohesion in the United Auto Workers (CIO), two very indicative developments in the past week testify to the deep discontent and restlessness among the men in the shops.

A series of wildcat strikes, especially in the Chrysler plants, have occurred recently. From the narrow standpoint of the union officials, these are merely due to an inability of the workers and the union leaders in the shops to understand and properly follow the procedures when grievances arise. Actually, the roots of the trouble go far deeper. The increasing dissatisfaction explodes in the way a tensed-up man loses his temper at the slightest provocation, and causes wildcats almost in direct proportion to the way the cost of living rises. Complaints and grievances are merely the spark that sets off the wildcats.

Another underlying aspect of this situation: the ranks, as a result of this frustrating experience—for the more wildcats, the smaller the paycheck—take their irritation out on the union representatives and on the UAW itself.

Only last week, during the

NLRB elections for a union shop in the Chrysler plants, a truly staggering number of workers failed to get out and vote! And this happened, not in small plants, located in small villages out of town, but right in Detroit! Fewer than 60 per cent of the workers voted in one of the largest and most militant local unions! During the Ford and General Motors NLRB elections of 1948-50, around 90 per cent of the workers voted, mainly for the union shop. Since, under the Taft-Hartley Law, any worker not voting is counted as a vote against the union, the UAW is going to have a narrow squeeze in the Chrysler election.

GROWING GAP

Now the irony of this situation consists in the fact that, in spite of the criticisms which must be made of the UAW, it is certainly in the forefront of the fight against the wage freeze imposed

on labor by the Truman administration, as compared to the rest of the labor movement.

Since the UAW leadership does not directly involve the ranks in this struggle—nor does the significance of the role of Walter P. Reuther in relation to the other top leaders of the union movement begin to permeate among the workers—the net result is a growing gap between the officialdom of the UAW and the ranks. Any understanding of the UAW convention or the problems of this union which does not start with grasping this new situation is bound to fail short.

Another aspect of this is the failure of the UAW to develop leaders of any caliber who are neither mere hand-raisers ("Let Walter take care of the program") nor blindly embittered opponents of the regime, blinded by the pressures of the rank and file into becoming fanatical critics of Reuther.

Will UAW Convention Adopt Witchhunt Clause in Rules?

DETROIT, Mar. 25—Will the United Auto Workers convention revise the union's constitution to bar "Communists" from membership, as well as from holding office?

This vital question, involving civil and democratic liberties, is one of the sticks of political dynamite before the delegates.

It came to public attention today when the UAW international executive board announced that Berry Blasingame, ousted from membership in Buick Local 599 for alleged CP activities, had been ordered reinstated.

The board acted upon the recommendation of a regional appeals committee.

Blasingame had been convicted by a Local 599 trial board on three charges of conduct unbecoming a union member, and he was expelled last October 29.

He had been fired by the company, and then placed back on

the job through insistence of the international union, for such action might have caused successful law suits against General Motors and the union under the Taft-Hartley Law.

Since it appeared that Blasingame also had a good legal case against the UAW if his expulsion were not vetoed, the board ordered his reinstatement. The board explained that while the constitution prohibits a member of a "subversive" group from holding an elective or appointive office, it does not bar him from membership. Blasingame did not hold any office at the time of his conviction.

Unless all signs are wrong, the intent of the top leadership is to "strengthen" the constitution to prevent such a dilemma arising in the future. It may seek to revise the constitution along the lines of the United Mine Workers constitution which gives John L. Lewis the power to kick out "Communists."

UAW Faces 2 Issues --

(Continued from page 1)

cemented a fighting alliance of all unions, except the miners; its militant policies, strongly influenced by the UAW, pointed the way toward independence of labor and freed its hands for a battle in defense of living standards.

Delegates to the UAW convention now ask: *What comes next?*

Starting from the inspiring actions of the ULPC, they need only carry out this course of action to its logical conclusion, militantly and without hesitation, to show the way to the rest of the labor movement.

The UAW has won its place as vanguard of the labor movement by taking the lead at every critical moment. Its leadership is necessary at this juncture: *for the Washington conference recorded labors protest but gave no guide for the future.* The representatives of all labor heard some conservative union officials suggest that the unions-rejoin government boards after only pitiful concessions from the

How this problem is posed before the convention is discussed in Walter Jason's article in this issue. The members must feel that this is their fight just as this is their union. They must have assurances that they are not being shunted aside by their own elected officers and instructed to be quiet for two years. When new political developments arise so swiftly, it is not proper to increase the period between conventions; it is not correct to lengthen the term of office of the officials.

Not censorship of local papers but a quite different emphasis is needed now: Let every member speak out, in a full and free discussion of the vital questions of the day. That's the meaning of union democracy now.

The most sincere and capable union leaders cannot take the place of an alert and active rank and file. It is the vigorous participation of the membership in every struggle, in every internal discussion, that has made the UAW the outstanding labor organization in the country. It is time to mobilize this membership, which will always respond to militant leadership, for an active role in the struggles ahead.

The trail was blazed by the Packinghouse Workers (CIO) in mass parades, demonstrations, picket lines, rallies, and work stoppages. In the cities of St. Paul and Albert Lea, packinghouse workers stopped work for hours in protest against the wage-freeze order and paraded around their plants; in Chicago, 7000 union men rallied to an open air mass meeting and the district organization of the union called upon the CIO to declare a national labor holiday of protest; in Denver, CIO and AFL meatpackers assembled at a joint mass

rally; and in Des Moines and Omaha thousands of union members attended emergency mass meetings.

The packinghouse workers' strike has been postponed; nevertheless, the union has shown how to bring the membership into action even short of a strike. Let the UAW do the same.

With a million members in many key industrial cities, the UAW can do what the smaller packinghouse union cannot. It can set the pace for the labor movement, show how to encourage and stimulate mass action. The ranks will remember that this is their union and they will be ready to make whatever sacrifices in money and time are necessary in the days ahead.

ONCE AGAIN, LET THE UAW CONVENTION SHOW THE WAY!

Subscribe to LABOR ACTION

By LEON TROTSKY

Marxism in the United States

35 Cents Order from Independent Socialist Press 114 West 14 Street New York 11, N. Y.

*A brilliant study of the labor movement—
A vivid insight into a great union—*

"The UAW and Walter Reuther"

by Irving Howe and B. J. Widick

\$3.00 A Random House book
Order from: LABOR ACTION BOOK SERVICE
114 West 14 Street, New York

WILSON AND THE PROFIT SWINDLE

By JAMES B. CAREY

It was to be expected, of course, that when organized labor withdrew its representatives from the defense agencies these same profiteering super-patriots would howl that labor was unpatriotic, greedy and lacking in a desire to halt inflation.

Let's take a look at the record of these howlers, the men who claim labor is greedy.

During the four years of 1942-1945 the profits of American corporations averaged \$22½ billion a year. But in the fourth quarter of 1950 their profits were equal to \$48 billion on a yearly basis. Reflect on that for just a moment—*corporation profits soared to more than 113 per cent over what they were during the peak war years!*

The picture of profits after taxes is even more disgraceful. During the same four war years net profits averaged slightly less than \$10 billion a year. But with the fourth quarter of 1950 net profits were on a basis of more than \$26½ billion a year. That means that net profits had skyrocketed to more than 165 per cent above the war years!

Yet during this same period our national income increased by only 50 per cent and wages rose by only 48 per cent. Clearly, corporate profits were racing far ahead and gobbling up an enormously disproportionate share of the national income.

Let's take it from that viewpoint and see how the national pie was divided. During the war years the "take" of U. S. corporations, before taxes, was 13½ per cent of the total national income. But in the fourth quarter of 1950 the "take" had boomed to 19 per cent.

After taxes the corporation "take" nearly doubled from 5.9 per cent of the national income during the war years to 11½ per cent in the fourth quarter of 1950.

But in that same period the share of the national income spent on wages dropped from 62 per cent to 61½ per cent. In other words, while corporations were grabbing a 50 per cent larger piece of the national pie, the wage earners' share of that pie actually decreased. And that occurred despite the fact that our civilian labor force increased by nearly 7,000,000 since the war years.

AFTER KOREA

The previous speakers here have made it clear where these huge profits have come from; the chief sources have been gouging of consumers, rampant speculation and a vicious profit-hoarding that refuses to share 1950's vast wealth with the men and women who produced it or with the consumers who have to pay the increasingly higher prices.

Let's view the picture from another angle—that of the period before and after Korea. Between the first three months of 1950—the period before Korea—and the last three months of 1950 the average hourly wage in manufacturing increased by 10 cents an hour.

But in the first quarter of 1950 the profits made on each hour of work by each of the nation's 13,000,000 production workers was already at the staggering figure of 86½ cents an hour. In short, the employer was making 86½ cents per hour on each hour worked!

But this was only a starter. By the fourth quarter of 1950 this profit had jumped to \$1.21 an hour—an increase of 34½ cents for each hour worked. Let that comparison sink in. Production workers

got an increase of 10 cents an hour for their labor, while the employer raked in an increase of 34½ cents an hour on that same hour of labor!

However, maybe a conservative economist might argue that we must consider corporation profits after taxes and not before because the dollar of corporation profit isn't worth as much as it once was.

All right, let's consider both profits and wages after taxes and after consideration of increased living costs, also. Seen in that perspective, the average worker in manufacturing—after paying his federal taxes and increased living costs—had 3½ cents less to spend for each hour worked during the last part of 1950 than he did during the first part. But manufacturing corporations—after taxes and after allowing for increased living costs—had 15 cents more to spend for each hour worked.

In other words, while the worker ended the year 3½ cents an hour poorer for each hour worked, corporations ended the year 15 cents richer for each hour each employee worked.

Is that a clear enough answer to the question of who are the chief beneficiaries of our present defense economy? . . .

U. S. STEEL

But now comes U. S. Steel and in its 1950 report, issued just a little while ago, Chairman Irving Olds announces that the corporation is so rich that "we are not

in need of cash to go forward" with plans for expansion. Mr. Olds added, "I hope it may never be necessary to do any outside financing."

The same story is repeated in corporation after corporation. It doesn't mean, of course, that these firms have stopped paying dividends. Quite the contrary! During the fourth quarter of 1950 they paid out nearly 2½ times as much in dividends as they did at the peak point of the last war. It simply means that profits are now so huge that corporations are able not only to pay record dividends but also to finance all or most of desired plant expansion. The money to do both these things comes out of the pockets of the worker and the consumer.

But in the face of this we have the same U. S. Steel refusing to meet the nation's need for expansion of steel capacity until it is bribed by the government with a five-year plant amortization scheme. In short, U. S. Steel, which is so rich it can finance all its own expansion, went on strike until the government promised to pay two-thirds of the cost of \$400,000,000 worth of new plants.

If the blackmail is successful the company will pay only one-third but the plants will belong wholly to U. S. Steel at the end of five years. . . .

Before taxes, GE's earnings were equal to \$1.46 an hour. Let me emphasize that. GE made \$1.46 profit on every hour worked by every one of its production workers. And even after taxes—including the increased excess profits tax—during the fourth quarter GE made 68 cents on every hour worked.

This shameful exhibition of greed plus GE's determination not only to tear up its contracts but to destroy all of labor's major gains in the past 15 years provide a pretty convincing explanation of why Charles E. Wilson doesn't want labor to have any policy-making voice in the defense effort. . . .

And now today we discover General Electric as a leading factor in an outfit called the Na-

tional Committee for Fair Excise Tax Legislation. This group seeks to have all excise taxes repealed—not a bad proposal in itself. But listen to what this committee wants in the place of excise taxes—a national retail sales tax ranging from 3 per cent to 10 per cent on everything the consumer buys except food, medicine and rent.

This gouging of the nation's wage earners and lower-bracket incomes is proposed by a company which in 1950 piled up profits equal to 28 per cent of its net worth after all taxes! And in the fourth quarter of 1950, even after the increased excess profits tax, GE's profits amounted to 39 per cent on its net worth.

From 1946 through 1950 GE's net profits soared 300 per cent while factory wages have increased only 25 per cent!

Before taxes, GE's earnings were equal to \$1.46 an hour. Let me emphasize that. GE made \$1.46 profit on every hour worked by every one of its production workers. And even after taxes—including the increased excess profits tax—during the fourth quarter GE made 68 cents on every hour worked.

This shameful exhibition of greed plus GE's determination not only to tear up its contracts but to destroy all of labor's major gains in the past 15 years provide a pretty convincing explanation of why Charles E. Wilson doesn't want labor to have any policy-making voice in the defense effort. . . .

That—tragically—is the picture of Washington today in terms of profits and credits. Clearly we of labor would have betrayed the trust the American people have placed in us had we failed to separate ourselves from the policies that make these iniquitous things possible.

We owe it to the American people, to the wage earner, to the consumer, to the people living on small pensions, to the men fighting in Korea to let the truth be known. If we are forced to, we will let the big business boys run the show—but without us.

We will do our job on the outside, loyally and militantly, to protect our nation not only against the menace of Communist savagery but also against the forces of greed and special privilege that would weaken our democratic strength from within. . . .

PATRIOT—DEFINED

You can see that there are new economic definitions abroad in Washington in these days of Charles Wilson.

A patriot is a man who lays out a mere 10 per cent and speculates in the necessities of life and the crucial materials needed for the defense program.

The patriot becomes a super-patriot if he has piled up super-profits for his corporation and then comes to Washington to teach us the meaning of equality of sacrifice.

If, however, you work for a living, earn \$60 a week and want to buy the necessities of life for your family, pay your increased rent and your increased taxes and if you object to your union being a part of a fraudulent mobilization which permits super-profits while the public is gouged—well, then you can expect to be reviled on almost every editorial page in the country. You are greedy, selfish . . . you want to run the whole show.

That—tragically—is the picture of Washington today in terms of profits and credits. Clearly we of labor would have betrayed the trust the American people have placed in us had we failed to separate ourselves from the policies that make these iniquitous things possible.

We owe it to the American people, to the wage earner, to the consumer, to the people living on small pensions, to the men fighting in Korea to let the truth be known. If we are forced to, we will let the big business boys run the show—but without us.

We will do our job on the outside, loyally and militantly, to protect our nation not only against the menace of Communist savagery but also against the forces of greed and special privilege that would weaken our democratic strength from within. . . .

Jeremiah vs. Truman

The president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Professor Kirtley Mather of Harvard, blasted away at the administration's doctrine of "guilt by association" in a speech at Syracuse University on Feb. 18. He quoted Jeremiah:

"In those days they shall say no more, the fathers have eaten a sour grape and the children's teeth are on edge. But everyone shall die of his own iniquity; every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge."

BOOKS RECEIVED

Published by the New American Library, publishers of Mentor and Signet pocket books, March 28:

CONSUMER'S GUIDE TO BETTER BUYING: How to Buy More for Your Money, by Sidney Margolius. New rev. ed., Signet, 192 pages, 25 cents.

100 MODERN POEMS, edited by Selden Rodman. Mentor, 224 pages, 35 cents.

BLACK GOLD, by Jewel Gibson. Signet, 224 pages, 25 cents.

THE SNOW WAS BLACK, by Georges Simenon. Signet, 192 pages, 25 cents.

DIRTY EDDIE, by Ludwig Bemelmans. Signet, 192 pages, 25 cents.

MEMORY AND DESIRE, by Leonora Hornblower. Signet, 160 pages, 25 cents.

THE STRANGE LAND, by Ned Calmer. Signet Giant, 408 pages, 35 cents.

Next — A Labor Party!

by Jack Ranger

A Hard-Hitting, Meaty Presentation of the Need for an Independent Labor Party

25 cents Order from: Labor Action Book Service 4 Court Square Long Island City 1, N. Y.

pected to repudiate any no-strike pledge. Nevertheless, UAW delegates must ask themselves: Will the existence of a disputes board change the fundamental policy of the Truman administration? Will it compensate for his abandonment of social legislation, for his turning the mobilization machinery over to corporation errand boys? Can labor once more become window dressing in return for such trivia?

The convention must say NO! Not back to the war boards but forward! The UAW will endorse every militant suggestion in Reuther's convention platform (see the article in this issue by Walter Jason). It will prepare to fight.

But the big gap in policy, the big question mark remains: *political action.*

One can only smile at those who repeat shop-worn phrases and suggest, at this late date, that labor send more "liberal" Democrats to Congress. Where are these Democrats now? What have they been doing in the past months?

The Washington conference could give no political leadership to labor. Emil Masey was 100 per cent right when he denounced Truman and criticized the resolutions of the Washington conference for evading this key question. There is only one effective political road now, only one course that follows from the experiences of the last months: *form an independent labor party. If not now, when?*

The delegates and members of the UAW must have the full facts. They must be ready for new policies and prepared to enter into the fight. Democracy for every member becomes a first requirement for united action.

To explain away any proposed retreat, some union officers will point to a future "disputes board" presumably set up by the administration to handle labor's grievances. But to get such a board established, they will hint subtly or promise openly to abandon strikes. Such a compromise is stacked against labor.

Certainly the UAW may be ex-

ISL FUND DRIVE

Half-Way Mark Near: Into the Stretch!

By ALBERT GATES

Fund Drive Director

The ISL Fund Drive is now approaching its half-way mark. This week's contributions make it possible that before many days have passed, we shall be over 50 per cent. From then on we will be in the stretch and should be in a good position to complete our high quota.

Streator continues to lead the way. With another payment of \$10, Streator has completed its quota and is the only one to have reached the 100 per cent mark in the campaign.

The biggest single jump, however, was made in the "General" category. A total contribution of \$450 during the week lifted "General" from almost the bottom of the list to near the top with 47.1 per cent. Right behind "General" are Chicago and New York, who

seem to be running neck and neck in the drive, with New York edged out in the standings this week.

Other cities also improved their standings this week. Most important was Seattle, which sent in a payment of \$100. A letter accompanying this sum advised us that the Seattle Branch is certain of completing its quota. Detroit, Oakland, Cleveland and the Berkeley unit of the SYL also came through with payments which helped their positions.

There are still several areas which have not paid anything as yet. It is they who hold down the general percentage in the drive.

Perhaps they are waiting till the stretch drive of the campaign. Well, we are approaching that part of the drive. After this issue of LABOR ACTION four weeks will remain. Judging the rate of payments, 50 per cent of the cam-

paign will remain to be achieved. We are counting on every section of the country to do everything they can in this period.

In the remaining four weeks of the drive we will need an average of \$1200 a week to go over the top. This can be done, if each branch plans the remainder of the campaign very carefully with an

eye to reaching the goal set for it.

There is not a single good reason why we can't go the top. There will be plenty of bad reasons if we don't. But on the basis of the results so far, we are sure that we can achieve the total goal. Again, we say, to all branches, sympathizers and friends: GET GOING!

Fund Drive Box Score

	Quota	Paid	Per Cent
TOTAL	\$12,500	\$4354.34	34.8
Streator	25	25.00	100
Youngstown	100	60.00	60
Soc. Youth League	500	279.00	55.8
Chicago	154.50	New York 102.50, Berkeley 22.00	
Boston	50	\$ 25.00	50
General	975	471.50	48
Chicago	1800	819.50	45.5
New York City	4200	1763.50	41.9
Seattle	300	100.00	33.3
Oakland	650	206.00	31.6
Cleveland	300	86.50	28.8
Detroit	800	212.00	26.5
Newark	300	75.00	25
Buffalo	850	200.00	23.5
Philadelphia	450	70.00	15.5
Los Angeles	550	84.25	15.3
St. Louis	50	5.00	10
Reading	100	3.00	.03
Akron	100	0	0
Baltimore	50	0	0
Connecticut	50	0	0
Indiana	100	0	0
Minnesota	10	0	0
Oregon	50	0	0
Pittsburgh	150	0	0

CONTRIBUTE to the ISL FUND DRIVE!

Independent Socialist League
114 West 14 Street
New York 11, N. Y.

Enclosed is \$..... as my contribution to the ISL's 1951 Fund Drive.

NAME
ADDRESS
CITY STATE

(Make checks payable to Independent Socialist League or Albert Gates.)

Get ALL your books from Labor Action Book Service 114 West 14 Street New York 11, N. Y. We can supply you!

The ISL Program in Brief

The Independent Socialist League stands for socialist democracy and against the two systems of exploitation which now divide the world: capitalism and Stalinism.

Capitalism cannot be reformed or liberalized, by any Fair Deal or other deal, so as to give the people freedom, abundance, security or peace. It must be abolished and replaced by a new social system, in which the people own and control the basic sectors of the economy, democratically controlling their own economic and political destinies.

Stalinism, in Russia and wherever it holds power, is a brutal totalitarianism—a new form of exploitation. Its agents in every country, the Communist Parties, are unrelenting enemies of socialism and have nothing in common with socialism—which cannot exist without effective democratic control by the people.

These two camps of capitalism and Stalinism are today at each other's throats in a world-wide imperialist rivalry for domination. This struggle can only lead to the most frightful war in history so long as the people leave the capitalist and Stalinist rulers in power. Independent Socialism stands for building and strengthening the Third Camp of the people against both war blocs.

The ISL, as a Marxist movement, looks to the working class and its ever-present struggle as the basic progressive force in society. The ISL is organized to spread the ideas of socialism in the labor movement and among all other sections of the people.

At the same time, Independent Socialists participate actively in every struggle to better the people's lot now—such as the fight for higher living standards, against Jim Crow and anti-Semitism, in defense of civil liberties and the trade-union movement. We seek to join together with all other militants in the labor movement as a left force working for the formation of an independent labor party and other progressive policies.

The fight for democracy and the fight for socialism are inseparable. There can be no lasting and genuine democracy without socialism, and there can be no socialism without democracy. To enroll under this banner, join the Independent Socialist League!

INTERESTED?
Get acquainted with the Independent Socialist League—

114 W. 14th Street
New York 11, N. Y.

I want more information about the ideas of Independent Socialism and the ISL.

I want to join the ISL.

Name
Address
City Zone
State Tel.

Editorials

U. S. Policy — in a Wheat Kernel

The U. S. government, through its foreign-policy makers Truman and Acheson and their colleagues, speak about "helping our friends" in the world to resist dictatorship and despotism.

Who are "our friends"?
Two current developments throw a harsh spotlight on this question, and on the nature of the government's foreign policy as a whole.

Both involve wheat. Wheat means bread, bread means life, and life is the greatest gift of all that one can give to "our friends."

To whom does Washington offer life?

By a coincidence, two different states in the world are simultaneously knocking on the doors of the State Department (and of the U. S. granaries which are overflowing with surplus wheat) to receive the staff of life from the philanthropists in the capital who parade the Marshall Plan and their projected Point Four as high-minded humanitarian enterprises.

One is India—and for a long time now.
The other is Franco Spain.

What's Wrong with This Picture?

In India we see a people who represent, in their democratic aspirations, perhaps the strongest bulwark against the expansion of Stalinist slavery over Asia, under a leader—Nehru—who was hailed in the U. S. on his last visit here as a champion of idealistic democracy.

In Spain, the Franco government is an openly fascist regime imposed on a suffering people by bloody civil war and Falangist butchery, ex-ally of Hitler and Mussolini.

Which is "our friend"? Is it a hard choice? Is it a close race? Is it too complex a question for even a "statesman" to figure out?

No, Washington figured it out—

The fascist government of Franco has gotten its grant of wheat, on the double-quick.

The Nehru government is still being denied a blade of it—after over a year of requesting it in desperate need. (See latest report on the other side of this double page.)

Frame this as a picture of U. S. foreign policy: Franco is a "friend" because the army of his tottering totalitarian state is desired as an ally in the third world war. Nehru is not a friend, obviously; his UN delegates don't vote the right way when Washington cracks the whip.

The Spanish People Say No

The friends of Franco in this country, none of whom show any visible signs of starvation themselves, piously argue that it is to the deserving people of Spain that the life-giving wheat shipments go, that "we don't approve of the Franco government," etc., but we cannot allow the Spanish people to starve, etc.

We will believe these hypocrites when we see them take an equally solicitous attitude toward the greater millions of the Indian people who are facing famine, while they kick the aid-to-India bill around the committees of Congress, where the administration consigned it.

But that isn't all.

The people of Spain, the people who are our friends because they hate and oppose the Franco terror—they are calling out to the U. S.: No aid to Franco fascism!

It is the people of Spain, looking forward to the collapse of their corrupt and shaky rulers through the sheer economic breakdown which it has brought on itself, who oppose this "humanitarian" aid to the Butcher.

Proof? We published in last week's issue the appeal of the strong socialist underground movement, against aid to Franco. There is not a single working-class group inside Spain or in emigration which does not fervently agree.

And that isn't all either. In a dispatch obviously referring to the middle-class and bourgeois opposition to the Franco regime within Spain ("moderate elements among the Opposition"), the New York Times correspondent in Madrid reports (March 27) that they "see the U. S. loan [to buy U. S. wheat] as support to the regime in its present condition, rather than a move to help relieve them," that they too oppose this aid to fascism.

Mark the Correct Answer:

- The aim of U. S. foreign policy is to defend democracy against totalitarianism.
- The aim of U. S. foreign policy is to assure the domination of American imperialist control in the world.



LABOR ACTION
Independent Socialist Weekly
Vol. 15, No. 14 April 2, 1951

Published weekly by the Labor Action Publishing Company, 114 West 14 Street, New York City 11, N. Y. Send all communications to general editorial and business offices of LABOR ACTION at that address. Telephone: WAtkins 4-4222.
Subscription rate: \$2.00 a year; \$1.00 for six months. (\$2.25 and \$1.15 for Canada and Foreign). Re-entered as second-class matter May 24, 1940, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879.

Editor: HARRY DRAPER
Assistant Editors: MARY BELL and L. G. SMITH
Business Manager: L. G. SMITH

Opinions and policies expressed in the course of signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the views of Labor Action, which are given in editorial statements.

Reading from Left to Right

THE BRITISH LABOR GOVERNMENT'S TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT, by Keith C. Clark.—Political Science Quarterly, March.

This article, on one of the least discussed aspects of the Labor government's program, is not informative with respect to the concrete aims of town-and-country planning itself but rather devotes itself almost exclusively to one aspect: the question of compensation.

The general aim of the plan—held also by the Tories and their own Town and Country Planning ministry before the Labor government—is to ensure that land, especially suburban land, be used for purpose desired in the national interest (e. g., housing instead of gardening, etc.). To make this effective for the first time the Labor government received the right to take whatever land it needed from the private owners.

The problem: shall the private owner be compensated for the "use value" only, or also for the "development value"? A plot used for gardening might be worth 50 pounds (use value); a buyer who wanted it for housing might be willing to pay 300 pounds (development value).

The government took the stand that where owners "lose development value . . . [they] are not on that account entitled to compensation."

But it compromised to the extent of setting aside a sum of 300 million pounds as total compensation for all land to be taken, the money to be allotted by 1953, after the claims are processed. This the author calls "designed to produce much the same result as sweeping nationalization" of the land, which, however, is "still a long way off." The Tories have made their stand on this point.

The government thus hoped to keep land prices from skyrocketing as a result of land development, but it is running into the classic difficulty: as long as the land remains in private hands, it is difficult if not impossible to enforce the restrictions.

"For example, the Economist noted that much land was continuing to change hands at prices well above the existing use value . . . [it] took a gloomy view of the likelihood of prices being kept low and building encouraged."

Sir Malcolm Ewe, chairman of the Land Board, said they "were trying to run the Act within the framework of ownership, management and selling that had existed before, and were trying to make it work in with what people had been used to in the past. If that could not be done, the Act would have to be made to work the other way."

WORLD POLITICS

A TURNING POINT FOR THE WORKERS OF WEST EUROPE?

By HENRY JUDD
PARIS, Mar. 21—Is Western Europe experiencing a turning point in the long period of working-class inactivity and apathy? While one must be careful in making any such flat prediction, recent events in many countries of Western Europe point to the distinct possibility that the phase of paralysis and inaction has reached its bottom point and a turn toward militancy and struggle has begun.

Italy, Spain, Germany and now France have stirred into motion with the coming of spring and a series of events of a popular nature have begun. We shall see within the next month or two the strength and extent of the forces behind these first stirrings.

The driving compulsion behind the present wave of strikes, particularly and most clearly in France, is the increasingly desperate economic condition of the masses of people. The matter is simplicity itself.

The mobilization of economic life behind war preparation has let loose a spiraling of prices throughout the world which has driven European living costs up to the point of annulling the gains of the post-war economic revival. Everything, in all countries, has been going up: food costs, clothing costs, transportation and rental costs, public utilities, etc. The American economy may be showing some signs of stabilizing itself, but that of Europe is still in a new phase of the war inflationary process.

The simple task of daily living has become unbearable to millions of workers and middle-class people who have begun to react in the only possible way.

UPSURGE IN WEST

In France, iron and steel workers in Lorraine have struck; in Paris, transportation and life in the city is paralyzed by the total strike of subway and bus workers; government employees, mail carriers, metallurgical workers, etc., are planning strikes in the future.

A one-day general strike of all French university students against threatened reductions in their social-security allowances was a complete success and may be followed by other action after the Easter vacations. This is the first serious stirring of the French people in almost two years.

Involved in these actions, which are purely economic responses to the impossible living conditions which now exist.

Furthermore, the same economic forces lay behind the now famous demonstration and strike action in Barcelona and other cities of Spain. Even in England, the desperate five-year-long efforts of the British Labor government to hold price-raises in check, together with a wage-freeze program, have now broken down because of the obvious inability of the government to control the cost of its essential imports from the world market. The trade-union movement of England has successfully broken the wage freeze, thus demonstrating its essential independence of the government and its responsiveness to the popular demands and needs of the workers.

It is safe to predict that other expected strike activities, in Italy for example, will have the same causes: the effort of all regimes to lower living standards even below their present minimums and fasten the war-cost burden on the workers.

BUT LEFT IS WEAK

At the same time, of course, a minimal political activity and revival—which one must be careful not to exaggerate or misinterpret—is noticeable in various countries, with the exception of France.

In Germany, the failure of the Bonn parliament to enact into law the agreed settlement of the "co-determination" (or "co-management") program in the Ruhr will unquestionably result in a quick reaction on the part of the German trade unions despite the death of the union president who was most responsible for formulation of the program.

In Italy, the deep crisis in the Italian Communist Party continues and affects all political movements of that country. The significance of the Barcelona events, from a political standpoint, hardly need comment. Once again we note that familiar phenomena and characteristic of all European political and social life—that of interaction and mutual influence of the various events upon each nation.

At the same time, however, we must point out distinct limitations and handicaps which exist and which signify only minimal possibilities for success on both the economic and political front. First of all—and most important—the enormous gap between the active

ity of the masses and the existing political leadership.

In France, for example, political leadership is simply non-existent and the few socialist groups which continue a vegetative existence cannot hope for any immediate success. This, together with the division of the trade-union movement, can easily lead to a dying out of strike efforts in uncoordinated actions. There further exists the long present danger of a "rightist" political solution, in the approaching elections, because of the general popular disgust with the impotence of the Fourth Republic. But this subject must be treated in a future analysis of the elections, now expected in June.

LIMITED REVIVAL

In Italy, likewise, we see the opportunities presented by the crisis in the Stalinist movement being dissipated, largely because of the inability of the PSU (Italian Socialist Unitarian Party) to approach the new movement. One of the most favorable opportunities that has existed to reorganize the Marxist movement of Italy on a new basis stands in danger of being thrown to the winds because of lack of leadership. Instead of this reorganization, we may see merely a reunification of the PSU with the right-wing socialist parliamentary group of Saragat (The PSLI) on the basis of a political deal of no value.

In Spain, despite the efforts of the various Spanish republican and socialist groups (Stalinists excluded), a monarchist solution to the political crisis of the Franco regime is possible, because of international factors. Yet even the imposition of a monarchy could have a progressive potential in a sense, since it would mean the downfall of the totalitarian Franco system and provide new opportunities for democratic action as a result of the shake-up.

The picture, then, is one of a limited political revival, on an elementary basis, accompanied by more militant activity on the economic front. What the interaction of these two activities will be it is impossible to say. The least encouraging side of the picture is the dispersal and weakness of the socialist forces; we shall see whether the turn in Europe's perspective will encourage a corresponding revival of such forces. In any event, the temporary postponement of any immediate war danger is a great help, from the standpoint of Europe. The longer the "peace" interim, the more one may expect.

INDIA

Famine Sweeps Parts of India While U. S. Dickers with Hunger

By ABEL BAKER

The big news from India this week is that 40 million people in the northern Indian state of Bihar are on the brink of starvation due to prolonged drought.

At the same time the food-to-India bill remains bottled up in the House Rules Committee with no indication that it will be released for consideration in the near future or in time to supply the necessary wheat to save millions from death by famine. Thus while the scandal of official corruption and nationally organized crime holds the spotlight of congressional and popular attention one of the greatest scandals in history is being silently perpetrated in the halls of Congress.

The administration has not moved to get the bill out of committee and there is not even any certainty that it could succeed if it did try. Anything less than a wave of popular indignation is unlikely to unfreeze the bill for congressional action. The other alternative, the one originally proposed by the Indian government for the purchase of the vital foodstuffs on the basis of long-term credits, may be the only recourse if Congress fails to act during the next few weeks.

It is difficult to see how Congress can possibly act in time. Even if the bill were released in the House it would still be subject to floor debate where all the powerful forces that have been holding it up will have a second crack at it; and even if they could not beat the bill in an actual vote they could employ every parliamentary trick to make for further delay and for adding restrictive amendments. If it got through the House it would then have to be introduced in the Senate, there referred to a committee which would then hold hearings; and if passed it would still have to await its turn before being placed on the Senate agenda.

PEIPING JUMPS IN

Can all this be done before June, when the famine is expected to be at its peak? Following Congressional action the whole program would have to be organized technically. With the best will in the world, and that is far from evident in this instance, it takes some time to transport two million tons of wheat half way round the world.

The horrible spectre of starvation for millions threatens to become a reality and the guilt can be assigned with disastrous certainty to the American govern-

ment—the administration, the State Department and the Congress.

It may be argued that neither has Russia offered any help, but that is hardly a source for consolation. The fact is that the U. S. did make an offer after a delay of two years and the U. S. has both the wheat in idle storage, where it serves no worthwhile purpose than to keep the market price at parity levels, and the U. S. has the ships in mothballs.

The Peiping government, incidentally, has already made a token delivery of rice, and while the total amount that China can make available is negligible in relation to the needs that must be met, the Chinese radio is already busy exploiting the propaganda value of its delivery.

The Indian press of all shades of opinion is also noting the contrast between the attitude of impoverished China and the fabulously wealthy United States. The Chinese action is, of course, motivated entirely by political considerations since China itself has far from a surplus this year and in fact there are many areas in the north where the food situation is not any better than it is in India. But it should not surprise anyone if there is an even greater decline of American political fortunes in Asia when the Indian famine breaks out.

It is perhaps another indication of the immorality of current world politics that the elementary needs of life should become a political tool. But one would imagine that this being the case the United States would have no difficulty in supplying the material goods with which to outdistance its opponents. The truth is just the opposite. And if the U. S. finally does send wheat in amounts overwhelmingly greater than the tiny portion sent by the Chinese Stalinists it will be looked upon with suspicion as well as with the feeling that the American action is grudging and belated. Nor will it help, after millions of people have perished, to offer Point Four aid, to increase future crop yields.

New Delhi appealed for help from Russia, China and the U. S., at the same time making clear that it would accept such assistance only on the basis of equality and without any "political strings." On December 16, 1950, Mme. Pandit, the Indian ambassador, formally asked the State Department for long-term credits to pay for the purchase of 2 million tons of wheat. The same offer to buy was sent to other states and the Chinese barter agreement was one of the first results, although it was under negotiation prior to the present emergency.

FAMINE DIPLOMACY

But the greatest expectation was for American help. After all, the American government holds a reserve of 375 million bushels, of which a mere 75 million would meet the Indian request. And India was offering to pay, with credits. But the request came in the middle of the MacArthur "Home by Christmas" fiasco when hysteria was rampant and "anyone who is not with us is stabbing our boys in the back" was the temper in Washington.

THE BENGAL FAMINE

Famine is nothing new to India, although this will be the first since independence. Actually most Indians, and this holds for city dwellers as well as peasants, are never far above the starvation level and hunger is a universal and chronic condition. Average food consumption is about 1980 calories daily as against a required subsistence minimum of about 2100. Even a slight decline in the food crop can have disastrous results for many. Every

year there are many deaths from starvation, and whole districts are seriously affected by famine. When, therefore, the Indian government warns of famine it is speaking of an overwhelming disaster, something far beyond the "normal" death from hunger that afflicts so many annually.

The last great famine occurred in 1943 in Bengal when some 3 million people died. The ghost of this disaster haunted the British, who were held responsible, till the day they yielded up their power. The Bengal famine was one of the great emotional driving forces behind the popular movement for freedom. A new famine is sure to have great effects on Indian politics.

The present crisis was expected as long ago as December 1949 when Nehru made an unofficial plea for help from Washington. At that time the administration turned a deaf ear on New Delhi. It was partly as a result of this negative attitude that Nehru was so bitter about his visit to the U. S.

An article in the current issue of the Far Eastern Survey quotes Nehru on the present situation: "We had counted on good crops. Instead, during the past four months every possible calamity has happened. We have had earthquakes, floods, droughts and visitations of locusts. Consequently we face a terrific food problem."

Every worker, every liberal and humane person can inform his congressman and senator how he feels about food for India.

(2) Every local union should adopt an official resolution of support to the bills for food to India now and send copies to Congress, urging their immediate enactment. Copies should also be sent to Philip Murray and William Green.

(3) The American labor movement can demonstrate its solidarity with the Indian people by shipping its own CARE packages to Indian trade unions. Of course, such a program could not meet the enormous needs of the famine, but it would be a powerful indication of labor solidarity and would, by contrast with Washington's official failure, act as a pressure on Congress.

(4) The International Congress of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) recently established a Far Eastern Division and sent its representatives to South Asia to confer with labor leaders in the area. It has established ties with most of these organizations. Both the CIO and the AFL are members of ICFTU and can propose an international program of relief. Through ICFTU the CIO and AFL can do even more. As an organization which has the official recognition of the United Nations, the ICFTU has the authority to sponsor a program of international relief via that body. Few steps could inspire congressional speed as much as such an international move.

At the same time Nehru made clear again his independence

from U. S. policy in Korea and again urged approaches to Peiping with a view to a settlement. Whatever one thinks of his efforts, it was this assertion of independence which became the primary consideration in Washington's reluctance to supply the credits and the wheat.

No less an authority than Senator Connally, who swings great political authority in the Democratic Party and in the Congress, and who is also head of the powerful Senate Foreign Relations Committee, openly stated his misgivings over helping India avert famine while she did not fail-and Washington's policy on Korea. In spite of denials this remains the basic, crude, inhuman consideration.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

There is every reason why the American labor movement should follow a completely opposite path and do everything possible to get food to India—now when it can still save lives. What can be done?

(1) Every worker, every liberal and humane person can inform his congressman and senator how he feels about food for India.

(2) Every local union should adopt an official resolution of support to the bills for food to India now and send copies to Congress, urging their immediate enactment. Copies should also be sent to Philip Murray and William Green.

(3) The American labor movement can demonstrate its solidarity with the Indian people by shipping its own CARE packages to Indian trade unions. Of course, such a program could not meet the enormous needs of the famine, but it would be a powerful indication of labor solidarity and would, by contrast with Washington's official failure, act as a pressure on Congress.

(4) The International Congress of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) recently established a Far Eastern Division and sent its representatives to South Asia to confer with labor leaders in the area. It has established ties with most of these organizations. Both the CIO and the AFL are members of ICFTU and can propose an international program of relief. Through ICFTU the CIO and AFL can do even more. As an organization which has the official recognition of the United Nations, the ICFTU has the authority to sponsor a program of international relief via that body. Few steps could inspire congressional speed as much as such an international move.

HANDY WAY TO SUBSCRIBE



LABOR ACTION
The Independent Socialist Weekly
114 West 14 Street, N. Y. C.

Please enter my subscription: NEW RENEWAL
 Six months (26 issues) at \$1.00
 One year (52 issues) at \$2.00

NAME
ADDRESS (PLEASE PRINT)
CITY ZONE STATE
 Bill me Payment encl. (stamps, currency or postal note)

Get Acquainted!

SOCIALIST YOUTH LEAGUE
114 W. 14th St.
New York 11, N. Y.

- I want more information about the Socialist Youth League.
- I want to join the Socialist Youth League.

NAME
ADDRESS
CITY ZONE STATE
SCHOOL (IF STUDENT)

SPAIN: THE BEGINNING OF HOPE

How It Began: the Barcelona Boycott Action

The general strike in Barcelona grew out of the immediately preceding action of the city's population in untidily carrying through a boycott of the streets when the fare was raised. As all reports have made clear, this was simply the focus for the wider discontent of the people with the high cost of living and living conditions in general. The following description of the boycott movement was written before the general strike broke out, by La Batalla's correspondent in Barcelona itself. It conveys the thrill of the first popular demonstration in a dozen years which cracked the wall of Falangist totalitarianism.

The articles on this page are translated from the March 19 special issue of La Batalla, the newspaper of the Spanish POUM, whose forces in Barcelona constitute the strongest section of the socialist underground against Franco. Last week's LABOR ACTION carried the Spanish comrade's appeal for aid to the Barcelona fighters, which also appeared in La Batalla. Translations by Mary Bell.

The so-called "streetcar affair" was pronounced "momentarily concluded" today in official terminology, with the complete rout of the Franco authorities. Former fares were re-established by the attitude of a people who have just shown the most magnificent opposition to the regime since Franco enslaved Spain.

It might seem exaggerated to describe in such terms what at first glance is no more than an attitude of reprisal toward a particular enterprise franchised as a public service which raised its prices, but the proportions and the violent form which affairs assumed justify my words.

How did it start? Very simply: small groups of students shouting in the crowded street against the streetcars. It was not the first time such a thing had happened, since the streetcars have always been the favorite target of student wrath, while the people confine themselves to smiling. It was Friday evening, February 23.

PEOPLE JOIN STUDENTS

The following day, early in the morning, the students continued their play. Demonstratively and skillfully they untied the "trolleys" and movement of the streetcars was continuously bottled up. Each time the groups were larger. In University Square the mounted police made their first charge, the only result being to provoke great excitement. People began to pay more attention than usual, since the atmosphere was more serious this time than on other occasions.

They did not delay to throw the first stones and . . . thus went 'Troy! Saturday evening, the 23rd of February, will be engraved on the minds of the Barcelonians as something seldom seen. Long lines of streetcars with broken windows followed each other among the whistling, shouting, joking people. It was not only students who were shouting. A huge crowd bordered the streets where the streetcars passed. The people of Barcelona had been drawn en masse into the street, and by the side of the gabordined students could be seen the blue garb of the workers. Men and women of every age and condition added to the confusion. Pieces of glass crunched under shoe soles.

Leaflets, typed or handwritten, began to circulate, some with bad spelling, others recommending that four copies be made and distributed. All of them proclaimed a boycott of the streetcar company for having raised the fare to 70 centavos. In Madrid it was 40. The slogan was: "One Spain, but equality for everyone. They fixed March 1 as the first date of the boycott, the date of the Guardian Angel, patron of the armed police."

MANY CASUALTIES

From the 25th to the 28th, before the beginning of what the civil governor himself called a "utilities strike," were feverish days which can be lived only in a city in truly extraordinary cir-

cumstances. During the day the students happily went about their harrowing task, constantly fleeing from the police who persecuted them with unsurpassed brutality. For the first time in 18 years the precincts of the Industrial School were invaded by the police force and the Faculty of Medicine was removed by the gray-uniformed bailiffs.

The dispensaries in the center of the city were insufficient to take care of the numerous casualties who came for aid. The police lines declined. Many guards were stoned. In the hospital clinic (next to the Faculty of Medicine), admittance was denied to a guard in a serious condition because "the students come first, and we already have too much work with them."

Arrests were counted by hundreds and, since it was impossible to confine any more in the overcrowded basement cells of the high government buildings, the arrested were taken directly to the jail.

THE FIRST OF MARCH

But the tumult reached its real fever point toward evening when the large mass of workers finished work in the shops, factories and depots. Spontaneous demonstrations took place in the center of the city as well as in the outlying districts, openly insulting the police and crying in loud voices for an immediate reduction in the streetcar fares.

At last the long-awaited first of March came, the date set by the people themselves for the great test. From the earliest morning hours it could already be seen that their efforts would be crowned with complete success. The workers set out for the factories walking happily, some singing and exchanging smiles and significant looks with one another. Everyone was proud of himself and of the stranger who walked a few steps ahead.

As the hours passed, the popular will which was manifested in the tremendous developing demonstration became increasingly apparent. The streetcars were completely empty. Their only passengers were the brace of guards stationed in each coach for protective purposes. The cars circled slowly among the crowd going about their daily chores, as though inviting the erstwhile habitual occupants to board. But no one got on and the collectors abandoned their posts to join the conductor on the forward platform.

PITCHED BATTLES

All during the day of the first, there was a dizzying succession of alarming news. The mayor had abdicated. In Ramblas the women of the Boqueria market had tried to lynch a man and a woman who got off a streetcar, the latter being rescued by the police after a bloody battle; both were seriously wounded. Reinforcements of armed police arrived from Madrid and Valencia. The students threatened the

A New Chapter Opens Up

By I. IGLESIAS

All the world had decided that the Spanish question was liquidated, some with more or less satisfaction and others with the pain that comes from a sense of losing a just cause. The United Nations had definitively shelved the matter; the well-known big international press soft-pedaled its commentaries; the [Spanish anti-Franco] emigration itself was for the most part prey to disappointment and silence. It was not accidental that the sad and pathetic book of a Spanish escapee appeared last year bearing the significant title *La Fin de l'Espoir*, the end of hope. . . .

Meanwhile, in Madrid the big chieftains of Francoism gloried in the state carriages which triumphantly rolled through the streets with the ambassadors of all countries. The representative from Washington, as busy as any good businessman making up for lost time, arrived by plane and hurried to make declarations of peace to the broken world of our time, the Spain of Franco. The latter and his flock directed their trumpeting of victory right and left, *urbi et orbi*, and even tried to make an inventory for their new allies. Spain seemed to us each day plunged deeper and deeper into the Falangist shadows, irremediably lost, its population condemned to a subhuman existence, with no hope of recovering a freedom lost twelve years ago.

newspapers with identical reprisals if they persisted in their attitude of absolute silence toward the events and accused the press of "criminal complicity with the government."

Again the disturbances grew at the time of the return from work. The clashes between the police and the rebellious people were mounting rapidly and in the street of Valencia the first victims to be wounded by bullets fell: a woman and a five-year-old child, the latter dying the next day.

VICTORY!

At last the press was authorized to take part in the affair. Articles calling for order and moderation appeared in all the newspapers, and it required no intelligence to observe that they were all cast in the same mold. The declarations of the civil governor were couched in the same manner and provoked great indignation because the assistance he had given to the streetcar company was only too well known. The official city organizations mobilized their forces and held numerous secret meetings to form an "entente." But today, after five complete days of total boycott of a service of such vital necessity in a city where it constitutes the only means of urban transportation, a resolution agreed to at one in the morning has been published which restores the former fare of 50 centavos a trip. By mid-morning the trolleys began to move with passengers.

The victory is clear to every last Barcelonian in a struggle undertaken for the defense of the legitimate interests of the people. But much more important than this victory is the big dose of moral and spiritual resistance which these events have injected into a saddened and humiliated people. They have been convinced by their participation in the events of these days that they still have the strength to raise their heads in pride and to throw off at an opportune time the yoke which has oppressed them for many years.

ARMANDO
Barcelona, March 6.

LABOR ACTION BOOK SERVICE

can help you build your own Labor and Socialist Library . . . Send for free book list 4 Court Sq., L.I.C., New York

And here suddenly—unexpectedly, if one wishes—the dying spark which was thought to be extinguished became a brilliant flame which lit up the sky of a great city of two million souls. There is not a similar instance in history. If Barcelona does not already occupy the first place of honor in the ranks of social struggles, this example which it has just given to the rest of Spain and the entire world would be more than enough to merit it.

Under a regime of bloody and totalitarian dictatorship, the total and absolute paralysis of an industrial city acquires an importance which crosses frontiers, a value not merely national but international in essence. It is as clear as day that the regime in question faces ruin or that in any case it is not as solid as it appears.

In Spain then, the struggle continues. The movement in Barcelona and its nearby cities shows that the spirit of rebellion against tyranny, the firm decision not to allow themselves to fall forever into slavery, the desire to make a stand against the insupportable real conditions of life, has seized almost the whole population, and the working class above all. In this year 1951 a new fact of immeasurable consequence has emerged. From this moment on, all ideals are again permissible. A new chapter opens: the beginning of hope.

Franco Police Jailed Over 5000 In First Few Days of the Strike

BARCELONA, Mar. 14—Only a few brief lines tell us the latest news of this great movement of the people of Barcelona which has caused us to relive glorious times. The burning of the writs of the authorities, the assault on the markets, the total paralysis of the life of the city, all so unanimous and so unexpected by the Francoists, demoralized the police themselves and caused them to refuse battle with the infuriated people during the first hours. But the inevitable repression was not long in making its appearance.

During the night of the 12th to 13th more than 2,000 arrests were made; the majority of those arrested are persons who were in provisional or conditional liberty. On the following day the police action did not cease nor is it reasonable to suppose that it will cease in the following few days. At the time of this writing, the arrests have reached some 5,000 in Barcelona alone, without taking into account the neighboring cities and towns, especially Tarrasa, Sabadell, Badalona and Granollers.

We are really in a state of war. While it is true that commerce and industry were forced to open their doors so that the center of Barcelona appears almost "normal," numerous workers continue the strike, particularly in the proletarian districts (Clot, Sans, Pueblo Nuevo, etc.). The police, civil guard and carabinieri patrol the streets day and night, always in groups of 14 men, with rifles cocked.

It is difficult to make predictions about the immediate future,

ARMANDO

The FIGHT for SOCIALISM

by Max Shachtman

A basic primer in the principles and program of Independent Socialism

\$1.00 Cloth-bound \$2.00
INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST PRESS
114 W. 14th St. New York 11, N. Y.

France: Strike Wave Wins Wage Demands

By R. CLAUDE

PARIS, Mar. 26—Spring has come to Paris, true enough, but accompanied by an almost complete paralysis of the city's normal life: absence of means of transportation (subway and bus); a weak flow of gas for cooking purposes; abrupt cuts in electricity; impossibility of leaving the city for Easter vacation; closing down of various industries; general irritation and bad humor on the part of a population already strained beyond the breaking point.

In other words, an early spring has been accompanied by a series of strike actions such as have not been seen since the general strike of the coal miners over two years ago. At the moment of writing, the government—after a period of intense inactivity—has finally come forward with an offer to the unions, proposing an immediate increase of the guaranteed minimum wage by 11 1/2 per cent in Paris and 15 1/2 per cent in the provinces.

This offer, which is not intended to automatically raise the wages of all workers by the indicated percentages, at least provides the basis for new negotiations between the government and the unions and it is expected that the strikes will gradually come to a conclusion. The offer, based upon the government's recognition that the official cost of living index has risen by 12 1/2 per cent in the last few months, represents already an almost complete capitulation by the government and a substantial victory for the unions.

It means that no worker in Paris, for example, can be paid less than 18,200 francs (roughly \$55) per month, as compared with a previous 16,400 (roughly \$50) per month. The unions had been demanding a 15 or 16 per cent general wage increase, for all categories.

A period of vigorous negotiations between unions and the government will now start, with fresh difficulties envisaged over the question of making the proposed increase for all workers, regardless of their classification or whether they are employed in private or nationalized industries. The threat of fresh strikes in other sectors of the nationalized economy (miners, government civil-service workers, civil aviation, etc.) remains as sharp as before, unless the government indicates its quick willingness to raise salaries all along the line. This is the only real issue at stake in the strike wave.

NOT LED BY CP

It must be understood, at the same time, that until this point only workers in state-run industries and public services have been on strike; no workers in private industry have as yet acted. What their reaction will be if the general increase in wages is denied them is not difficult to predict. At the height of the present activity, roughly only 400,000 workers (of whom 300,000 were railwaymen) were actually on strike. The bulk of French labor is as yet unaffected.

The strikes nonetheless have their significance and it is well to explain the background, in brief, and their motivation—particularly in view of the likelihood that the American press is howling about "Communist-led strikes" with the political motive of disrupting the country and sabotaging and embarrassing the visit of President Auriol to the United States. Needless to say, nothing would be more remote from the truth than such claims.

The simple motive behind the strike action is the desperate situation of the mass of French workers, hit today as never before by the gap between their

wages and the cost of living. No other explanation is correct or justified; a few figures will indicate this.

According to the CFTC (Catholic Trade Union Federation), since August 1950 the cost of living has gone up 12.5 per cent, while real wages' purchasing power has gone down 26.45 per cent since 1945. This, in a nutshell, is the story. During the past few months, the situation was aggravated by sharp increases in subway and bus fares, food prices, rents, clothing and all the other items of a workers' budget. It became impossible for the ordinary worker to live, and he reacted in the only possible way. Without enthusiasm or aggressiveness, the strike action began.

Far from Stalinist leadership or motivation, the CGT unions (Stalinist-controlled) lagged far behind the movement, and it was the CFTC (Catholics), together with the CGT-FO (anti-Stalinist unions) which took the leadership! In fact, the most militant demands were formulated by the Catholic unions themselves, which demanded wage increases ranging from 15 to 25 per cent.

SUBWAY WORKERS LED

The general strike of railroad workers was launched by the Catholic and anti-CP unions, whereas the Stalinist-CGT (consisting of about two-thirds of the workers) did not join in the general strike call! Naturally, the CGT workers supported the strike but their leaders remained strangely silent.

The strike itself began with that of the Parisian subway workers, who were quickly followed by other workers in the nationalized industries (gas, electricity, etc.). The government, surely the most impotent and helpless which France has ever known, ignored the strike at first

and was clearly unprepared for the quick response which occurred and its rapid tendency to expand. The government itself—which is simply a government of liquidation before general elections now expected in June—went on "strike" and refused, at first, to consider the demands of its own employees.

Only the beginning of the railroad strike forced the government into action and resulted in the offer already described and now under consideration by the unions. A stirring among the workers in the auto and metallurgical industries, building workers, miners, taxi drivers, etc., further increased the pressure which obliged the government to cancel its delay-and-drift plans and quickly formulate a proposal. The nation was threatened by mass strikes in the principal industries, and this possibility has not yet been removed although not expected to materialize.

ALL CLASSES PASSIVE

This, in brief, describes the conditions under which the strike wave began—limited, hesitant, springing more out of desperation than militancy, yet possessing the elemental power of despairing and frustrated men.

Of special significance in the usual sense of the word, there was and is none. The universally detested and despised government of liquidation is incapable of any political activity or action which would bring about a corresponding political reaction among the workers. The nation, as a whole, is so profoundly sunk in a state of anti-political apathy and indifference (a wholesale disgust with all parties and politics) that only a most elementary material compulsion, such as the desperate economic situation, could stir it into action such as has been going on.

Even the manner in which the strikes went on indicates this: no coordination among the unions, no general strike plans, no picket lines or other signs of normal strike activities. Anger, the rage of frustration and disgust—yes, but without any broader political expression.

While these attitudes have their negative and dangerous sides, in the sense that all sectors of the population are mutually hostile to one another and all join together in a common hostility to the government and the pathetic "Fourth Republic," it must be pointed out that this impotence in solving problems extends, most of all, to the French bourgeoisie itself! Where one would normally expect, under these conditions, that the French bourgeoisie would offer its classic solution—a "strong" government headed by a Bonaparte, or a Boulanger, or a De Gaulle—the astounding fact is that it is itself so dominated by despair, confusion and paralysis that it cannot even formulate or prepare its historically classic solutions! This is fortunately the case, for the workers' movement.

Given its own absence of political leadership and a divided union movement, a powerful rightist reaction—if it existed—would have little trouble in discarding the present bourgeois-democratic regime and installing a dictatorship. But, in terms of political solutions, nothing exists today in France, either on the right, left or center.

It is this which makes so incredible the social, political and spiritual life of this country. Whether the limited success of the strike actions today will launch a fresh wave of activity in the labor movement remains to be seen. It is the only possible source of comfort in a situation which must be lived through to be believed.

Readers of Labor Action Take the Floor . . .

Objects to Story on Israel General Strike

To the Editor:

In the February 19 edition of your paper I came across an article by Mr. Findley, titled "General Strike Answers Lockout As Israeli Class Struggle Sharpens." Being sure that Mr. Findley gathered his factual information from a reliable source or sources, I nevertheless cannot help mentioning that, as in any case we deal with, we have two sides to consider; only one side of the coin was shown in the above-mentioned issue, which leaves the other side in an extremely unfavorable light. Had the question been dealing with an issue of which the American public has deep knowledge, and could thus form its own opinion through objective evaluation, I would not have bothered you with this letter; but since in Mr. Findley's article only one side was represented while nothing was said to throw more light on the other party in question, I feel that honesty and objectivity had been evaded.

Mr. Findley starts out with a short historical review of the situation in the economic and political fields which finally resulted in the lockout of the Metal Industry workers in Israel. I wish to assume that lack of adequate space rather than intentional misrepresentation of facts was the reason for the failure to mention that the workers of the Metal Industries in Israel have gone out on strikes on various occasions before, regardless of how dangerous such strikes were to the national economy when they occurred. But no chivalry can be expected in any dispute of such a nature, and it therefore seems out of place to put special emphasis

worse in the quality of articles. The prospering of the black market, on the other hand, was a direct result of the unplanned distribution of raw materials, which, contrary to Mr. Findley's claim, remained in the inefficient hands of the Labor government. It also is no secret that the latter preferred to buy ready-made goods from abroad for considerably higher prices than was the margin on locally manufactured items, if the foreign exchange factor is kept in mind, and give unfair priority in the distribution of raw materials to government-controlled industries, with the intention to force privately owned industry out of the field.

It was this practice of abuse which finally resulted in the long-expected backfire, and forced the industrialists to take the step they took. Whether the lockout proved effective or not is a matter of opinion and is beyond the scope of this discussion.

Finally allow me to mention that no proposal was ever made by the Association of Industrialists in Israel to control labor under a free economy plan. Mr. Findley's accusation to that effect gives his article more of a nature of a smear campaign than I hope it was intended to be.

Ben LICHTENSTEIN

It seems ridiculous to assume, as Mr. Findley does, that the policy of wage and price control which was undertaken by the Labor Party [Mapai] was "unfair to the workers." I agree with Mr. Findley, though, that it would have been much more ideal for the workers had the freeze been imposed solely on prices, while the wage policy were maintained on a status quo; however, anybody with the least understanding of economics would realize the absurdity of such a proposal. Mr. Findley's criticism at this point is that the wage-price control caused prosperity of the black market and reduced the quality of the consumer goods. This statement again calls for contradiction, as the facts are that there was no change to the

compared with the difficulties imposed by the tremendous tasks of the war and large-scale immigration. The conservative charges in this connection are similar, as far as their validity goes, to the charges of the British Tories that the post-war economic difficulties of England are due to its Labor government—ignoring the devastation of the war and the collapse of the empire.

It is not "a more experienced authority" (by which we presume is meant a bourgeois government) that Israel needs. Even the Israeli bourgeoisie admits that, whatever else may be said of the complete impotence of the Labor government in getting the country out of the inflation into which it was driven because of what can only be explained as ignorant experimentation in national economy. Such a difficult task should have been handed over to a more experienced authority long before the present stage was reached.

It is ridiculous to assume, as Mr. Findley does, that the policy of wage and price control which was undertaken by the Labor Party [Mapai] was "unfair to the workers." I agree with Mr. Findley, though, that it would have been much more ideal for the workers had the freeze been imposed solely on prices, while the wage policy were maintained on a status quo; however, anybody with the least understanding of economics would realize the absurdity of such a proposal. Mr. Findley's criticism at this point is that the wage-price control caused prosperity of the black market and reduced the quality of the consumer goods. This statement again calls for contradiction, as the facts are that there was no change to the

Findley Replies

No, the economic difficulties of Israel are not primarily due to the "inefficiency" of the government nor are they due to "experimentation in national economy," ignorant or otherwise. We are familiar with the complaints of the Israeli conservatives on this score. These considerations are minor and almost insignificant

is a "mixed economy" with the overwhelming percentage and the most profitable section in the hands of capital. There has even been the slight retreat in favor of the capitalist sector—e. g., the relative number of *moshavim* established as against collective *kibbutzim*, the demand that the *kibbutzim* employ hired labor, etc.

Mr. Lichtenstein seems to oppose economic controls in Israel today in favor of "free trade" or "free enterprise," as do the General Zionists, the religious bloc, the Revisionists and Heirut. Such a demand must be completely incomprehensible from any objective standpoint. Any government, no matter what its ideology, would be forced to institute strict controls. In a country where imports outrun exports almost nine to one, and where there exists a terrific dollar shortage that cannot possibly be made up from production for years to come, failure to regulate and ration would be unthinkable even from a national capitalist point of view. Of course, it does make sense from the short-run point of view of an individual capitalist who sees an opportunity for unrestricted profits—which is why the demand is raised.

To get to fundamentals, the causes of the present economic crisis in Israel are: (1) the poverty of the country; Israel has few natural resources; (2) the burden of armaments; while the actual figure is secret, it is known to be larger than the regular and immigration budgets combined; (3) the disruption of the normal trade between the Jewish and Arab sections of Palestine, in food, oil, etc.; (4) the tremendous influx of new immigrants.

No bourgeois government could

(Turn to last page)

Dues Hike, 2-Yr. Convention --

(Continued from page 1)

volve around these basic economic problems, and should concentrate on stimulating the initiative of the ranks in preparation for action. But unfortunately there is every indication that other matters will dominate the caucus meetings, floor discussion and decisions of the convention.

For the Reuther leadership has put forward—as its **MUST** program with top priority over all other decisions—a set of proposals identical to those which the 1949 Milwaukee convention rejected because the delegates feared it meant a growth of bureaucracy in the UAW—and represented a sharp trend away from the democratic traditions of the union.

According to Walter Reuther himself, the most important decisions facing the convention are on these proposals: (1) a dues increase of \$1 a month, making a total of \$2.50; (2) extending the time between conventions from 18 months to two years; (3) local union elections every two years instead of the present annual ones.

At rather routine caucus meetings held in the Detroit area, Reuther told his secondary leaders: "I am not interested in pious resolutions, programs of actions or any other matters unless the convention gives us the tools to do something about them." The "tools" are a dues increase with more funds for the international union.

To emphasize the importance of this question, the Reuther leadership announced it expects to make it the first point on the agenda, following Reuther's opening address and the selection of convention committees.

Although some regional caucus meetings have adopted this program, the real test of its popularity, or lack of it, will be at a national Reuther caucus meeting on Saturday, March 31, just before the convention opens.

THE IRONY OF IT

Now the internal struggle in the UAW does not arise from the fact that about 200 or so anti-Reuther delegates will oppose his program quite vociferously. Everyone knows that they would reject anything proposed by Reuther out of hand. What is of real significance is that almost every pro-Reuther slate in Detroit and Flint, the heart of the union, won the elections by campaigning against these organizational planks in Reuther's own platform! They applaud his militant speeches but fear anti-democratic trends.

The painful irony for the Reuther leadership has been the spectacle of slate after slate of REUTHERITES winning by pledging themselves against a dues increase! Briggs 212, Chrysler 7, Dodge 3, Ford 600 and 400, Hudson 154 and West Side 174, just to mention some of the huge powerhouse locals, are all committed against dues increases!

READERS TAKE THE FLOOR: ISRAEL—

(Continued from page 7)

avoid a dollar shortage, goods shortage and inflation under these conditions any more than the Mapai government has. A genuinely socialist government—with a program of winning the friendship of the Arab masses and establishing real peace—could overcome points 2 and 3 above; and, while expecting that contributions from outside the country would pay for the immigration, it could undertake the long-term job of raising the agricultural and industrial level of the country, thus attacking the first difficulty.

Lastly: yes, there have been strikes before, but against the opposition of the Mapai leadership of the Histadrut. Only now, with the workers finding it impossible to make ends meet and with new

The embarrassment of the Reutherites is all the greater because most of the victorious delegates have told Reuther—and do believe—that a dues increase is necessary! Skeptics have been pretty well convinced by Reuther's persuasive arguments for a dues increase: (1) inflation has raised costs; (2) we need a larger staff to organize new war plants; (3) we need a weekly paper; (4) we need a TV and radio program, and (5) we are losing our technicians to private industry.

But the secondary leaders of the UAW know what Reuther refuses to admit: The rank and file is against a dues increase. And these leaders are worried about their political careers if they repudiate their campaign pledges. They are irritated with Reuther for putting them in this impossible situation, while Reuther insists that they should take a correct stand first and worry about votes second! (Something that he does NOT have to do!)

At no point in the pre-convention discussions has there been a real analysis of why the rank and file seems to be so strongly against a dues increase in a union which has a better record than any other major union in America.

REUTHER'S APPROACH

To dismiss the whole problem by arguing that the rank and file is simply backward, and the union should educate them after the dues increase is voted, is a false and bureaucratic approach. It is precisely in the most advanced union centers that the opposition to a dues increase is the greatest!

The ranks are taking out on the union their irritation and dissatisfaction with the effects of inflation. All Reuther's explanations of how much progress the union has made—and compared to other unions, it is progress—fall on deaf ears, for the ranks judge this question by simple criteria: Is my standard of living higher or lower? To ask that question is to answer it. The leadership does not call upon them to prepare for their participation in battle. Quite the contrary. They are told that for two years their own intervention in union affairs is to be limited to a quiet routine while the officials take care of everything. They wonder: If we are not summoned to action, why is a dues increase necessary?

Reuther's own approach to the convention, his preoccupation with the dues increase, makes it unlikely that the discussion will be related properly to the larger and broader social issues. Far too much time is being spent on a narrow approach to this problem: Can the union leadership get a dues increase by avoiding a roll-call vote and thus helping to get the pro-Reuther delegates off the spot?

The Reuther leadership proposes to commit the national caucus to an obvious tactic: Get a voice or hand-vote majority for the dues increase. If this carries,

elections coming up, has the Mapai sanctioned the strikes. Besides, while everyone knows there have been strikes before, the point is that the leaders bent their efforts to hold them down to a minimum. That they did not take place more frequently and on a large scale is because the "labor leaders placed national and Zionist interests above class interests." (By labor leaders I include both Mapai and Mapam.)

Revolutionary socialists have been pointing this out for years. For years the Mapai leaders denied it. (Mr. Lichtenstein, in this respect, backs up the Mapai leaders' claims.) But most interesting it is that now a representative of the Histadrut visiting the U. S., Gurrin, has finally admitted that it is true.

AI FINDLEY

the pro-Reutherites who are pledged against it can return home and blame the increase on the other delegates. The very fact that such a maneuver is proposed suggests that Reuther's claim that the dues increase can easily win at the convention is open to question. Many Detroit delegates are quite suspicious of the claims. They resist the broad hint that once the national caucus votes for Reuther's program they are expected to go along. Perhaps many of them will skip the Reuther caucus meeting, just as they have in Detroit.

What a sorry commentary on the state of the union that there is so much preoccupation with such maneuvers and bureaucratic tactics! Actually, the Gordian knot can easily be cut. There is a clear, unambiguous answer to the problem, which some UAW activists have advocated.

If money is needed to carry out a fighting program, then let the convention adopt such a program FIRST and then appeal to the ranks for increased contributions BUT NOT IN MONEY TERMS ALONE.

Nowhere in the discussion in the Reuther camp is there serious consideration given to the key problem of involving the union ranks directly in their own destiny.

The test of the secondary leaders will come on the proposition for local union elections every two years, for many of them are tired, demoralized and weary of the yearly struggles. Lacking the inspiration of a clear program, the vigorous internal life of the past has been supplanted in many locals by a bitter struggle for posts. Reuther handles the program, and the local boys fight over the posts! Isn't that a low-

ering of the political level which marked the UAW of previous years? "Porkchops" replace program as a decisive factor. How deep is the tendency? Only the convention will indicate!

Why two-year conventions? How does this relate to union democracy? Reuther makes vigorous speeches pledging that the "UAW will remain democratic," but what proposals, what activities are suggested? Only ideas which make rank-and-file participation less frequent!

UNION DEMOCRACY

The convention may be asked to revise the constitution to make it impossible for Stalinists to function in the local unions. In the Linden, N. J., cases, it appears that the UAW constitution could not be used to justify the expulsion of two Stalinists! At least not in civil court. The Reuther leadership doesn't begin to understand the problem of civil liberties in its basic sense. The rank and file at Ford 600 has other ideas. In the run-off elections, Joe Hogan made an amazing showing against Carl Stelato. He went from 9,000 to 18,000 in spite of a fantastic "Moscow plot" story cooked up against him. The ranks are worried more about inflation than they are about a tiny handful of Stalinists left in the UAW-CIO.

The democratic rights of all must be defended, even of workers who are CPers—not because the slightest sympathy should be shown to Stalinism, that hated enemy of labor, but because every worker must feel free to speak out, to act, to defend his union. No intimidation of critics—encourage the exercise of democratic rights.

After five years of power how can the leadership explain the bitter resistance to its platform? One of Reuther's most frequently used examples of the financial problems of the UAW is the fact that its technicians are offered more money by industry and will leave the union, unless they get big raises far above even Reuther's salary. Reuther sees this only as a financial question. He forgets that in its best days the UAW attracted intellectuals, technicians and other professional people who were proud to sacrifice greater salaries to work for a dynamic democratic union!

How do two-year conventions and two-year local union elections keep the union democratic? Isn't that the opposite of the tradition of the UAW, and isn't this whole trend the source of the cynicism of the active union leaders in the UAW, a feeling that is reflected even more strongly among the technicians?

No union stands still. Either it goes forward as a democratic organization, rallying to its banner the restless population which seeks a new social force in America as its leadership, or it sinks deeper into the familiar pattern of a business union. The UAW will not degenerate into just another union; it will retain its dynamic spirit and democratic traditions. But only if it does go forward.

The tasks before this convention are twofold: (1) to defend labor's rights and living standards by moving toward political independence from the two old parties, toward a Labor Party, and (2) to defend and extend independent union democracy as an indispensable method of rallying the ranks for the fight to come.

UAW Can Lead--

(Continued from page 1)

the CIO and Labor's League for Political Education of the AFL, for which the workers of both organizations were asked to give their dollars and their efforts during the past few years.

The United Labor Conference which met in Washington on March 21 drew up this bill of particulars against the government, and voted unanimously for the indictment. Yet, strangely enough, they did not name the Truman administration as one of the accused parties.

They denounced the reactionary coalition in Congress; they denounced the representatives of big business to whom the economic destiny of the nation had been turned over as if it were a part of their corporate empire. But they did not tell the whole truth: that the Truman administration and the Democratic Party which it represents is a firm partner in the unholy alliance which rules in Washington.

Their failure to say what is was reflected in their failure to adopt a program which can mobilize the labor movement and with it the American people against the danger to their economic and political welfare which now confronts them.

Emil Mazey, secretary-treasurer of the United Automobile Workers, speaking from the floor, touched on the question. He stated that the Truman administration cannot escape its responsibility for the present usurpation of power by big business in Washington. He said that the remedy for this situation lies in going to the labor movement and mobilizing the workers to elect men from the ranks of the labor movement to represent them in Washington.

Mazey was a hundred per cent right . . . as far as he went. Everything that had been said at the conference, the conference itself which demonstrated the prac-

tical possibility of uniting the whole labor movement politically, and every element in the actual situation points to—in fact cries out for—one solution: the formation of an independent labor party in the United States.

In the past, the proposal that the American workers form a labor party has been opposed on several grounds. It has been said that labor is divided organizationally and therefore cannot unite politically. It has been said that the labor movement would isolate itself politically from the rest of the nation if it were to form its own party. It has been said that labor's best interests can be served by supporting the most progressive elements in both old parties, and chiefly in the Democratic Party.

Today the whole labor movement, its conservative leaders included, have recognized in action that none of these objections hold good. In the face of a major threat to the welfare of the American people and to the very continued existence of a free labor movement, labor has achieved a political unity which is the hope of its friends and the terror of its enemies, including the professional politicians of both parties. It has recognized that in this crisis labor and only labor can give leadership to the vast majority of the American people against the clique of big businessmen and politicians who are pursuing their reckless course in Washington.

The consumers, all who pay rent, the working farmers, the lower income tax-payers, the Negro people and other minorities—all these, all the common people, can come to regard the labor movement as their ally and their organizer if the labor movement shows the will to give them courageous political leadership.

Faced with this great responsibility which it acknowledged and accepted in words, the United

Labor Conference hesitated, drew back, and missed its chance. It proposed a program of action which fell far short of the need of the hour.

But the crisis has not been resolved. The danger is still present. The great historic opportunity of the American labor movement to break its paralyzing ties with the parties of big business has not yet been missed.

This week the convention of the United Automobile Workers is being held in Cleveland. This union is one of the most powerful and one of the most militant and progressive unions in America. Repeatedly in the past it has led the way for the rest of the American labor movement. An open declaration by the assembled delegates of the UAW that they are for a labor party, and that they will do everything within their power to urge the formation of such a party on the rest of the labor movement, could well be the spark which sets off a political chain reaction and transforms the whole political situation in the country overnight.

It is not at every moment in history that all the elements are present which make possible a great political step forward for the common people. But right now these elements are present. The political unity of labor has been demonstrated; the fertility of the old policy is evident for all who want to see; the people of the country are crying out for leadership against the business-government coalition. The delegates to the UAW have a chance once more to demonstrate to the whole labor movement and to the American people that they are indeed the "architects of the future."

For an independent labor party! That is the political slogan of the day. That is the road to a future of peace and security for the workers and all the common people. Let the voice of the UAW be heard: for an independent labor party!