

A First-Hand Report of the UAW Convention

Auto Workers Discuss Vital Union Issues

By DAVID COOLIDGE

The eighth convention of the UAW-CIO opened in Buffalo on Monday, October 4, in an atmosphere of tension, conflict of opinions and positions held by the main groups in the convention. This tenseness and struggle between the groups did not abate, but continued throughout the convention to the day of adjournment on October 10.

While the struggle for power, that is, "control of the international," was a prominent feature of the convention deliberations, only the most superficial observer could say that this was the main aspect of the Buffalo meeting. The struggle for control of the union had its roots in and took its main form from the mood of the UAW membership and the body of 2,000 delegates which represented these million members at the convention.

There was the Reuther group and the Addes group, which had been formed long before the delegates came together at Buffalo. Reuther was the leader of the faction which contained the overwhelming majority of the militants who wanted to maintain an aggressive and independent international union, fighting for the welfare of its members and for a higher standard of living.



R. J. THOMAS

There were good American "patriots" in the Reuther group, but in this sense they did not believe in complete surrender to the war-mongers and to the bosses. While the overwhelming majority of them formally supported the war, they could see no reason why labor should be called upon to make ALL the sacrifices while big business enriched itself off their backs.

By the time the convention convened this group or a large section of it had developed some understanding of the experiences they had been through: in their shops, with the WLB, with other government agencies, Congress, the Administration and the employers. This experience and education reflected itself in the program brought forward by the Reuther group and in the tricky and slimy hedging of the Stalinist delegates on all the important questions before the convention.

Special Feature Next Week--

Max Shachtman, national secretary of the Workers Party, who attended the UAW convention in Buffalo last week, will write an analytical story on this great meeting of the auto workers. Make sure not to miss it!

The Addes-Frankensteen group was definitely the camp of the Stalinist Communist Party. While it was not clear before the convention exactly where these two stood on all the main questions, there could be no doubt about it in anyone's mind after the sessions got under way and the main issues reached the floor. This was a faction that followed the Stalinist political line with a high degree of consistency under the direct leadership of the Stalinist whips on the floor of the convention.

There was another influence in the convention which might be called the Murray-Thomas influence. The point of view of this group was complete and unqualified support of Roosevelt and the war. This was the avenue through which the pressure of Roosevelt and his bureaucracy made itself felt in the convention.

The parade of government speakers and pro-war propaganda began on the second day of the convention with the address of Under-Secretary of War Patterson. He initiated the campaign of direct and indirect agitation whose aim was to prepare the delegates to "vote right" on the important issues that were to come up later in the convention.

On the no-strike pledge Patterson told the delegates that "the War Department appreciates full well the fine effort of the patriotic working men who work long hours to keep production going. The no-strike pledge is a measure that is helping our men to win the war. Don't think for a minute that the effect of that is not appreciated. . . . We know that we can depend upon the men and women on the production front that you represent right here in this hall. . . . We know that you will not fail our soldiers, those men on the fighting front. We cannot and I know we will not."

Patterson was followed on Tuesday afternoon by Senator Mead. He informed the delegates that "we have as the leader of our government the world's most powerful and the world's most popular leader." And not only this but "we have, in my judgment, in shop and factory, on the railroads and in the mines of America



WALTER REUTHER

(Continued on page 4)

OCTOBER 18, 1943

A PAPER IN THE INTERESTS OF LABOR

ONE CENT

BUREAUCRATS AND BOSSES CAUSE MANPOWER MUDDLE

Labor Herald Declares--

The NLRB 'Is Anti-Union'

We believe the following editorial, which appeared in the Labor Herald, weekly labor paper published in Maryland, is an important contribution to the issue of the NLRB and its relation to the trade union movement.

As to the disputes between the AFL and the CIO in cases involving both of them before the Board, we cannot express any opinion, since we are not familiar with the facts. That the NLRB would take advantage of these inter-labor disputes for its own anti-union purposes, we have no doubt. The important point the editorial makes is that individual decisions and opinions aside, the NLRB, by its structure and purpose, is anti-union and should be abolished.—Editor.

The American Federation of Labor, in its convention, accuses the National Labor Board of being pro-CIO and anti-AFL. It says the board is "not realistic, judicious or fair." The Labor Herald goes even further and says the Labor Board is anti-labor and pro-employer; that as an institution it has forgotten it is supposed to be for labor but actually has swung around to supporting anti-union employers in their anti-union activities.

The decision in the Maryland Drydock case and the decision in the Glenn Martin case where two-by-four leaders who lacked even the authority of straw bosses were robbed of their franchise showed the board to be an anti-labor outfit.

Of course, the board has made fair rulings. It had to do so if it was to remain in business, but when it takes rights from unions which they have enjoyed for a century it is robbing

the worker and aiding the employer. The AFL has been discriminated against in favor of the CIO. This has happened in Baltimore. And it has happened all over the country. But when James Montroy of the UAW-CIO was disfranchised the CIO was most terribly discriminated against in favor of the anti-union Glenn L. Martin.

The Labor Board has not been unduly kind to the CIO, except where it could throw AFL jurisdiction to it. It actually robbed the CIO in the Montgomery Ward case to build up the prestige of Harry Bridges. The aim of the board seems calculated to divide the house of labor against itself and to add confusion where confusion exists and to create confusion where none exists. The AFL denounces the Labor Board but the CIO just takes a beating lying down in the hope that the board will steal a few crumbs from the AFL table and throw them its way. Or if the crumbs come from District Fifty, they are accepted with thanks.

What the CIO and the AFL and the UMW fail to see is that actually the board is anti-union. It is heading toward a condition or a situation where it will unblushingly proclaim itself a creature of industry, where it must protect capital before it protects labor. It is well on the way. A few more steps, a few more decisions and it will be over the line.

Inasmuch as the board is as far along that road as it is, labor should ask for the repeal of the law which created it. Let labor stand on its own two feet and organize itself into appropriate unions and it will more greatly aid the working class.—From the Labor Herald.

The suspicion, during the debate on the drafting of fathers for military service, that Washington had bungled the manpower situation, has now been confirmed by a new study made at Princeton University.

Previous to this disclosure, however, Labor, weekly paper of the railway unions, obtained access to confidential figures of the War Manpower Commission and the War Production Board, wherein it was revealed that the "critical" shortage of manpower was highly exaggerated.

Now the Princeton University report declares that employers are wasting an equivalent of 5,000,000 workers! Princeton University was never a friend of labor, but the revelations of the study made by its economics department were too much to keep secret.

The outstanding feature about this waste of 5,000,000 workers is that it is a million more workers than the highest government estimate of what is required in additional labor from July, 1943, to July, 1944.

Eliminate the tremendous labor waste, for which the mismanagement of big business is responsible, and there would be a surplus of labor!

In what way is there a waste of manpower? The Princeton report lists: "Inefficient managerial conditions, poor plant layout, lack of co-operation between department heads, interruptions of work caused by poor scheduling."

But this isn't all. The report points out that bad working conditions are also responsible for wasting manpower! It is interesting to note that among these "bad working conditions" the report lists: inadequate grievance machinery, unhealthy surroundings, tyrannical foremen, complicated wage set-ups, rejection of any involvement of the workers in management!

"Do not expect the employee to accept unnecessary hardships in the working environment just because it is wartime," says the report. "In encouraging employees to give steadily the maximum in production, management must maintain working conditions conducive to employee well-being."

This is merely a honey-worded way of saying that the bosses are taking advantage of the war to destroy conditions of labor and are refusing to accede to union demands not only to stop this practice, but to improve working conditions.

The great influx of women workers makes such an improvement mandatory. But Washington remains respectfully silent on this aspect of manpower waste. And big business only adds to its profits because, without compulsion, it will not spend a penny to improve working conditions!

This mismanagement of industry and manpower is best revealed in the case of the Brewster Aeronautical Corporation, reported elsewhere in this issue of LABOR ACTION.

Government Estimates of Needs
On top of this, WMC Boss McNutt and the "brass hats" declare that there is a requirement in additional manpower of from 3,600,000 to 4,000,000 by July, 1944. Of this number, 2,000,000 are to "replace additions to the armed forces, and the rest to fill demands of industry."

But already revised figures for munitions industries show that they will need much less manpower than originally estimated. Previously it was thought that these industries would need 2,000,000 additional workers, whereas now it appears that only 900,000 new workers will be required. Three hundred thousand more workers are estimated as needed in transportation, mining, utilities, food, textiles and clothing.

(Continued on page 2)

Milk Drivers Get "Sick" of WLB Firing Decision

By GERTRUDE SHAW

The week of October 4 most of the capitalist press of New York City and vicinity slobbered all over itself, weeping crocodile tears for the mothers, children, old people and invalids who did not get their regular milk deliveries.

The New York Times wrote an editorial entitled "A Shameful Strike." The New York Post called the milk drivers' action proof—no less—that a labor draft is called for. That's the kind of "labor" paper the New York Post is.

The big business Sheffield Farms Company—whose employees became "sick" on receiving the War Labor Board decision that 959 of them were to be fired—bought advertising space

(Continued on page 3)

OPA Price Rollback Is a Big Farce

The President Hasn't Made His Promised Speech Yet

By WALTER WEISS

We ask again: Where is that big speech by the President on the cost of living which was promised us almost three months ago? Said the New York Times way back on July 24:

"President Roosevelt, according to informed sources, has under consideration a major speech within a few weeks in which he is expected to present the outlines of a new program to stabilize prices and wages."

On September 13, Chester Bowles, general manager of the OPA, unveiled a program for reducing the cost of living at least 2.3 per cent by cutting back prices on apples, onions, oranges, potatoes, lard, vegetable oils and peanut butter.

This rosy picture was challenged immediately by liberal, labor and conservative circles alike.

The New York newspaper PM said: "Saving amounts to less than one per cent, not 2.3, as claimed."

The New York Times editorialized: "The first difficulty in considering OPA's new price rollback program is that it seems impossible to make the figures add up."

Cost of Living Bounces Up Again

The much-publicized rollback of prices by the OPA, which was revealed as bringing a saving in the cost of living of less than one per cent (for oranges, lard, shortening, apples, onions, potatoes and peanut butter), has turned out to be no rollback at all.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics on the cost of living will reveal that there has been a one per cent rise in living costs, wiping out the less than one per cent reduction of the OPA.

But this rise is "slight" compared with what is coming in the next two years. Eric Johnston, president of the United States Chamber of Commerce, predicts a twenty-five per cent rise in the cost of living in 1944, and an additional rise of twenty per cent the following year. Government officials have not entered a denial to this prediction.

In order words, the program was inflated with plenty of wind. But what has happened to it, such as it was?

"A general average price of 3.5 cents a pound is sought for potatoes, which are now selling around four cents, according to Mr. Bowles" (New York Times, September 14).

On September 28 the OPA fixed

potato ceiling prices to cover the late 1943 crop. Read about it and rub your eyes:

"In New York this will make average retail ceilings...4.5 cents a pound in October, increasing to 5.5 cents in June, 1944. It is expected, however, that potatoes will in general sell substantially below the retail ceilings because of this year's

large crop" (New York Times, September 29, just two weeks later).

What is the OPA doing—rolling the price back to 3.5 cents, as it promised, or giving dealers a broad hint not to lower the price just because of a big supply?

Apples and Peanut Butter

Apples were to sell at 8 1/2 cents a pound. But three weeks later the Times (October 7) reported: "Maximum prices for apples...were established today...at levels which will mean a national retail average of ten and eleven cents a pound. This was in contrast with the announcement made at a press conference in September by Chester Bowles...that...apple prices were to be brought down to a retail average of 8.75 cents a pound. It is understood that pressure by the farm bloc produced this change in policy."

We are pleased to report that as of October 2 the OPA was still sticking to its guns, at least in public statements, on the price of peanut butter, which is supposed to be cut to 26.5 cents a pound.

We haven't noticed any figures on

(Continued on page 3)

Attention: DETROIT MEETING!

A Discussion of the Debates and Decisions of the Recent UAW Convention by Labor Action's On-the-Spot Reporter

MAX SHACHTMAN

National Secretary, Workers Party

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NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE LABOR FRONT

GM Anti-Labor Drive Fought by UAW Local

By T. R. COBB

DETROIT—While big business and its representatives in the government, the press, the radio and the Stalinist Communist Party were firing a barrage of propaganda for the "incentive pay" wage-cut plan, the National General Motors Council of the United Auto Workers Union touched off a few salvoes of its own last week.

Local 262, covering the GM Chevrolet drop forge, spring and bumper plant in Detroit, took the most direct blast at the speed-up scheme by filing a request with the NLRB for a strike vote of workers employed under the piecework system at the plant.

Cornelius Moll, president of Local 262, said the purpose of the strike vote is to eliminate the "intolerable conditions and gross inequalities in earnings caused by the piecework system." The local wants it replaced with a straight day-rate wage setup.

Slams False Claims

A report issued by the Local 262 shop committees hits the false claims made by proponents of the scheme and describes the following conditions among the Chevrolet forge workers:

Decreased Earnings: The majority of piecework workers are earning less than they did in normal times on auto production. Conversion brought all new jobs to the plant with lower piecework rates and decreased earnings.

Unequal Earnings: There are great differentials between the earnings of men having the same degree of skill and doing the same type of work.

Uncertainty of weekly earnings: The man on piecework can only guess what his next pay check will amount to. Under piecework, men have been sent home when shortages occurred or when their machines broke down, while at the same time forty per cent of the plant machinery stood idle.

Rates Out: Management has refused to negotiate piecework prices with the shop committees. Clear-cut inequalities are ignored by management.

Cutting of Prices: Changes in this method of operation have brought about price cuts—without supposed increases in production.

Sub-Standard Earnings for Heaters and Helpers: More than fifty per cent of the pieceworkers are heaters and helpers whose pay is less than that paid by other forging plants in the area.

UAW Denounces Piecework

Spokesmen for the Ford National UAW Council and the heads of most Chrysler locals have joined the National General Motors UAW Council in the offensive against reintroduction of piecework into their respective plants.

The September 23 issue of "GM Facts" features a full-page plurge headed "The Workers' Answer to

General Motors Corporation—Piecework Means Retreat," and contains the following reply to the corporation's demands on the union to withdraw its opposition to piecework and other "incentive" systems:

"Piecework will not increase production. It will cause dislocation of schedules; it will lead to layoffs and unemployment; it will pit worker against worker in a speed-up contest which will lead to unbalanced production schedules, rate cutting, and destruction of labor morale.

"GMC has reopened its offensive for so-called 'incentive pay' systems in an effort to re-initiate the vicious speed-up, piecework plans which the UAW-CIO drove out of its plants. We care not how the corporation may dress up piecework in sheep's clothing, nor how many others it may confuse by this tactic; the GM workers will have nothing to do with piecework."

In addition to this, R. J. Thomas and William Stevenson, UAW president and West Side regional director respectively, have addressed a joint letter to William H. Davis, chairman of the NLRB, denouncing a directive and majority opinion by the Detroit regional WLB in a current case involving the piecework workers at the Timken-Detroit Axle Company.

The Joint Letter

The regional board's decision allows the management to reduce the wages of piecework workers below

their previous hourly earnings. The letter states:

"The opinion and order illustrate one of the principal objections of the auto workers to reintroduction of the piecework system in our industry. We have always contended that highly productive piecework workers frequently work themselves into wage cuts. The board's opinion not only recognizes this to be a fact, but says, in effect, that the board can or will do nothing about it.

"The board is not only taking a hands-off policy regarding one of the most vicious aspects of piecework; it is also violating Executive Order 9250, which provides that there shall be no reduction in wage rates. Ad-

vocates of a return to piecework in the automotive industries have sought to assure the workers against wage cuts. In view of the attitude of the Regional War Labor Board, these assurances cannot be safely accepted by labor.

"Edwin E. Witte, chairman of the regional board, admits, in the opinion, that 'the great course of incentive systems' has been that, 'too often, when employees have brought up their earnings through increased efforts and times, doing their work better, they have had their piecework rates reduced.' The board's decision does nothing to remove that course. In fact, it blesses its continu-

Win Hillburn Fight Against Jim Crow

The Negro parents of Hillburn, N. Y., won their strike against Jim Crow segregation in the school system when the State Education Department ordered the Jim Crow school abandoned and directed the Ramapo Central School District to provide facilities for the Negro children at the regular main school.

Since 1889 the school district in the town of Ramapo, Rockland County, had maintained two elementary schools, one known as the Brook School and the other as the Main School. The Negro children in the district were assigned to the former while the white children went to the latter. In 1938, the State Legislature repealed that section of the education law which permitted this segregation, but this separation of white and colored children continued until September of this year, when twenty-two parents, representing fifty-six Negro children, decided to strike to get their children admitted to the Hillburn Main School.

Just before the opening of the school semester, the local school district "re-zoned" the area in order to make legal the segregation of the colored children to the Brook School. It was this rezoning and the whole principle of Jim Crow schools which the striking parents were contesting. They refused to allow their children to attend the Brook School, which, in addition to representing an insult to the Negroes in the locality, consisted of an old dilapidated wooden building, with inadequate and inferior furnishings, endangering the health and safety of the children. This school, forced upon the Negroes for fifty-four years, was considered by the state education commissioner to be "not worth repairing."

AFL Machinists Invade Goodyear Plant in Akron As CIO Leaders Fail to Build Strong Local

By J. POWELL

The recent attempts on the part of the AFL machinists to organize Goodyear Aircraft, which is already in the bargaining hands of Local 856, UAW-CIO, found willing assistance from those members of the local who were disgusted and disillusioned with its reactionary leadership and its do-nothing, let's-wait-for-the-WLB-decision policy.

The WLB has at last rendered its report: no increase in pay.

Goodyear Aircraft, like all other aircraft industries, came into existence with the war. As in other open shops, workers derived the benefits of organized labor without having gone through the long struggle of the last ten years to win them. They feel that they have nothing to gain through joining the union when they see that a wage increase has been denied them. They see that their right to strike to put pressure on the company has been given up by their leaders.

Therefore, the biggest problem at Goodyear Aircraft, that of organization, is a doubly hard one. The present leaders offer no responsible assistance to the situation. Those who are capable are politically ambitious and scarcely have the best interests of the union at heart.

Inter-Union Struggle Looms

Therefore the machinists received a warm welcome from some good

While boycotting the Brook School, the parents set up their own school for the children in a nearby church, hired licensed teachers and proceeded with the educational program at their own expense. The town of Hillburn brought suit against the parents for keeping their children out of the assigned school, and a suspended sentence and fine were imposed upon them.

Yet the strike continued, for the Hillburn Negroes were determined to push aside this Jim Crow practice. They have shown that by sticking together and remaining firm in their determination to get equal treatment for their children they can win.

Negroes throughout the New York area have been watching this strike for some time. Now they have an object lesson on how to fight Jim Crow. It is not enough to get anti-Jim Crow laws passed, as was done in 1938 with regard to the use of educational facilities of the state. That is only half the battle. These laws must be enforced, and this cannot be entrusted to state and local officials. These laws will remain dead letters unless they are enforced by the people who will benefit from them.

The Hillburn strike has shown the way. Jim Crow in education can be smashed through organization and a determined fight against it. The system of free education in this country was born of a long and serious struggle conducted by the labor and trade union movement. This movement must now defend that gain. It must take up the fight to drive racial discrimination and prejudice from the school system.

World Events

By Europeans

Two Policies in the Midst of War

Another proof of the fact that the Allies fight a war on two fronts, one against German imperialism, the other against revolutionary developments in Europe, is furnished by recent events in Italy.

On July 25, Mussolini fell; on September 3, the surrender was made.

In these forty days the negotiations between Badoglio and the Allies went on without interruption. No important military events took place. But during this interval the Allies bombed the North Italian towns in which the workers were daily fighting the remnants of the old regime.

And the Soldiers Jumped with Joy

Milan and Turin were so heavily bombed that most of the workers had to leave the town. These bombings had at least one effect of disorganizing the workers' movement in the North. The rushing Nazis only completed the job of wiping out the North Italian socialists.

Badoglio and Prince Humbert recently revealed in interviews extremely important information on the morale of the German soldiers in Italy. "When Mussolini fell, the German soldiers heard a rumor that Hitler was killed. They were fairly jumping with joy. They believed that then the war was over... these rumors swept all the German soldiers in Rome in ecstasies of joy."

It is revealed from other quarters that the Nazis had to rush S.S. Elite regiments into Italy because the ordinary German soldiers proved to be unreliable in the face of the popular manifestations. This time the

Nazis succeeded in resisting the danger of a spreading of the revolutionary spirit from the Italian workers to the German soldiers. These reports indicate, nevertheless, that the German soldiers were tremendously influenced by the revolt of the Italian people. Hitler recalled these soldiers from Italy, but they will tell all those at home what they have seen.

Millions of Italian workers are now conscripted for work in Germany. They, too, will be ideal carriers of revolutionary ideas. At the end of the last war, Germany drafted into the army thousands of workers who had participated in strikes, but this proved to be a fatal mistake; these workers served as the best revolutionary propagandists in the army. Something like this may very well happen again with the German soldiers back from Italy and the Italian workers taken to Germany.

The Fate of One "War Criminal"

Some months ago the Allies announced with much ado that lists were to be drawn up with the names of all war criminals—of Nazis and fascists, of course. All these war criminals were to be punished once they fell into Allied hands.

We are happy to announce that at least one of them is already in Allied hands. He is the Italian general,

Roatta, who commanded the Italian forces of occupation and terrorism in Northern Yugoslavia, and his name was on the list of war criminals that the Yugoslav government in exile had presented to the Allies. There is only one hitch to this: the worthy general is presently a member of Badoglio's government, valiantly fighting at the side of the Allies.

Himmler's Terror and Unrest in Germany

Since Himmler, supreme leader of the SS, has been appointed chief of the Reich Department of Interior a new wave of terrorism has swept Germany, according to Swiss travelers. Letters are intercepted, telephones are tapped, personal conversations on the streets are listened to by Gestapo eaves-droppers, women

in shops find themselves provoked into restless statements, and so on, until the average person relaxes into a safe but gloomy taciturnity.

That the Nazis deem it necessary to take such extreme steps—there are now daily executions for treasonable activity—is a sure sign that defeatism is spreading in Germany.

The Yugoslav Partisans and the Allies

The Yugoslav Partisans, favored by the disintegration of the Italian occupational forces in Yugoslavia after the conclusion of the armistice, have waged a new large offensive against the Nazis. They have even succeeded in occupying, temporarily, a number of important towns on the Adriatic coast.

For the armchair strategists, it is inconceivable why the Allies do not use this favorable situation for an invasion of Yugoslavia. But they forget that there are political considerations which make Yugoslavia

a hot potato for the Allies.

First, the Partisans, in spite of heavy Stalinist influence, apparently represent a genuine peasant revolutionary movement, and the Allies dread contact with such a movement for the same reason as they dread a revolution in Italy. But even more important, Russia is moving heaven and earth to prevent an Allied push into the Balkans, which she considers her own restricted hunting grounds. That is why the Daily Worker does not ask for an invasion of Yugoslavia.

Bunglers—

But, in response to that need, 800,000 workers released for rapidly declining construction projects and 2,200,000 more in trade, service and similar fields, who will be "affected by a decrease in manufacture of civilian goods."

The whole story on manpower hasn't yet been told, but it is clear from the above that the whole thing has been bungled—and bungled badly—at the top!

Away with the Bunglers

Hoarding labor and wasting manpower is easy for the industrialists, since their costs and their profits are guaranteed by the government war contracts. Now, as a result of their greed and the bungling in Washington, they seek to put over a laborer draft. The Austin-Wadsworth labor slavery bill is one manifestation of this effort. But all of them, from the extreme bill just cited, to the Pacific Coast plan adopted without consultation with labor, aim at destroying the independence of the workers.

Labor must fight against this bungling by opposing any labor draft or national service act. If big business can't manage—and it has shown how incompetent it is—then nationalize the war industries under workers' control. It may not be so profitable for the bosses—there's the rub—but it would be much better for the workers!

Railway Unions' Paper Bares Mismanagement at Brewster

(Reprinted from "Labor")

Newspapers during the past few weeks have been on another union "smearing" spree. They seized upon a production breakdown at the Brewster Aeronautical Corporation in Johnsville, Pa., and tried to pin all the blame on the union in the plant, though the evidence pointed squarely to incompetent management.

Brewster has been a "bad spot" since the defense program began. For a time racketeers with criminal records were in control and "milked" the company. Back in April, 1942, the Navy took over operation of the plant, placing in charge one hard-boiled manager after another—all more concerned with undermining the union than in boosting production.

Early this year, Henry J. Kaiser, America's "miracle" shipbuilder, was induced to take over the chairmanship of the board of the corporation. Instead of giving Kaiser full power, the Navy put into the presi-

deny Fred Riebel, Jr., who had been a Westinghouse executive and a business associate of Assistant Secretary of the Navy James V. Forrestal.

Same Old Alibi

When this change failed to produce results, Riebel, like his predecessors, blamed the union contract, the terms of which he had been trying to emasculate in negotiations for a new agreement.

Frequent clashes between the union and the management came to a head on August 23 in a dramatic strike of union guards, who claimed their seniority rights had been violated by the Navy.

That was taken as a signal by the newspapers for a ferocious barrage of anti-union propaganda.

Last Sunday the Washington Post published a full-page account of the Brewster situation, written by Agnes E. Meyer, the wife of its multi-millionaire publisher.

Although practically all her facts

indicated inefficient management, Mrs. Meyer insisted the fault lay with the union, which, she said, had a "stranglehold" on the company because of the "brilliant leadership" of its president, Tom De Lorenzo.

In an attempt to give an appearance of fairness, she also interviewed De Lorenzo. He gave a simple defense of the union's conduct, charging the management was trying to destroy the union's hard-won gains. He declared "our policy is to win the war without sacrificing too many of the rights which we have obtained."

Because of the article in the Washington Post, the House Naval Affairs Committee, which is not friendly to the unions, has ordered an inquiry.

The Philadelphia Record assigned a reporter to take a job as laborer in the plant, and the conditions he described were unbelievably shocking. He reported that employees anxious to do a real day's work were instructed by supervisors to loaf for hours at a stretch. He found parts for planes were doled out in such dribbles that it was impossible for workers to keep busy. The alibi given for this was a "shortage" of supplies, but the reporter managed to get a peek at a storeroom that was filled to the rafters with parts. Why the materials were held back he was unable to learn. One thing was certain, he said—there was nothing to indicate the union was at fault.

"I found no instance in which the union contract could be said, by any stretch of the imagination, to have impeded production," he wrote.

Incident at Chrysler Plant

Dear Editor:

My belated praise to you on your intelligent and courageous handling of last summer's race riot in Detroit. As a result, I became a subscriber to LABOR ACTION, but not until the other day did I discover for myself how dangerous to all labor is the misunderstanding between us white workers and our colored fellow workers.

Here at one of the Chrysler plants there was a petty squabble around the time clock between a white and a colored worker. It ended in a fight between them when the former called the latter a "dirty n---r."

Outside the plant at quitting time the men, who generally get along okay with one another inside the shop divided into racial groups, and things were tense for a few minutes. Instead of joining together to cool off the fighters, they stood around waiting for trouble.

Fortunately, neither the colored nor the white workers allowed themselves to be provoked into any senseless action that everyone would have regretted later on.

For one thing, I think something should be done about the ignorant jerks who go around insulting our colored fellow workers and preventing the unity we need so much in order to stand up against one of the loudest companies in Detroit.

The colored workers have the right and duty to go to their shop steward and ask that those who practice Hitler's racial theories be transferred out of the department and, if possible, out of the plant. If the steward should refuse or fail, the matter should then be taken up with a higher union body.

Most of us old-timers at Chrysler's are true union men and know the score on race hatred. We must stick together if we are to win respect and justice for all workers, regardless of creed or color or nationality.

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACTS OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 4, 1912, AND MARCH 3, 1933.

LABOR ACTION, published weekly at New York, N. Y., for October 1, 1945. State of New York. County of New York, ss.

Before me, a notary public in and for the state and county aforesaid, personally appeared Albert Gates, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the editor of LABOR ACTION and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 4, 1912, as amended by the Act of March 3, 1933, embodied in Section 387, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to-wit:

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ALBERT GATES, Editor. Sworn to and subscribed before me this 4th day of October, 1945.

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Wallace--1943 Model Trust-Buster

A Phoney "Era of the Common Man"

By SUSAN GREEN

There is no denying that the common man needs an "era"—or two or three.

But when a capitalist politician—be he Vice-President Wallace or anybody else—assumes the role of modern messiah, a specialist has legitimate doubts. For how can a capitalist politician who defends the boss profit system be on the level about the "era of the common man"?

And Mr. Wallace thinks the boss profit system is just fine.

However—whether he realizes the contradiction or not—he says he is against "a small group seeking to parcel out the resources and markets of the world so as to control production, prices, distribution and the very life-blood of world industry."

This champion of the "common man" has recently looked horns with the Standard Oil trust and called it names in public. And he so bravely declares: "The international monopolists should be conspicuous by their absence at the peace table."

In his recent speeches Mr. Wallace has implied that the great industrial monopolies and international cartels stand between the common man and his era. Do away with those or curb them and— presto! — we will have that "economic democracy" about which he talks so much.

Wallace's Game an Old One

Mr. Wallace is another trust-buster—1943 model. Other messiahs of the "common man" have before blasted the trusts as the great evil which prevents dear old capitalism from being the benevolent institution it really is at heart. But it has all been to no avail!

As far back as 1890 the trust-busters had the Sherman anti-trust law passed to restore—in the 1943 words of Mr. Wallace—"American business principles of free private enterprise and equal opportunity." But the development of capitalism from a free competitive system to monopoly could not be stopped by law.

Under the noses of the demagogues and the hmwakers of those days—and in spite of the anti-trust law—the Standard Oil octopus developed, the monopolistic National Sugar Refining Company blossomed, J. P. Morgan completed the structure of the United States Steel trust, and the basis of modern monopoly capitalism was laid.

Other "Friends of the People"

Later, Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and Taft found it very convenient to become the "friends of the people" merely by lambasting the trusts. And actually, lawsuits were

brought against Standard Oil, American Tobacco and other trusts—to "bust" them. Formally and legally they were dissolved into several smaller companies. But what a farce! The dissolutions were in name only. Trustification continued more than ever.

Woodrow Wilson was another trust-busting champion of "freedom." During his administration the Clayton anti-trust law of 1914 was passed. This law the historian Charles Beard described as "an elaborate measure which IN LETTER at least threatened to tear apart all combinations large enough to control prices in their respective areas." But the Clayton anti-trust law was also absolutely ineffective in stopping capitalist consolidation for greater profit and economic domination by the few.

The best proof is that the trusts of Woodrow Wilson's day have grown to the magnitude of the international cartels against which Mr. Wallace flings his fiery words today.

There has been for many years in the U. S. Department of Justice a full-time, fully-manned anti-trust department. Indictments are made, suits filed, trials held against the wicked trusts—and they are wicked.

Nevertheless, their power increases. They gobble up all the industrial wealth that counts. And the funniest thing is that they have become high-pressure salesmen of "free enterprise" through their radio stogees and their press—meaning, of course, complete freedom for the monopolists to profit from the labor of the people.

No, the demagogic trust-busters who came and went before Mr. Wallace could not make the wheel of economic forces rotate backward—and neither can he. National trusts, international cartels and international imperialism were inevitable under modern capitalism. In fact, that IS modern capitalism.

Take a Look at the Giants

Have a look at the American trusts branching out into international cartels that Mr. Wallace wishes to bust. Here is a partial list of this country's industrial giants, tied up with I. G. Farbenindustrie, Krupp and other German trusts as well as with the industrial monopolists of Great Britain and other countries:

Standard Oil, du Pont, Aluminum Company of America, General Motors, Ford, Remington Arms, General Electric, Westinghouse Electric, National Cash Register, American Roll-

ing Mill, International Tel. & Tel. General Aniline, Sterling Products, Winthrop Chemical, North American Rayon, American Bemberg.

Here are the giants of nearly every branch of American industry. Through financial connections and "interlocking directorates," the owners of these corporations control manufacturing, mining, transportation, power, farming, insurance, finance. In a word, here is American capitalism, which has become monopoly capitalism—breaking all barriers to profits just as it broke small-scale business.

Capitalism or Socialism?

Mr. Wallace stands for capitalism. Today capitalism is monopoly capitalism. There is no other. The wheel of economic development cannot be turned back.

Nor is it desirable to turn it back. Combinations in industry for the elimination of the waste and the inefficiency of small-scale production are progressive—just as technological development itself is progressive, although under the boss system it has meant hardship for the workers. Similarly, international industrial combinations for the pooling of inventions, resources, etc., are in themselves progressive.

The big question is: By whom are the trusts owned—for whose benefit? By whom are the international combinations made—and for whose benefit? Today they are the means of pegging prices, cornering markets, withholding inventions, etc.—all for the private profit of the economic masters of the earth at the expense of the masses.

What Socialism Can Do

The socialist says that progress consists not in smashing these giants of industry—which cannot be done, anyway—but in taking them away from the monopolists and making them the property of the whole people, those who produce all the wealth of the world. Owned by the toiling people, by the workers, the poor agricultural laborers, the dispossessed middle classes and all the poor, these giant industries could produce plenty for all. That is the road to socialism, to a world system of peace, security and freedom—a true era of the "common man."

The "common man" has no need for a 1943 model trust-buster. What he needs is to get rid of the selfish, profit-bloated trusts, and the selfish, profit-bloated capitalists.

Hear Ye! Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

Federal Judge William F. Smith, sitting in Newark, N. J., refused to sentence a young bank teller who pleaded guilty to the charge of embezzling \$5,000 from the First National Bank of South Plainfield, N. J.

The hearing revealed that the teller began to work at the bank for a "salary" of \$15.00 a week. After eleven years of service to this institution he was receiving the magnificent sum of \$28.00 a week.

In the light of these facts, the judge declared in court that the payment of less than living wages to bank employees is an open invitation to "dishonesty." He described the teller's pay as "niggardly."

We can expect that the frankness of the judge will be righteously denounced by the big business moralists who live off the backs of labor, and their press, which defends the legalized thievery of the profit system.

A Greek King by the Grace of Churchill

By MIKE STEVENS

King George of Greece was assured by Winston Churchill, in the latter's recent radio speech from Quebec, that British imperialism would do its utmost to again force a monarchy upon the peoples of Greece.

The war is not yet over, so Churchill had to throw in that he "hopes" to see King George restored to his throne "by the free choice" of the "liberated peoples."

Churchill knows better. He knows that King George is the most universally hated among all the heads of governments in exile. Every section of the underground movement in Greece, as well as the remnants of the army and navy that are located outside of Greece is against the return of the monarchy.

This will not be the first time that British capitalism has tried to force a monarchy upon Greece. The one difference this time is that it will be attempted with the aid of the United States. From the time that Greece won her independence from Turkey, five parasitical monarchs have been forced upon her to guard British interests. The Greek people get rid of them almost as rapidly as they arrive. We say "arrive" because Greece has no royal house of its own. The diplomats of Downing Street have had to go to the Glucksburg dynasty in Denmark to pick up kings for Greece.

HOW GEORGE CAME TO BE KING

The present King George assumed the throne in 1922 and was forced to flee for his life a year later. But in the early 30's Greece was in bad

financial straits and British capital was again willing to lend money at a good rate of interest. But in order to guarantee their investment they insisted on George's return. A fraudulent plebiscite was engineered and he returned in 1935. His father, King Constantine, was dethroned twice and died in exile. His grandfather was assassinated. Three kings were dethroned twice. One was dethroned once and one was assassinated. Only one died in his royal bed and even that resulted from a fatal monkey bite. The people of Greece were saved the bother of getting rid of him. This is all a matter of record. The people of Greece are unalterably opposed to a monarchy, but a Greek monarchy, even though an imported one, suits British imperialist aims.

When George returned to Greece in 1935 it was obvious even to him that he was not wanted and it was only a matter of time before he would once more be unemployed. The parliamentary elections that were then held confirmed his suspicions when, despite threats, bribery and thievery on the part of his followers, the anti-royalist Liberal Party took 135 seats in the House of Deputies.

THE METAXAS REGIME

King George then revealed that during his exile he had learned a few things from Hitler and Mussolini. He appointed the fascist General John Metaxas as Prime Minister and, under the pretense that the country was in imminent danger of a bolshevik revolution, authorized him to declare a dictatorship. Metaxas was the leader of a tiny Fascist Party that had only three seats in the House of Deputies.

The fascist dictatorship instituted permanent martial law, abolished the constitution, elections and all political parties, illegalized the trade unions and exiled to prison islands over 8,000 trade union leaders, Marxists, liberals, intellectuals, in short, anyone who opposed the regime. The regime was on a par with Hitler's in Germany and Mussolini's in Italy.

DICTATORS AFTER METAXAS

Metaxas died in January, 1941, and King George appointed the fascist, Alexander Koryzsis, as dictator. Koryzsis died shortly after his appointment and George picked another fascist, the notorious Constantine Kotzias. When Hitler's armies began pushing their way through Greece, King George, under the prodding of the embarrassed Allies, appointed one of Greece's leading bankers, Emanuel Tsouderos, as Prime Minister. Tsouderos had never opposed fascism but he was not tainted with having been part of the fascist regime. As the London Tribune put it: "The King, despite his complicity and responsibility for the Metaxas regime, had to be saved at all costs. That was the pitiable task to be performed by Mr. Tsouderos."

THE SENTIMENTS OF THE GREEKS

It was not long after King George and his government had fled Greece that news began to leak out that the underground organizations and guerrilla forces that were being formed by the people in Greece were issuing manifestoes that under no condition would they stand for a return of the monarchy.

King George paid no attention to this "sabote" but as the months went on, not only did these un-

derground groups grow in size and influence, but the anti-royalist feelings began to manifest themselves in the ranks of the army and navy in the Middle East. King George tried to appease them by dropping some of the more notorious fascists from his cabinet, but to no avail. The revolt against the monarchy is in part a reflection of the attitude of the masses toward anyone who is responsible for or collaborated with the Metaxas regime that brought a fascist regime upon them and dragged them into the war.

The anti-royalist sentiments in the Greek battalions which have been incorporated into the British Eighth Army reached such proportions a few months ago that the British government insisted that King George make some statement about his "democratic intentions" for post-war Greece.

King George obliged by issuing a declaration that six months after the end of the war he would permit an election to let the people decide what form of government they want. But he omitted all details on how this would be done, for example, whether parties would be legalized and permitted to campaign.

The people of Greece know King George—his principles and promises. He vowed to uphold the constitution in 1935, only to destroy it a few months later. He declared that he would safeguard the people's democratic rights, and then suppressed all civil liberties. He promised honest elections, but instead forced a fascist dictatorship upon the country. We shall finish with this "beloved" King in another article.

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This Is Labor's Own Problem!

By W. F. CARLTON

This business of the Fair Employment Practices Committee and the hearings on racial discrimination on the railroads may soon have far greater significance than appears at present.

We pointed out last week that both the government and the rail companies are laying the chief blame on the railroad unions. The government took advantage of the situation to put itself in a fairly strong position. It can say: "Look. The government committee brought the question out into the open and exposed it."

LOOKING IN THE WRONG PLACE

Now Negroes themselves are looking to the government to take steps on their behalf. Says the Pittsburgh Courier (December 25):

"One thing seems clear: that the FEPC is only a small part of the government machinery which must be brought into play to win for Negroes equal rights in the railroad industry."

This sounds innocent and reasonable enough. But the Courier then goes on to say that the fight will be a terrific one against the combined power of "poll-tax congressmen, the powerful railroad unions, with a million and a half members, the powerful railroad combines, with money and power." These, says the Courier, will do all in their power to make the FEPC and the President "back down on the issue."

This is the general attitude of the Negro press. Labor, organized labor, must see to it that it does not continue. **It must bring pressure to bear on the railroad unions to separate themselves from the railroad combines on this question and to do it now.**

A DANGEROUS PROPOSAL.

All labor is concerned. We repeat: ALL OF LABOR! Philip Randolph has demanded more funds for the FEPC and has also asked that the National Labor Relations Act be amended to give the National Labor Relations Board the power to act in cases of discrimination. This means direct interference by the government in the affairs of unions. It is a sentiment that is growing, and it must be fought on all fronts.

Let the capitalist government deal with the capitalist railroad combines. The relations between workers, Negro and white, in a union, are the concern of labor, Negro and white. All labor must unite to keep the government from interfering with the union movement. But to do this most effectively, labor must set its own house in order.

It is asserted in the Negro press (the Atlanta

Daily World of September 21) that the government is actually preparing a bill to establish a Court of Fair Practices to carry on in peacetime the work done by the FEPC in wartime. The employers will be prohibited from refusing employment or discriminating in conditions of employment against persons on account of creed, race or color. But "Unions would be called to book if they deny membership, expel from membership or discriminate in any way against an individual for similar reasons."

IT CAN TURN AGAINST LABOR

There is no question at all that such a bill can be turned into an instrument against labor. First, such a bill dealing with railroads will discredit labor. Next, it will make the Negroes think that the government, and not labor, is their friend; and, finally, it will bring the labor unions more closely under government supervision.

If such a bill is passed, every employer in the country will use it at the first sign of any dissatisfaction among backward elements with the promotion of Negroes in the plant or with complete equality of working conditions, etc. We may be sure that the bill will be drawn in such a way as to give the government far more powers than will appear in the press reports. The bill will also have loopholes enough for all of Wall Street to crawl in and out of as it suits them.

Labor must see this question in sound perspective. It is not only a matter of the rights of Negroes in the unions. It is that, but today it is more than that. It is a question of whether the capitalist government and the capitalist railroad combines will continue to persecute Negroes, shift, dodge, promise and not perform, and then, as now, seek to pass the buck. It is a question of whether this will continue or whether labor will boldly announce that the capitalist class cannot and will not solve the Negro problem, but that labor will solve it.

CORRECTING POLICY IS OUR JOB

It is in labor's total interest to do so, and, as this latest maneuver of the bosses shows, it is in labor's immediate interest as well. Above all, it must be recognized that this projected bill is the concern not only of railroad unions, but of all labor as well.

No one can correct errors in union policy except the great mass of our union rank and file. It is, after all, our job and not the job of a bunch of professional politicians in league with big business.

Milk Drivers Get "Sick" - -

(Continued from page 1)

in the metropolitan press to assure its customers that it was oh, so sorry; but it wasn't their fault, don't you know? At the same time, the news columns contained long statements by F. J. Andre, president of Sheffield, about how "REASONABLE" their employees are.

On the second day of the suspension of milk deliveries—when the Borden employees caught the "sickness" which got their fellow workers in Sheffield—the papers tried the tear-jerking stunt of printing large pictures of women, with baby carriages, buying milk direct from the Sheffield depots for their little ones. Sob, sob!

Besides all this, the WLB issued ultimatums to the workers and their own local and international union leaders unfaithfully opposed them in their action.

Job Security Involved

This gives some idea of the batteries of propaganda that were opened up against the employees of Sheffield and Borden when they refused to take lying down the decision of the WLB that job insecurity is the accepted principle of "American democracy."

For that is exactly what is involved.

After eighteen months of dispute as to whether or not the powerful dairy trust had the right to fire its employees wholesale—on the excuse, of course, of "war necessity"—the WLB decided in favor of the trust. "Freedom from Fear"—those emp-

ty words written in the Atlantic Charter and babbled about so much—does not apply to fear of losing a job. The WLB decision means that 959 milk drivers will be out on their ears. How or where they will earn a living for themselves and their families was not the concern of the WLB!

No wonder drivers were suddenly afflicted with "asthma," "sore arms," "sore backs," "bad colds"—and called up that they could not come to work.

No wonder pasteurizers and platform men—when they heard of the afflictions of the drivers—caught the "germs," became "ill" and went home.

No wonder the Borden employees on the second day got the contagion from the 3,500 Sheffield workers. They understood that for any workers to be deprived of their bread and oleomargarine is a threat to all workers. That was enough to make them very sick indeed.

It is no joke to be turned out of a job that a worker has learned, where he has joined the union, where he has hoped to be able to continue making a living for himself, his wife and children.

Milk Trust Benefits

The pretext for this anti-labor and anti-human decision is that the war situation demands the skip-a-day delivery of milk. Ostensibly the purpose is to save rubber and gasoline. But—

For some time now milk deliveries in and around the metropolitan area have been made by horse and wagon.

So how much rubber and gas will be saved by throwing 959 drivers out of jobs?

However, the milk trust will save on its labor costs. It will make more profits at the expense of these jobless workers.

Here is a case that should be fought to the finish. It involves the vital issue of whether the bosses shall be allowed to use so-called "war necessity" as the pretext for curtailing their working staffs, for piling more work on fewer workers—for adding to their own profits by taking the bread out of the mouth of labor.

This question is so very important because once the bosses reorganize their operations on the basis of the curtailed working staff, that will be the set-up for the post-war period also. Then what?

The Shame of It

The housewives and other working class elements inconvenienced by the milk drivers' "illness" should turn their wrath against the War Labor Board and the milk trust, who have acted on the capitalist principle of each one for himself and the devil (of a milkman) take the hindmost.

The shame about the milk drivers' action is not that some of the community suffered inconvenience, but that the whole working class community did not rise up in sympathy with the men robbed of their jobs for the benefit of the milk trust.

Yes, the whole working class population should, with one voice, have demanded the immediate restoration of these workers.

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Farce of Price Rollback- -

(Continued from page 1)

the other items in the program, but the above information is enough to show how a program of practically nothing, which was nevertheless front-page material for the newspapers, can later be reduced to less than practically nothing in a few weeks. The later reports were, of course, buried in small articles on inside pages or put way back in the business section.

The OPA also announced in September that it was going to control the prices of winter fruits and vegetables to bring about a further deduction of 1.3 per cent in the cost of living. On October 8 the Journal of Commerce reported that the OPA, after months of study, had worked out ceilings for thirteen fresh vegetables, that the War Food Administration had protested that these ceilings were too low for adequate production, that the OPA in a compromise move then raised them somewhat. Stabilization Director Vinson is now said to be examining the results, trying to decide whether some of these ceilings aren't higher than the Price Control Act permits.

Prices and Clothing

While all the hullabaloo about cutting food prices was going on, the Times reported the following about clothing in its business section on September 15:

"Negotiations looking toward a slight increase in price levels for many low-cost apparel items and a downward adjustment of the ceiling prices for higher price goods have been opened with the OPA by the War Production Board's Office of Civilian Requirements, it was learned authoritatively here tonight.

The conferences at present are concerned mainly with adjusting maximum price regulations affecting work clothing, women's low-price dresses and a variety of children's wear."

The report goes on to state that manufacturers have not been producing the low price items (just one more of the countless strikes staged by business—W. W.) and that it would be better for consumers of such goods (that is, working class families) to pay a little more for them than to be forced to buy in a higher price range.

The Magic in Indies

As our readers know, that magic index has been dropping steadily for the last few months. Low cost clothing disappears from the stores. The index drops. The OPA grants New York laundries a two to eight per cent increase in prices, and similar increases in Baltimore, Philadelphia, Washington, Newark and other cities (New York Times, September 26). The index drops. Egg prices keep getting bigger and eggs smaller. The index drops.

We are still waiting for the President to add his magic voice to that magic index. Meanwhile we feel forced to repeat a priceless quotation from Business Week of August 21, which we have used before:

"The goal of reducing the cost of living to the September, 1942, level may not be reached, but some JUGGLING OF FIGURES, some judicious wage increases, and some SMOOTH TALK will be coupled to achieve an over-all result which will look pretty good to the public" (emphasis ours).

A Problem for the Labor Movement

How Shall Ex-Servicemen Organize?

By R. FAHAN

Even though the war is far from over, there is much talk in this country about the veterans of tomorrow. No need to wonder why—every political movement realizes that the men who return from the battlefields by the millions are going to wield a potent influence on the future of this country.

Certainly the forces of reaction realize this fact. Every political quack, every nightshirt demagogue, is polishing up the pie-in-the-sky promises he plans to hawk to the future veterans. From the nightshirt Nazis like Joe McWilliams to important and semi-official spokesmen of big business like Captain Rickenbacker, they are attempting to lure the soldiers into the camp of reaction.

The danger is so apparent—and, to face the facts, the success thus far of the Rickenbackers is so obvious—that even the timid labor leaderships are beginning to realize that labor must meet the veteran problem if it is to continue to exist.

WHAT WILL SOLDIERS RETURN TO?

Of course, the ideal solution would be for the soldiers to come back home and be absorbed into the normal channels of civilian life. It would be preferable, for example, if the returning soldiers, shortly after their discharge, would return to their old status as workers or farmers or students or whatever they happened to be in civilian life. In that way, the artificial grouping of soldiers, which has been forced upon the men and which is the mark of their separation from the normal processes of civilian life, would more or less disappear. In that way, the great masses of soldiers would return to the ranks of the working class from which they came, there to participate in the struggles of their class side by side with their brothers; and the tiny minority of soldiers who come from the wealthy capitalist circles—well, let them return to THEIR class, too. That process of separation would represent a healthy development.

But it is one of the marks of the rottenness of capitalist society that it will not permit the soldiers to resume their normal place as civilians even after they are discharged. Everyone knows that the post-war world is not going to be a very pretty one. All that the experts differ on is whether there will be twenty million unemployed or twenty-five million—and even the most optimistic hardly dare speak of less than ten million unemployed.

THE SOLDIERS WILL ORGANIZE

The capitalist politicians, from Roosevelt down, speak piously of "providing" some kind of work

for the veterans, thereby admitting that the capitalist economy will not be able to absorb both them and the millions of war workers thrown out of employment because of the decline of war production.

The returning veteran will discover that capitalist society has no place for him. The heroes of yesterday will be the outcasts of tomorrow; we may again see men with the highest military decorations for bravery in action selling apples in the streets.

This situation will necessarily provoke the veterans to maintain their group allegiance. If they cannot gain a place in civilian life, it will be only too natural for them to band together in the hope of being able thereby to better their lot and to express their indignation at the fact that they, who suffered most during the war, will have had to return to a life of insecurity.

It is clear, then, that the veterans are going to organize. Probably they will organize into a number of groups, and perhaps some new version of the American Legion will be formed. Regardless, therefore, of whether we socialists approve of the general idea of veterans forming their own organizations (a situation, we wish to re-emphasize, caused more by the inability of post-war society to give them a satisfactory life rather than by any necessary desire on the part of the veterans), they are going to do so. Some of them will probably be pretty close to fascism. Some of the soldiers have fallen for the anti-labor propaganda which has been so industriously pumped into them; others may fall for it when they come home to a life of disappointment.

A JOB OR THE AFL AND CIO

It is a dangerous situation for the American labor movement. If our AFL, CIO and railroad brotherhoods remain indifferent to it, we will come to regret it. It requires action—bold and imaginative and immediate.

First of all, there is the general consideration that the labor movement must immediately begin a concerted campaign to get its point of view across to the soldiers. It must be in the forefront of the fight for soldiers' needs. And it must begin to consider seriously the problem of a veterans' organization sympathetic to and largely based upon the labor movement. This latter point may not be an immediate one—but if anything is ever going to be done about it, some thinking has to start now.

For instance, the CIO Shipyard Workers Union, at its recent convention passed a resolution urging the CIO to organize a veterans' auxiliary within its ranks. This union is to be applauded for at

least being aware of the problem, although we think its specific solution is inadequate. For one thing, such an outfit would be too narrow. It would occupy the same general status as the CIO Women's Auxiliary, which is clearly not enough for the veterans.

And what about the AFL veterans, the veterans who belonged to the railroad unions, to the mine workers union; and those thousands who didn't belong to any union? Secondly, we think that the proposal for such a CIO Veterans Auxiliary shows a certain lack of imagination. The veterans, rightly or wrongly, will want their own independent organization, which won't be an auxiliary to anything.

We think that the labor movement ought to give serious consideration to the idea of stimulating the creation of a Working Men's Ex-Servicemen's League (the name isn't important, of course). Such an organization, while embracing worker-veterans and while sympathetic to labor, would be an independent outfit and therefore could take in members from any union.

A PROPOSED PROGRAM

In order to insure its labor base and make certain that it not be "captured" by any reactionary group like the Stalinists, it would be well for such an organization to be based primarily on labor posts organized among veterans within various local unions—including members from all unions in its ranks—and also permitting the organization of neighborhood posts composed of members not actively engaged in unions. What could such an organization achieve? To list only a few things:

1. It could reintegrate veterans into the labor movement and educate them in the spirit of trade unionism.
 2. It could fight for the legitimate needs of the veterans, such as medical care, bonus, etc., without at the same time falling into the trap of pitting these demands against the equally legitimate demands of the working class.
 3. It could utilize its varied experience to serve as the nucleus for union defense groups which will undoubtedly be needed in the post-war period to beat off the attacks of fascist hoodlums incited to destroy the labor movement.
 4. It could serve as a counter-force against the reactionary veterans' outfits which will undoubtedly be formed and which will pretend to speak in the name of all the veterans.
- Yes, the veterans are going to organize. On the one hand, big business, and also the native fascists, are getting ready to try to corral them into their kind of veterans' organization. Will labor counter with a bold, fighting, imaginative veterans' movement of its own? That is the challenge.

The Case of Sgt. Alton Levy

By REVA CRAINE

The disclosure of even some of the facts about Alton Levy, former army sergeant who was "broken" by court-martial, demoted and sentenced to four months at hard labor, reveals that this case involves a good deal more than ordinary punishment for a simple infraction of army discipline. It is a case which involves a former trade union organizer, who voiced his objections to the Jim Crow treatment accorded to Negroes in the army generally and in his camp in particular.

On August 16, Alton Levy was arrested and sent to the guardhouse. He was later tried by court-martial on three counts, two of which charged him with circulating slanderous remarks about the commanding officer and his wife, and the third with making "false statements... willfully and maliciously" about the mistreatment of Negro soldiers at the Army Air Base in Lincoln, Neb., where Levy was a sergeant.

For some time it was very difficult for any of his friends outside the Army to find out what the actual charges were and every attempt to investigate the facts around the case was met with a reply that since Levy was tried under a "special" court-martial, the case could not be appealed to Washington.

The Workers Defense League has taken an interest in the case and through its attorney, Leon M. Depres of Chicago, has been able to gather sufficient facts to point not only to anti-labor and anti-Negro bias in the Army and in this particular court-martial, but an admission by the court-martial that the evidence against Levy was inadequate.

Before he was drafted into the Army in May, 1942, Levy was an organizer for the International Ladies Garment Workers Union. After his preliminary training, he was sent to the Air Corps Administration School and from there he went to the Lincoln, Neb., camp as a sergeant. In writing to his friends, he made mention of the fact that he was displeased with the way the Negroes

in his camp were treated. For example, in July he wrote:

"Most of the whites in charge of them (the Negroes) are Southerners. Naturally, as a result, they are treated like dogs. They are kept in camp while others are allowed out. They are hounded and harassed and yelled at and cursed and insulted and generally treated abominably."

Inside the camp, he frequently discussed this problem with his fellow officers. Early in August, he

court retired again. Everyone present congratulated Levy and he believed himself acquitted. On Monday the court again reconvened over defense counsel's objection, recalled Miss Armstrong, a civilian, and then found Levy guilty of all specifications. Levy says that Miss Armstrong's oral testimony on Monday added nothing to her written statement which had previously been admitted into the record.

Depres further revealed that two of the three counts against Levy were based on what was common gossip about the commanding officer, that everyone in camp was talking about it, and that, at worst, Levy was also discussing these rumors with friends. The third charge is the really serious one—namely, that he protested the treatment accorded the Negroes in the camp.

From the facts thus far it is fairly clear that Levy was chosen to be court-martialed because of his background as labor organizer and because he was championing Negro rights in the Army. The other charges against him are highly irrelevant.

At the trial itself Levy stated: "I did say the Negroes were mistreated. I did say only forty were allowed passes each night. I did say that my training group, not the base, had about two hundred Negro soldiers. But here's the strange thing: Although these are allegedly false statements, at no time did the prosecution attempt to prove or establish that they were false statements."

In other words, though convicted of making "false statements," the court did not investigate whether or not these statements were false. Instead, Levy was actually convicted because he dared talk about what has been such a publicly recognized fact—that Negroes are Jim Crowed and mistreated in the Army.

The Workers Defense League, together with several unions and Negro organizations, is trying to get the case reopened, although the War Department has already sustained Levy's conviction. It is to the direct interest of the labor movement to support this effort by the WDL.



SGT. ALTON LEVY

was interrogated by army intelligence officers about his objections to the way in which the Negro soldiers were mistreated. Soon after that came the arrest and court-martial.

A very important fact about this court-martial is that only forty-eight hours before the verdict of guilty was pronounced the presiding officer at the trial, speaking for the court, expressed the belief that Levy was innocent. Depres, WDL attorney, wrote in his report on the case:

"On Saturday, August 14, the court reconvened and the president, Major Washington, said that the court believed Levy to be not guilty of the specifications as charged and asked whether he might be found guilty of a different offense. After receiving a negative answer, the

Morrison 'Shortens His Line'

On What Class Owns Russian Property

By MAX SHACHTMAN

It is little short of amazing what people can do with the riches of modern vocabularies when they are hard put. Take, for example, the problem of announcing, in the least embarrassing way, the fact that your army has retreated instead of advanced or even held its own.

Those responsible for issuing the war communiques do not simply say: "Our opponents won the battle, and we retreated." How would that sound back home? Instead, they write: "We have successfully disengaged our forces from the enemy," or "Enemy attempts to contact our rear guard were effectively thwarted," or "We have triumphantly evacuated the fortress because of a lack of adequate housing and sanitary facilities," or, more simply, "We have shortened our line." What sounds better.

So it is in war nowadays; so, it seems, it is in political debate.

A good case in point is M. Morrison, the Cannonite essayist of *The Militant*. A few issues ago in these pages we pinned him right to the board. He described as "one of Shachtman's debating tricks" the "suggestion that someone" in *The Militant* had said that the morale of the Red Army proves that Russia is a workers' state. I thereupon proceeded, without tricks of any kind, to quote a half dozen occasions when writers in *The Militant* said precisely that.

MORRISON ADMITS "MISTAKE"

What does Morrison reply in a roundabout way, presumably in discussing a letter from a Chicago reader? In *The Militant* of October 2 he blandly writes: "It was a rather risky statement to make, I must admit, because it is quite possible that some comrade was guilty of making a bad formulation. I assumed the risk because Shachtman failed to cite any quotation justifying his assertion." (Emphasis mine—M.S.)

But once Shachtman has presented six or seven quotations "justifying his assertion," what does Morrison do? He "shortens his line," as they say in the war communiques. He repeats one of the quotations to create the impression that it was the product of some isolated and not entirely thoughtful or representative writer. "Shachtman," he says, "has to be grateful to the editors of *The Militant* for overlooking an incorrect formulation now and then" (my emphasis—M.S.).

What Morrison does not tell his readers (who, he hopes, did not see the LABOR ACTION article) is that it was not a question of "overlooking" an "incorrect" formulation "now and then." Among other quotations we printed one from no less a document than the "unanimously adopted" political resolution of the convention of the Socialist Workers Party. What is more, I showed pretty plainly that this "incorrect formulation" was the sum and substance of every comment *The Militant* makes on Russian morale. But Morrison is shortening his line, and not only on that front.

TROTSKY AND THE "MISTAKE"

In a still earlier issue, I addressed a few questions to the editor of *The Militant*. That paper has been repeatedly printing the outright Stalinist falsehood to the effect that the means of production in Russia belong to the workers and peasants, or the people. We asked the editor how he reconciles these statements, made in an "official" Trotskyist paper, with the assertion by Trotsky that the identification of "state property" with "possession of the whole people" is the "fundamental sophism of the official doctrine," that is, of Stalinism.

Morrison replied by "officially" ignoring my questions. In other words, and as usual, he dealt with them in a round-about way. But his answer was good enough, all things considered. Do the workers own the factories, as *The Militant*

has said repeatedly? No, replied Morrison, "they know too well that this is a fiction of the bureaucracy." And two weeks ago: "I must, however, admit that the expression 'the workers of the Soviet Union own the factories' was actually used in *The Militant*." (Emphasis mine—M.S.)

If Morrison were genuinely objective, and did not confine his indignation to the Stalinists for the mockery they make of self-criticism, he would have acknowledged that this "incorrect formulation" was not only "actually used in *The Militant*," but is contained, word for word, in the above-mentioned official convention resolution of the SWP. I quoted it before. Perhaps my lordly critic didn't see it, either when it was written, or printed, or when he voted for it in the convention, or when it was reprinted. So here it is again, straight from the resolution:

"The Soviet masses have something to fight for. They fight for THEIR factories, THEIR land, THEIR collective economy." (My emphasis—M.S.)

Thus, as I once said, the very fountainhead of Stalinist fiction is the official position of the SWP, and not of an occasional writer whose repetition of it is "overlooked" by the editor "now and then." To be the disseminator of Stalinist fiction (and the fundamental one, at that) is a confoundingly bad thing for a "Trotskyist" party and paper to be. To be pilloried for it is even worse. Therefore? Therefore, Morrison "shortens his line" and condemns, not the resolution he voted for (pardon me—"overlooked"), but condemns... Shachtman. As the Germans say in their communiques: "Our forces were obliged to disengage themselves because the barbaric Russians were armed."

WHERE THIS LANDED THE ESSAYIST

We would be done for the moment if Morrison had not retreated from the frying pan into the fire. Once forced to admit that the Russian working class does not "own the factories and the state," he has removed the only serious argument that Russia is a workers' state, degenerated or otherwise. The Chicago reader whom his October 2 article ostensibly answers without quoting directly, has obviously asked: If the workers do not really own the factories, what happens to our theory of the workers' state?

Morrison's explanation is a piece of muddled sophistry if ever there was one, and it goes without saying that it is smeared over with liberal layers of "dialectics."

We know, as Morrison does, that there is no capitalist class that owns the factories in Russia. We know, as Morrison now admits, that the working class does not own them. We also know that the working class has not the slightest degree of control over the state that does own Russian property.

A FICTION FOR A FICTION

Who, then, does own the land, and factories in Russia? What class? We say: a new class developing out of special historical circumstances, the Stalinist collectivist bureaucracy. Morrison says: No class owns the means of production! That is all that his "answer" to the Chicago reader can mean. A magnificent sample of Marxian and dialectical thinking! For the first time in the long history of the class struggle we have a society in which no class owns the property and no class controls the state. The property is not owned by a class at all. It is merely nationalized, that is, it is owned by the state which is not a class. Is it any wonder that the Chicago reader is perplexed? What reader wouldn't be? And is it any wonder that the Stalinists declare Russia to be a classless, socialist state? Morrison abandons one Stalinist fiction only to approach another!

Morrison is still shortening his line. He refuses to say in simple or complex English what

class owns the factories and (controls) the state, and then adds that the question is of no consequence! He quotes an entirely inappropriate paragraph from Trotsky, says: "It will of course not satisfy the doctrinaires who insist on a specific answer to the question: what class owns the nationalized property in the Soviet Union? The answer can only be to show that the Soviet state owns the factories and then proceed to give Trotsky's explanation of the nature of the Soviet state."

Morrison can "proceed to give Trotsky's explanation" from now till the end of time. He can write himself blue in the face with attacks on those who "insist on a specific answer to the question" as "doctrinaires" and "non-dialecticians" and "abstractionists." He can shorten his line to a pinpoint. But if he is to stop making a mockery of the fundamentals of Marxism, he must "proceed" from the premises that the state is the political instrument of a class which, fundamentally, controls it, and that there is no class society in which NO CLASS owns the property—be it slaves, land or factories.

MUST ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS

Twist and turn, squirm and squeeze—you cannot evade an answer to the extremely concrete (by no means abstract or "legalistic") questions which Morrison readily answers for every country, in every period of history, except Stalinist Russia, namely:

What class owns the property (means of production and exchange) in Russia? Not the working class, not the capitalist class—then who?

What class controls (or "owns") the state machinery in Russia? Not the working class, not the capitalist class—then who?

What class is the SOCIAL BENEFICIARY of the present-day Russian state and the productive relations prevailing in it? In Kerensky's time, it was the capitalist class. In Lenin's time, it was the working class. And under the Stalinist bureaucracy?

If it is "doctrinaire" to "insist on a specific answer to the question" of who "owns," then why is the capitalist class so infernally concerned about what class owns the factories (and controls the state) in America, England, Germany and Japan; why is it so concerned about CHANGING the class ownership of the factories in Russia; and why are such "abstractionists" as Morrison (and ourselves) interested in changing the class ownership of the factories in the United States?

Is there perhaps another Chicago reader who will give Morrison occasion to explain further?

LABOR ACTION

A Paper in the Interests of Labor

Published Weekly by the
LABOR ACTION PUBLISHING ASSN.
114 West 14th Street New York 11, N. Y.
(3rd Floor)

Vol. 7, No. 42 October 18, 1943

ALBERT GATES, Editor

Subscription Rate: 60 Cents a Year

75 Cents for Canada, New York 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.

Convention of the UAW--

(Continued from page 1)

that free worker who in any crisis... is the best worker and the most durable worker and the worker who will stay in there fighting when the enslaved workers of other countries are all gone."

The government closed its direct presentation with a report on the state of the war from the production angle and the strength of Germans and Japanese. This report was read by a lieutenant-colonel who had served on the staff of General Patton. He was accompanied by four men who had been in Africa and Italy: a captain and three sergeants. All had been wounded.

The parade of these wounded men across the platform was the most indigent part of the whole sordid show put on mainly for the purpose of "softening up" the delegates so that they would submit to the demands that were coming on reaffirmation of the no-strike pledge and for support of Roosevelt for a fourth term. Working men who had been drafted into the Army and who had been wounded in a war not of their own making were being used in a convention of workers to retard the militant activity of labor.

What About Labor's Problems?

There was one very interesting side to the report made by the lieutenant-colonel. He said: "Deficiencies did exist in the Sicilian campaign, but they existed not because we lacked material, but just because we couldn't move enough equipment forward in the assault, and we never did get a chance to catch up."

His whole description of the African and Italian campaigns demonstrated that there was no lack of material on hand but that the problems were mainly those of organization, transportation and overcoming such difficulties as arise from weather conditions, corrosion, etc.

Despite all the hallyhoo and sobbing over production, no one has yet dared to make the statement that any fault in the military operations was due to supplies not being produced in the factories. Characteristically enough, none of the government speakers had anything to say about wages, working conditions or hours. All they were interested in, of course, was that labor keep its nose to the grindstone and receive its reward, if any, after the end of the war.

The low point in the "more production" propaganda ballyhoo and "don't let our boys down" tear-jerking was reached in the speech of Philip Murray. Murray closed his speech to the convention with the statement of seven points that the CIO will fight for, but the whole program can have no meaning whatsoever in the light of the main emphasis which Murray put forward in connection with support of Roosevelt and the war.

Murray's Pious Speech

Murray's speech was similar to the rantings of a backwoods evangelist, calling sinners to repentance, dangling them over hellfire, calling on them to mend their ways or be damned, pleading with them to continue in the straight and narrow path lest the devil get them and they descend into hell.

The speech was delivered with all of Murray's whimpering pioussness but, at the same time, with direct thrusts designed to overawe and frighten the delegates into keeping up support of the no-strike pledge and Roosevelt's program.

He began with the statement that "our primary interest for the moment... is directed toward the winning of this great, noble struggle." He wished that the delegates could have the opportunity to look inside the war picture as the officers of the CIO have had the opportunity to do. The CIO gave a pledge that "it was their firm purpose, no matter what may happen, never to indulge

war and Roosevelt and to hold things in line so that this purpose could be accomplished.

How did the various forces, groups and leaders react to this situation? We have already mentioned something of the mood of the ranks of the union and the fact that the leadership was compelled to give heed to their pressure.

Incentive Pay on the Floor

Probably the clearest expression of rank and file sentiment was on the question of incentive pay. Not even the Stalinists dared propose outright adoption of incentive pay schemes to the convention, despite the fact that they are known to be the foremost proponents and defenders of this system of piecework wages. Although they presented a minority resolution on the question, it was not a direct proposal for incentive pay. They were for "local autonomy" in the establishment of wage payment plans and they approved the action taken at Columbus on March 9 by the International Executive Board.

The position taken by the board, at this meeting, however, was to reaffirm "its traditional opposition to incentive pay plans. In plants where incentive plans have or have not been in existence and the membership of such plants are desirous of having incentive plans, such plans must be approved by the International Union."

The whole fight of the Stalinists was made around the point of leaving the decision up to the locals with, as they called it, certain safeguards. The point is that they did not dare to come before the convention with their main position on this question as it was expounded for weeks and months in the *Daily Worker*, in pamphlets and in speeches by Earl Browder. And the reason, of course, was that the sentiment of the workers was overwhelmingly against them.

The majority (Reuther-Leonard) resolution was outspoken against incentive pay. This resolution forbids the signing of incentive pay or piecework agreements by locals. Where they already exist they may be continued. The resolution directs all officers to conform strictly to this policy and it put the UAW squarely on record against the incentive pay and all piecework schemes. In this the Stalinists suffered a decisive defeat.

Consideration of the most important questions that came before the convention will be continued in LABOR ACTION in the next two issues. This will include the resolution for a fourth term for Roosevelt, the resolution on the no-strike pledge, the struggle for control of the International, the resolution on the Negro workers, the role of the Stalinists, the part played by the progressives and militants in the convention and LABOR ACTION's appraisal of the convention as a whole.



RICHARD FRANKENSTEEN

themselves in the so-called pre-war luxuries of strikes for the duration of this war." Murray felt that the story of the soldier dying from wounds while a worker bent over him saying: "Buddy, Buddy, you are dying because I did not give you the tools to fight with," should be repeated over and over. And Murray added: "That, I hope and trust in God, will never happen in America."

"Preparing" the Delegates

Then Murray told the story of the death of the son of a member of the staff of the CIO. "He died that the Auto Workers could meet in convention.... He died that you and I could enjoy our freedom.... That is what our boys are fighting for."

To be sure, this is what this young member of the CIO was fighting and dying for. This is what is in the minds of hundreds of the worker-soldiers. But Phil Murray did not tell the convention that those who started the war, who are responsible for it, who make the policies and who profit from the war, are not fighting the war in order that the Auto Workers may meet in convention, or that labor may be free!

This was the setting of the convention that was to prepare the delegates for continued support of the

Report on the AFL Convention

The meeting in Boston is still on as we go to press. Many important questions remain to be taken up. The report of the convention will therefore appear in the next issue.