



GREETINGS TO THE UAW CONVENTION: FORWARD TO LABOR POLITICAL ACTION!

Counter-Demand!



Labor Action This Week - -

is a special UAW issue. We have, as you can see, devoted the greatest part of the issue to greeting the UAW convention and discussing its problems. LABOR ACTION will have reporters at the convention. For an analytical report on the proceedings of the convention, don't miss—

Labor Action Next Week - -

which will be, as well, a sample of the EIGHT-PAGE LABOR ACTION. In addition to the reports on the UAW convention and other labor and world news in the regular section of the paper, the four-page magazine supplement will contain articles on the general labor scene, a page of international news and comment, educational features, articles on Spain and on U. S. imperialism, an analysis of Six Years of the Workers Party, a review of "Black Metropolis" and other interesting material.

DON'T MISS NEXT WEEK'S LABOR ACTION!

By DAVID COOLIDGE

The United Automobile Workers (CIO) will meet in national convention at Atlantic City from March 23 to March 30. This convention will convene hard on the ending of the General Motors strike and at the end of the general wave of strikes which have been going on for the past three months.

Undoubtedly all of the important aspects and problems connected with the strikes in the automobile industry will come before the convention. There was the matter of what the corporations call "company security"; there were the problems of wages, prices and the rise in the cost of living, arbitration, fact-finding boards, the intervention of the government and the demands of the unions in connection with wages, prices, profits and production.

The most dramatic and far-reaching demand made by any union during the strike wave was the demand of the General Motors division of the UAW that the corporation open its books for union scrutiny in order that the union might investigate the corporation's claim that wages could not be advanced without an increase in the price of automobiles. This was in addition to

a demand for 30 cents an hour increase in wages. General Motors steadfastly refused to grant this demand, taking the position that corporation financial records are none of the union's business, that the books are not open even to the corporation stockholders, and that the union was trying to get "a finger in the pie."

The strike and the negotiations dragged on. The government entered with its conciliators. President Truman initiated the system of "fact-finding" boards. These boards established a new wage formula, which established wage increases for industrial workers generally of about 19 1/2 cents an hour.

In the matter of "company security," the UAW, under the leadership of Leonard, agreed to corporation protection clauses in the new Ford contract which were decisively rejected by the membership of Local 600 when submitted to a vote of that local.

While the GM division of the UAW was struggling with GM for the 19 1/2 cents rise which the government had recommended, the Stalinist-led UAW-MWA settled with General Motors for its GM workers for 18 1/2 cents without consulting with the UAW or without notifying the UAW that they were going to sign up.

General Motors stood adamant against accepting the recommendation of the government that the GM workers be given a 19 1/2 cent increase. The corporation offered 18 1/2 and refused to budge from this figure. Finally the UAW proposed that the company agree to send the dispute to arbitration by an arbitrator to be appointed by the President. The company refused. A week or more later the UAW leadership accepted the corporation's offer of an increase of 18 1/2 cents an hour coupled with the few minor concessions.

ROLE OF LEADERS

These are the outstanding matters in connection with the procedure in the handling of the strike and the wage negotiations. There are other questions, however, which are of paramount importance in connection

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Vote to Continue Strike

CHICAGO, March 17.—By a tremendous majority, the members of Local 719, UAW-CIO, voted to maintain their picket lines around the Electro-Motive plant of the General Motors Corp. While voting overwhelmingly to accept the terms of the agreement recommended by the National GM Conference, the members of this militant local decided to stay out of the plant until General Motors comes across with an adequate local agreement. This after four months of picket lines against the country's richest corporation!

After the recommendation of the executive board to refuse to accept the local agreement until it incor-

porated the position of the union on shift preference and the elimination of the merit spread in wage brackets, and after several militant speeches by rank and file members, the membership voted to "stay out of the plant."

By their action these UAW workers flung the charge that a strike settlement had been delayed by union politics right back into the teeth of General Motors and their paid hirelings.

The local union is faced with a real test now that the chips are down. Mass picket lines will have to be established to block any attempt at bringing in scabs. A thorough local

publicity job will have to be done to make the entire community aware of the issues involved, and the community's stake in a victory of the union. The local will have to insist that the International Executive Board give it some real financial assistance.

It is time that the top leaders of the CIO be put on the spot for not giving greater financial assistance to the GM strikers who spearheaded the attack against the corporations for the entire labor movement.

No one can deny that the tremendous display of fighting spirit and solidarity shown by the GM workers helped win gains for the rest of the labor movement. The national CIO has been remiss in its duty to the GM strikers who pointed the way to the future by linking the issues of prices, wages and profits. The rest of the labor movement can profit from this lesson. The least it can do is put the entire weight of all organized labor behind the fight of the locals that are still on the picket lines.



R. J. THOMAS: CAUGHT IN UNDEMOCRATIC ACT

UAW Caucuses Dispute GM Strike Strategy

By JACK WILSON

DETROIT, Mar. 17.—Ending of the nation-wide General Motors strike last week removed the last restraining force to the pent-up differences in the UAW-CIO leadership over policies. A bitter dispute involving GM strike strategy and control of the UAW flared wide open, with the national convention beginning March 23.

Spearheading the reckless campaign to divide and confuse the auto

workers and to discredit at any cost Walter Reuther, UAW director of the GM division, the Stalinist clique has begun a major drive to gain controlling influence in the UAW.

The Stalinists are being aided by the bloc into which they have maneuvered R. J. Thomas, union president, and Philip Murray, CIO president, who are supporting the wild and dangerous charges which the Stalinists are pumping into the ranks of the UAW.

The source of this alliance between the Murray-Thomas wing of the top CIO leadership and the Stalinists is their joint responsibility for the dissatisfaction of the GM strikers over the isolation and prolongation of the strike, the failure to settle any major plant grievances and the retreat from the excellent original strike demands of the GM workers.

The sensitivity of Murray to his role in the whole strike wave revealed itself in his speech before the CIO executive board meeting yesterday in Washington. Murray heatedly denied a report that he had interceded with the Truman fact-finding board to urge them not to recommend more for the GM strikers than he had obtained for the steel workers, namely 18 1/2 cents an hour wage increase. Charles Wilson, GM official, had said as much in negotiations with the UAW leaders.

Fishing in troubled waters, the Stalinists have attributed the spreading of this story to the Reuther faction and have done everything possible to intensify the factional heat among the leaders of the CIO.

As a matter of fact, both Murray and the Stalinists know that the dissatisfaction and widespread criticism of Murray's role in the GM strike does not stem from any such company-inspired story. It was not taken very seriously by anyone. The chief criticism of Murray is the undenia-

ble fact that his terms for settlement of the steel strike were a direct blow at the whole demands and fight of the GM strikers. His formula: "Higher wages, higher prices for the corporations," was the direct opposite of the GM strikers' demand for higher wages without an increase in prices.

Murray likewise knows, just as R. J. Thomas knows, for he was in on the GM negotiations, that GM officials challenged the UAW negotiators to bring Murray to the conference table, because "Murray will settle for 18 1/2 cents, just like he did in steel."

Murray is reasonable, Reuther is unreasonable, the GM officials chanted. Nor can Murray explain away his silence on the GM strike in its last few weeks, his failure to come out strongly in support of their just demands. This policy lent support to the talk among auto workers that Murray was afraid for his prestige if Reuther got a better contract with GM than Murray got in the steel strike.

There is another big question that remains unanswered yet about the GM strike. What was Murray's role

in the secret deal made by the Stalinist leaders of the United Electrical Workers Union covering 25,000 GM workers organized in the UE? This secret pact shocked the whole labor movement, coming as it did in the middle of the GM strike and carried out brazenly by the Stalinists. Even R. J. Thomas denounced it in blistering language.

The Daily Worker, in defense of this deal, stated on Friday, March 15, that "UE leaders worked closely with Murray in line with general CIO strategy." It is also known that Leo Pressman, Murray's general counsel, was here the week that the UE signed the pact with GM officials, though UAW leaders did not know of his presence. Was Murray a partner in this secret deal, as the Daily Worker says? Auto workers want to know the answer.

The Murray-Thomas-Stalinist bloc is trying to evade these major issues or any real discussion of GM strike strategy, by asserting that Reuther was responsible for the prolongation of the strike. Thomas now claims the GM strike was called six

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R. J. Thomas Pulls Bureaucratic Trick

DETROIT, Mar. 18.—A first-rate scandal involving R. J. Thomas, UAW-CIO president, in a brazen and bureaucratic maneuver to get votes at the coming UAW convention for his re-election, became known today following a meeting of Chrysler Local 7, Thomas' home local.

After the Detroit Free Press carried a story that six of the nine delegates from Chrysler had announced support for Walter Reuther, UAW director of the GM division, for president to replace Thomas, Thomas came to the union meeting and hurled wild charges that Reuther was another Homer Martin, and that he was trying to split the UAW. Thomas also denounced Reuther as a "factionalist" and a maneuverer!

Then a resolution with Thomas' approval was introduced by a Stalinist clique at the local meeting, which mandated the Chrysler delegates to vote for Thomas!

Opposition speakers were cut off, a voice vote was taken and the resolution passed, according to a union man who left the meeting in disgust and who told this reporter the story.

The pay-off on this action is that the union meeting lacked a quorum and that the action was illegal! This was admitted by Tom Cunningham, union president and Thomas supporter, when questioned by Reuther supporters from the floor!

Cunningham and the Stalinist clique refused to permit a count of the members of the union present, knowing that it would prove conclusively what Cunningham admitted verbally, namely, that the meeting lacked a quorum!

Even though this was true, Cunningham threatened the delegates, some of whom were present, with disciplinary action by the local union if they didn't follow the mandate of the resolution! One of the union delegates, a veteran, got up and told the packed meeting of Stalinists and Thomas supporters that he would vote according to his conscience.

The fraudulent character of this entire maneuver of the Thomas-Stalinist bloc is shown by the fact that the union delegates were elected on the basis of Reuther's program and for his candidacy as president. They were elected by over 2,000 votes apiece, yet a small meeting with less than 150 present tried to change the expressed will of the ranks in the shop!

"And Thomas talks about democracy! He sat there watching the clique do its work!" said the union man to this reporter.

The unprincipled nature of this whole situation was also shown by the fact that Thomas attacked Reuther for once writing: "Yours for a Soviet America" and for talking socialism!



WALTER REUTHER: SHOULD STICK TO GM PROGRAM

Aid Your Paper in Fund Drive!

By PAUL BERN

Organizer Local New York, WP

American Labor is on the march. But it has run into the snag of dependence on capitalist politicians, principally Truman. No, labor itself did not depend on Truman. It was either on the picket line or prepared to go on the picket line. Its union leadership, however, depended on Truman with the result that instead of meaningful wage increases, we have Truman's "Big Steal" formula and rising prices that are eating away our wage gains.

The UAW-General Motors program was a sure winner. Increase wages 30 per cent! Stop price rises! Open the books! Hundreds of thousands of working men were on the march to

win those demands, but they were ripped by Murray and those other union leaders who spent their time conferring with capitalist stooges in government, instead of with picket line captains.

Labor won on the picket line. But what it won, has been stolen in Washington through government-approved (and union leadership conceded) price boosts. Even in the UAW, which waged the longest and most dramatic strike, the leadership retreated before "fact-finding" boards and under government pressure instead of relying for victory on the GM program that had won millions to labor's cause.

You have been reading our analysis in these events in LABOR ACTION every week. This is only one of la-

bor's fights that we have been writing about. To cover all the problems of labor, international as well as domestic, we need more space.

LABOR ACTION must keep going forward. For this we need an eight-page paper. And we are planning to start publication of this eight-pager on June 17. The extra four pages will appear as a specially planned and edited magazine section.

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

To establish a permanent eight-page LABOR ACTION, the Workers Party has started a \$15,000 fund drive. Part of the fund will go to LABOR ACTION.

We ask your help in raising this \$15,000.

The capitalist newspapers are subsidized by advertisements from General Motors, Ford, etc. We are not. We are subsidized by our readers.

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