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# LABOR ACTION

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A PAPER IN THE INTERESTS OF LABOR

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## Seattle Housewives Demand City Ordinance to Lower Price of Milk

SEATTLE, Nov. 8—Winding its way through the heart of Seattle's business center last Monday, a caravan of cars assembled by the militant Homemakers Price Control League disembarked at City Hall to present to the City Council demands for a city ordinance establishing the price of milk at 14 cents per quart delivered.

During the after-lunch rush hour, Seattle citizens, crowding the downtown streets, gaped at the sight of colorful signs displayed on the 15 or more cars parading through town, stopping traffic and awakening interest and speculation. This parade, starting out from the AFL Trade Council Building, carried slogans saying, "We'll strike till the cows come home—and that's no bull," and "Babies cry for it, and Daddy can't pay for it." This demonstration was another action organized by the up-and-coming Seattle housewives' movement to lower the price of milk.

### DEMAND HEARING

The City Council, proceeding with its regular order of business, ignored the sixty housewives with their children who crowded the chambers, and then adjourned. Mrs. Sally Hogan, chairman of the League, angrily demanded that the Council hear the assembled group. The president of the Council, a suave master of all the tricks of parliamentary procedure,

explained that the Council would listen to the plea, but that it would do so informally as they had not been notified in advance of the intended visit. This was hotly contested by the representatives of the League, who insisted that registered letters had been sent to the Council informing them of the forthcoming visit, and putting forth their demands.

In spite of the "unofficial" character of the interview, the infuriated housewives stated their case. Mrs. Hogan gave the history of the organization and stated the plight of those who are daily being forced to reduce their living standards below the minimum subsistence level because of the continuous increase in prices.

Mrs. Clara Krasnowsky and Mrs. Margaret Webb then spoke and told how the visit to the Milk Dealers Association had netted the League nothing. The poor milk processors were barely eking out a living, so Mr. Bird of the Association claimed. It would be impossible to lower milk prices, said the representative of the milk processors.

### SEEK HOUSEWIVES' CONTROL

Mrs. Helen Burns then presented the specific proposal of the League, namely, that the Council exercise its emergency powers and pass a city ordinance establishing the price of milk at 14 cents, said ordinance to be enforced by a committee of house-

wives and union representatives having jurisdiction in milk processing and distribution.

The councilmen, despite the "unofficial" nature of the interview, found their tongues promptly and stated that such a request was "an invasion of private property rights." To such legalistic hocus-pocus, the mothers and homemakers present in the Council had a swift and sure response. We want milk prices lowered, and you have it in your power to lower them, they stated. The charter of the city gives you this emergency power—we demand that you act.

From this point on, the interview got a bit confusing. Mrs. Sally Hogan then read a letter handed to her, which was supposed to summarize the views of the League. However, the letter mysteriously included a request that the City Council pass a resolution asking that control be put back on the price of milk and milk products, and excluded any mention of the ordinance. Those familiar with the antics of the Stalinists over the last ten years will quickly recognize their despicable and cunning hand.

The councilmen were quick to seize upon this confusion brought into the picture by this act of duplicity and asked the women which they wanted, an ordinance or a resolution. As one councilman put it, we pass resolutions all the time. (This said between yawns.) However, the wom-

en closed ranks and pressed home their demands.

### RALLY LABOR SUPPORT

The League since the visit to the City Council has launched a campaign to rally the support of the labor movement. The Milkdrivers Union was approached and heard the plea of Mrs. Hogan. However, no action was taken—the secretary of the local stating that the interests of the drivers were opposite to that of the Homemakers League.

The drivers get more money if they get more customers, he said. Despite all efforts, he could not be made to see that the high price of milk was cutting the wages of the drivers in two ways: one, by decreasing the amount of milk sold; and two, by having their salaries mean less because of the high price of milk and milk by-products.

A horse of a different color was the visit of Mrs. Cysewski to the Lumber and Sawmill Workers Union. There her appeal was greeted enthusiastically, and the local passed a resolution endorsing the program of the League and then passed the hat to help out the ladies.

Plans are under foot for a caravan to Olympia, the League announced. We will continue to press the Council for action, and return again and again. In the meantime we are planning the Olympia march to rally support throughout the state, they said.

A 15 or more per cent boost in rent ceilings has passed out of the stage of rumor and is now a virtual certainty. Washington circles expect this latest price steal momentarily. The National Association of Real Estate Boards, with victory in sight for its campaign to hike rents, is licking its chops in anticipation of dumping rent ceilings entirely.

The NAREB has been lobbying for a long time to put over a three-point program:

- To jump residential rents 15 per cent "as a matter of fundamental justice and emergency relief" to landlords who are presumably gasping for air in the squeeze of poverty.

- To lift controls entirely for those landlords who would grant a year's lease on the 15 per cent robbery.

- To eliminate all price ceilings and rent controls on new residential construction.

In addition to working on their agents in Congress, the landlords have been trying various devices to put over their plans. Sections of the NAREB have been threatening landlord "strikes" to keep vacated apartments empty until they get the green light on raising rents. Others have been threatening "sit-downs" in which they would deny tenants any kind of service until rent controls are killed.

We reported in last week's LABOR ACTION one such move in Chicago. And at the same time we reported the action of the Workers Party, which forced the landlords to cancel a scheduled "strike" meeting. We made the point then, and repeat it now, that swift working class action, multiplied a thousand times over the Chicago scale and involving the people of every community in the United States, will be necessary to stop the landlord campaign.

Time is fast running out on this issue. It is expected that with controls lifted on everything but sugar, (Continued on page 2)

## New Wage Demands By Rubber Workers To Meet Price Rise

By E. J. McLAIN

AKRON—The United Rubber Workers wage policy committee met in South Bend, Indiana, October 27 and 28 to determine how much money they would ask for to offset the tremendous cut in their standard of living since the last 18½ cent raise. The figure set by the representatives of all the locals was 26 cents an hour. This of course doesn't come close to gaining back for them the amount they have lost in exorbitant prices in the last eight months.

Negotiations are to begin very soon on a big four (Goodyear, Goodrich, Firestone and U. S. Rubber) basis and the gains that they make will be retroactive to November 1. When these four large locals negotiated with their companies last March they agreed to open their contracts when necessary on a big four basis. The necessity is apparent now, and has been for some time. But the significance of this decision is that if necessary joint action will be taken and these four mammoth companies, with a total of around 60,000 workers, will strike simultaneously.

### FOR INDUSTRY-WIDE ACTION

Akron workers have learned some lessons during the last ten years and one of them is that sporadic plant-wide strikes aren't nearly as effective as if they were on an industry-wide basis. A big four strike would not be industry-wide for there are many smaller companies and subsidiaries of the four large companies, with separate locals and contracts. The next logical step would be to have an effective strike weapon on a complete industry-wide basis. For every major strike in Akron has been weakened by the placing of orders at other plants of the same company in different parts of the country.

For instance, during the last strike at General Tire & Rubber Co. its tires were allegedly manufactured under its own label at Goodrich.

It is significant also, that the United Rubber Workers were the only large group of organized labor to bring forth the amount of their demands. The UAW and the United Steel Workers have both met and stated their intention to seek higher pay but neither have set any figure.

### COMMITTEE LIMITATIONS

The international policy committee was created at the last convention of the URW in September. The members of this committee were to be elected at the next local election but since this meeting was held in the interim between the convention

and elections, representatives were appointed or temporarily elected to serve until regular elections in November. Each local was granted representation according to its size. This method limits the large locals for they are allowed only five members after their size exceeds 6500 workers. And there are very many small locals entitled to one representative.

The policy committee is therefore set up so that the small locals who have an 8-hour day may force an impasse in the demands of the large Akron locals who have a 6-hour day. This situation was deliberately brought about by the international to limit the power of the large locals and make them more dependent on the arch conservatism of Buckmaster and other labor bureaucrats.

The power of the international officers, of course, lies in the small locals and their desire for perpetuation in office (which trait, is, if not the definition of bureaucracy, at least an inseparable component) it is very evident. It is manifested in their petty machinations and combinations for power. Splitting the large 6-hour locals from the smaller 8-hour locals to the obvious detriment of both groups as they are attempting to do with their Wage Policy Committee setup, is an example of this policy.

## Stalinists Take Lead In French Elections

Incomplete returns from France's election of November 10 for a National Assembly to function under the newly adopted Constitution indicate a slight sharpening of the basic political divisions existing in the country between the parties of the right and those of the left.

The most significant fact in the results has been the fact that the Communist Party has replaced the party of Bidault (MRP) as the leading party in the new National Assembly. A summary of the vote according to latest available figures gives the following:

### BULLETIN:

We have not yet received direct word from France on the vote polled by our comrades of the Parti Communiste Internationaliste (PCI). However, a New York Daily News report lists 60,000 votes for the PCI.

Communist Party—163 seats—5,476,000 popular vote—28 per cent.  
Socialist Party—93 seats—3,454,000 popular vote—18 per cent.

Thus, the two major parties with working class membership, with a total of 256 seats out of 619, and with 46 per cent of the total vote, failed to attain a clear-cut majority, indicating a serious decline in their general position in France since a year ago. This general decline, however, has been largely in the influence of the Socialist Party, which dropped from 120 seats in the old Assembly to 93 now, and lost over 700,000 popular votes. The Stalinist party retained its huge vote and even registered a slight increase, indicating that it still remains the party supported by the bulk of the French working class, unfortunately.

### RIGHT-WING MAJORITY

The right-wing parties, headed by Bidault's MRP, recorded the following results:  
Popular Republican Party (MRP)—

160 seats—5,000,000 popular vote—25 per cent.  
Radical Socialist Party—59 seats—1,971,000 popular vote—11 per cent.  
Republic Party (PRL)—42 seats—3,137,000 popular vote—12 per cent.

Actually, the conservative, pro-capitalist parties attained a majority of the seats and of the popular vote, with the growth in influence of the PRL (the most reactionary, pro-fascist party of the right) being of the utmost significance. The PRL increased its vote slightly and gained eight seats over its former position. The Socialist Party undoubtedly lost many of its votes to the Stalinists as well as to the Radicals and supporters of Bidault, indicating the general tendency for that party to become weaker and more divided than ever.

The French Trotskyist Party (PCI) ran 119 candidates, but did not elect any. At the present moment, its popular vote is not yet known, but will undoubtedly be greater than the 45,000 attained at previous elections.

### GOVERNMENT IN DOUBT

With the elections over, the problem of the formation of a new government must now be resolved. The Stalinists, as the largest party, are demanding the right to name the new President of France along with the Premiership of the government to be formed. It is clear they have no intention, at present, of breaking their coalition with the Socialist Party or the bourgeois party of Bidault (MRP). In fact, they may attempt to re-establish the 1936 Popular Front alignment with the Radical Socialist Party of Daladier and Reynaud!

The French Trotskyists will undoubtedly continue their pre-election demand that the Socialist and Communist Parties break this reactionary coalition with capitalist parties and refuse to participate in the administration of capitalist France.

In the next issue of LABOR ACTION we shall publish a more detailed analysis of the election and its meaning, based upon final figures and reports from France.

## Imperialist Conflicts Sharpen in UN Arena

By ALBERT GATES

The meeting of the United Nations and its various sub-committees and sub-departments at Lake Success (1) in New York State is heavily overlaid with hypocrisy. No one country has a monopoly over this dubious quality. For each power and its satellites is embroiled in an involved and complicated game of imperialist politics. The true aim of the game is camouflaged by copious use of the words "democracy," "freedom," "self-determination" and the "rights of the people." Yet, however ingenious the camouflage, the imperialist aims of the contestants sticks out at every stage of the struggles which dominate the sessions of the UN.

There is endless testimony to prove that the UN does not differ in principle from its predecessor, the League of Nations. The participating nations are almost the same (except for the two dominant powers, the United States and Russia); some of the architects of Geneva ply their trade at Lake Success; the new figures are cast in the same mold as the old. Each dispute which reflects the bitter clash of conflicting imperialist interests is covered with the camouflage cited above; the disputants hurl epithets at each other like actors rehearsing a play. But they are all deadly serious. In common they deceive the people; among themselves they are fighting for high stakes.

So long as the UN meets there will be no end to the obscene exhibitionism of the big powers carving up a world in the name of freedom and democracy. We shall follow its sessions closely as a living exhibit of the hypocrisy of imperialism and the decay of capitalism. At the moment we cite only three examples among many:

1. TRUSTEESHIPS OVER NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES, INCLUDING AREAS MANDATED BY THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS. The charter of the UN adopted a plan of trusteeships by "directly concerned" nations over such territories. The professed aim of the powers was that trusteeships would be the initial steps toward a future complete independence for the territories involved. The imperialists turned anti-imperialist! But in the context of the real aims of the powers, the fight over trusteeships reduces itself to a struggle between the two main imperialist blocs—the Anglo-American and the Russian.

Shortly after the war ended in Europe, the Russian imperialists demanded a share of the former Italian colonies in Africa. Their demand is still before the UN. Now the Russians claim to be "directly concerned" in the former Japanese Pacific territories held by the United States. The United States has demanded the right to be sole administrator over some 1,500 Pacific islands under a United Nations' trusteeship. She has

asked that the veto be set aside on this question. In the event, however, that objections are made against American trusteeship, President Truman has already described these territories as "strategic areas" of the U. S. If the UN does not accede to the American demand, then the territories formerly held by Japan will be retained by the U. S., anyway. This is tantamount to a veto over other powers' objections, despite pious objection on the part of the U. S. to the veto principle. The areas involved are the Marianna, Caroline and Marshall Islands, German possessions mandated to Japan after the First World War, and other Japanese possessions, such as Okinawa and Iwo Jima.

Now the Russians have put in their claim for a "joint trusteeship" of these territories as a "directly concerned" state. To bolster up this demand the Russians cite their interest in Germany. Since the above mandated areas were former German colonies Russia cannot be excluded from participation in the trusteeship. In attacking the American proposal, Russia also denounced the British strategy of discussing the Palestinian situation with the U. S., Arab and Jewish representatives outside official channels of the UN.

This is indeed a spectacle! Russian imperialism protests the type of trusteeships proposed by Great Britain, the U. S., (Continued on page 8)













