

LABOR ACTION

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'This Is a Free Country...'

War mobilizer Charles E. Wilson, in his radio appeal to the rail strikers, crooned into the mike:

"This is a free country. We rely on the individual sense of responsibility of the individual citizen. We are proud of this. It is the basic difference between our system of democracy and the slave system of the Soviet Union."

Three days later, the army broke the strike by threatening mass firing of strikers. The military control the jobs of the individual citizens who work the railroads. An anti-strike injunction remains in effect. The courts hit the union with a fine.

And after thus making clear the "basic difference," it was Truman who compared the strikers to "the Russians!"

'Wage Freeze Is a Fraud' Labor Leaders Say—but Cover Up Truman's Role

By BEN HALL

Percolating at last into the consciousness of labor leaders is a grim awareness that the price freeze is fraudulent and that the wage freeze begins a general attack on labor standards. This much is progress.

At first, union officials hoped to "live with" the wage freeze. Labor's representatives on the Wage Stabilization Board refused to sign the wage-freeze order but they issued no protest against it. A quiet behind-the-scenes understanding, they hoped, would permit labor to hold on to its gains, to maintain the buying power of its wages after a series of pro-labor "interpretations" of the freeze.

Basically, they still cling to this illusion. Only it is becoming clear that nothing will fall from the heaven of a benevolent administration. They will have to "fight." But against whom and for what is not so clear to them.

At an emergency New York State CIO conference, convened for action on the wage-price crisis, Michael Quill, president of the state CIO council, said: "the freeze order was a lousy order and labor was not consulted. . . . Mobilizing the country for all-out defense is something we are interested in but we are not interested in union-busting. The sooner labor starts raising hell, the sooner our problems will be recognized."

Emil Rieve, a member of the Wage Stabilization Board and the

president of the Textile Workers Union, told a congressional committee: "as far as the American working people are concerned there is no stabilization program—except wage stabilization."

Walter Reuther blasted away: "The government's so-called price freeze is a complete fraud upon the American consumer. Prices of food, clothing and other basic necessities were 'frozen' at the stratospheric levels to which they had soared in the past months. The government rolled back the price of Cadillacs which workers and low-income families do not buy. The government rolled back the price of scrap iron ten dollars a ton; but people do not eat scrap iron. . . . No one with any understanding of the basic problem of inflation can in honesty defend the weak-kneed and half-hearted effort of the government on the price front. Viewed objectively, the phony price-control order was issued primarily as an

(Turn to last page)

Injunction Harry's New Performance: Army Firing Threat Breaks Rail Strike

By GORDON HASKELL

The Truman administration broke the railroad switchmen's strike on Thursday, February 8. The method used comes directly out of the arsenal of the most rock-ribbed anti-union employers. Under instructions from President Truman himself the army, which has legal control over the railroads, ordered the strikers to return to work within 48 hours and threatened to fire permanently anyone who refused to comply with the order.

Just how many switchmen were still "sick" at the time the army's strikebreaking order was issued is not known. The daily press now claims that the back-to-work movement was already in full swing in response to war mobilizer Charles E. Wilson's speech of the previous Monday.

It is true that a large number of workers returned to their jobs on Tuesday. But such was the solidarity of the men and such the depth of their feeling about the justice of their cause that even by Thursday afternoon a number of key yards were still tied up. This is demonstrated by the fact that at that time the

embargo on other than first-class mail was still in effect at East Coast cities for all areas west of the Mississippi and for Illinois, Michigan and Ohio.

At the press conference in which Truman announced his strikebreaking order he added insult to injury by saying that the railroad workers or at least their leaders were acting like "a bunch of Russians." The reaction of the workers is understandable. Some 1500 of them at Columbus, Ohio, signed a petition to be wired to Truman which read in part: "We resent your statement that American railroad workers . . . are worse than Russians. We consid-

er such a statement relegating American citizens to a lower status than that of Stalin who you previously stated was a decent old fellow not many months ago." In the Pennsylvania station in New York one trainman was heard to shout to another: "Hey, don't call me George. Call me comrade!"

COURTS IN ON KILL

Of course, this is just working off the real anger and frustration felt by the yardmen and trainmen in their switch-shanties and cabooses all over the country. Their action was a magnificent demonstration of determination and solidarity. Large numbers of them held out for ten days in the face of a concentrated barrage of government, newspaper and radio pressure. Yet it has failed not only to gain the immediate demands for which their unions have been negotiating for over two years, but it demonstrated once more that the combination of government and employers which finds its most open expression in relation to the railroad

(Turn to last page)

Shachtman, Kerensky Debate '17 Revolution

CHICAGO, Feb. 11—In the first direct confrontation—since 1917—of the genuine democratic and socialist ideas of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 with those of the governmental leader whom it overthrew, Max Shachtman, national chairman of the Independent Socialist League, met Alexander F. Kerensky, president of the last of the provisional governments that ruled Russia from March through November 1917, in debate at the University of Chicago last Thursday on the question "Was the Bolshevik Revolution Democratic?"

Attracting unusual attention among all university and liberal and labor political circles, the issue and the personalities involved drew the largest attendance of any political meet-

ing held on the campus in many years.

Shachtman, as the outstanding spokesman of democratic and revolutionary socialism today and a long-time collaborator of Leon Trotsky, unequivocally defended the democratic character, achievements and aims of the first victorious workers' socialist revolution, sharply underlining that Stalinist despotism has totally

crushed and replaced it. Kerensky, now a man of 70 years living and lecturing in this country, defended his actions of 1917 in attempting to stem the mass democratic tide demanding immediate peace, land and freedom by trying to invoke alleged undemocratic practices of the Bolsheviks and insisting that Stalinism is their product.

More than 1000 listeners packed the university's Mandel Hall to capacity and many people were turned away, under university regulations. The meeting was held under the auspices of the Politics Club, a student socialist club for political discussion and action. Justin Grossman, chairman of this club, welcomed the big audience and introduced as

chairman of the evening's debate Professor Bert Hoselitz, executive director of the university's Committee on International Relations.

The audience gave its fullest attention to the speakers in their respective turns before the mike. An unfortunate aspect to the otherwise smoothly running affair was that the chairman did not maintain the agreed-upon schedule, with the result that Shachtman, who spoke first, exceeded his 40-minute presentation time by 10 minutes but Kerensky took 25 minutes extra. In the rebuttals each took 20 minutes; Kerensky again speaking second. At the conclusion of these, the chairman adjourned the meeting, because of the lateness of the

hour, thus depriving Shachtman of his scheduled 5 minute rebuttal.

Wide publicity was given on campus to the debate, with the student newspaper *The Maroon* giving it a big first-page article. It was announced over the campus-wide radio; the proceedings themselves were tape-recorded by the university for replaying later over this hookup to the dormitories.

Although some in the audience may have attended the debate out of mere curiosity to see an historical personality like Kerensky, their serious demeanor indicated their concern with the matters at

(Report of debate on pages 6-7) stake.

General Strike Answers Lockout As Israeli Class Struggle Sharpens

By AL FINDLEY

At the call of the executive committee of the Histadrut, the General Federation of Jewish Labor in Israel, 70,000 workers of the country went out on a 30-minute general strike demonstration on February 12, to show their solidarity with the locked-out metal workers.

About 7000 metal workers, employed in 260 factories, who are demanding a wage increase equivalent to about \$1.40 a day, have been locked out by the concerted action of the employers.

The Association of Manufacturers in Israel obviously feels that, given the victory of the General Zionists in the municipal elections and the discontent among the population with economic conditions, now is the time to precipitate a class struggle on a national scale. As always the bourgeoisie shows more loyalty to its own class interests than the labor leaders do to theirs.

Both sides recognize that the issue goes beyond the immediate interests of the metal workers. For one thing, there are the rest of the 70,000 workers of Israel who are ready to make a similar demand. Then too the issue is part of the general political struggle for hegemony in the country, a struggle which may be precipitated any day in new national elections to the Knesset (parliament).

WAGES ON ICE

Some information is necessary to understand the background. While the labor leaders placed national and Zionist interests above class demands during the rule of the British and were therefore willing to defer or com-

promise labor's demands, they did win an escalator clause in all their contracts. Inflation galloped through the country during World War II and during the Arab-Israeli war, but wages thereafter formally kept pace with prices. With the coming to power of the present Israeli government dominated by the Mapai (Labor Party), a policy of austerity (*Tsneh*) was inaugurated. The overwhelming excess of imports over exports, the huge armament expenditures and mass immigration made some such program inevitable.

But the government, with the consent of the majority leaders of the Histadrut, also introduced wage-freezing. They went even further and embarked on a policy of reducing the wage-price level so that Israel could better compete on the world market. The government ordered price reductions, and after a few months, when these reductions showed up in the official cost-of-living index, it ordered a cut in wages. This policy worked for a while.

While formally just, this procedure was unfair to the workers for a number of reasons. Many critics claimed that the cost-of-living index was faulty and biased against the workers. Mapai, the opposition pro-Stalinist labor party, puts its greatest emphasis on this point. This criticism, while true, was probably grossly exaggerated, and besides the government did make some minor revisions. A more serious objection is that while wage controls are easily imposed, price controls are easily evaded.

In any country where the overwhelming sections of industry and trade are in the hands of private industry as in Israel, the private enterprisers display real enterprise in evading the law when they do not flout it openly. Hidden inflation appeared. When

an item was obtainable at the official price, it was always of inferior quality, shorter measure, etc.—in short, an inferior commodity at a higher price. Most often, however, it proved impossible to obtain any products in the legal market; they all vanished. The black market, however, was well enough stocked. It is an open secret that everybody in Israel must buy on the black market in order to live.

BOTH SIDES GIRD

A more fundamental criticism of the government's wage-price policy is that it froze labor's relative standing at a disadvantageous point. The relation of labor's share to the profits of the capitalists was low as a result of years of compromise of labor's demands in the interests of Zionism, as mentioned above. The rank and file had the right to expect that a labor government would raise labor's share. Instead the Mapai froze the situation at this disadvantageous ratio.

As long as it seemed that it was possible to make this freeze work, the Histadrut majority leaders went along. The collapse of the much publicized government campaign of police action and criminal prosecutions to halt the growth of the black market has led the Histadrut leaders to demand a raise but as yet has not led to an abandonment of the wage freeze.

The Jewish employers are using all the traditional arguments of capitalists the world over to oppose a wage rise. On the one hand, they demand a free economy in order to raise prices and profits; on the other, that labor be controlled. The argument that increased wages can come only from increased production is heard: "Work harder, longer and ever better, but don't touch our

sacred profits." In addition, the bosses are quoting many a speech of the labor leaders in favor of wage-freezing to justify their adamant stand.

Both sides are making preparations for a real struggle. The Association of Manufacturers has rejected an appeal from Prime Minister Ben Gurion to call off the lockout and negotiate on the grounds that nothing should be allowed to interfere with the program of bringing immigrants to Israel—unity in the face of threat of war with the Arabs on the tense international scene. The association has raised a large fund to subsidize the metal manufacturers. In addition, it has empowered its executive to order lockouts in any other industry. Employers, individually or in groups, have been forbidden to negotiate with their workers on any demands as long as the metal industries' lockout continues.

The Histadrut answered this decision of the capitalist class by its call for the 30-minute general strike demonstration and an appeal to all workers to donate a day's pay for the relief of the locked-out workers. The labor federation has also demanded that the government revoke the power granted by it to the Association of Manufacturers to allocate raw materials.

It is interesting to note the reaction of the American Jewish press to all this. When a few hundred bakers went on strike in the fall, a hue and cry was raised that they were endangering the immigration program into Israel and the national security of the country. But when the employers lock out thousands of workers and close down a vital \$50 million industry, thereby really endangering national economy and national security, not a word of reproach is to be heard.

Dazzled

A news item from Sydney, Australia, indicates how the friends down under learn about American "austerity" and "equality of sacrifice":

On February 13, says the item, "the Cunard luxury liner Caronia, with 550 wealthy Americans aboard, is due to arrive here on its 104-day world cruise." These American tourists, including "several Texas millionaires," are paying up to \$30,000 each for the junket. "Businessmen, dazzled at the thought of 550 free-spending Yanks hitting town, are predicting that the junketing Americans will spend at least \$125,000" during their brief stop at Sydney.

Purge

Purges of "nationalist deviationists" go on virtually unabated in the land where the "national question has been solved," Stalin's Russia.

Last November, it was the turn of Azerbaijan. The secretary of the Azerbaijani CP, at a meeting of the regional Academy of Sciences, violently attacked the group for its failure to produce the study on Azerbaijani history, literature and economy which the party had requisitioned three years before. His bill of particulars:

The state university and the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute were working unsatisfactorily. The *History of Bolshevism in Baku and Azerbaijan* had still not been written. The *Short History of Azerbaijan* contained eulogies of various sultans, khans and sheikhs; the works of several Azerbaijani scientists were "full of mischievous ideas," had an anti-Russian bias, praised Islam as "culture-bearer," and minimized the role of the Bolshevik Party in Azerbaijani history. All of these thought-criminals had "an objectivist and cosmopolitan tendency." Machesov's *U. S. Economic Intervention in Azerbaijan in 1919-20* also went under the knife.

There have been similar attacks previously on Ukrainian, Tadjik, Uzbek and Kazakh historians.

Auto Bosses' Link with Gangsters Exposed As New Light Is Cast on Briggs Beatings

By WALTER JASON

DETROIT, Feb. 11—For two days last week, thousands of people here sat glued before their TV sets at home or jammed the saloons and bars in what was described as "world series crowds" to watch a sensational drama of real life that surpassed the imagination of any Hollywood racket story.

How could the show miss? Its cast included top auto industry executives and their silent partners, the racket bosses of Detroit. Its director was the Kefauver Senate Crime Investigating Committee. Scheduled for three days, the public hearing was called off after two days. But the damage was done, and the subsequent developments have left many embarrassing questions unanswered.

What began as an investigation of "rackets" in Detroit touched the most sensitive spot in the sanctimonious air of respectability of business and industry here: the not so strange alliance of the underworld czars and major sections of the auto and business world, with the union movement as the victim.

For a long time, the smug apology in Detroit over the well-known links between the mobsters and the Ford Motor Company of the days of Henry Ford and Harry Bennett consisted of saying, "Well, the new Ford regime eliminated Bennett, and it's all past history."

But the public hearing showed that the big-time racketeers, like Joe Adonis and the man described by the Senate committee as the head of the Mafia gang in Detroit,

D'Anna, still hold lucrative contracts with Ford!

Harry Bennett's performance before the committee, with excellent closeups over TV, simply served to increase suspicions, for his bland unwillingness to testify on important questions confirmed every question asked him.

He had no recollection of how these racketeers received their very profitable contracts—Adonis for his exclusive conveying business in the East and D'Anna for his Ford agency. Bennett denied it had anything to do with "labor troubles," and as for the gangsters on the payroll, it was just a "rehabilitation" program.

When asked to name some of the key figures in Detroit's gangland, Bennett declared heatedly, "What do you want me to do? Get my head blown off?" The amazing thing is that the committee did not see fit to take up this remarkable statement. Is Bennett on the spot if he tells what he knows? Whose power is so great that Bennett fears it?

Who Paid for the Briggs Job?

The Kefauver committee did not go as deeply into the Ford setup as does Keith Sward in his brilliant and monumental work, *The League of Henry Ford*, for Sward adds more names, from major political figures in Michigan to the top racketeers, in developing the theme that the connection was based on the idea that Ford would get protection against unionism in return for major concessions to and protection for the racketeers.

Nor did the Kefauver committee dig into the interesting question of how the former FBI chief in Detroit, whose knowledge of gangsterism would naturally be pretty complete, has become a major figure at Ford, replacing none other than Harry Bennett. We refer, of course, to John Bugas.

But the Ford story is not a new one. What is "new" is that the story remains the same today. And the Ford Motor Company is not the only concern embarrassed by its close links—with top racketeer elements.

For the truly sensational story of the Briggs Manufacturing Company's "business deals" with strikebreaking racketeers—deals that are still going on—was the highlight of the hearings.

And the mystery of who beat

up six prominent Briggs Local 212 leaders since 1945 doesn't seem like much of a mystery any more. What is curious is why there have been no arrests of company officials and racketeers. More exactly, why a special so-called "labor rackets" grand jury failed to return indictments in 1947.

Ken Morris, president of Briggs 212, was nearly killed in 1945. Genora and Sol Dollinger were brutally assaulted. Art Vega was nearly killed. So were others. Who was behind these murderous assaults? Who paid for the job?

To understand the whole picture it is necessary to go back to 1934, when a strike at the Michigan Stove Company on East Jefferson Avenue was broken. It employs around 1000 persons. As the Kefauver committee pierced the fog of ambiguous answers from reluctant witnesses, a 16-year record of violent anti-unionism revealed the following:

Sicilians were illegally smuggled from Canada and hired by the company as virtual slaves of one Sam Perone, a man with a criminal record. The whole plant consisted of relatives or people from the same community in Sicily. This element acted as strikebreakers in 1934 and established its power.

John Fry, president of the company, suffered from memory lapses too, and his evasions and squirmings made juicy drama over TV. The sarcastic committee lawyers had a field day with him.

"How did you happen to give a day laborer, who could neither read nor write, a business con-

tract that furnishes him \$50,000 a year salary?" a committee lawyer asked.

"Just a business deal that looked good at the time," Fry replied.

Is it a wonder that Detroit was agog at these hearings?

But this turned out to be just small stuff, somewhat bizarre but only a prelude to the next aspect of the hearings. This concerned the Briggs Manufacturing Company, one of Detroit's major supply companies. It was a followup to the Perone story.

For it seems that Perone's son-in-law obtained an exclusive contract with Briggs to handle its \$1,000,000-a-year scrap-metal business! How did this happen? What did it mean?

W. Dean Robinson, president of Briggs, explained it merely as a business deal about which he knew very few details.

To refresh Robinson's memory, the Kefauver committee read him excerpts from his testimony before a secret one-man Grand Jury hearing, headed by Judge George T. Murphy. It seems that Robinson at that time knew some of the details.

"My Story May Sound Fishy . . ."

(4) The company lost more than \$14,000 a month on the contract for many months.

(5) Henry J. Roesch, former industrial relations director for Briggs, called the contract a company attempt to buy industrial peace.

(6) Walter Briggs Jr., executive vice president, said there was no connection between the contract and the terrorizing of unionists.

(7) W. Dean Robinson, Briggs president, said that though the Briggs-Renda relationship, "does seem strange," the company made no effort to sever it.

(8) A Briggs official who opposed the contract and went to the FBI about the "Renda plot" was fired by the company!

(9) A UAW faction in Briggs 212 was allied with Renda, and the beatings resulted from the failure of the victims to go along with the Renda faction and the company!

In these days when Senator McCarthy can ruin people by mere accusations, without any

"Who, Me? I Don't Remember . . ."

Between these major hearings, the committee paraded before it all of Detroit's top racket bosses, Pete Licavoli, Mike Rubino, William Tocco, Louis Ricciardi, Angelo Meli, and others. In each case, a neat bit of irony was furnished by the revelation that these men, as well as Perone, own palatial residences in the snooty Grosse Pointe area, where the auto tycoons and Detroit business executives live.

How these men obtained control of major laundry companies and other service businesses was not completely brought out. But that they did control them was indisputable. How one racketeer loaned a steel company \$100,000 cash was told on the stand.

For sheer entertainment it would be difficult to compete with the picture of these men seeking to cover themselves and the men behind them, during these hearings.

Ricciardi, for example, was a typical witness: "I'm just an ordinary man, making a living. I have no record." He couldn't recall five arrests on murder charges. "Who, me? I don't remember, but if you say so, maybe I was."

"What do you do at the Kleen Line company?"

"Oh, I just work there."

"You make a living?"

But what exploded the hearing was the action of Judge Murphy, who decided to make public the 28-bound volumes of testimony around the very delicate subject of Briggs contracts and Briggs beatings.

Here is what it said, in summary form:

(1) Top Briggs management forced through the contract, over the objections of subordinates who were suspicious of the beneficiary, Renda, and his hoodlum father-in-law.

(2) By simply asking for it, Renda got the contract—though he was only about 26, a \$1.50-an-hour factory worker, without capital, equipment, trucks, experience, or even a telephone—"a man who didn't have one thing to recommend him except he is the son-in-law of Sam Perone."

(3) In return, Renda offered the Briggs Company protection against strikes which had plagued its plants—and these strikes dropped sharply after the Renda association began in April 1945.

(Emil Mazey, UAW-CIO secretary-treasurer, testified that the contract was a payoff for the murderous beatings.)

Surely, a joint AFL and CIO investigating committee should take up where the Kefauver committee left off. For the story of the dialogue between business and the racketeers has just begun. Its effect on the union movement and its anti-union significance requires far more attention to this problem than the union movement has given it.

ECA on Pan

Another blast at the operation of the Marshall Plan in Europe, from an eminently conservative source, came in January from a series of articles in the Washington Post by Mrs. Agnes Meyers.

She had "interviewed political leaders, industrialists and labor leaders" abroad, and wrote that big businessmen in Germany and other European countries are "hogging" the benefits of the Marshall Plan while workers and their families are in want.

Also, Mrs. Meyer adds, "German union leaders maintain that the representatives of American investors in German industries have been hostile to the labor union program and support the German industrialists."

Do Unto Others . . .

Lieutenant General Eaker, retired, made a speech in January about how "the United States is on the road to socialism" and generally going to the dogs because of high taxes; he was perturbed about such things as social security, pensions, health insurance, etc., provided by the government.

General Eaker retired at the age of 51 after 30 years' service and draws a generous pension, about \$8,000; he also gets free medical care, almost-free hospitalization and other benefits—without deductions from his paycheck. But if workers were to get these benefits, after paying taxes for them during a lifetime, it would be that bad socialism.

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Uh-huh!

The Funeral Directors Association of North Dakota has come out against national health insurance.

Steel Local 2715 Strikes ACCO

By J. LYNCH

The strike of Local 2715 of the CIO Steelworkers against the American Chain and Cable Corporation in Reading, Penna., has entered its seventh week. During that week the issue was taken to Washington and a hearing held before federal conciliators—to no avail. The company still stands adamant on its original offer: a 16-cent-an-hour increase which is tied in with the union's acceptance of wage-rate adjustments for 16 acetylene burners who remove excess metal from castings.

The union, at once rejected the contingent demand of the company and paid holidays. The local American Chain and Cable Company is one of the few shops in which the workers enjoy no holiday pay. In addition the workers received no wage increases since 1947, but did receive a social insurance and pension plan in 1949, modeled along national lines.

The issue of the acetylene burners although immediately affecting only 16 workers, is deemed very important in that any action taken in regard to this department can easily serve as a precedent to undermine wage rates on all jobs. It is unfortunate that at Washington the union officials retreated to the extent that they agreed to send this issue and the matter of holiday pay to arbitration and accepted the 16-cent increase pending final decision in the other two cases. The company refused to arbitrate the matters. What the union officials hoped to gain by showing signs of weakening first is scarcely understandable.

The experience of the past has only served to prove that where the unions showed signs of weakening first the appetite of the corporations was increased, not diminished. But this little incident has only underscored the vast change of the situation in Local 2715 from several years ago. In addition we can add the very uninspiring fashion in which the entire Local 2715 leadership conducts the strike, suppressing rather than invoking rank-and-file initiative.

In 1946, during one of the most turbulent post-war strike waves, the American Chain and Cable Company workers spearheaded the whole strike movement in this area. The rank and file was thoroughly involved in the strike: in the conduct of relief work, in the organization of roving pickets that went about organizing other plants, in the regularity and militancy of strike meetings, in the adoption of a militant strike, economic and political program which the delegates of Local 2715 eventually brought before the Steel Workers convention of that year. That situation ended with the international officers trying to suppress the local, resulting in a physical setback for the local. And although a retreat might have been forced upon the local by the bureaucracy of the international, the fiasco that has developed since then certainly need not have happened.

SMUGLY CONSERVATIVE

Ever since then the executive board, with new officials, began a constant campaign to usurp all the powers of the local even to the extent of trying to suppress the democratic expression of

opinion before the local membership of minority members of the executive board. The attempt of the educational committee to re-institute a good shop paper was set back and this committee was compelled to clear through the Executive Board before any reports were made to the membership.

And now, in the midst of the strike, the Executive Board maintains this same smug conservatism, refusing to heed any demand of the ranks. Even regular meetings of the local are not called, let alone strike meetings; no mass rallies are organized; arrangements are made to put members on DPA; others receive vouchers from the local strike fund which is exclusively handled by the officers, even though solicitations for it could result in more funds if the ranks were involved in such work. Some members talked of a strike parade, but to organize this would take too much initiative on the part of the officers, so it was frowned upon.

The spirit of 1946 is dead—at least it is suppressed as much as

possible by the officers, so that it has little space to show itself. Other things have changed too, however, in the situation that serve to suppress this spirit.

1946 was a period of hope, of the Reuther program of talk of a labor party. 1951 is a period of hysteria, atomic jitters, "anti-red" and anti-labor activity. And with a national labor leadership that finds itself helpless in this situation and which in turn encourages acceptance of the witch-hunt drive and the pro-war drive within the labor movement, even the best local leadership would have a hard go of it. A leadership with a sense of direction and a program would indeed have a difficult time today and would certainly meet the repression of the international Steel Workers' leadership. But to completely capitulate to that bureaucracy and in turn to serve to institute bureaucratic and anti-democratic methods within the local; to completely wipe out the whole tradition of Local 2715—that is another thing entirely. For this the local leadership must alone answer.

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by Jack Ranger

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The ISL Program in Brief

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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BUSINESSMEN AND MILITARY HACKING AT NATIONAL PARKS

By PHILIP COBEN

The director of the National Park Service, N. D. Drury, has issued a warning. As a public statement it is mild and watered down, though it is known that Drury has been carrying on a running battle with Secretary of the Interior Chapman over the mounting threat to America's wilderness resources. Drury warned against the "constantly growing demand for commercial utilization of resources" cutting into the national parks program.

He also pointed the finger at the "increasing number of instances" in which projects of the army engineering corps and the Reclamation Bureau were located near national parks and monuments. He cited the plan to build dams at Echo Park and Split Mountain in Dinosaur National Monument, which had been approved by Chapman over the strenuous objection of the park service.

All this is only the latest skirmish in a battle which has been going on for decades. The main aggressors have been commercial interests, with the yielding support of the government, but the government has increasingly entered on independent assaults of its own, as Drury pointed out.

Our side has been on the losing end right along. We say "our side" because we think that the people's interests call for an expansion, and not contraction, of the areas in which natural beauty, wilderness, and field and stream are allowed to grow up without having Burma-Shave ads and gas stations plastered over them, available for those forms of recreation which are especially important for the city-dweller.

On the commercial side, the main enemies have been the lumbering interests, power companies and the resort promoters. Viewed narrowly, each of their specific invasions can be justified perhaps: after all, isn't it nice to have a hotel on top of Mount Washington with a high-gear road leading up to it, so that a vacationer can lounge on a porch above 5000 feet in altitude instead of somewhere closer to his natural habitat at sea level? . . . And can the AFL lumbermen's union be altogether condemned for supporting the pernicious and never-ending drive of the lumber companies to spread their gangrene into the national parks and forests? We need housing, don't we?

The whole conservation issue in the country has revolved around such small-minded and narrow considerations in all of its phases. But whereas conservationists have been largely successful in combating profiteers' waste of natural resources in oil and soil or other economic resources (where it was after all a question of one economic interest against another), they have been less successful where business greed and the possibilities of economic (and now military) exploitation have been balanced against "merely" cultural needs. For the unspoiled wilderness is one of the great cultural assets of a people.

San Jacinto, the Ramapos and Hetch-Hetchy

Victories have been won. There was Mt. San Jacinto, one of the most beautiful peaks of Southern California, where a so-called "development" (gross misnomer) had gotten under way to provide Hollywood characters with a skiway near their colony at Palm Springs, which blotches an otherwise idyllic desert-and-mountain area. Fortunately, the plan has been scotched (at last notice) through pressure steamed up by the Sierra Club.

But by and large, the front is shrinking. The most important area near New York City, the Ramapo-Bear Mountain-Harriman State Park region, has, since the beginning of the last war, been truncated at both ends and run through the middle. Private owners withdrew the whole southern section from use by hikers and campers; West Point closed off the whole northern section; and most recently the Dewey administration in the state has committed the last abomination by directing its "Throughway" right through the state park proper, lousing up what remains. And while space has contracted, the area's use has increased.

We may yet see committed another such crime against humanity as the flooding of the Hetch-Hetchy Valley (a "miniature Yosemite," John Muir called it) in order to make it a reservoir for San Francisco. The ploy of it is that every such step is irrevocable. Our present generation (of San Franciscans included) can never see the beauty of a work of art which will never be rivaled in a museum. And will someone propose to solve the knotty problem of disposal of atomic wastes by using the Grand Canyon as a dumping ground?

To be sure, the problem presently affects fewer people than those who seek their recreation in resorts and "developments" amply supplied with civilized plumbing, hot and cold running water, tennis courts, movies on Saturday night, hostesses, and no signs of non-human life larger than overcivilized mice. But the numbers who want to take their pleasure in the wild resources of the country are steadily increasing, and will be immeasurably greater when a sane socialist society makes it possible for the masses of people to spend more of their waking hours enjoying life rather than suffering or tolerating it.

Reading from Left to Right

WORDSWORTH AND THE SPY HUNT, by George W. Meyer.—American Scholar, Winter 1950-51.

We leave the beaten track to pass on this reminder of the fact that the hysterical witch-hunt atmosphere is not new in type—but how comparatively mild it was 150 years ago! It happened in England at a time of jitters over the danger of "French aggression."

In this footnote to history, the article relates that, the poet had subtlet a country place called Alfoxden, on the recommendation of a local liberal and philanthropic landowner, one Sir Thomas Poole. Soon after his installation, he received a visit from "Citizen John" Thelwall, with whom he had corresponded but whom he had never met before. His troubles began.

For "Citizen John" was a man known throughout England as "an atheist and a political agitator of dangerously radical sympathies. One one occasion, it was reported, he had knifed the foam from a pint of porter, expressing the desire that such might be the fate of all crowned heads." He had been arrested for sedition three years before, had been tried, and acquitted amid popular applause at the Old Bailey. "Thelwall denounced the government in public lectures whenever he was not forcibly prevented by patriotic mobs from speaking. His name alone could disturb the peasantry and gentry of self-respecting rural districts."

On hearing that Thelwall was in the district, the local landowner's cousin, Charlotte, wrote in her diary, for example: "To what are we coming?" It went further.

(1) A local farmer, Thomas Jones, serving at Wordsworth's table and hearing Thelwall, "knew that he was among desperate men and concluded that they must be French spies or conspirators." He told (2) one Charles Mogg, "a one-man telegraph system," all about the subversive plotting he had witnessed, heavily buttressed by the fact that the shady characters involved had profaned the Sabbath. Mogg passed the word to (3) the cook for a Dr. Lyons in Bath, and (4) the vigilant doctor immediately sent a letter to (5) the Home Secretary, the Duke of Portland, expressing the expert opinion that "These people [the Wordsworths] may

possibly be under agents to some principal at Bristol." Whitehall sent a detective (6), Walsh, who investigated and reported that the scoundrels were not French spies but "a set of violent democrats—the age's equivalent of bushy-bearded bomb-throwing bolsheviks. The neighbors' tongues wagged violently meanwhile. One went about with the lowdown that Wordsworth "is surely a desperate French Jacobin, for he is so silent and dark that nobody ever heard him say one word about politics!"

With this unanswerable evidence piled up against them, the Wordsworths were ousted from their home by the owner of the place.

BRITISH ECONOMIC POLICY: THE SCHUMAN PLAN, by Prof. Alzada Comstock.—Current History, December.

Professor Comstock's emphasis is on the fact that, essentially, the British Labor Party's stand on the Schuman Plan was the same as that of the British bourgeoisie and Tories. At the time, the U. S. press highlighted those phrases in the BLP Executive's statement which referred to socialist "principles." But the appearance of a Tory attack on the statement was partly simply a matter of partisan politics, and partly only a criticism of the way in which the BLP leaders had handled the question (neither Atlee nor Bevin knew about the Executive's statement in advance). But, vis-a-vis the continent, the Tories' spokesmen put forward the same view.

After the outbreak of the Korean war, at the European Consultative Assembly on August 15, the Conservative representative, Harold Macmillan attacked the idea of a "supra-national authority" for coal and steel; he "pulled no punches. He said that the British people would never hand over to any supra-national authority the right to close British mines and steel mills." Labor representative Maurice Edelman also spoke there: "It was apparent that the difference between himself and the Conservative was slight, and that he shared the British aversion to the supra-national authority."—"On the Continent, the opposition grew hotter . . . Finally the French delegates reached the point of describing the Conservative proposals as a 'plot.' The lines were now clearly drawn."

WORLD POLITICS

BREAK IN ITALIAN CP SHOWS INFLUENCE OF YUGOSLAVS

By PAUL ROBERTS

"We repudiate terrorist and police methods; we believe that the fight to attain socialism must go hand in hand with the fight for democracy."

"The workers must fight for peace without becoming slaves to propaganda, defending the independence of their country against its submergence in rigid blocs of powers whose conflicting interests increase the danger of war."

"The fight for socialism is always international. Internationalism, however, presupposes complete equality between all nations."

From the above quotations it is evident that the rebel group's ideas have much in common on the one hand with the ideas expressed by many of the socialists in or close to the Italian PSU—Socialist Unitary Party (not to be confused with pro-Stalinist parties with similar names in other countries) and on the other hand with those expressed by the Yugoslav Titoists. The insistence upon "equality between all nations" is particularly characteristic of all Titoist declarations.

YUGOSLAV INFLUENCE

The insistence upon "the fight for socialism going hand in hand with the fight for democracy" is more characteristic of the columns of the PSU paper *Lotta Socialista* and of the declarations of Ignazio Silone. (It should be

noted, though, that such declarations appear regularly in the Yugoslav CP press as well.) Magnani and Cuchi have thus far disclaimed being Titoists, but it is clear that they and their followers have been influenced by the Yugoslavs' break with Moscow. The rather loose discipline in the Italian Stalinist movement made it possible for the Yugoslavs to develop a great deal of contact and to invite hundreds upon hundreds of Italians to visit Yugoslavia and take part in the voluntary foreign brigades building roads, housing projects, student cities, etc.

Visiting Italian delegations were made exceedingly welcome by the Yugoslavs, including Tito himself; Italian wartime resistance partisans have spoken over Radio Belgrade's regular Italian language broadcasts, and the Italian flag with a red star in the middle (in Yugoslav fashion) has been seen and photographed by Western journalists in Yugoslav streets.

With further resignations from the Italian CP the rebel group, which calls itself "Action Committee for the Unity and Independence of the Workers' Movement in Italy," may take on an important role both in breaking workers away from the Stalinists and in strengthening the hand of those socialists who are opposed to collaboration with the reactionary "Christian Democrats" in the government.

QUESTION OF PROGRAM

The exact political line of the rebels is not yet very clear. Some American press dispatches from Rome contain obviously garbled and shortened quotations. On February 10, however, a statement was made by Magnani and Cuchi. This statement was quoted more extensively and contains the following very interesting points:

"The workers' movement must be independent of the power politics of all states."

Conclusion of the Report — The ISL Sees The Justice Department

By ALBERT GATES

In the course of the hearing with representatives of the attorney general's office in Washington [see first part of this report in last week's issue—Ed.], Max Shachtman, national chairman of the Independent Socialist League, presented the ISL's views on and analysis of the Russian state as "bureaucratic collectivism." Since our readers are familiar with this position, it is not necessary to take space to repeat it here. Shachtman's remarks, of course, also applied to the Workers Party, the former name of the ISL.

Following this presentation, Assistant Attorney General Whearty asked this question: "Your position is that the term 'Communist' at no time in the whole history of the Workers Party applied to it?"

The reply made by Shachtman was brief and to the point. He said: "That's right. We have developed the further opinion that the Communist Party is not a working-class or socialist organization of any kind and we contest the idea that the Communist Party is a left wing of any kind."

The following exchange then occurred: Whearty: "A second question. Is it your opinion that at no time in the history of the Workers Party did the interpretation of 'subversive' apply to it?"

Shachtman: "Absolutely. I would contest in advance any presumed evidence that could be adduced

Minneapolis Case Figures Prominently

Discussion followed on the chronology of the split and Whearty then raised the question of the Minneapolis "case of the 18." The manner of the discussion impressed the delegation that the conviction of the leaders of the Socialist Workers Party in the 1941 case was used as a precedent by the attorney general's office. Their conviction was obtained under the Smith Act and on the ground of doctrinal position of the individuals and party on trial.

Whearty then said: "I take it from what you say, you contest the evidence upon which these defendants were convicted. You still say that is so. If you admit the evidence was a true portrayal of the Socialist Workers Party, then you must admit that the Socialist Workers Party falls at least into one of these categories." Shachtman replied at some length, part of his remarks being the following: "I contest that, and I have no reason for being politically friendly to the SWP. I know their views and I know their activities. I also know why the defense guards were set up by the union. I was a leader of the Socialist Workers Party. They were not organized for the overthrow of the government. I would testify to that under oath."

It would seem, from the nature of the discussion on the Minneapolis case and on the conviction of any knowledge whatever of the basis of the attorney general's actions, deal with any matter concretely so as to serve as a specific denial to any specific charges that produced his action. The discussion with Whearty and Foley, as we already indicated, did not improve that situation, since they merely repeated that the president's order did not provide for hearings, cross-examination of evidence and witnesses, or even a declaration by the attorney general as to why an organization was put on the list. The question was repeatedly asked: What can an organization do to get off the list? Although not directly answered, it would seem that an organization might rely upon a voluntary re-examination of its status by the initiative of the Department of Justice itself, request such a re-examination, or seek some way to test the attorney general's action in court. The latter would be a very difficult, costly and long-

Still No Specific Evidence

It is impossible to record what went through Whearty's mind upon reading this request from Miss Moch, Chief, Field Publications Section of the State Department, but it was apparent that some impression was made on him. "Needless to say," he commented, "you gave them permission." Needless to say, such permission was granted with the request that proper credit be given to LABOR ACTION for the material used.

The discussion turned once more to the question of the removal of the WP, Socialist Youth League and ISL from the attorney general's list. It was pointed out to the department's attorneys that the petition of the ISL (summarized in last week's LABOR ACTION) had to be written on a broad basis, treating with the general views of the organization, concluding with a specific denial of the designations made by the attorney general. But the petition could not, in the absence

drawn-out affair. The delegation, however, continued to emphasize, explain and direct the attorney's attention to the obvious errors in the attorney general's action on the Workers Party and the ISL. It made a very strong case for itself in connection with the listing of the organizations under the designation "Communist." Toward the end of the discussion, Whearty then stated:

"The thing boils down to this. You may have some justification asking for some sort of action by this department in respect to your determination since the designations were made. There you may have something to talk about. I think you may have something for consideration now. I don't know."

Promises 'Re-Examination' for ISL

Watts then tried to establish that if such a re-examination was made and if the department found that the ISL should go off the list, then there existed the possibility that an error was made in respect to the WP also. While Whearty admitted that such a possibility existed, he ruled it out by re-emphasizing that the department did not believe that the case of the Workers Party warranted any re-examination.

In behalf of the ISL, Shachtman then stated in substance that the ideal arrangement, if full justice were done, was that the WP, SYL and ISL should be removed from the list. However, if the attorney general would not reconsider the case of the WP, the ISL would at any rate wish that its own case be re-examined. Whearty then asked: "You would like to be cleared for the whole period for both organiza-

tions, but you are willing to take less than that?" "Of course," Shachtman answered. "Whearty then went on to say: 'I don't want any misunderstanding. I want to tell you this: (1) We will not re-examine the case of the Workers Party. I am definitely certain there would be no change because of the care with which our original designation was made. (2) We will re-examine the case of the Independent Socialist League. Since the designation was made in 1947, it is not necessarily implicit that that designation is going to remain true, that the organization is in the same category it was in when the designation was made.'"

Shachtman then asked: "Do you have a periodic redesignation of organizations?" "We have no redesignations," Whearty said.

Net Results of the Conversation

Gates then asked the attorneys whether the ISL could re-examine the department in their re-examination by the presentation of materials to it. "No," answered Whearty, "however, if it becomes necessary we may do so. We will be glad, however, to re-examine the question of the Independent Socialist League."

Shachtman then asked: "That is a definite commitment?" "That is a definite commitment," said Whearty.

"Can you give us an approximate idea," said Shachtman, "when this re-examination will take place and in what way you would inform us of the conclusion?" "I can answer the second part," Whearty replied, "that you will be informed by letter when we have completed the re-examination. But I want you to know that the department is very busy, carrying an immense load. The re-

examination will not be early. I would only say that it will be in the future and that we will try to squeeze it in as soon as we can." The hearing reached its conclusion with this exchange. In summary, then, what did the visit to the attorney general's office achieve? First, it gave the ISL a clearer picture of the way in which the department had proceeded to list the organizations now on the attorney general's index, and confirmed the views of its petition. Second, it brought before the department in a personal way the determination of the ISL to do everything within its power to get off the list. And third, it obtained a commitment that the case of the Independent Socialist League would be re-examined.

LABOR ACTION will report any new development in the case, whenever it occurs, as we have done up to now.

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New York Socialist Youth League FORUMS

Friday, Feb. 23
THE KOREAN WAR AND U. S. FOREIGN POLICY
BEN HALL
New York Organizer
Independent Socialist League

Friday, March 2
THE POLITICAL NOVEL IN THE 20th CENTURY
IRVING HOWE
"The UAW and Walter Reuther"
Co-author,
LABOR ACTION HALL, 114 W. 14 St., N.Y.C.—8:30 p.m.

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The Shachtman-Kerensky Debate:

By R. L. FERGUSON

SHACHTMAN

Seldom does history record the former head of a government, deposed by social revolution, facing up in an open debate 34 years later to a modern representative of the same ideological current which swept him from power. This was the situation in the February 8 debate at the University of Chicago where Max Shachtman confronted Alexander Kerensky, the head of the regime which was overthrown by the great Russian Revolution.

To recall to consciousness all the relevant facts of that vast revolution and vindicate its democratic and socialist aims and achievements, Shachtman, national chairman of the Independent Socialist League, brought a clearly defined and thoroughly Marxist appreciation of the meaning of democracy. Alexander Kerensky, erstwhile president of the short-lived Russian Provisional Government and self-styled "arch-democrat," brought no understanding whatsoever of democracy, substituting for that lack his own garbled version of historical facts and a relentless penchant for reiterating fraudulent quotations from Lenin. Indeed, how could a "democrat" proceed otherwise who could not even explain publicly that he was not put in office by popular election!

The intervening years since the revolution have witnessed the rise in Russia of the totalitarian bureaucratic oligarchy of Stalinism. Grabbing onto this bare historical fact, Kerensky sought to bury the anti-democratic crimes of his own regime by pointing an accusing finger at Lenin and the Bolsheviks as those responsible for Stalin's monstrous despotism. Shachtman thus faced a double task in this debate, one familiar enough to genuine socialists: that of establishing historical truth against the combined opposition of both capitalist and Stalinist falsifiers of the past 34 years.

Lie Factories

This is the reason that Shachtman, in opening the discussion, found it necessary to remark: "The Stalinist regime never slackens in its efforts to portray itself as the legitimate successor of the Bolshevik Revolution. It needs this great authority to help befuddle the thinking of people and to maintain itself in power. . . . It came into power as the result of a counter-revolution which systematically destroyed not only every single one of the great achievements of the Bolshevik Revolution but likewise exterminated all its founders, builders and defenders.

"To conceal and suppress this incontrovertible fact, the Stalinist regime has established the biggest lie factory in all history. It does not, to be sure, have the exclusive monopoly in the work of falsifying and slandering the Bolshevik Revolution. In this work it is given signal assistance by most of its political opponents. Yet I must admit that it excels them all in the scope and depth and intensity of its labors. Indeed it has been so successful in them, and so ably seconded by falsifiers and muddlers out of the camp of its opponents . . . that the truth is today wrapped up in obscurity so far as most people are concerned."

Scouting the idea that the evening's discussion on "Was the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 Democratic?" of merely historical interest, Shachtman indicated its vital relationship to the most important social and political question of our time, the answer to which will determine conclusively the future of society. Formulated by Lenin, the leader of Bolshevism, that question is: The working class cannot attain socialism except through the fight for democracy, and democracy cannot be fully realized without the fight for socialism.

Following is a running summary and digest of the presentations and rebuttals of the two speakers. The digest of Shachtman's presentation is based on his written notes. [We understand that *The New Internationalist* is considering publication of the complete text of the debate from the tape-recorded transcript if that is found to be possible.—Ed.]

If You're—

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- Against Stalinism
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One must judge a revolution out of the circumstances from which it sprang.

The social structure of czarism, the most reactionary and outlived in Europe, was in a state of complete collapse. The imperialist war was bleeding the country white; a consciousness of the futility of continuing it deepened not only among the people at home but also among the soldiers at the front. At the top in official and court circles, bigotry, corruption and every conceivable form of social and intellectual leprosy was eating into the regime. At the front, a bloodletting that was as useless as it was incredible; at home a veritable orgy of war-profiteering among the capitalist classes and an unendurable growth of hunger among the working classes.

In February the czarist regime appeared to be the most powerful in the world, with the world's biggest army at its disposal, with a subject people at once docile and impotent. Shortly after, the regime was overthrown by the same people and the same army.

It was an imposing example to all statesmen and politicians that the patience of the people is not inexhaustible, and that once they are determined to rise in the struggle for liberty, for their aspirations, they stand on no ceremony, on no formalities. They take action directly and stop waiting for the promises of their well-wishers to be fulfilled in some distant and indefinite future. The example was also instructive to statesmen and politicians capable of learning from the people. As it soon turned out, not many of them are capable of learning very much.

Tonight we are discussing democracy, the rule of the sovereign people. Democracy does not consist in imposing upon the people what their rulers, by themselves, decide, is a good thing for the people. It consists in the free expression of the desires of the people and their ability to realize these desires through institutions manned by their freely-chosen representatives.

What then did the people, who had just put an end to czarist rule, want? It would be a bold man who contended that two opinions are possible on this score.

Democracy through Socialism

They wanted (1) an end to the imperialist war; (2) the convocation of a national, democratically-representative Constituent Assembly; (3) an end to the rule of the predatory landlords and a distribution of land among the peasants; (4) a radical change in industry, beginning with the 8-hour work day and the assuring of the beginning of the end of completely arbitrary rule of industry by the capitalist class by the establishment of workers' control in industry; (5) the right of national self-determination for the nationalities oppressed by czarism.

Not a single one of these desires is, by itself, the equivalent of socialism. Every single one of the demands of the Russian people was democratic through and through. And yet, as we shall see, they required a socialist revolution for their realization.

Virtually from the first day the revolution established what were tantamount to two governments, two powers, contesting with one another for political supremacy.

One was the soviets; in 1917 as in 1905 they were spontaneously established. More democratic institutions it would be hard to imagine. They were directly and freely elected and sat in permanent session as direct representatives of the workers, peasants and soldiers. They were not the creation or invention of the Bolsheviks. While they were spontaneously formed without waiting for instructions from anybody, they were dominated by the right-wing socialists and the Socialist-Revolutionists. The Bolsheviks started as a tiny minority in the soviets.

While the soviets were the only elected body on a nation-wide basis in the land, and only they could thus speak authoritatively for the people, being referred to even by Kerensky as the "revolutionary democracy," they did not seek to become the government of Russia under their compromising leadership. But they were the real power, recognized by all: by the czarist generals who wanted to crush them and restore reaction; by all the provisional governments; by the Bolsheviks who wanted them to take all governmental power; and above all by the people. Not a single significant political or military step could be taken by the official government without their support.

Who Elected Kerensky?

Appearing to stand above the soviets were the various provisional governments. These were not democratic, if by that term is understood a government elected by popular suffrage in regularly fixed elections and submitting its conduct to the control of any popularly elected democratic body. The provisional government was constructed exclusively from the top, bureaucratically, by agreements among party leaders, self-constituting and self-perpetuating. Unstable by its very nature, it had no independent power of its own. It depended for its existence on the unpreparedness, and therefore the tolerance, of the reactionary forces on the one side and the revolutionary forces on the other.

While the soviets mistakenly thought the government could be the vehicle for advancement of the revolution, they watched its every step, particularly its reactionary wing and allies, and tried to control each step, reflecting the attitude of the whole people. The provisional government tried to maintain itself by satisfying both the real social and political forces, the reaction and the revolution. This aim was utopian; the two forces could not be reconciled. Both forces realized their life and future depended on the other's destruction. The governments became more and more governments of chaos, sure to produce nothing but that.

The 8 months' record of provisional governments in this stormy period when the desires of the people were urgent and manifest consisted of the following:

(1) The main body of the czarist officialdom remained intact, only few changes being made at the top. Czarist officers primarily remained at the head of the army, doing everything to undermine the soldiers' soviets, soldiers' rights, and even keeping enough power to threaten this same government. Cossacks, symbol of the czarist knout, were kept intact.

(2) The Constituent Assembly was not convened, on the basis of all kinds of pretexts. The real reason for this, as the bourgeoisie openly declared, was that the election results would not be acceptable to them and would mean that the regime might refuse to continue the imperialist war.

Record of Failure

(3) While the people wanted peace, the provisional government, in obedience to czarist commitments made to the Anglo-French allies, drove the army into the June offensive at a horrible cost in lives and against conservative military opinion that it would be doomed. The people did not want to fight for the czar's secret treaties (the long list of them was cited by Shachtman), authentic agreements made among imperialist pirates. While Kerensky had been told by Milukov about them, he never repudiated them and refused to publish them, since such would be a "discourtesy to the Allies."

(4) While the rule of the landlords continued, the peasants who wanted the land received promises. But they were taking the land, carrying out the revolution themselves in the traditional style of every great agrarian revolution. The provisional government forbade them to act, instead of carrying out its own reforms. It sent Cossacks against the peasants, who had never seen a Bolshevik in their lives but who were taking things into their own hands.

(5) No changes in industry. While the capitalists sabotaged production by locking out workers, the government failed to intervene. The 8-hour work day decreed by the government was not enforced. Everything was promised for after the "Constituent Assembly" met, but its convocation was constantly delayed. Workers saw that their soviets' influence in the government declined as that of the capitalists and czarists grew.

(6) As Woodrow Wilson has said, the treatment of oppressed nationalities represented the "acid test" for a democrat. The Finnish social-democrats obtained a majority in early June and declared for their autonomy, enjoyed previously under the czars. The provisional government dissolved the Finnish parliament, barring its doors with Russian soldiers. . . . In June Kerensky prohibited the holding of the Ukrainian Soldiers Congress called by the nationalist Rada. Vinnichenko, head of that body and an anti-Bolshevik, attacked the provisional government for being "imbued with the imperialist tendencies of the Russian bourgeoisie." In October Kerensky demanded an explanation of alleged criminal agitation started there for a Ukrainian Constituent Assembly and an investigation of the Rada was ordered.

Record of Achievement

On the basis of this record of failing to meet the continuing demands of the revolution, the provisional government of Kerensky fell. It also explains why the power of the compromiser Menshevik-SR leadership in the soviets likewise fell. They had urged confidence in the provisional government, which showed it did not deserve the masses' confidence.

After the Kornilov affair, the Bolsheviks won uninterrupted victories in the soviets, while the Mensheviks and SRs split up and declined. Bolshevik influence was won fairly, openly, democratically, in spite of huge handicaps. Their leaders were arrested or driven underground, presses and headquarters smashed, press outlawed, forbidden entry to the garrisons and a lynch spirit aroused against them as German agents.

On November 7 the soviet congress, whose convocation had been delayed by its compromising leadership, was called together by that same leadership. The Bolsheviks had a clear majority. The congress endorsed the uprising led by the Military Revolutionary Committee of the Petrograd Soviet under Trotsky by electing a new government of Bolsheviks holding soviet power. Two weeks later the Peasant Soviet Congress, called by the compromisers, gave a majority to the Left SRs and the

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A Summary of The Presentations

Bolsheviks, and the Left SRs entered the new soviet government.

In a few days the soviet government did all the things the provisional government had failed to do: (1) gave the land to the peasants; (2) offered peace by broadcast to all governments and peoples, starting with a proposal for a 3 months' armistice; (3) inaugurated workers' control of production to stop bourgeois sabotage of industry; (4) decreed freedom for all nationalities, beginning with Finland and the Ukraine; (5) denounced and published all secret treaties and czarist rights in China and Persia; (6) wiped out all czarist power in the army and began creation of new workers' and peasants' army; (7) abolished special Cossack privileges and caste position; (8) inaugurated the new soviet regime of direct representation, with full right of recall.

The Constituent Assembly finally met in January; and because of its then unrepresentative character, big changes having occurred in mass thinking since its lists were drawn and the election held, and its refusal to recognize that the revolution had conferred full power on the soviets, it was dissolved. No champions could be found among the people for it—only reaction supported it.

The country rallied to the soviet power as the only guarantee of the great democratic achievements consolidated by the Bolshevik Revolution.

The future proved to be a difficult one. The country was plunged into civil war by the dispossessed classes, landlords, bankers, bondholders, monarchist and reactionary scum in general who sought to arouse the weather peasants against the regime, and by all the imperialist powers who forgot their differences in the face of the socialist enemy.

This civil war brought devastation to the country from which it took years to emerge. It forced upon the soviets a harsh regime, and laid the basis for the eventual rise and triumph of a counter-revolutionary bureaucracy which is in power today.

But in spite of that these achievements are immortal: nothing that happened afterwards can eradicate that from history or from the thoughts of mankind. They are a monument and a guidepost.

The road out of the blind alley into which society is being driven more and more, lies in the struggle for democracy. The struggle for democracy receives its clarity, purpose and guarantee in the struggle for socialism; the struggle for socialism lies in the hands of the working class—the beast of burden, the despised of the earth—whose will to victory were all forever underlined by their first great revolution, the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia.

KERENSKY

Kerensky's presentation followed Shachtman, who had devoted his time to developing the whole picture of the unfolding revolution in Russia, in its historical context and in a rounded interpretation. Kerensky devoted his time to picking holes in this interpretation, from the viewpoint of a government official of narrow social vision.

He based himself on the necessity for the provisional government to "defend Russia" during the war, opposing the elements of extreme monarchist reaction who favored a separate peace with Germany, and likewise opposing the desire of the people to get out of the disastrous war.

He took the stand that the social reforms demanded by the people must be postponed until the war was over. The government could legitimately adopt measures such as its land reforms, the 8-hour day, the need for a constituent assembly, the right of self-determination for oppressed nationalities—BUT (and it was a very big but) nothing could really be done until the Constituent Assembly met, and it would be better for that body to meet only after the conclusion of the war.

After all, the organization of a constituent assembly is a "big job." The Germans were advancing, and the "Lenin crisis in the rear" forced the Constituent Assembly commission to cease its never-ending labor for only three weeks. The provisional government was "in direct contact with all forces—exception: the Bolsheviks."

This section of Kerensky's presentation had already been anticipated in Shachtman's speech, which had made clear in advance the garbled version of history which Kerensky was presenting. Nor did Kerensky even try to meet Shachtman on the ground of the meaning of democracy and the role of the masses. Instead he spent the major part of his time plucking out and attacking quotations from Lenin's writing, with a view to proving their conspiratorial, treasonous and totalitarian nature.

Sees "Trickery"

According to Kerensky's story, Lenin foresaw that Kerensky's proposals would win the support of the peasantry—after the victory of Russia's noble but crumbling armies. Therefore Lenin had to act fast, before this happened. He had to marshal his Bolsheviks to organize army deserters on the countryside and to steer a course toward armed insurrection, before the provisional government had a sporting chance to show its sterling mettle to the peasants on some indeterminate future date after the equally indeterminate conclusion of hostilities.

The aim of Bolshevism, according to Kerensky, was to exploit the country in totalitarian fashion. The real question here, he announced, is what happened after the revolution—but he abruptly stopped at this point, apparently remembering that the subject of the discussion was the revolution itself; however, he picked up this theme from time to time later.

Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin, he said, were playing a double game of trickery on the country and the government. Lenin sent various "secret instructions" to his cen-

tral committee. (Kerensky, without pointing it out, was referring to the period when his own government had jailed Trotsky and other Bolsheviks and had forced Lenin to go into hiding!)

In one of these "instructions" Lenin committed the heinous crime of saying that the soviets would be of value to the people only if they carried through the needs of the revolution.

Another aim of Bolshevism, Kerensky charged, was to "distract the freest country in the world from preparing a base for the future world socialist movement." So, Lenin concluded, the provisional government had to be stopped. "For this they ruined Russian democracy," he cried, after having made clear that he understood nothing about the urgent desire of the Russian masses for the democratic and socialist reforms which only the Bolsheviks were fighting for.

Punchline: Attack on Marx

Striking a personal note, Kerensky drew some applause when he cried: "Maybe my government was unpopular but I needed no bodyguards. In Kiev when I took a walk the people liked to gather around me and speak to me. It is a special type of 'dictator'." Kerensky was presumably referring to Stalin's secluded and guarded living habits (and it is a safe bet that he was not referring to Truman's bodyguard); but while he was supposed to be discussing Lenin and the days of the Russian Revolution, he made no mention of the fact that Lenin and the other Bolshevik leaders constantly mingled with the workers at all kinds of meetings and elsewhere, guarded at other times as the crisis neared only against the police vengeance of Kerensky himself.

At another point, Kerensky gained a meed of applause by referring to the Bolshevik suppression of the Kronstadt revolt against the revolutionary regime during the post-revolution civil war.

He concluded his presentation by quoting an attack by Proudhon on . . . Marx. The French petty-bourgeois radical had denounced Marx's *Communist Manifesto* with the cry that "Communism is nothing more than inequality, subjugation and slavery." The fight in 1917, said Kerensky, was "not a fight between capitalism and socialism, but between freedom and slavery." And "Stalin is the most faithful, most able, most talented disciple of Lenin."

REBUTTALS

Shachtman opened his rebuttal with a reminder to the audience that he had initially stated that the Stalinists have the biggest lie factory against the Bolshevik Revolution but that they by no means have a monopoly on the business. He proceeded to discuss Kerensky's garbled quotations—that is, forgeries—purporting to prove that Lenin favored "treason," discussing in particular Lenin's opposition to the czar's war and the world-wide imperialist war and his views on the so-called "revolutionary defeatism."

The ISL chairman demanded to know "who elected" the supposedly "democratic" provisional government—which, of course, had been put into power by no popular vote of any kind. In contrast, he pointed out, the Bolshevik government took power with the support of a free vote of the broadest and most representative body ever assembled in Russia or for that matter in the world—the soviets (the councils) of the workers, peasants, and soldiers of the country—in a congress organized and prepared by enemies of the Bolsheviks.

It will be a curious spectacle for future historians to picture the president of a government whom no people had elected contesting the democratic character of the

only revolutionary regime in the history of the world's revolutions which did come to power with the recorded, freely voted support of the broad masses!

Shachtman presented the documentation of the recent book on *The Election to the Russian Constituent Assembly of 1917* by O. H. Radkey as even more conclusive proof that the compromising leadership of the Mensheviks and SRs "no longer commanded the allegiance" of the masses. He stressed the absurdity, not to speak of the slanderousness, of Kerensky's claim that the Bolsheviks were able to lead a vast, tumultuous, surging mass revolution of the people through "trickeries."

How many insurrections, he asked, had Kerensky ever organized in which he gave public instructions (not "secret instructions") so that the reaction would know the time, place and forces at his disposal?

"Whom did the Bolsheviks suppress during the civil war? White guards, czarists and Mensheviks who had taken up arms against the government and the revolution. . . . Did that 'maniac' Lincoln ever permit the Confederate States in the U. S. Civil War to open up a recruiting station in Chicago?"

Kerensky had referred in rapturous terms to the president of the first provisional government in 1917, Prince Lvov, one of the biggest landowners in Russia, as "one of the most extraordinary democrats in the world." Shachtman stated his regret that he had no time to take up this democratic idol of Kerensky's properly, but it is worthwhile to mention Kerensky's estimate for the light it casts on his own conceptions of democracy.

"Kronstadt" Argument Blows Up

Kerensky had argued that while his provisional government had denied self-determination to Finland and the Ukraine, it had granted immediate freedom to Poland. Shachtman had only to point out that this was done when (and because) Poland was under the German sword at the time! Kerensky was magnanimously giving freedom to a people whom he no longer controlled, while ruthlessly maintaining Russian control over the Finns and Ukrainians whom the Germans did not have in their power.

As reported above, Kerensky had also waved the flag of the Kronstadt revolt against the Bolsheviks, which took place in 1920 during the civil war of the White Guards and foreign armies against the revolution. It was "ill-advised" for Kerensky to mention the word Kronstadt on his lips, Shachtman said. The provisional government—in 1917—had "merely" ordered submarines to blow up the ships of the pro-Bolshevik Kronstadt sailors to compel their submission to the government!

In his rebuttal, Kerensky differentiated his own attack on Lenin as a "German agent" (one of the crudest of all the slanders against Lenin) from that of others in that he did not accuse Lenin of being a vulgar agent for German gold. It was Lenin's "point of view," he said, that coincided with German interests.

Taking up the question of why he had denied self-determination to the Ukrainians, he gave as his excuse the Ukrainians' "excessive" territorial demands, which for him could be solved only by the same Constituent Assembly which he was continually postponing.

His main appeal was "Why was it necessary to organize the uprising?" implying that it is "always possible" for things to be worked out.

As also reported elsewhere, Shachtman, by the terms of the debate, was then supposed to have a surrebuttal, but did not get the opportunity since the chairman adjourned the meeting due to the lateness of the hour. But even without this last word, there is little doubt that the solid, fact-butressed, cogent picture of the Russian Revolution that he had presented clearly lighted up the socialist inspiration and democratic nature of the great revolutionary struggle.

The Kerensky-Shub Method of 'Quoting'

As noted in the accompanying summary of the debate, Kerensky spent much of his time working over scraps of quotations from Lenin—from different periods, contexts, and articles indiscriminately, à la Boris Shub—under the heading of a discussion of the Russian Revolution and democracy. While it takes at least ten times longer to nail one of these forgeries than it takes to reel off the distorted quotation, Shachtman was able to take them up effectively.

Here is one of the "quotations" which Kerensky tossed off, for example. Quite often it was impossible for the audience to determine from his speech where his alleged quotation ended and his own commentary on it began, and his confused quote-mongering was further complicated (still from the audience's angle) by the fact that it was not always possible to clearly distinguish the words. Thus, at one point, he quoted Lenin as writing (as far as this reporter heard it): "Human nature cannot do without subordination," plus something which sounded like this: "This is not a free state and must be overthrown at any cost." Assuming that the latter part was supposed to be a quotation from Lenin, we have no knowledge at the moment where it is supposed to be from; but we can say unequivocally, with Shachtman, that the first part is one of the standard forgeries, quite probably lifted from Shub's biographical hatchet-job on Lenin, and in any case completely unrelated to the second sentence with which it was coupled by Kerensky.

In Shub's *Lenin*, the author set out to show that in Lenin's philosophy it was the nature of people to want to be ruled. In his review of Shub's book in *The New Internationalist*, Shachtman showed how Shub quoted Lenin to make it look as though Lenin set out to satisfy this alleged craving of the masses by ruling them with an iron hand.

What Lenin actually wrote—in the passage where the phrase quoted by Kerensky crops up—conveys a diametrically opposite thought:

"We are not utopians, we do not indulge in dreams of how best to do away immediately with all administration, with all subordination; these anarchist dreams, based upon a lack of understanding of the tasks of the proletarian dictatorship, are basically foreign to Marxism, and as a matter of fact they serve but to put off the socialist revolution until human nature is different. No, we want the socialist revolution with human nature as it is now, with human nature that cannot do without subordination, control and 'managers.'"

"But if there be subordination, it must be to the armed vanguard of all the exploited and the laboring, to the proletariat. The specific 'commanding' methods of the state officials can and must begin to be replaced—immediately, within 24 hours—by the simple functions of 'managers' and bookkeepers, functions which are now already within the capacity of the average city dweller and can well be performed for 'working-men's wages.'"

One of Kerensky's associates in the provisional government, the bourgeois politician Milukov, was also an historian of the revolution. He wrote of Kerensky's bearing and attitude at the state conference in Moscow before his downfall: "This man seemed to be trying to frighten somebody and create upon all an impression of power and force of will in the old style. In reality, he evoked only a feeling of pity."

In the breast of a fellow bourgeois politician, it could be pity. . . .

'Wage Freeze a Fraud' but --

(Continued from page 1)
excuse to be used to freeze wages. (Our emphasis.)
Many true words are spoken by many labor leaders. But something follows: the wage-freeze order is an attack on labor? Then labor should demand: Rescind the wage freeze! It would seem almost impossible to overlook this simple conclusion; but union officials achieve the impossible. Despite their bellicose phrases, not one, not a single one makes that categorical demand. They hope somehow to live with the wage freeze.
 UAW contracts, and others like them, still hang in the balance. Reuther points out:
 "The Wage Stabilization Board

as yet has not made a determination on our over-all cost-of-living escalator clauses or on our annual wage-improvement clauses . . . we have served notice that we shall not tolerate any tampering with our basic contract provisions. . . . Members of the UAW-CIO have invested years of hard struggle and sacrifice to win the protection provided by their present contracts. They will fight equally as hard to defend them. The International Executive Board has stated clearly and unmistakably that we are prepared to resist with all our resources any attempt to set aside our basic contract provisions. . . . To cancel [the improvement factor] of our

five-year contracts would amount to a decision by the Economic Stabilization Agency that, throughout the years of national mobilization, workers are to be compelled to turn over to the employers their hard-won right to share in the proceeds of increased productivity made possible by improved technology."

So far, the biggest concession to labor has been a "well-informed" rumor. Public members of the Wage Board, it is reported, are willing to relax the wage freeze to permit the operation of such contract clauses and to permit limited wage increases to meet living costs. But not beyond June, 1951; and that would only mean postponing the final slashing attack on wage standard for four months. Labor representatives reject such a compromise. Here again, however, they do not reject the whole principle of the wage freeze; they only insist upon modifications that would allow higher wage increases.

WHO'S THE HIGHER-UP?

Not only rising prices, but also rising taxes cut away at labor's real income. "The present approach to taxation," Reuther shows, "will make the rich richer and the poor poorer by comparison. . . . At present families of \$5,000 and less income are paying the same taxes as they paid during the last war, while families of \$500,000 a year are presently paying \$40,000 less in taxes."

Labor must free its hands to fight, not only on the political front, but also on the industrial front, against the impact of higher taxes. Even the "fairest" wage freeze would shackle the unions and make it more difficult to perform their duties to the working class.

Labor gets so little from "its own" administration in Washington! Who is responsible? At the New York CIO conference, labor attorney Herman Cooper charged that the man responsible for having "broken the railroad strike with armed forces and threats" was—guess who . . . Charles E. Wilson. Only Wilson is mentioned. Even a hasty scanner of news headlines with no legal experience must have noticed that the man who ranks above Wilson was the man who called the strikers "Russians." Truman, of course.

PACKINGHOUSE CASE

The president, however, was quick to demonstrate his true "pro-labor" feelings: he explained that he meant not the workers but their union leaders! Only a delicate sense of the etiquette of labor's relations with Truman gives a labor lawyer such poise, such an ability to overlook un-

pleasantness.
 What remains "tact" in a speech becomes grotesque in the class struggle. The United Packinghouse Workers announced that it had reached an agreement with all three major companies providing for wage increases of 9 cents per hour. This was the first contract won by the union from Wilson and Co. since the defeated strike of 1948. For three years, this company fought the union, refused to recognize it, refused to sign a contract, fired loyal union men. But after a long uphill fight, the union has returned and wins a thrilling victory against union-smashing.

But the wage increase is now held up, not by the companies, but by the Wage Stabilization Board.

The union sets March 25 as a deadline. If the board does not approve of the contract by that date the union announces that it will begin "the struggle." Against whom? the board? . . . Not at all. It will resume "the struggle with the packing companies for a decent wage."

Strike action is already authorized. Such a strike would resemble the railroad strike. It would be a strike, in reality, not only

against the companies but against the Truman administration, against the Wage Board, against its wage freeze.

The fight against the employers for decent wage standards is becoming clearly a fight against an employer-administration alliance. Not only Congress but also "President Truman has the responsibility for seeing that the present price-control tools are fully used," says Reuther, "while at the same time he must demand that Congress strengthen the price-control law to provide better tools to effectively control the cost of living." The finger of blame is pointed in the right direction.

What can we expect from Truman? "No one can predict with certainty what will happen in Washington," says Reuther, who goes on to forecast: "We are confident, however, that our position in support of our contract provisions is so sound and just that the government cannot find any justifiable basis for setting aside our cost-of-living and annual wage-improvement clauses." But will it do so on an "unjustifiable" basis?

Of course, no one can predict. But one thing, by now, is fully predictable. The labor movement cannot rely upon the benevolent intentions of Truman Fair-Dealism in the critical days ahead.

LABOR SCOPE

ANOTHER AFL ORGAN REFUTES ITSELF

The labor leaders seem strangely anxious to prove that they are hopelessly incompetent in politics, and that their clever policy of committing all-out labor support to the Fair-Deal and Truman has gained them nothing. They even proclaim it.

In a backhand way, of course. In our January 29 issue, we printed the protest by the League Reporter (AFL-LLPE weekly) against the "slander" about overmuch labor influence in Washington. The AFL's political organ indignantly repudiated this lie of the reactionaries. It did so by calling the roll of the president's cabinet — lawyers, bankers, military men, etc.—and concluding abruptly: "Not a trade unionist in the crowd."

Now another AFL paper comes forward to document the argument. It is the Summit County LABOR NEWS, AFL organ of the Akron, Ohio, area. An editorial in this periodical's January 26 issue is sarcastically headed "Labor's 'Influence'" and it reads:

"Where is all this labor influence in Washington that you read about?"

"David Lawrence, Westbrook Pegler, George Sokolsky, Fulton Lewis and other writing pets of big business make their copy paper sizzle as they furiously write about the influence of labor leaders on the administration.

"What do they mean?
 "Do they mean the appointment of the chairman of the board of the Continental Can Company and the senior partner of Goldman, Sachs and Company, the New York investment banking firm to be assistants to the defense mobilizer?"

"Do they mean the appointment of a former president of the United States Rubber Company to be wage stabilizer?"

"Do they mean the appointment of the president of the International Telephone and Telegraph Company to be ambassador to Great Britain?"

"Do they mean the appointment of a former president of the United States Rubber Company to be wage stabilizer?"

"Do they mean the appointment of the president of the International Telephone and Telegraph Company to be defense production administrator?"

"Do they mean the appointment of a former president of the United Fruit Company to coordinate American military and economic aid to other free nations?"

"Obviously it's all a part of a technique. The method is to keep screaming about 'labor bosses' in Washington loud enough and long enough so that the country will believe the stuff.

"Then whenever — if ever — a trade union leader is appointed to a top post, the Lawrences, Peglers, Sokolskys and Lewises can say the country is sick and tired of 'labor bosses' trying to 'run things.'"

•
 We should remember that the labor strategists are complaining

that the administration—"their" administration — has not given them even appointments. Obviously, the investment of a labor man with a title does not yet give labor a lead nickel. That depends upon what the labor men do with their titles, what actual power the title confers upon them, what they are able to get for the workers. As "advisers" and "assistants" to the dollar-a-year men in the top posts, they can serve the purpose of letting off steam, griping in private, and camouflaging the actual big-business control of the war program.

Their steam and griping can be a considerable annoyance to a man like War Mobilizer Wilson, who isn't used to having labor men in his private office, but it is a far cry from annoying Wilson or pinpricking Johnston to defending labor's interests where it counts.

BUTTERING TRUMAN

In any case, the current bitterness of the labor men is that the Fair Deal administration has not even given them titles. Typically—in the case of both the LLPE and Ohio papers of the AFL—they let loose their disappointment in an attack, not on the administration which they elected, but on the "reactionaries" who are "lying" about labor's influence in Washington councils.

So discreetly are their protests worded that one might even think that, if labor did have a big voice in Washington, that would be bad because it would give the Peglers something to scream about.

When Truman was re-elected in 1948, he told the press: "Labor did it." Remember? He was a grateful man. But first things come first. That is, big business comes first. The labor movement has not even come in second.

The Summit County Labor Journal editorial ends with the caution that "whenever—if ever—a trade-union leader is appointed to a top post," the reactionaries will yell like stuck pigs. It implies that that would be nothing to yell about. They would be right, of course—but the reaction is smart enough, unlike the labor leaders, to know that the purpose of screaming blue murder is not necessarily to gain a specific change but to impress the administration with the fact that they are dissatisfied and that concessions have to be made to them.

THEY do NOT follow the AFL and CIO's stupid strategy of attempting to butter up the president by declarations of abject loyalty and gratitude, from which Truman can only conclude that he need pay no further attention to them. They yell—even when the chips are going their way.

They do not even support Truman's political party; their pressure on Truman is a hard squeeze in part because they are organized "independently" of the Fair Deal, that is, in the Republican Party. The labor men bend over backward reassuring Truman that they would not dream of forming their own party.

Breaks RR Strike —

(Continued from page 1)

workers gives them no way out. While the executive arm of the government was forcing the workers back on the job with its dismissal threat, the judicial arm sanctified the government's contention that the unions have no legal right to strike while the railroads are "seized." Federal Judge Michael L. Igoe found the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen in contempt of court for the December 13-15 work stoppage and fined them \$25,000.

The action of the court tied up one more strand in the legal web in which the government has enmeshed railroad labor, and in which it holds the workers while the employers chew up their collective-bargaining rights without fear of retaliation.

SAVAGE DEMANDS

Compared to the tremendous fine imposed on the United Mine Workers in a similar situation some years ago, Judge Igoe's penalty seems fairly mild. The government had asked for fines of \$500,000 against the union for each day of the strike, for heavy fines against its top officers and smaller ones against 43 others. It was also in the process of demanding that the union be given compensatory fines for damages done by the strike.

Such were the savage demands of the legal representatives of the Truman administration which has enjoyed the enthusiastic political backing of the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen officialdom. The judge declined to go along with the Department of Justice, contenting himself with establishing the "legal principle" that "as long as a union is functioning as a union, it must be held responsible for the mass actions of its members," even if the mass actions were completely spontaneous.

Just like an employer who is breaking a strike, the army accompanied its order to the workers with the offer of a small wage increase. The men were granted half the wage increases which had been accepted by their officers in the Washington agreement of December 21 and then rejected by their bargaining committees. And as LABOR ACTION goes to press all reports agree that no progress whatever is being made in the mediation which is going on in Washington.

DENSE SILENCE

The pattern followed by the government in this whole situation has now been repeated, with minor variations, so many times that it seems to be slowly becoming a time-honored part of the "American way of life." In fact,

it seems to be in the process of becoming "American" in the hemispheric sense of the word. Down in Argentina the authoritarian government of President Juan Peron has just broken a railroad strike by drafting the workers into the army and making them subject to military law. This method of "settling" labor disputes on the railroads was advocated by Truman in 1944 but rejected by the Senate. It is reported that the Peronist press in Argentina gave heavy play to the strikebreaking actions of the United States government in an attempt to justify its own behavior.

As far as can be learned, the labor leaders in this country have reacted to the strikebreaking of the Truman administration with a dense silence. They are so preoccupied with getting a top labor bureaucrat into a high position in the war mobilization setup that they apparently have no time even to comment on what is done to a million railroad workers.

The major economic question in this strike was whether or not railroad workers have the right to the 40-hour week without loss in take-home pay. Important as this issue is, it is overshadowed by the question of the right of railroad labor to strike, which includes within itself the effective right of railroad labor to bargain with its employers with any chance of winning its demands.

IS IT FOR DURATION?

The rest of the labor movement may not be too disturbed by the defeat of the switchmen. As stated above, this kind of thing is becoming a "tradition." But with a long period of "national emergency" ahead of the rest of the labor movement may well ponder this question:

If the government can use the "seizure plus injunction" tactic on the railroad workers, why not against the steel workers, or auto workers, or any others?

The United Mine Workers have met the issue for themselves, and despite fines and threats of fines have established that their solidarity and militancy is so great that the government's tactics cannot be counted on automatically where they are concerned. But there are few unions as solid and militant as the miners. And the effective use of the technique against any other group makes it just that much easier for the government to use it again.

Has the railroad strike set a pattern of government-employer tactics for "the duration"? The answer still lies in the hands of the organizationally mighty labor movement.

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