

We're Going to Have an 8-Page Labor Action

By MAX SHACHTMAN, Nat'l Sec., Workers Party

We are going to have an EIGHT-PAGE LABOR ACTION!

We are launching a WORKERS PARTY EXPANSION DRIVE!

These are the decisions unanimously adopted at the recent meeting of the National Committee of the Workers Party, with members in attendance from coast to coast, including a representative group of members just released from the armed forces.

The American working class is on the march. Great battles have already taken place and are now being waged between the working class, on the one side, and monopoly capital and its government, on the other. These are only the first of the post-war battles. More lie ahead, more battles and bigger ones. It is not only the future of the American working class that is at stake. In a deep sense, the future of the world is being fought out here.

In these battles the voice of LABOR ACTION must resound throughout the land. It must reach the hands of thousands and tens of thousands of working class militants, inspiring them to fight more clearly, more consciously, more aggressively than ever before.

LABOR ACTION must cover a dozen battle fronts where it covered one yesterday. It must deal with a dozen problems where it dealt with one yesterday. It must have space at its disposal for the voice and aspirations of its readers. It must have more space for news and analysis of political events in this country and throughout the world.

For this, four pages are simply not enough. We must expand to eight pages.

To make this possible, the meeting of the National Committee of the Workers Party voted to raise a fund of \$15,000 to contribute to the expansion and maintenance of LABOR ACTION as an eight-page fighting weekly. Part of the fund will be devoted to sending or-

ganizers of the Workers Party to the different sections of the country which are clamoring for party organizers and speakers. Another part of it will be set aside for a publication program of Workers Party educational literature.

The news of the EIGHT-PAGE LABOR ACTION plan has already created the highest enthusiasm in the branches of the Workers Party. Jumping the gun on the campaign, a membership meeting of the New York Local of the party received pledges totalling \$4,500 from the membership alone. Some members have still to make their pledges. New York has already raised \$1,405 in cash. Our new and thriving Newark Local has not only accepted its quota of \$500 but has already raised \$242. The Chicago, Philadelphia and Reading locals have already accepted their quotas and are busy raising the money. (The quotas for each city will be printed next week.)

The campaign will last three months, and then will come—the first issue of the EIGHT-PAGE LABOR ACTION!

We appeal for support to this Fund Drive not only to—

Members of the Workers Party, and Sympathizers of the Workers Party, but also to Every reader and friend of LABOR ACTION!

Send in your contribution without delay—anything and everything you can afford, dimes and quarters and dollars you can collect from your fellow workers and friends. LABOR ACTION is your paper. It fights alongside of you. It wants to triumph and it will triumph along with you and with the entire working class.

We launch this drive with every confidence that we will go over the top. Our members, our friends, our sympathizers, our readers—all of them together will surely justify this confidence.

ON TO THE EIGHT-PAGE LABOR ACTION!

1052 SUBS TO DATE!
3,948 TO GO!



LABOR ACTION

MARCH 4, 1946

A PAPER IN THE INTERESTS OF LABOR

ONE CENT

"Big Steal" Formula Signals Price Increases, as PROFITS RISE, WAGE GAINS VANISH!

"Quit India!" Cry Angry Masses

By HENRY JUDD

The long-talked of crisis has finally burst out openly in India, and that nation's 400,000,000 people are moving into action in their demand to enforce their "Quit India" slogan upon the detested British occupants.

At the head of this movement today are the thousands of Indian sailors of the Royal Indian Navy who are, in the harbors of Bombay, Karachi and in the military centers of New Delhi and Poona, in open revolt against the British authorities. These revolting seamen are fighting for, according to reports, "swifter demobilization, pay raises, assurances regarding their economic future, as well as better food." But it is important to note that in Bombay they have raised the Congress Party flag of freedom on their ships, after hauling down the British flag of slavery and national oppression. This proves that the struggle of the Indian seamen is highly political in character—that is, a conscious effort on their part to assume their place with the people of India. The Bombay population has understood this, for, according to reports, they have demonstrated in great masses around the besieged Castle Barracks in the city, to prove their solidarity with the sailors.

Previous naval and sailors' revolts come immediately to mind. The famous revolt of the seamen of the Russian Czar's Navy, headed by the crew of "S.S. Potemkin"; the mutiny of the German sailors at Kiel in 1918; the revolt of the sailors at Cattaro; the French revolt in the Black Sea in 1921, etc. Each of these dramatic events heralded great mass actions on the part of oppressed peo-

ple—the Russia revolution of 1905, the overthrow of German Kaiserism in 1919, the end of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It may well be that the present struggle of the Indian seamen will precipitate great struggles on the part of India's workers and peasants.

The response of the British govern-

ment has been, of course, similar to their action in Palestine, Indo-China, Indonesia, Malaya and every other section of the Empire where the colonial peoples are demanding liberation. Declare a state of "open mutiny," rush in soldiers, tanks and airplanes, and shoot them down!

The "Labor" government of Attlee

and his fellow British imperialists is well on its way to establishing the bloodiest and most reactionary reputation of all recent British governments with respect to the people of the Empire. Already, its hands are bloodied with the lives of thousands of Javanese, Jews and Arabs, Indians

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Snapping!

Police Club Vets; May Widen Strike

PHILADELPHIA, FEB. 27 (BY WIRE)—APPROXIMATELY 1,000 PICKETS DEMONSTRATED THIS MORNING AT GENERAL ELECTRIC IN DEFIANCE OF A COURT INJUNCTION. THE WORKERS PARTICIPATING CAME FROM MANY DIFFERENT PLANTS, SKF, WESTINGHOUSE, BALDWIN AND PHILADELPHIA TRANSPORTATION COMPANY. THE SHERIFF HAD ON HAND ABOUT 1,000 POLICEMEN, MOUNTED AND ON FOOT, TO BREAK THE LINE OF MARCH. AFTER A STRUGGLE IN WHICH SEVERAL VETERANS WERE CLUBBED AND HORSES RIDDEN INTO THE CROWD, THE PICKET LINE WAS TEMPORARILY DISPERSED. A MEETING WAS CALLED AT A PARK IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE DISPERSAL AT WHICH THE ASSEMBLED WORKERS CALLED FOR A GENERAL STRIKE TO ANSWER POLICE VIOLENCE. AMONG THE MEN ARRESTED WERE ORCHANT, ACKER AND HOODY. THE PICKETS WERE CALLED UPON TO REASSEMBLE THE FOLLOWING MORNING AT THE SAME PLACE. THE PICKET LINE WILL GO ON. THEY WILL ATTEMPT TO RALLY FURTHER SUPPORT. THE PHILADELPHIA CIO INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL AT ITS MEETING TOMORROW NIGHT WILL DISCUSS THE QUESTION OF A GENERAL STRIKE IN RESPONSE TO THE DEMANDS OF THE STRIKERS.

What price wage increases? This question is troubling every worker, every little consumer, every housewife.

Two weeks of the Truman "Big Steal" formula—and the price front is giving in on every sector. "Big Steal" is working in peacetime just as the "Little Steal" formula worked in wartime. According to the new wage-fixing, price-relaxing pattern, employers can increase prices enough to meet their 1936 to 1939 profits, while wage increases are permitted to meet what the Department of Labor considers the increase in the cost of living.

Maybe the effect of price increases wasn't so obvious a couple of weeks ago when the \$5.00 per ton increase in the price of steel was announced. But, as LABOR ACTION predicted, Big

Seven Join Detroit WP At Meeting

DETROIT—Seven workers applied for membership in the Workers Party and one high school student applied for membership in the Socialist Youth League at a forum on "Jim Crow in Detroit," held jointly by the two organizations on Friday evening, February 22, at Labor Action Hall, 3773 Gratiot.

The forum was an answer to a recent series of articles in the Detroit News on "Negro Life in Detroit." Speakers were: Lucille Spray, who dealt with discrimination in employment, housing and social life; Simon Williams, Detroit organizer of the Socialist Youth League, who discussed Jim Crow in the schools of Detroit; and Gene Dyer, chairman, who presented the program of the Workers Party to end Jim Crow and segregation.

A total of \$18 was contributed by the audience at the close of the meeting.

Steel is the bellwether, the lead sheep, for the rest of the industry. Now follows the 1 1/2 per cent hike in meat prices in exchange for the 16 cents an hour wage increase. On every table in every home in the country is reflected the price labor and the public are paying for modest enough wage gains.

The cotton textile millers, their war profits five times their pre-war take, follow the meat industry and demand a 15 per cent increase in prices to give them the proper incentive to produce lower cost clothing. OPA is "holding the line" by demanding only a 7 per cent increase!

LABOR'S PICKET LINE GAINS ARE BEING STOLEN IN WASHINGTON! Philip Murray and the other leaders of the CIO know what's going on. Murray delivered himself of the following remarks at a recent wage policy committee meeting of the steel workers in Philadelphia:

"From the start of our campaign, the union has recognized that all of our objectives sought in our wage fight can be lost if the wage gains of American workers are wiped out by unjustifiable price increases granted to American industry."

And are the price increases, begin-

(Continued on page 4)

GM Vital Issue for UAW

By JACK WILSON

DETROIT, Feb. 25—Prolongation of the General Motors strike into its 96th day has posed questions which will appear as major issues at the forthcoming convention of the UAW-CIO.

Contrary to the hopes of R. J. Thomas, UAW-CIO president, and George Ades, secretary-treasurer, their intervention in the negotiations with GM officials failed to bring a satisfactory settlement of the strike last week.

Instead, these two UAW-CIO officials joined with the entire executive board of the union in unanimously condemning the arrogant corporation. The telegram blasting GM was sent at the insistence of Walter Reuther, UAW GM director, who presented it for adoption by the executive board at a special session this weekend. It went to all locals.

The endorsement in the telegram of the views of Reuther who insists

on a 19 1/2 cent wage increase, and no company security provisions, was a victory for his faction in Reuther's drive to replace Thomas as president of the UAW.

The action of the UAW-CIO executive board in standing by Reuther's demand that the corporation accept a 19 1/2 cents increase, the inclusion of the good provisions of the old contract plus awards of the War Labor Board, was also a blow at James Dewey, federal conciliator. Dewey's role has been greatly magnified by the press. In reality, his efforts have been mainly directed towards pressuring the union through releasing false statements of negotiation progress, the idea being that this would force the UAW to retreat some more. But Dewey's efforts have failed.

Now Dewey has threatened to go to Philip Murray, CIO president, for support. In the steel negotiations Murray had accepted 18 1/2 cents an hour, plus a price increase for steel,

GM officials, of course, are willing to meet with Murray to talk that kind of terms.

Reuther's insistence on wage increases without price increases has become more than an issue in the GM negotiations. It is a major plank in his program for the coming UAW convention. Only yesterday a slate at Chrysler Local—R. J. Thomas' own Local—was elected as delegates to the UAW convention on this program, and a Reuther-for-president slogan.

This action was the closest to an outright declaration by Reuther that he is aiming at Thomas' job. The Reuther faction also insists that he has always been against the company security provisions. The Reuther faction intends to present to the UAW convention a better contract for GM than other UAW officials obtained at Ford or Chrysler. Also, to slug the Stalinists for the UE-GM

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New York Workers! Support Indian Independence!

India's 400,000,000 people are moving into action to enforce their "Quit India" slogan upon the British. Thousands of Indian sailors of the Royal Indian Navy in the harbors of Bombay, Karachi and in the military centers of New Delhi and Poona are in open revolt against British authorities. The Bombay population, defying the machine guns of the British, has demonstrated in great masses around the besieged Castle Barracks to prove its solidarity with the sailors.

The demand that all American troops be withdrawn from the colonies and foreign areas is especially to the point now. Hunger, oppression and discrimination are the fruits of British rule in India. RALLY TO THE SUPPORT OF THE INDIAN PEOPLE! Come to this Mass Meeting in New York.

MAX SHACHTMAN, National Secretary, Workers Party
GUEST SPEAKER, from the India League of America

TEX DAVIS, Army Veteran, recently returned from India
FLORENCE FRAZIER, Chairman

SUNDAY, MARCH 10, 8 P. M.
Admission: 25 Cents Auspices: WORKERS PARTY, Local N. Y.

IMPERIAL HALL
160 West 129th Street (near Seventh Avenue)

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE LABOR FRONT

Steelworkers' Solidarity in the Mesabi

By JACK EDWARDS

HIBBING, Minn.—At 12:01 a.m. Friday, February 8, three weeks after the nation's steel workers began their million-man strike by throwing picket lines around every section of the steel industry...

'fact-finding' board to 'investigate' the steel workers' grievances for thirty days and to report their findings. This procedure was a union-busting farce from the beginning.

In the first place, the United Steel Workers 'have called an industry-wide strike that carries them across most of this country's forty-eight state lines. It is plain to a schoolboy that a one-state "fact-finding" board could neither find the facts about the grievances of steel workers in forty-seven outside states, nor do anything about them if they did.

A tour of the picket lines, picket shanties and strike headquarters last Sunday turned up fighting spirit and militancy in every Mesabi Range town. From Coleraine to Chisholm, the rank and file mine workers revealed a willingness to battle. They are well organized. Each picket-line

captain knows how to lead his squad and the squad members know their duties and carry them out with the precision of veterans. George Teller, rugged president of the Range's CIO Industrial Union Council, proudly stressed the fact that this is the first strike action for most of these men and that they were acting like veterans.

RUNNING OVER PICKETS

Just one act of violence has occurred on the Mesabi to break the armed truce between mine owners and mine workers. At about 9:00 a.m. last Friday, shortly after the strike was called on the Range, General Superintendent Earl Mollard drove toward the mass picket line barring the entrance to the Butler Bros. shop at Cooley. The pickets, whose numbers included Emil Shelly, Fred Ross, Floyd McColler, Paul Madar and John Stish, flagged him down. Instead of stopping at the picket station to present his card for approval, Mollard suddenly gouted his car and shot right into the mass of pickets. The miners had to break ground to avoid being murdered, but a fifty-year old worker, John Stish, had one leg bruised by the labor-hating superintendent's car and narrowly escaped serious injury.

A special strike committee, captained by local union President Wayne Kumpula quickly bearded Superintendent Mollard in his office den. The knee-weakening presence of

grim and rugged miners like the 260-pound Shelly of Nashwauk, sinewy Paul Madar, the injured Stish, Fred Ross, McColler and others apparently caused Mollard to regret his venomous act, for he apologized on the spot. But the miners show distinct evidence of forgetting all the wartime baloney about "labor-management cooperation" because they called a meeting for Monday night at Nashwauk, to which they invited one of the Butler family to discuss the incident and arrange to get Superintendent Mollard out of their vicinity. Pierce Butler had not appeared at the meeting by 9 p.m. so it is safe to say that he shares his superintendent's contempt for the mine workers who have made him rich while getting poor themselves.

'Watchful waiting' are perhaps the two words that best sum up the Range situation. Like other workers on strike throughout the country, however, the miners should not forget that the cards are stacked against them. While it seems clear at this writing that they will get an 18-cent an hour wage boost from Truman, U. S. Steel will get a 36-cent an hour steel price increase from PAC-endorsed Harry. In other words, what the steelworkers are winning on the picket line, the weak-kneed policies of Phil Murray and the strong-arm, union-busting tactics of Truman and the other Big Business-government representatives are taking from them on the price line.

MINNESOTA FACT-FINDING

Governor Ed Thye, another would-be "friend of labor," stabbed ever-trusting Henry Burkhammer, CIO director of District 33, smack-dab between the shoulder blades. CIO strike leaders at Hibbing told this reporter that Burkhammer got a solemn promise from Thye that the notorious "fact-finding" law, Minnesota's contribution to big business' strike-breaking arsenal, would not be invoked against the 20,000 Gopher State steel workers. "The very next day," they said, "they crossed Burkhammer by appointing a three-man

GM Strike Vital Issue --

(Continued from page 1)

settlement of last week. And to appear as outstanding opponents of company security provisions.

The inevitable jockeying for strategic posts and positions at the convention goes on full force, with many an ambitious eye on the vice-presidency vacated by Richard Frankenstein's resignation. It is entirely too early to predict what the results of the convention will be. It is very possible, for example, that Phil Murray will put enough pressure on to keep Thomas as president even if Reuther has enough votes. An Ades-Stalinist-Thomas bloc might coalesce and defeat Reuther. The election of delegates is just taking place and no one knows exactly what strength the various factions have.

Unlike last year, there will not be a powerful rank and file caucus united on a basic issue as the abolition of the no-strike pledge. This issue, of course, has disappeared and the entire UAW is in a process of realignment of forces, programs, and groups. The lessons of the GM strike are just beginning to be understood. They point, however, to a program for militants in the UAW. Briefly, this might be described as the GM Program—linking wages with prices and profits, demanding that the corporation Open the Books, opposing company security, and adding to it

the obvious necessity of a Labor Party. The GM workers performed an invaluable service to the labor movement in the demands they made of the corporation. Reuther, as head of the GM local, initiated the strike on the proper basis, but the fact remains that he permitted real issues in the strike to be pushed into the background. He did not stand up against the Phil Murray's allowed labor's wage gains to be stolen in Washington-granted increases. Precisely because he demonstrated a better understanding of the situation than other labor leaders it is necessary to subject his role to severe criticism. (In coming issues of LABOR ACTION we shall, along with other articles discussing the issues before the UAW convention, specially evaluate the role played by Reuther in the GM strike.—Ed.)

An indication of the future was forecast last week in the public announcement by Larry Yost, chairman of the famous rank and file caucus, that a large bloc has been reformed at the Ford local to fight against "company security" and for a Labor Party. However, Yost is not a delegate to the convention, nor are many other rank-and-file leaders, so the fight among main factions in the UAW will probably occupy the center of the stage.

Los Angeles Anti-Fascists Win

LOS ANGELES, Feb. 17.—The anti-fascists of this city have won an important victory in the fight against Gerald Smith and his fascist fifth. Some three weeks ago 48 of them went on trial, charged with "disturbing the peace" by boozing Smith at his Polytechnical High School meeting of November 3. Yesterday the jury acquitted all but two of the defendants; 23 had their cases dismissed during the trial for lack of evidence and of the remainder the jury found 23 not guilty and two guilty. New trials will be requested for these two in the hope that the victory will be complete.

The case started back on November 3, when a mass picket line of some 15,000 anti-fascists picketed the Polytechnical H. S. in protest against Smith and his drive to form a fascist spearhead. Over 300 cops, armed to the teeth and wearing steel helmets and gas masks, were on hand to protect Smith's meeting. Perhaps a third of Smith's audience was hostile to him and displayed their hostility, among other ways, by loud and vigorous boozing. Smith followers pointed out the anti-fascists and the police cooperated by removing them. To drive the point home, they arrested 49 of them (one pro-Smith by accident and 48 anti-Smith).

'Since their arrest, the 48 have been subjected to relentless persecution by the City Attorney's office (part of PAC and labor-endorsed Mayor Bowron's administration). The original arrest was made on the charge of disturbing a public school meeting, but the City Attorney amended the charges twice, had the defendants all re-arrested and added three new charges. Bail originally set at the fantastic figure of \$500 was finally reduced to \$50.

Judge Guerin assisted the prosecution by offering them suggestions when they weren't doing so well, and when that failed, took over the cross-examination himself. His conduct appeared so biased that the defense attorney, John McTernan, cited him for misconduct five or six times during the trial, and called for mistrials. The judge systematically overruled McTernan's objections and threatened him with jail, but permitted the prosecution full play.

One biased decision of the court was played up by the newspapers here and aroused publicity and sympathy for the defendants. A defendant, Mrs. Anne Draper, pleading illness, asked to be excused for lateness and from the court session. She was told she looked healthy and fined \$50. Attorney McTernan, protesting

Fourth International Mourns Death of Italian Revolutionist

ROME, January 25 (By Mail)—Nicola Di Bartolomeo, National Secretary of the Partito Operaio Comunista (Workers Communist Party), Italian section of the Fourth International, died at Resina (Naples province) on January 10.

He was only 44 years old, but with a record of 25 years of struggle in the revolutionary movement. Only in the last two years was he able to appear under his own legal name. Before that in many countries he was known as FOSCO and then as ROLAND.

In France, in Belgium, in Holland, in England and in Spain, he participated in the struggle. During the Spanish civil war he fought in the Lenin Column and later in Barcelona, rifle in hand, he defended the workers' rights on the barricades which rose in the famous May Days of 1937.

Jailed in France under the Vichy régime, he was handed over to Mussolini and returned to his native land after long exile—to a prison. It was in the prison-isolator of Tremati that he and a group whom he had gathered around him wrote the first program of the new revolutionary party which they were to found.

That program, and much else that he wrote in the less than three years that remained to him, was necessarily preoccupied with the central importance of democratic demands as the crucial means to mobilize the masses for revolutionary struggle. These writings were directed against the ultra-leftist Bordigha and his followers. Comrade Di Bartolomeo

emphasized that we must not repeat the error which the Communist International made even in its best days when it permitted the reformists to pose as the sole defenders of democracy.

He had the satisfaction, in the weeks preceding his death, of knowing that at last the party had won the right to a legal newspaper, three issues of which had appeared before his death. IV Internazionale, as the paper is called, has enabled the party to turn toward the masses and to fight for the republic and a government of the Socialist and Communist parties in order to end the present political paralysis.

His conception of the Fourth International was that it could contain within it all genuine revolutionists despite their differences on Russia and other questions. Hence his warm support of unity of the Socialist Workers Party and the Workers Party in the United States, which if achieved he considered would be a guiding precedent for divisions in other countries. He warned against the danger that continued divisions would facilitate the formation of a new international which would hamper the growth of the Fourth International.

Despite the terrible conditions prevailing in southern Italy, he insisted on remaining there because of his close connection with the workers of Naples, although meanwhile the national center and the press had been moved to Rome in order to serve the industrial North. A pulmonary congestion, aggravated by the lack of proper food and medical treatment, killed him after a few days of intense suffering.

An indefatigable organizer, and with his vast international experience, his loss is a great blow at a time when the Italian section of the Fourth International has weathered its initial tasks of establishing itself and is growing rapidly.

On behalf of LABOR ACTION and the Workers Party we can add: not only the Italian party but the whole world Trotskyist movement has suffered a great loss in the passing of Comrade Di Bartolomeo. One of the oldest remaining comrades who go back to the days of the Left Opposition, his great international experience gave him an especially authoritative voice in the Fourth International not only on European but also on world questions. To his bereaved widow, Rosa, his worthy companion in the revolutionary fight, we send our heartfelt condolences and pledge of comradeship.

QUEST LECTURE, NEW YORK WORKERS PARTY SCHOOL Speaker: Ernest Erber Managing Editor of The New Internationalist BALANCE SHEET OF THE STRIKE WAVE Friday, March 8, 9 P. M. 1st Labor Temple 14th St. near 2nd Ave. admission 25c Labor has demonstrated its strength. What has labor gained? What are the next steps?

Readers of Labor Action Take the Floor...

Disputes Editorial On Jewish Program

Dear Editor: As an old friend I'm sure you'll permit me to express my disappointment in your "Statement on the Jewish Question" of approximately two months ago.

In it, the homeless, uprooted Jewish masses of Europe are carefully and, on the whole, correctly but cavalierly instructed in a democratic program for Palestine. I wonder why the Arab masses are not admonished against the reactionary politics of THEIR nationalist movements. Why aren't they urged to fight against the criminal opposition of their parties to free Jewish immigration and the denial of full civil rights to Jews already residing in Palestine?

It's easy to anticipate the "answer" to these "naive" questions: "the statement is addressed to Jews in America and not to the faraway Arabs."

Nevertheless, I feel that a programmatic statement on this question should not have failed to emphasize, or, at least point out the fact, that on the immediate, life and death question of open doors for the hapless, rootless Jewish remnants who escaped Fascism's "murder factories," it is the Arab nationalist movement and not the Jewish nationalist movement which actually deprives a people of its human, democratic rights. It is not enough to show that the Big Three are also guilty of this crime or to curse a few Arab feudal landlords.

Somewhat, Arab nationalism gets off scot-free; no derogatory appellations like "reactionary" become attached to it in your editorial. Very little, or nothing, is said about the fact that the Arab nationalist movements not only "mean to" but DO disfranchise Jewish masses.

By implication you distinguish between Arab nationalism and its semi-fascist organizational manifestations.

That's undoubtedly correct procedure. On the other hand, you continue in the Comintern pattern and refuse to distinguish between Jewish nationalism and its organizations. Why?

Why is the national aspiration of the Jewish masses (instinctively distrustful of the "Big Three world" for a territorial concentration of their own, in and of itself reactionary?)

The truth of the matter is that the organizational expressions of present day Jewish nationalism, the Zionist parties, are no more chauvinist or imperialist than are their counterparts in France (the MRP, the so-called Socialist and Communist Parties) or, for that matter, in other European countries.

Very few, if any, of the European and Asiatic nationalist movements you did "support" do not swarm with viciously chauvinist and imperialist tendencies.

The postponement of democratic majority rule in Palestine by the Zionist parties is matched by the permanent rejection and denial of majority rule by the Arab nationalist parties in the largest metropolitan centers (Jerusalem) because Jews are there a majority.

In the case of the Zionist parties you insist upon seeing nothing but an aggressive, imperialist intent to deprive the Arab people of their rights; while the Arab nationalists' anti-democratic program is, by lack of criticism, portrayed as a wholly justified policy of defense against imperialist aggression.

Unfortunately for your editorial, the facts of the Palestinian reality do not jibe with this erroneous conclusion. Despite its pretensions, your programmatic "Statement on the Jewish Question" is foreign to the spirit and method of Marxist analysis when it substitutes a priori schemata for a concrete investigation of the real social and political relations in the Palestinian situation.

Fraternally yours, EDWARD FINDLAY

Your letter undoubtedly refers to the November 12, 1945, statement in LABOR ACTION entitled, "A Socialist Program for the Jews." In the confines of a brief editorial it was admittedly impossible to deal with every aspect of the Jewish-refugee problem and Arab nationalist aspirations in Palestine—one of the most complex problems in the world. So, for example, we did not stress in this editorial our main demand: Open the doors of the United States to Jewish immigration, free immigration of the Jewish people to any country of their choice.

But there is a reason for the emphasis on the "reactionary and utopian character" (Trotsky) of the Zionist movement, and this has been discussed at various times in articles on Palestine in LABOR ACTION. So far as we know, there are no Arab political parties in Palestine which express the needs of the masses. The Arab "Higher Committee" which is the spokesman of the Arab Nationalist Party in Palestine is the organ of the Arab bourgeoisie and the feudal lords. Along with British imperialism, its main interest is in diverting the masses from agrarian revolt by playing on their fear of Jewish domination. Thus far, they appear to have been successful.

The Zionist movement, on the other hand, is made up of many tendencies. It includes leftward elements which call themselves socialist. They claim to be in sympathy with the Arab peasant and worker and do in a limited way organize them into trade unions. We call on the politically advanced elements to take leadership in organizing the fight against imperialism and feudalism.

We denounce Zionist-British maneuvering and show that it is not in the interests either of Jewish immigration or of democracy for the Arab masses. We call for a break with Zionist leadership and the building of a genuine Jewish-Arab independent movement. We consider it the

elementary socialist duty of these left militants to help crystallize an Arab popular movement and it is for that purpose that we advance the slogan to "establish universal suffrage and a national constituent assembly based on majority rule."

On the other question you raise, namely, the national aspirations of the Jewish masses, your assumption that the Workers Party considers this to be "in and of itself, reactionary" is not correct. Comrade Trotsky in discussing Biro-bidjan wrote:

"But not a progressive, thinking individual will object to the USSR designating a special territory for those of its citizens who felt themselves Jews, who use the Jewish language in preference to all others and who wish to live as a compact mass. . . . Are we not correct in saying that a world socialist federation will have to make possible the creation of a Biro-bidjan for those Jews who wish to have their own autonomous republic as the arena for their own culture?"

"It may be presumed that a socialist democracy will not resort to compulsory assimilation. It may very well be that within two or three generations the boundaries of an independent Jewish republic, as of many other national regions, will be erased. I have neither time nor desire to meditate on this. Our descendants will know better than we what to do. I have in mind a transitional historical period when the Jewish question as such, is still acute and demands adequate measures from a world federation of workers' states.

The very same methods of solving the Jewish question which under decaying capitalism will have a utopian and reactionary character (Zionism), will under the regime of a socialist federation take on real and salutary meaning. This is what I want to point out. How could any Marxist or even any consistent democrat object to this?"—J. Kaaren, for the editors.

Says Murray Showed Poor Leadership

Editor:

I am a member of Local 2715, CIO, Reading, Pa. You know Murray started us off with a "\$2.00-a-day slogan. Well, he got a pittance for the 'Big Steel workers, so he ordered them back to work. But what about us? We were good enough to help them, now who is going to help us? I think it shows very poor leadership for him to order the men back into Big Steel and let us (the little fellows) stick in this mess. He should have demanded that all or nobody goes back to work.

I would be satisfied with the 18 1/2 cent increase if (and when) I get it. But I don't know when we will go back to work. The Big Steel has now been granted a measly \$5.00-a-ton increase which will amount, as Truman had figured it, to 60,000,000 tons times \$5.00. That equals \$300,000,000. The capitalist papers were shedding tears because, as they claimed, it would cost the steel companies \$135,000,000 to pay the increased wages. Now-why should the steel companies be given \$300,000,000 when they themselves claim it would cost them only \$135,000,000? Oh well, what is \$135,000,000 friends?

If Murray was sincere in his demand for 25 cents an hour, why did he allow the fact-finders to slice 6 1/2 cents off his demand? Or, in other words, if he was going to allow slicing, he should have asked for 35 cents an hour; then let Truman's fact finders slice off 10 cents. It would have made them feel better because of the bigger slice. They did not give us the 6 1/2 cent slice because of the facts they found, but they figured Murray was stupid enough to accept it.

Yours very truly, W. L., Topton, Pa.

With the Workers Party

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Editorials

Mr. Attlee Is a Liar!

Clement Attlee is head of the Labor Party cabinet in Great Britain. When the revolt of the Indian sailors broke out last week, Prime Minister Attlee—the leader of a party which claims to speak in the interests of labor and freedom—was forced to state the attitude of his government.

And so, while British troops were shooting down the Indian sailors and the people of Bombay and Calcutta who had demonstrated in support of the sailors, Attlee issued a statement which slandered the masses of India, which ignored the real political issue: the desire of the Indian people for national independence.

Attlee said that the revolt (which in best imperialist fashion, he disdainfully called a "mutiny") had been provoked by "Left Wing and Communist elements." He further said of the Indian sailors that "only their unconditional surrender would be accepted."

Consider those two statements for a minute. The Indian sailors, ground down by the feudal discipline of the British navy, humiliated by the racial discrimination to which they are subjected, discontented with the segregation the British officers impose on them—these Indian sailors were finally goaded into desperate rebellion. And what does the Labor Prime Minister say about that? That it was merely inspired by "Communists!" Could Churchill have done better in behalf of British imperialism?

And then that nauseating phrase about "unconditional surrender." Is it the attitude one would

expect from a "leader of labor" towards a people whose only crime is their desire to control their own destiny? By the use of that phrase, Attlee adopts the same attitude towards the Indian people, towards his "comrade" Nehru, as he was supposed to have adopted towards the Nazis. Could any phrase more completely show how much Attlee—whatever his verbal promises—has continued the imperialist policy of Churchill!

If Attlee had one spark of democratic decency, one ounce of socialist internationalism in his soul, he would have said: "We leave India. We break with the shameful record of British imperialism. We withdraw every soldier, every gun, every civil servant, every imperial agent. We leave you, the people of India, free to rule yourselves as you should have always been free; we leave you to make of your nation what you will. The day of imperialist rule is over."

But Attlee says nothing of the kind. As in every other phase of British political life, he and his Labor Party pursue their policy of perpetuating capitalist rule, of bolstering the British Empire. As his Foreign Minister Bevin said, "I am not prepared to sacrifice the British Empire..." These are exactly the words Churchill used a few years ago. And to veil this wretched policy, Attlee must have recourse to the oldest of slanders: it's only a "Communist plot."

To which we say—even if it isn't considered good form in Eton—you're a bloody liar, Mr. Attlee!

Quill, O'Dwyer, Profits, Wages

The possibility of a subway strike in New York has thrown that city into an uproar. For thinking workers there are a great many interesting points to be noted about this situation and in this issue of LABOR ACTION, we wish to comment briefly on just a few of these points, leaving more detailed comment for next week when, we hope, there will be more space in the paper:

(1) It's a long time now since we've seen such an orgy of red-baiting and union-hating propaganda in New York. The Hearst press, the Scripps-Howard World Telegram, the Staid Times are engaged in a race to see which can slander the transit workers most viciously. They work themselves into a frenzy of hysteria at the very thought that the 32,000 transit workers—whose wages are approximately 20 per cent below those of similar workers in many other cities—may exercise their right to strike. We of LABOR ACTION, together with all other militant workers, are not one whit fazed at all this blather about "you can't strike against the government." Any time workers have a beef, any time they fight for a decent living, it is the job of labor to come to their support—no matter against whom they're striking.

(2) There's a special viciousness in the press campaign against the transit workers. The bosses and their press agents say that if the transit workers do get their \$2 a day raise, the subway fare will have to be raised because the subways are already running at a loss. Bunk! The subways are running at a loss because the various city administrations—both Tammany Hall and LaGuardia—have permitted them to be saddled with the fantastic interest rates which the bankers impose upon the subway system. The interest on the subway bonds has been paid many times over to the bankers, who just keep getting rich from it. That's why the subways run at a loss.

Even as un-radical an observer as Newbold Morris, former President of the City Council, notes in articles in the New York Post that were it not for this interest burden which is making the bankers rich and the people poor, the subways could be run at a profit! The result of this banker squeeze has been: low wages for the transit workers; wretched service and old trains for the people of the city; and the constant threat over our heads of a raise in fare to 10 cents. On guard against the big shot realtors and bankers! Keep the fare down to 5 cents; give the transit workers their raise; and get the money to do both by putting an end to the scandalous leak of the peoples' taxes into the bankers' coffers!

(3) If, as seems likely, the transit workers get their raise, you can expect a big hue and cry about "the need" either to raise taxes or raise the fare. This is the way the steel and auto bosses have passed on to the consumers the raises their workers got. What's the good of raises if prices go up

with them? The workers need wages that go up—and prices that stay down! And that can be done by having the raises come out of the bloated profits the bosses made during the war. That was the original proposal of the GM strikers before Phil Murray gave them the axe. The "GM program"—wages up; prices down—is the red-hot need of the workers everywhere. It is the need of the transit workers. They must get their raises. But the raises must be covered by cutting out the financial enslavement of the subway system to the bankers; and not by passing it on to the people who ride the subways.

And now a word about the leadership of the Transport Workers Union, which means Michael Quill and his friends. Everyone in New York knows what Quill is: a close supporter of the Stalinist movement. Today Quill is shouting bloody murder against the head of the subway system, one ex-General Gross, who has the mistaken idea that he can bully workers the way generals kick around GIs. Gross is a no-good labor hater and he should be shown up for that. But why is Brother Quill so silent about Mayor O'Dwyer? Why does he develop an advanced case of tongue-tied reticence when it comes to attacking the man who is behind Gross, the man without whom Zero-Gross couldn't move an inch—that is, Mayor O'Dwyer?

Could it be because Quill and his Stalinist friends supported O'Dwyer for mayor? The very same O'Dwyer who appointed the very same Gross against whom Quill is so bold! There's the result of the rotten policy of supporting capitalist candidates for office. They glad-hand you when they need the vote. As soon as they're elected, they give you the boot. O'Dwyer appointed labor-hating Gross. Don't forget that. O'Dwyer sent Sarnoff and McGrady, two big shot officials of RCA, as the "peoples' representatives" to talk to Philip Murray in Washington. Why? Since when are these two capitalist officials of a million dollar corporation the "representatives of the people?"

But—you make your bed and you sleep in it. Quill and his Stalinist friends made a rotten deal with Tammany Hall and they put a puny gang-buster into City Hall. Now he's turned against labor—as sooner or later all capitalist politicians do. That's the price you pay, Mr. Quill, for your rotten policy. You, and your Stalinist friends with your stranglehold on the American Labor Party, put O'Dwyer in office. Now you're getting back what can be expected from his type.

There's a lesson to be learned here. Workers need a party of their own, one that's not tied up with capitalist politicians. And it is one of the main crimes of people like Quill and the other Stalinists and Stalinist stooges that they tied the unions they control to the tail of Tammany Hall in New York.

WORLD POLITICS

By IRVING HOWE

What will be the character of the Stalinist régime in Russia, now that the war is over? This question, which has interested the world for many reasons, may now be partly answered on the basis of Stalin's "election speech" and his "Order of the Day to the Red Army." Leaving aside the rhetorical pap, what Stalin said was this:

Contrary to the expectations of the weak-brained Stalin sympathizers in other countries, there will be no relaxation in the Russian totalitarian régime. Those who fooled themselves with the idea that once the war was over and the danger of Nazi invasion removed there would be a gradual "democratization" of the Stalin régime, must now face the reality. The elections just held followed the same "Vote Ja" pattern as previous Stalin elections: no toleration of opposition; the unanimity which comes only with terror and a paralyzing spy system; in short, a farcical mockery of democratic processes. And this pattern will continue.

Stalin said that the war machine, which had been built up by driving millions to the verge of hunger and by depriving the masses of consumer goods, would be continued. In fact, it is obliged not only to keep up with progress in the art of war but to advance it. The militarism which had pervaded every arena of Russian life will also be perpetuated: "Firm discipline and strict military order" are the needs that Stalin emphasizes.

ONE IMPERIALIST VERSUS ANOTHER

Not a word from Stalin about democratization of internal life—something, by the way, which only the most naive ever expected from him. He does have a word in his speech about "raising the standard of living," but it is completely subordinated to the perspective of constructing a gigantic military machine.

Why this perspective of continued and increased militarization? The orthodox Stalinist explanation is that Russia fears the capitalist powers, but that is an explanation we cannot accept. At the moment Russia stands in no particular danger of attack from the capitalist powers. The conflicts that exist between them are not based on ideological issues; the Western powers know that Russia is not, and has not been for a long time, the source of working class revolution. On the contrary, Anglo-American capitalism remembers how efficiently the Stalin-bureaucracy has helped them to stifle and destroy working class revolutions in various countries. The basic source of conflict between Russia, on the one hand, and America and Britain, on the other, is imperialist ON BOTH SIDES!

The British are fighting desperately to maintain their empire; and at the moment Russia is making what are for the British "ominous" moves to muscle into the Near East, "the lifeline of Empire." The United States, whose imperialist domination inclines toward financial control rather than territorial rule (though the latter is by no means unusual) is also interested in getting Russia out of the places into which she is at present moving.

But the Russian imperialist expansion becomes increasingly compulsive in its nature: the low level and poor organization of Russian economy are among the factors which prod the Stalin bureaucracy into further imperialist adventures. At the moment, Russian troops are propping up puppet régimes in a number of Balkan countries; Russian troops persist in Manchuria long enough, at least, to fish every movable piece of capital goods; Russian puppets grab a piece of Northern Iran rich in oil; and Russian imperialism even reaches out to grab a piece of Africa, Tripolitania.

(In passing, we wish to ask those people who deny the imperialist character of the Stalin régime: Just what is the nature of its African ambitions? Are they also

merely an attempt to protect its borders by supporting friendly countries?)

The Russian economy has been thrown back considerably by the war; whole industries have been destroyed. But it is not these factors which are basic. What is basic is that Russia is not a working class state but rather a bureaucratic collectivist dictatorship in which there is no motive for genuine working class effort for productive efficiency and expansion (other than the fear of the NKVD, the secret police). Russia is a country in which the paralyzing grip of bureaucracy, of dictatorship, makes impossible that working class initiative which a socialist régime would stimulate. Terror and efficiency don't go well together—not, at least, for very long. Bureaucracy and democratic workers' initiative don't go well together—not, at least, for very long.

The economic exploitation within Russia is not based—as is, for instance, capitalist exploitation in America—on a highly developed and technologically advanced and efficient economy. On the contrary, the exploitation is, so to speak, extensive rather than intensive. A very striking example of this is seen in the Russian use of the oil wells it has grabbed in Hungary and Austria. The Stalinist press gleefully announces that "under the guidance of the Beloved Leader" (who is of course also an expert on drilling wells...) new records in oil acquisition have been set in Hungary and Austria. But these records, somewhat similarly to Stakhanovism, the Stalinist equivalent of the speed-up, are set by means of incredibly wasteful exploitation of natural resources, of working the wells so ruthlessly today that their value will be lost tomorrow. This is the economic method of the Stalinist bureaucracy: extensive, wasteful, primitive exploitation.

And it is a method which forces intermittent attempts at EXTERNAL expansion. The Stalinist armies have looted half of Europe and half of China, too. They have sent back to Russia—without the slightest regard for the peoples of the occupied countries, even those who were "allies"—entire industries. This is not the classical kind of capitalist imperialism in which the capitalist country tries to sink its surplus capital into the backward country. It is rather a kind of "primitive accumulation" by bureaucratic collectivism spurred on by its internal economic backwardness and its greed for acquisition. To achieve this end Stalin needs tremendous military forces; nobody will submit to his plunder willingly. Result: his call for increased war production, his emphasis on "firm discipline," his statement that consumer goods production will remain subordinate to war production.

This is not the picture of a state moving toward socialism; it is not the picture of a workers' state. It is rather the picture of a totalitarian dictatorship, driven to more and more reckless adventures by its internal contradictions. The bureaucracy doesn't give a damn about the internal standard of living, other than having it high enough for the Russian workers to continue as efficient slaves. Concretely, that probably means a certain increase in the standard of living, for the near-starvation level of the war years cannot be maintained indefinitely. But too sharp an increase is not entirely to the interest of the Stalin bureaucracy. For an increase of considerable proportions in the standard of living means an increase in leisure and culture among the masses; that means a "chance to breathe and think"; and THAT is a danger to the bureaucracy. Terror, bureaucracy, low living standards, primitive economy, imperialist expansion—all of these characteristics of the Stalin régime are intimately related. They are its trademarks. They will continue to be so in the post-war period.

OFF LIMITS By JAMES M. FENWICK

LOOK WHO'S TALKING!

Brigadier General H. C. Holdridge, after a comfortable army career of twenty-seven years, during which, so far as we know, he manifested no great alarm over the army system, recently groped his way out of retirement to say some very nasty things about the institution which sheltered him so well from the storms of a very chancy civilian life.

Speaking against compulsory military training before the House Military Affairs Committee he said that the army's "most prominent characteristic is its medieval caste system which sets up unsurmountable barriers between the officer aristocracy and the enlisted man."

As former commandant of the adjutant general's school at Fort Washington, and thereby uniquely qualified to speak upon the infamous court martial system of which he was a not unimportant part, he said of the Army's judicial system that "it is not a system of justice at all, but a system of military discipline and punishment carried over from the days of Gustavus Adolphus by way of the British Army."

"The Army leadership," he continued, really getting into his stride, "is class-conscious, ultra-conservative, absolutist," and the Army itself offers "an excellent breeding ground for totalitarianism."

UNRIDDLING THE RIDDLE

This is mighty strong language, especially when it is recognized that it comes from one of the "officer aristocracy," and not from one of us anonymous army serial numbers, who, as is well known, were always complaining.

Many GIs, while agreeing with Holdridge's statement, must have wondered what provoked it. Passing over the subordinate personal reasons involved, which we are not in a position to know, and which are, in any event, geared more appropriately to the intellectual level obtaining in officers' bars, the secret of Holdridge's hair-raising statement is contained in one of the criticisms he made.

Speaking of the Army régime, he said: "It promotes class consciousness and class cleavages." What distinguishes Holdridge from some of the vicious brutes like Patton is not only the possession of a few brains but a modest awareness of the political and social reality. He recognizes that United States capitalism in the ensuing period is going to be saddled with political commitments all over the globe which will ultimately have to be backed up by armed force.

He also recognizes that an army raised by compulsory methods and subjected to such a régime as now exists in the armed forces will prove a very unreliable one for the carrying out of United States capitalism's plans for world political (and hence, military) domination. "It promotes class consciousness and class cleavages."

The recent GI demonstrations all over the world, the similar activities in the British Army and the mutiny in the Indian Navy serve as storm signals for persons such as Holdridge.

Hence his proposal for reform of the Army, so as to make it a more reliable instrument of United States imperialism.

WHAT OTHERS ARE THINKING

There are unquestionably other officers who, starting from the same recognition of the necessity of a large, stable United States Army, are drawing authoritarian conclusions. They desire a less democratic army and a less democratic government.

Both, however, support capitalism, its armies, and its wars.

Only socialism, which will destroy the economic roots of war, roots which are imbedded in the soil of capitalism itself, can bring peace.

Seen from that point of view, Holdridge's remarks, however well intentioned, however "radical," are only a more sophisticated method for preserving United States capitalism with all its iniquities, in a difficult time for world capitalism.

International Socialist Notes

GREECE

Negotiations to unite all the Fourth Internationalist forces in Greece are now going on. Agreement has been reached on how the pre-unity discussion shall be carried on and how the various tendencies will function in the unified party. This agreement was signed by the Internationalist Workers Party, the International Revolutionary Party and the International Communist Party of Salonika.

During the unity discussions, a theoretical magazine, the Fourth International, will be published by an editorial board composed of three members from each party. This publication will print the platform of the various factions, discussion articles, and Fourth International documents on subjects that will come under discussion at the unity convention. Combined membership meetings of all parties are planned for the pre-unity discussion period.

The three parties to sign this agreement have been carrying on extensive activity in Greece. The International Workers Party issues a newspaper, The Workers' Struggle, and has recently published in book form Leon Trotsky's Revolution Betrayed and John Reed's Ten Days That Shook the World.

Members of this party are active in the trade union movement, and their activities, plus the fact that they are party members, are often mentioned in the party's press. The International Revolutionary Party issues the paper, Workers' Front, and it recently published the Lenin and Zinoviev pamphlet, Socialists and the War. The left wing of the Socialist Party recently joined the IRP. One of the highlights in the recent activity of the IRP was a student demonstration at the University of Athens led by members of the IRP. The International Communist Party of Salonika publishes a newspaper, The Spark.

The agreement signed by the three parties calls upon all other revolutionary socialist groups in Greece who will adhere to the program of the Fourth International to

join them in forming the new party.

A non-party group expected to join the unified party is an organized group of trade unionists who function as a fraction in the unions, consider themselves Fourth Internationalists, but who have up to now refused to join any of the parties because of the division in the ranks of the Fourth International parties in Greece.

BELGIUM

Under the headline, "Trotskyist Unity Realized in Belgium," the fusion of two Belgian Trotskyist movements was recently announced in Workers' Struggle, organ of the Revolutionary Communist Party, official section of the Fourth International.

The fusion took place between the official section and the International Communist Group, whose most prominent leader was the well known revolutionist, Verecken.

The fusion weds a split which had existed since 1923.

The name of the new organization is the International Communist Party. Its organ will remain Workers' Struggle.

An electoral campaign was conducted by our Belgian comrades in an effort to win several seats in Parliament.

The election appeal advanced the following slogans:

A sliding scale of wages and a uniform pension. Workers' control of production and of prices. Nationalization of industry without compensation. Immediate abolition of the monarchy. A government of workers' parties and trade unions. The communist revolution.

SOUTH AFRICA

We were very happy to receive recently several publications of our South African comrades, including their paper, Socialist Action. In the October, 1945, issue our comrades stated the following: "The Workers International League, after prolonged discussions, has changed its main direction of work..." The

first political task of the non-European worker in this country lies in the creation of a mass national liberation movement to struggle for complete freedom and equality."

This movement is to be built upon the following eight points, supplemented by other democratic and transitional demands:

- (1) The vote for every man and woman over the age of 18. (2) Abolish all segregation and the color-bar laws. (3) National minimum wage of three pounds sterling per week for all unskilled laborers. (4) Forty-hour working week. (5) Full recognition of non-European trade unions. (6) Equal redistribution of the land. (7) Unconditional independence of South Africa from the British Empire. (8) Hands off the European and colonial workers."

In the section headed "Fourth International News" the comrades took cognizance of the unity moves between the Socialist Workers Party and our organization, as follows: "Moves toward the unification of the two Trotskyist groups have been made and are welcomed by us."

Detroit Forum

DAVID COOLIDGE National Labor Secretary of the Workers Party will speak on FEPC

Friday, March 8, 8 P. M. Admission Free Labor Action Hall

3773 Gratiot (near Mt. Elliott)

DETROIT SCHOOL

The Detroit Workers Party School has changed its schedule of classes. Consult the Workers Party column on page 2 of this issue for the new list of dates.

SOCIALISM—The Hope of Humanity

By Max Shachtman National Secretary of the Workers Party 24 Pages 10 Cents per Copy

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CRISIS IN FRANCE TODAY and 75TH YEAR OF THE PARIS COMMUNE

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For an 8-Page Labor Action!

The Drive is on! LABOR ACTION will be expanded to 8 pages. The first issue of the 8-Page Paper will appear on June 17. On April 1 a sample copy of the 8-Pager will appear so that all our readers may see for themselves what a great advance this expansion will represent.

The thousands of dollars required to make this advance must come from our readers. We appeal to every reader to send us a contribution to make the expansion possible. Fill out the blank below and send it to us at once. Make all checks and money orders payable to: LABOR ACTION, 114 West 14th Street, New York 11, N. Y.

NAME ADDRESS CITY STATE AMOUNT \$

Corporations On Strike for High Prices

By Susan Green

The ex-GI tramps from store to store in search of a suit in which to reconvert himself from a soldier to a civilian. But unless he is willing to pay black market prices, his search is in vain. Yet there are reported to be nearly a million suits on manufacturers' shelves, being hoarded for higher prices.

Women are patching and mending men's shirts to make them last a little longer because this essential bit of haberdashery is either not obtainable in retail stores or is priced so fantastically high as to arouse indignation. However, many millions of men's shirts are kept in warehouses for higher prices, while the black market asks and gets up to \$10 for a shirt worth not more than \$1.98.

Butter production is at the lowest level in twenty-five years. All over the city long lines of women and children wait for a hand-out. Wholesalers take advantage of retailers, making the latter buy much they don't want in order to get the coveted tub of butter. Retailers follow the same practice, compelling the housewife to shell out for a considerable order before surrendering that quarter of a pound of butter.

What is it all about? The dairy corporations are frankly declaring to Congress that they will not produce more butter until the price is increased by at least ten or twelve per cent, and some corporations are demanding the end of all price controls on dairy products. These same interests are asking for higher milk prices, on top of the heavy subsidy the government is paying them, and they threaten to cut down the supply of the basic food of children, the sick and the aged, unless they get what they want by July 1.

In the big granaries of the nation, feed for animals, corn, soy beans and other grains are held from the normal markets—for the same reason. The powerful farm interests are pressing for the passage of the Pace bill, which would advance farm prices; so food for man and animal is being hoarded for expected higher profits. This immoral practice is permitted at a time when millions throughout the world are undernourished and actually on the verge of starvation.

Women's hosiery in rayon or cotton is as hard to find as the needle in the haystack, because manufacturers are holding out for price increases. Nylon hose is released in dribbles and people wait in endless queues to buy a couple of pairs all packed up like a pig in a poke, without any choice of color and at whatever price is asked. But commentator Drew Pearson reveals that big hosiery firms like Kayser and Gotham actually have millions of pairs in stock, reserved for a more profitable ceiling set-up.

With millions of new housing units absolutely imperative and with the capacity to build greater than ever before in history, private enterprise is holding back construction. Construction companies speak of a few hundred thousand units, and they are in no hurry to get started. They are pressuring Congress for an end to all rent and price controls. They want to be able to take advantage of the shortage in housing to charge all the market will bear.

CONTRAST THIS WITH LABOR'S STAND

Contrast these obstructive actions of the capitalists with the strikes of workers for higher wages. The capitalists use their position as owners of industry for anti-social purposes. On the other hand, workers strike to get adequate food, clothing and shelter; to give their children an education; to maintain the purchasing power of the whole people and provide an outlet for production; to keep employment high. The obstructionist tactics of the capitalists for higher profits at the expense of the people is an irrefutable argument for the nationalization of industry under workers' control.

The powers in Washington naturally do not take this view of the difference between capital and labor. The pace has been set by the \$5.00 per ton boost in steel. Without losing a minute, Stabilization Administrator Bowles tells the House Banking Committee he would favor a rise in ceiling prices on clothing to "sweeten up" the manufacturers and "encourage production." In this connection the reader will be interested to know that the before-tax profits of the textile industry in 1944 was 772 per cent above the pre-war level.

Mr. Bowles is also said to be in favor of raising meat prices regardless of the facts that meat packers' profits in 1944 were 424 per cent higher than in 1936-39; that the government pays a meat subsidy of \$595,000,000 yearly; that this subsidy may be upped by \$125,000,000; and that the consumer actually pays these subsidies with the taxes deducted from his pay as a worker.

Again, House Administrator Wyatt shows a willingness to placate the construction interests by advocating a subsidy for them too, and this will be another reason why our pay envelopes will continue to feel the clutching grasp of the tax department.

FACTS POINT TO ONLY ONE CONCLUSION

What then is the difference between Mr. Bowles, who stands out as the chief administration advocate of price controls and who wants the OPA to be continued beyond June, 1946, and the National Association of Manufacturers, which campaigns with full-page advertisements for the end of OPA and of all price controls? One may well ask the question in light of the fact that since V-J Day Mr. Bowles, as OPA Administrator, allowed price advances on 4,982 commodities and altogether exempted from ceilings 1,300 other items or groups? One may well ask the question in light of the additional fact that President Truman has placed Mr. Bowles UNDER Reconversion Director Snyder, whose leaning toward the position of the NAM is notorious. But perhaps in light of these facts the question answers itself!

The failure of both government and industry to meet the needs of the people for adequate supplies of the needs of life at prices low enough to make them available to all, is indisputable. Patience on the part of the working people is no longer a virtue. The demand for the nationalization of industry under workers' control to plan adequate production and a fair price set-up, can no longer be deferred. It is the issue of the day, and it involves the formation of an independent Labor Party and fighting for a workers' government to carry out the nationalization of industry and place it under workers' control. This is the conclusion to which commodity shortages and price gouging leads.

LOS ANGELES FORUM:
PICTURE OF SOCIALIST AMERICA
Speakers: Hal Draper and others
SUNDAY, MARCH 10, 8:00 P.M.
Grand Theater Bldg.
730 Grand Street

Support India's Demand for Independence!

Masses Demand British Quit India

(Continued from page 1)

and Indo-Chinese. If the revolt of the Indian sailors should spread, we can rest assured the British will utilize every method of terror warfare to suppress it.

What stands behind these events? The situation in India is undoubtedly confusing in many respects, but certain things are clear. The conclusion of the war has led directly to a period of open revolt on the part of colonial people everywhere (Palestine, Indo-China, Java, etc.). This movement has now extended to India, where it is first beginning. The conclusion of the war has also resulted in great unemployment among the Indian war workers, with rising prices to offset any gains they had made. And, finally, there is the great famine threat in the cities and provinces.

The Viceroy, Viscount Wavell, has added to this threat by announcing to the people a cut in rations to a level of twelve ounces of grain per day—not even a pound of food to eat per day! (We must remember that grains are the bulk of the Indian people's diet.) The Viceroy admitted that India is short millions of tons of food, and that mass starvation is imminent unless help comes immediately.

The people responded to this starvation proposal ("share the hunger") by mighty demonstrations. Over 100,000 met in Calcutta; a general protest strike was held in Allahabad, where 50,000 workers paraded through the streets. In the cities of Meerut,

Calcutta, New Delhi, Bombay, etc., similar demonstrations took place. The people are obviously not prepared to accept starvation. Even Nehru support of the conservative Gandhi in the Congress Party, has called upon the peasants of United Provinces, Madras and the Punjab to revolt rather than face hunger. "If people die of hunger," he said, "their deaths will be avenged." But meanwhile a continued drought in the Punjab has further worsened the food situation and its prospects. This wheat center of India is now expected to produce only half of its annual 4,000,000-ton crop.

Furthermore, there has been the whole issue of the Indian National Army to further complicate the situation. This is the army organized by the former Congress leader, Subhas Bose, who became a supporter of the Japanese. He formed the army from those Indian soldiers who had surrendered to the Japanese at Singapore and Hong Kong, demagogically distorting the desires of these soldiers to help participate in India's freedom fight. Now many leaders and men of this Indian National Army are being tried and sentenced by reactionary British court-martial boards. This has aroused great feeling, particularly in Calcutta, where Bose was the traditional popular leader. In that city great demonstrations were held against the British, to protest these sentences. Over 45 were killed and 400 injured (including 37 American soldiers) in violent fighting. An important aspect of this affair is that the Moslem people (majority of the Calcutta population) led it, thus belying the traditional propaganda that the Moslems are "for the British," because they fear the Hindus.

LABOR ACTION's demand that all American troops be withdrawn from the colonies and foreign areas is right to the point now, particularly since the American Army leaders are ready, without hesitation, to help their British "comrades" quell any nation-wide revolt. The time is here to remove every last American GI from India!

What is happening within the Indian national political front? Here the story is still vague, due to lack of information and press censorship. The conservative Congress leaders, still anxious for a "deal" with the British, are nevertheless aware of the demand for action that exists among the people.

Nehru, the middle-class "socialist" Congress leader, tours the country, making radical speeches and announcing to Aitche that the first requirement is "recognition and proclamation of India's right to full independence." But the next moment both he, Gandhi and Azad, president of the Congress, join together in statements denouncing the masses of

the great cities for their violent action, offering to cooperate with the British authorities to "solve the food crisis," and offering themselves, finally, as mediators between the British rulers and the revolting Indian seamen.

These leaders, who run the Congress Party today, desire nothing more than a settlement, a "deal" negotiated in peace, between themselves and the Labor Government imperialists. Their last wish is to see a mass revolt of the people; they can be counted upon to do everything possible to prevent this.

In addition, there is the Moslem League, headed by M. A. Jinnah, which claims to speak for India's 90 million Moslems. While it cannot be denied that Moslem "communalism" and "nationalism" have grown in the last years, there is no truth whatsoever to this claim. It must be noted that at the very moment when Hindus and Moslems are participating in mass strikes and actions, side by side, against the common British enemy, Mr. Jinnah utters dark threats about civil war between Hindu and Mos-

lem, if independence is won. These threats sound strikingly welcome to British ears at this crucial time! The issue of Moslem-Hindu can only be settled properly AFTER the expulsion of the British.

While these political leaders and parties maneuver about, negotiate and plot against one another, the real struggle takes place in the cities and villages. Now a new Cripps mission is being prepared to leave for India shortly, to continue the endless negotiations. We freely predict it will not succeed, and India will once again bid goodbye to Mr. Cripps. For today there seems one thing on which the vast Indian masses—workers and peasants, Hindus and Moslems, students and middle class—are united. They are fed up with 200 years of British rule and determined to enforce the "Quit India" slogan.

LABOR ACTION and the Workers Party, complete supporters of the Indian seamen and the people who stand behind them, will follow this struggle as it unfolds and do all in their power to bring the true story to the American workers.

Pay Gains Vanish - -

(Continued from page 1)

ning with that of the steel industry, whose workers you aim to represent, "justified," Brother Murray? Even the Department of Commerce of the administration, which claims your support, has indicated that wage increases surpassing the one you settled for in steel could be granted—without any price increases, and without making a dent in profits!

RETURN TO GM DEMANDS!

The original, socially conscious, demands of the General Motors workers are the most practical to meet the needs of labor and the consuming public.

Walter Reuther, representing the GM workers, asked for a 30 per cent increase in wages to bring standards UP TO the war level, NO PRICE INCREASES and the OPENING OF THE BOOKS. A victory on the program would mean a genuine wage increase, paid for out of profits. It would mean that labor, upon receiving its modest wage gain, would not have its pocket picked immediately through the price rises. And not labor alone, but all the people who will suffer from rising prices would benefit.

For this very reason the UAW-GM program gained wide support and sympathy for the strikers from the middle classes. A retreat from this program, as Reuther has been retreating, will injure all of those whose interests demand lower prices. The "Open the Books!" slogan of

the GM program, which ties the wage-profit-price issues together and challenges the system of capitalist enterprise, should be inscribed on the program of every union. This slogan is designed to shatter the arguments of the profit-hoarding companies that they cannot pay a living wage.

The Treasury Department has just made public the 1943 corporation profits, revealing that net profits were four times the pre-war level and profits after taxes twice the pre-war level. Even the number of corporations in the excess profits bracket has jumped 26 per cent over the year 1942. The 68,000 firms making excess profits include most of the country's biggest corporations, those which have been engaged in the current battle with labor over raising wages.

Open the books! Show that these corporations can disgorge their wealth in the form of wage increases without taxing the whole public.

If labor is going to fulfill its responsibility to itself and to society, it must assume political responsibility. It must supplement its economic action on the picket lines with political action. If its wage gains are not to be stolen in Washington, it must have its own representatives in Washington. If it wants to open the books of the union-busting corporations, it must have its own board to inspect those books.

Labor must have its own independent political party! Organize for political action through a Labor Party!

APRIL 7 SOCIAL WILL CELEBRATE WP ANNIVERSARY

NEW YORK—The Local New York Social Committee of the Workers Party, which met on Saturday, is hard at work organizing and planning for a gigantic affair to celebrate the sixth anniversary of the Workers Party on April 7. The party and its friends and sympathizers will celebrate this significant anniversary at Caravan Hall, 110 East 59th Street, where many successful Workers Party affairs have been held in the past.

Max Shachtman will give a brief review of the history and activities of the party. Singing, dancing to a first-class orchestra and refreshments will be part of what is certain to be a bang-up social.

The social committee is also actively engaged in planning and coordinating branch socials, the first of which is a joint party on March 9, sponsored by the two Brooklyn branches. Arrangements have been made for get-togethers after Red Sunday mobilizations for all who desire to participate.

Sub Drive Jumps 1,000 Hurdle

By REVA CRAINE, Press Manager

On February 25, the first thousand new subscriptions to LABOR ACTION were in our hands. Since this was the hardest hurdle to jump in the drive, we expect the remaining 4000 subs to roll in very quickly now. Confirmation of this comes in reports from Workers Party Branches from which we had not heard previously, and from several LABOR ACTION readers who have joined the ranks of LABOR ACTION Boosters to achieve the 5000 goal in less than the three months allocated for the present drive.

PHILADELPHIA ENTERS THE DRIVE:

We have heard from the Philadelphia Branch of the Workers Party that the preliminary work in the drive has been done and that subs are now on their way. The comrades there have requested 50 additional LABOR ACTION Subscription Booklets since all they have already received have been distributed and are being filled out.

Distributions of LABOR ACTION to the General Electric strikers who have been defying an anti-picketing injunction by mass picketing have brought enthusiastic responses. Plans are under way for subscription gathering at a number of housing projects and neighborhoods in Philadelphia. Shipyard workers are eagerly taking advantage of the special 25 cent subscription offer. The first batch of 21 subs reached us in time to make this week's scorecard, but this is only a token of what Philadelphia intends to do.

SEATTLE "PROTESTS"—AND SENDS IN SUBS

From Seattle we get the following justified complaint: "Although it is the opinion of the Seattle Branch that we were 'sighted' in the 'peppy' write-up in LABOR ACTION (January 28 issue) concerning

the past success and activities of various branches in sub drive—we accept our quota, graciously and seriously and herewith report enthusiastic support from Seattle."

Proof of this support comes in the form of 29 subscriptions for LABOR ACTION.

We owe the Seattle Branch an apology because we omitted mention on January 28 that in the last sub drive it went way above its quota. We are more than confident that it will outdo its own record in this drive.

BOSTON FIRST TO TOP ITS QUOTA:

With the aid of several LABOR ACTION supporters, the Boston Workers Party is the first to go above its quota. One LABOR ACTION booster writes: "I received your letter with the sub booklet. I think this method of getting subscriptions is a very good one. I am sending six subs and will get the other four shortly. Very best greetings—J. C., Boston."

Denver and Oregon have gotten into the drive this week, with the latter writing that its quota should easily be doubled by May 1. The Detroit Branch has ordered 50 additional subscription booklets in preparation for LABOR ACTION Sunday.

The Subscription Drive has been undertaken by every Workers Party Branch and LABOR ACTION Booster as the first step in our campaign for the new 8-page LABOR ACTION, which is already being planned. (See page 1 on the Expansion Drive.) It is not too late to join the army of LABOR ACTION Boosters. Write for your subscription booklet today!

With the first thousand subs under our belt, we say—LET 'ER ROLL!

Akron	200	7	23	11'
Baltimore	10	—	1	10
Boston	10	8	14	140
Buffalo	200	—	5	2.5
Chicago	350	12	23	6.5
Cleveland	100	2	6	6
Connecticut	10	—	—	—
Denver	25	9	9	36
Detroit	1000	40	145	14.5
Hibbing	100	9	88	88
Los Angeles	250	5	33	13
Louisville	50	—	—	—
Madison	25	—	—	—
Newark	150	15'	61	40.6
New York	2000	152	378	18.9
Oregon	10	5	5	50
Philadelphia	500	21	31	6.2
Reading	75	14	39	50.6
San Francisco	200	34	84	42
San Pedro	250	8	24	9.6
Seattle	200	29	38	19
Streator	25	1	6	24
St. Louis	25	—	6	24
Syracuse	10	—	—	—
Youngstown	25	—	—	—
Miscellaneous	—	3	33	—
TOTALS	—	374	1052	21

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'Security' Plan Is Aimed at Shop Stewards

By Ben Hall

Granting the capitalist class contracts to guarantee their "company security" makes as much sense as prescribing strength-building vitamin pills to Superman. Their "company security" is guaranteed in advance by their monopoly over vast resources and wealth, and by their ownership of the machinery of production in the basic industries. How, explain, then, that the union leaders appear so ready to concede to "company security" clauses in the recently signed contracts?

At a recent meeting of Chrysler Local 7, where the new contract was finally ratified after a bitter debate in which the shop stewards were unanimous in their opposition, R. J. Thomas tried to explain away the decision to yield to the "security" demand. He argued that the strike wave revealed a conspiracy on the part of the capitalist class to destroy the union movement, to wipe it out completely and to return to open shop conditions. "Under these circumstances," said R. J., "we did the best we could." Company security, according to this line of argumentation, is a concession to the employers to buy them off, a ransom or blackmail payment to hold off the thugs of capitalism.

THE FRUITS OF GRANTING CONCESSIONS

This, however, is a familiar theory. Do you remember the arguments in favor of the no-strike pledge? Remember how we were told that we had to surrender the strike weapon lest Congress pass anti-labor legislation and abolish the right to strike? That was an appeal to the labor movement to pay blackmail. Its fruits? We won anti-labor legislation and anti-strike legislation.

Yes, the employers want to destroy the unions. But blackmail payments cannot stop them. Every concession of this kind is a sign of weakness and only leads to greater boldness on the part of the capitalist class.

The anti-union conspiracy continues. But the big business elements have been compelled to retreat from outright union busting by THE POWER AND SOLIDITY OF THE STRIKERS WAVE. BY THE SUPPORT GIVEN TO THE STRIKERS FROM NEARLY ALL SECTIONS OF SOCIETY.

The company security provisions now give the employers a tool with which they hope to whittle down the solidarity and strength of the unions in PREPARATION FOR THE BATTLES OF TOMORROW.

AIMED AT SHOP STEWARD SYSTEM

Against whom is the "company security" system aimed? Answer: AGAINST THE SHOP STEWARDS AND COMMITTEEMEN.

In Chrysler, the "company security" plan is accompanied by another provision, the notorious section 2 which reads as follows: "The Union recognizes that the Corporation has the exclusive right to manage its plants and direct its affairs and working forces." Every shop steward knows what this means. Instead of being free to handle grievances and leave his job when necessary, he can expect to be chained to his job.

During the Ford negotiations, the company demanded and still demands dozens of new restrictions on the stewards. It wants to cut down their number, to reduce their pay for lost time, to tighten up on their rights, and to eliminate many of their prerogatives.

Who will be penalized under the company security plans? Answer: THE STEWARDS AND COMMITTEEMEN. When a walkout occurs, on whom does the company pin the blame? The steward. If anything at all goes wrong in a department, who are always picked out as the "leaders," the "instigators"? Always the stewards.

No one knows these facts better than the committeemen and stewards themselves and that is why they are so bitter against company security. THEY KNOW IT MEANS INSECURITY FOR THE UNION.

STEWARDS ARE VITAL TO CIO

Why do the employers aim their arrows against the shop stewards? Because they know that the shop steward system is the very heart of the CIO. If they can pierce that heart they can proceed to destroy the rest of the body at their leisure.

Who defended and preserved the unions during the war? The shop stewards and committeemen. The official leadership, the R. J. Thomases, the Phillip Murrys and their kind, voluntarily gave up the class struggle. They renounced the right to strike and fought down their own membership when it tried to defend itself.

But the capitalist class did NOT give up its struggle against the workingclass. It tried to demoralize and destroy the unions and their rights. It was the shop stewards who led and carried on the defensive struggles of the workingclass, deserted by its top leadership. Thousands of so-called "unauthorized" strikes took place. It was this "unauthorized" class struggle, led by the stewards, which held the unions together and preserved the solidarity of the workingclass which is now being displayed in the picket lines.

In fighting against the company security plans we are fighting to defend the shop steward system.

Canadian Spy Scare Shows War in Making

After the hot disputes among the Big Three at the UNO sessions in London, the exposure of the spy ring in Canada, which aimed at getting for Russia the know-how of atom bomb manufacture, came as a dramatic sequence. Imperialist antagonisms add up to war. The Canadian incident shows war in preparation.

Subsequent events added fuel to the kindling fire. Izvestia editorialized that Premier King's action was to create a diversion from Foreign Minister Bevin's failure in UNO. Inside Russia the matter is played up as part of the anti-Russian campaign and comes as handy propaganda to put over Stalin's plan for military preparedness.

Secretary Byrnes hastened to brandish the blueprints of atom bomb manufacture and to boast that the know-how is still the sole possession of this government. On the other hand, ex-Ambassador Joseph Davies defended the sacred right of every nation to spy upon all its avowed friends, and declared that Russia is doing nothing different from what the United States is doing or would do.

However, be of good cheer. UNO is establishing headquarters right here in this country. What more can one desire—unless it be the overthrow of imperialism of both the capitalist and Stalinist stripe.