

LABOR ACTION

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'Loyalty' Crisis: One Law Actually Requires Proof!

By GORDON HASKELL

A yawning gap has just been discovered in the government's "loyalty" program for federal employees.

The discovery comes just at a time when it had been thought that the dyke constructed against the disloyalty danger was complete and sound. A vast amount of energy and millions of dollars have been spent in constructing it. Executive orders, a half dozen congressional committees, hundreds of loyalty boards and loyalty review boards and thousands of FBI agents have been laboring for years to build it. The taxpayer's money has been poured out without stint. But unless this gap can be shored up by legislative action, and quickly, the dreaded cry may well rise from the nation's capital: Take to the hills, boys, the dam has broken!

This disturbing state of affairs was revealed in a special Washington dispatch to the New York Times dated December 20. The dispatch states that the Civil Service Commission is asking Congress for remedial legislation in existing law which makes it, according to the commission, "almost impossible" to dismiss any of the federal government's 260 hearing examiners for disloyalty.

PROOF? IMAGINE!

These hearing examiners are men whose duty it is to conduct hearings for various commissions and agencies on violations of federal legislation, petitions for changes and similar matters. And the Loyalty Review Board has already received reports questioning the loyalty of about ten of them. But due to an oversight in the law, these men cannot be fired just because their loyalty has been questioned.

In their case disloyalty has to be **PROVED!**

This dangerous situation has come about in the following manner. The hearing examiners come under the Administrative Procedures Act of 1946 which requires that they can be removed from office only for "good cause" and after a hearing conducted by the Civil Service Commission under practically the same rules of evidence as in a court trial. This means that specific evidence must be brought against them, that they have a right to cross-examine wit-

nesses or informers who charge them with disloyalty, etc.

But everyone knows that the FBI's "evidence" in most disloyalty cases cannot stand up to that kind of procedure. At any rate, the Civil Service Commission knows this, for in the letter requesting legislation to remedy the situation they state:

"If the Administrative Procedure Act is not followed, any adjudication of disloyalty is sure to be reversed in a subsequent proceeding in court.

"If the Administrative Procedure Act is followed, the evidence that can be presented in the hearing is certain to be insufficient to justify adjudication of disloyalty."

That would seem to be clear enough! If these men are not given a fair trial before they are fired, the courts will reinstate them. But if they are given a fair trial, there is not good enough evidence against them to fire them.

The situation is dangerous but not desperate. Happily the Commission's remedy for it is clear: Take away the right of these hearing examiners to a fair trial, and put them on an equal basis with all other federal employees, who have no such right!

Then they can be fired on the basis of the FBI's reports without any uncomfortable and ridiculously democratic business of being given a chance to disprove the validity of the reports and the reliability of the witnesses and informants who have given the FBI its information.

Unemployed Auto Workers Scramble for Snow Jobs: UAW Heads Alibi Inaction

By WALTER JASON

DETROIT, Dec. 22—During the past week the top brass of the United Auto Workers (CIO) got a good look at the kind of union leadership they have been developing since taking power five years ago, and what they saw was not very pleasant to look at.

As a preliminary to the Washington conference on unemployment, the UAW top leaders called an emergency Detroit area conference to which they invited 180 local union presidents for last Wednesday night.

Only seven showed up.

This, in a city with over 125,000 unemployed, mainly auto workers.

Of course, the attendance at the Washington conference itself will be full enough, with only seven absent. Who's going to miss a trip to Washington—with expenses, salary, etc., paid for—unless one is sick in bed, or something else like that!

But to devote their own time, one evening, to discuss the acute crisis in Detroit—surely that is asking too much of these local union presidents, the overwhelming bulk of whom are part of the Reuther machine!

Can anyone in the UAW imagine such a disgraceful lack of attendance five years ago?

FOR A CHANCE TO WORK

The tragic part of this situation is that the top leadership completely misses the point on the reasons for the lack of attendance. To them, it only shows that the crisis isn't bad yet—not enough heat on the local union presidents to make them act. Furthermore, they can rationalize their own deficiencies: What can we do, when the local union presidents aren't interested? So the alibi runs.

How terrible the situation in Detroit actually is, was shown beyond doubt by what happened here last Thursday, in a story that made

page one of every Detroit newspaper, and for good reason.

In near-zero weather, 5,000 unemployed, mainly auto workers, jammed and stormed the temporary hiring offices of the city clean-up department to get jobs shoveling snow.

What a scene! From 4:30 p.m. until 11:30 p.m. men struggled and fought to get and keep a place in the hiring line. Fist fights, pushing, shoving, grumbling, and bitter comments were on the order of the day. Detroit's riot squad was there, almost full force, to keep a free-for-all from breaking out.

What were the men fighting for? A chance to work all night at wages of 50 cents an hour less than assembly rates in the auto plants. Detroit's newspapers carried big photos showing this massed humanity, kept in line by policemen's clubs.

And if a man was hired that night, he still had to rehire again the next night. This is the system, something like the longshoremen's shape-up.

Newspapermen described the whole thing as strongly reminiscent of the depression days. And it surely is!

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TIE-UP WITH FAIR DEAL MACHINE EXPLAINS WHY—

Murray May Backwater on Strike

By BEN HALL

Phil Murray was called to the phone. President Truman was on the line and wished to speak to him about the threatening steel strike. Neither of the two presidents would divulge the contents of their conversation; but on the next day it was reported that the steel stoppage, which had seemed certain to begin on January 1st, might be postponed.

The 170-man wage-policy committee of the United Steel Workers had set that date as the deadline beyond which their members would not work without a contract; it decided that no proposal for a truce or postponement of the strike could be accepted by the top leadership of the union; and it called a special emergency union convention to begin on January 3, a convention which alone would have the power to pass upon any

compromise offerings. It seemed as though the leadership of the steel union had decided definitely for a strike, even if only a brief, demonstrative action to put pressure on the steel monopolies and the national administration.

WHY MURRAY RENEGES

But after the Murray-Truman talk, the union announced that it would reconvene its wage-policy committee on December 27, four days before the strike deadline, presumably to withdraw its previous decision and to accept Truman's request that the strike be postponed indefinitely while the issues are taken before the Wage Stabilization Board.

If the union leadership does in fact call off its strike after all its threats and after repudiating, in advance, any administration-inspired "truce," its calculations, for

good or bad, will be based more or less on the following considerations:

- (1) Truman announced publicly that he would use every law on the statute book to prevent a steel strike, even one of short duration. He was ready to stop the strike by

means of a Taft-Hartley injunction. The union supports Truman; it tries not to embarrass him; it doesn't want to "force" him to apply for an injunction.

(2) The leadership of the union is perfectly aware of the fact that,

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Steel Profits: They Can Afford It

(In millions)

| | Earnings Before Taxes | Per Cent Net Earnings on | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------|
| | | Profit | Net Worth |
| 1947 | \$1,070 | \$5,410 | 19.8 |
| 1948 | 1,416 | 5,810 | 29.3 |
| 1949 | 1,115 | 6,512 | 17.1 |
| 1950 | 1,987 | 7,029 | 28.3 |
| 1951 (1st quarter) | 652 | 7,396 | 35.3 |
| 1951 (2nd quarter) | 688 | 7,607 | 36.2 |
| Average 1947-5-9 | 1,200 | 5,913 | 20.3 |

NEXT WEEK
In Labor Action
Looking Back
Over 1951's
Headlines

A review of the year's news highlights and political trends

Readers of Labor Action: A Happy New Year to You All

