

Devaluation of Franc And the Western Bloc

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VOL. XII.—No. 6

Workers of the World, Unite!

THE MILITANT

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9

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AFL CHIEFS UPHOLD 2-PARTY MISRULE

Washington State Legislators Stage Local Witch Hunt

By Daniel Roberts

SEATTLE, Feb. 2 — An assortment of several dozen ex-Stalinists are currently parading before the Canwell Committee, created by the state legislature to investigate "un-American" activities in the state of Washington. The witness list includes Louis F. Budenz, former managing editor of the *Daily Worker*; Manning Johnson, former N. Y. State Organizer of the Communist Party; Jesse Fletcher, former Stalinist big shot in the Building Service Union; Nat Honig, former editor of the *International Woodworker*; Howard Costigan, former head of the Washington Commonwealth Federation and opportunists of lesser light.

The Canwell Committee is made up of the most reactionary legislators from the rural districts. When creation of the committee was in the discussion stage in the legislature, one of its present members, Blen, proposed that the committee be given judicial and executive powers including the right of summary execution! While the committee did not receive the powers Blen asked for, its attitude is one of virulent hatred toward anything connected with labor.

The Canwell Committee has been enjoined in the courts from acting for the State of Washington. Its hearings, which began on Jan. 24, therefore have no legal status. Nevertheless they are being held in the state army in Seattle and receive full protection of the state police.

Testimony by the renegade Stalinists is receiving full spread publicity in the local daily paper. The organization under current investigation is the Stalinist-led Washington Old Age Pension Union, an

organization that has a mass following among "senior citizens" in the low income brackets. The activities of the Pension Union since 1938 were responsible for securing for the old people in Washington the highest pension rates and the best overall pension system in the country.

WIPE OUT GAINS

Last year the legislature and Governor Wallgren, over the opposition of the WPWU, moved to wipe out the gains made in prior years. The \$50 floor on pensions was removed, the escalator clause was eliminated, a modified form of the means test was instituted, items were placed on the property of pension recipients and the overall appropriation reduced.

The Pension Union charges that it is being subjected to the "anti-red" investigation in preparation for even more drastic cuts in the pensions.

The only noteworthy testimony in the hearings was given by Budenz. He stated before the Canwell Committee what he has already disclosed elsewhere, namely, that he and other high-ranking Communist Party officials in this country participated, under instructions from the Kremlin, in the plans of the assassination of Leon Trotsky in 1940.

The rest of the testimony was only pathetic recanting on the part of former Stalinist hatchetmen as well as fingering of present-day Stalinists.

In the eyes of class conscious workers the real indictment of the Communist Party is not contained in the testimony of the witnesses, but in the fact that the party should have had such a wretched crew of stool pigeons in its leadership.

Press Blackout On Plan for Pa. Secret Police



President David B. Robertson of the lily-white Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Engineers, whose union discriminates against Negro firemen, for whom it is supposed to be bargaining. Federated Pictures

BLFE Continues Jim Crow Policy In New Disguise

Negro Firemen Demand Full Union Membership

President Robertson, of the lily-white Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Engineers, announced abandonment of the union's policy barring promotion and seniority to Negro firemen, following a Supreme Court decision upholding a lower court ruling that Negro firemen must not be discriminated against.

Robertson stated that the BLFE was serving notice on the 13 southern railroads involved that classification of Negroes as "non-promotable" must be dropped from the union contracts. This action was made necessary by the court decision, since these clauses endangered the validity of the existing union contracts.

A "NEGRO JOB"

For many years the job of fireman was the toughest and dirtiest in railroading. In the South it was a "Negro job." But as locomotives were improved, white men began to take firemen jobs.

The BLFE first negotiated in the 1920's "50-50" contracts under which the railroad companies replaced Negroes with whites until parity was achieved. But in 1941, the union put on a tighter squeeze and a great many Negro firemen lost their jobs. The Negroes, for whom the union bargained, were not—and still are not—permitted to become members of the union.

The Supreme Court decision does not solve the problem of the Negro railroad firemen, nor does it ensure equal rights. Archibald Bremser, attorney for the Federation of Southern Colored Locomotive Firemen, pointed out that the BLFE is now attempting to deprive additional firemen of their jobs by means of a new subterfuge. He stated that the union is proposing new contract changes, ostensibly in line with the Supreme Court decision, requiring Negro firemen to take examinations for promotions and if they failed to pass, the men would have to be dismissed.

A Philip Randolph, President of the AFL Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and Chairman of the Provisional Committee to Organize Colored Locomotive Firemen, announced that Negro firemen on southern railroads will accept no compromise with the BLFE short of full union membership. He stated that the men would reject any Jim Crow union, and that the provisional committee would be kept alive until they won full and equal union rights.

UAW Leader
Calls For
Sliding Scale
SEE PAGE 4

Auto Plants Shut Down



Thousands of auto workers stream from the Dodge plant in Detroit as management shut down the works during the last cold spell. Practically all plants in the area closed down following orders to curtail industrial gas for home consumption. George Edwards, Detroit City Council president stated, "The public is left with the assumption that Consolidated Gas desires a shortage as a propaganda basis for its proposed new pipe line." Federated Pictures

CIO Packinghouse Locals To Vote on Wage Strike

The International Executive Board of the CIO United Packinghouse Workers has instructed the UPWA locals in the Armour and Swift plants to be prepared for a strike vote not later than Feb. 14.

This action followed the meat packing trusts' out-of-hand rejection of the union's demands for minimum decency and cost-of-living wage increases.

The UPWA leaders, during the last week of January, presented the following demands in opening negotiations with the companies:

1. A general wage increase of 29 cents per hour, retroactive to the reopening of the contract;

2. Pledge of future wage increases to bring minimum wages for all workers to the decency living standard set by the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics — \$1.65 an hour for an average family at present price levels;

3. An escalator clause (sliding scale cost-of-living bonus) to provide automatic increases above the basic wage for price rises during the contract.

The UPWA, under the requirements of the Taft-Hartley Act, gave notice of intention to strike last Dec. 18. A strike may legally begin on Feb. 19. But the NLRB can intervene five days ahead of time under the "national welfare" clause of the Act to enforce an additional 80-day waiting period. During this period the NLRB is empowered to

take a vote among the workers to determine if they will accept the company's final offer.

The CIO Packinghouse Union's fight was made tougher by the undercutting agreement signed last week by the AFL Meatcutters' leaders with the big packers. After secret negotiations behind the backs of their members, they agreed to take a miserable 9-cent an hour increase. This has strengthened the hand of the profiteering packers against the CIO workers, the largest group in the industry.

An equal handicap to the UPWA negotiations are the policies of Murray Reuther and the other top leaders of the CIO. They have projected no unified wage strategy for the major CIO unions and made no preparations for a consolidated struggle against the big corporations, although most of the CIO unions are making wage demands this spring.

Now GM is trying to put over a sub-standard group insurance plan, with a pay deduction, without negotiation with the union. This has brought a howl from Reuther and an NLRB complaint against the company.

They had reached a point of frustration and desperation when they were actually considering appointing one of their own number to keep the job going begging.

At the last moment, however, they dug up a likely candidate, ex-

ers committee meets Feb. 8 and to formulate demands on the "Big Four" corporations — Goodyear, Goodrich, Firestone and U. S. Rubber.

The Oil Workers will launch its wage drive on Feb. 9.

The CIO United Automobile Workers, which is demanding a 25-cent increase, plus five cents in health and welfare benefits, has already felt the effects of Walter Reuther's weakening policies adopted at the recent General Motors delegates conference. Reuther put over the proposition of accepting a 10-cent cut in the wage demand in return for an "acceptable" pension plan.

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AVOID A FIGHT

The CIO Steelworkers Wage and Policy Committee meets Feb. 13 to take final action on wage demands.

President Murray and his Executive Board have called for "substantial wage increases" without stating any specific amount as yet.

Murray is already hinting around he will accept any "reasonable" demands the companies may offer in order to avoid a real fight.

Wage policy committees of other leading CIO unions are meeting next week. The CIO Rubber Work-

ers committee meets Feb. 8 and to formulate demands on the "Big Four" corporations — Goodyear, Goodrich, Firestone and U. S. Rubber.

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Congressman And Cop Tangle

Representative Joseph Hendricks of Florida was driving home from Washington when he was caught in a speed trap in Darien, Georgia. After paying his fine Hendricks remarked "jokingly and facetiously" that it was a dirty trick to set up a speed trap.

The Congressman should have known Georgia cops better for here is his account of what happened. The Deputy Sheriff, one Poppell, "seized me by the arm and began pushing me and shoving and forcing me violently without reason. He shoved me up two flights of stairs to a cell."

All the while the Congressman tried to tell the sheriff who he was but the sheriff just wouldn't listen and locked the politician in the cell with the remark, "You will stay in there until you know you have been in Georgia."

Then he told the desk clerk, "File another charge against him." Rep. Hendricks later asked for a physician. He never got one. The same with his request for a lawyer.

Some time later when the prisoner's identity was learned the sheriff's wife appeared and unlocked Hendricks' cell. The prisoner demanded to know the charges against him and a trial.

Mrs. Deputy Sheriff told him nothing and began shoving him out of the jail to his car. They sure do a lot of shoving in Georgia.

But there is a moral to this story. If an influential Congressman, driving a good car can get shoved around for a "joking" remark, what sort of treatment can a poor white or Negro, or a union organizer expect from the "law" enforcement officers in Georgia?

On the Taft-Hartley Slave Labor Law, the AFL chiefs had nothing new to offer since the time they voted to capitulate at the San Francisco convention in October. They made their now oft-repeated threat to oppose the re-election of every member of Congress who voted for the Taft-Hartley Act.

But they proposed to ride along

Council Stages Political Farce at Miami Parley

By Art Preis

FEB. 3—While warming their senile hides and thin blood in Miami sunshine, the 15 "elder statesmen" of the AFL Executive Council have been disporting themselves since Jan. 26 in a shameless political farce.

They have decked themselves in the fetching costumes of "independent" politics. But their gestures and postures are those of solicitors for the two-party dave of Big Business.

On Feb. 2, the entire AFL Council lined up in chorus formation for the first act of their burlesque. This was their unanimous rejection of Henry Wallace and any third-party candidacy for the U. S. Presidency. Their theme song was "Do Not Split the Liberal Vote."

The next act, played the following day, was performed largely in the vein of low-stakes comedy. Here the cast of characters was seen trying to contrive their own political program and set-up.

FALLING APART

They were seated around a machine called Labor's League for Political Education, blue-printed at the San Francisco convention last October to be the AFL's political conveyance.

Then the farce got out of hand altogether. Wheeler advised them that he could only take the job on a "part-time" basis, if at all. Besides he could not accept without the understanding that he did not go along hook-line-and-sinker with the Marshall Plan and did not subscribe to the AFL's position of opposition to all Congressional candidates who voted for the Taft-Hartley Slave Labor Bill.

This led to a free-for-all among the Council members that did not appear to be in the original script of their show. A section of the Council, headed by David Dubinsky, "revolted." They said they would not accept Wheeler.

A THIN DISGUISE

Seldoms has the American labor movement been so disgraced as by the Miami spectacle put on by the AFL big-wigs. In the very breath that they opposed Wallace for his "false liberalism," they revealed their own complete subservience to reaction. They complained that sup-

(Continued on Page 3)



WILLIAM GREEN
Senator Burton K. Wheeler, and even announced his acceptance.

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(Continued on Page 3)

AFL Chiefs Prepare Capitulation on UMT

Three crucial problems — inflation, the Taft-Hartley Act and war preparations — were the main topics of discussion at the opening week's sessions of the AFL Executive Council in Miami, Florida. The results of the deliberations of the AFL top leaders can give no comfort to the seven million AFL members and American labor generally.

Against the Big Business and government attacks on labor's rights and living standards, their answer was only whining words of complaint. At the same time, they lined up like sheep behind the reactionary Truman Doctrine of American imperialism and its militarist program.

On the question of high prices, they pointed out the indisputable fact that prices are being pushed up by greed and unbridled profiteering. They even expressed the fear — it was certainly no threat from these timorous souls — that unless prices come down, this spring will see the worst wave of strikes in the country's history.

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They even laid the basis for abandonment of the AFL's traditional opposition to peacetime military conscription and universal military training by calling for a revision of the country's traditional peacetime policies "in accordance with the requirements of common-sense national defense." Green said, by means of huge increased appropriations for military preparations even if tax cuts are to be shelved indefinitely!

In a press conference, one AFL leader admitted that a majority of the Council is for supporting the Brass Hat program of compulsory military training, but they did not dare to go on record because of the strong sentiment against military regimentation among the AFL membership.

Meanwhile, they propose to sacrifice the needs of the workers to the wealth-devouring inflationary war budget.

OIL DICTATES U. S. ROLE IN MIDDLE EAST

Jan. 29 that the U. S. government has a "vital interest" in the Middle East oil reserves. This "vital interest" extends, in fact, from "Gibraltar to the Indian Ocean."

CRY OF "IMPERIALISM"

He declared that "some arrangement" must be made by the government to secure for American armed forces, in time of "emergency," the oil from the Middle East "depot." The protection of this "depot"—owned by private American oil companies—he conceded would raise a cry of "imperialism."

He suggested that the government could escape this charge by buying into the private companies—although he admitted this would be actively resisted by the capitalists and Congress. His alternative proposal was for long-term government contracts to buy up the oil from the private companies at a fixed price. In fact, he indicated the Navy is considering such contracts now.

Stalinists Plan to Build Wallace Movement—by United Front from Below

By George Breitman

The differences between independent labor political action and the Stalinist third party policy were clearly delineated in the speech made by Communist Party General Secretary Eugene Dennis at a mass meeting in New York on Jan. 15. This speech made it plain that while the CP is now attacking the two-party system, in line with the world-wide "left turn" ordered by the Kremlin, it is still fighting by every means at its command to prevent the mobilization of the workers as an independent class force in U. S. politics.

Any discussion of the CP's present policy naturally raises the question of its previous opposition to the formation of a new party. Dennis "disposes" of that embarrassing issue as follows:

"It is a matter of public record that for many, many years the Communist Party, together with other advanced workers, pioneered for a new political alignment to free the working class and its popular allies from the two-party system of Big Business.

The truth is, of course, that for many, many years the Stalinists had been running up and down the country denouncing those workers who wanted a new party... They campaigned vigorously in 1944 for the election of Roosevelt and Truman; after that election, their members at the CIO convention reaffirmed their opposition to a third party as something that would divide the "forces of progress" in the Democratic Party.

Even as late as the 1946 elections they backed Truman's candidates. At last month's CIO Executive Board meeting, Murray, whose opposition to the Wallace movement is wholly reactionary, reminded the Stalinists, with malicious glee, of their own extensive hatchet work on behalf of the two-party system. Dennis can't publicly explain the real reason why the CP line changed, but it is well known. Stal-

in wants a pact with Truman, like the one he had with Hitler. And he is trying to get it by political pressure and blackmail. Dennis can't admit this because to do so would be to admit that if a Stalin-Truman deal is worked out, the CP will again be waving the flag for the two-party system.

It is obvious that this flagrantly bureaucratic method—"Here it is, all worked out, take it or leave it"—will antagonize and repel many workers who are ready to break with the two old parties but don't intend to be used as doormats by anyone. The main (if not the only) "trade union base" resulting from such a procedure will be the unions dominated by the Stalinists.

UNITED FRONT FROM BELOW

But, Dennis consoles the members of the CP, everything is going to work out OK anyhow, because:

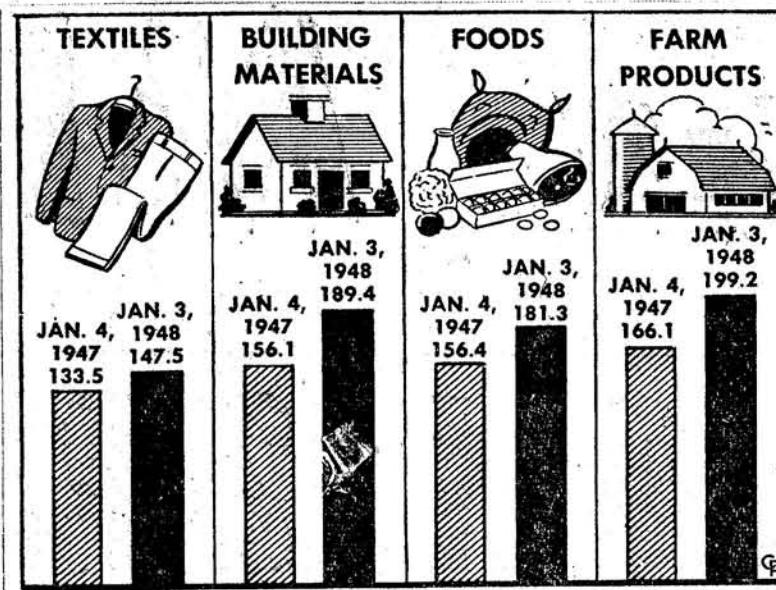
"In the present situation all who truly wish to advance working class unity see that the Wallace movement is based on and stimulates the united front of struggle from below. It is serving to unite not only the consistent advocates of a new people's party and coalition but also hundreds of thousands of rank and file workers in auto, steel, clothing and other important industries. Those who are genuinely interested in advancing working class unity will therefore help to build this united front of action from below..."

But what is the "united front from below?" Translated from Stalinism to English, it is a promise that workers can be won to the third party even if the organized labor movement is by-passed. True enough, this can be done to a limited extent.

But what you will have then is not a party representing and speaking for and controlled by the labor movement, but another party not controlled by labor to which workers happen to belong. Such a party may be manipulated to serve the political blackmail interests of Stalinism, but it cannot serve the interests of independent labor political action.

ENDORSE—NOT CONTROL

By a "strong trade union base" the Stalinists don't mean that the unions should control the party, have the deciding voice in determining policy, candidates, leaders, structure, etc. Oh no, what they actually mean is that as many unions as possible should be gotten to endorse the party, finance it, do the bell-ringing and Jimmy Higgins work—just as the Stalinist-dominated unions did for the Democratic Party. Of course, the unions should be given greater represen-



Based on official government figures, this chart shows how much wholesale prices have zoomed in the past year. They also explain why labor is demanding increased wages.

Federated Pictures

Milwaukee Politicians Aid Gas Company Steal

MILWAUKEE, Jan. 29.—

Protests against the 10% "temporary" rate increase granted the Milwaukee Gas Light Co. on Jan. 15 by the state public service commission, mounted as the company admitted today that it could not guarantee uncurtailed service in the event of more cold weather. Indignation is increased because gas pressure is already so low that many families find it impossible to light more than one burner at meal time.

On last Thanksgiving and Christmas days pressure dropped so low that thousands were unable to cook their holiday dinners at home. But what is the "united front from below?" Translated from Stalinism to English, it is a promise that workers can be won to the third party even if the organized labor movement is by-passed. True enough, this can be done to a limited extent.

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Although Milwaukee is in the midst of a mayoralty campaign, only the Socialist Workers Party candidate, James E. Boulton, has offered a program to meet this situation. Boulton demanded that the city declare a gas emergency and seize the utility without compensation and operate it under the control of the gas workers. "Only in this way can we provide enough gas for everyone at reasonable rates. We must take steps to end the 'profits first' principle in utility operation."

In an attempt to justify the rate increase, the public service commission made the astounding statement that the utility's earnings "are so inadequate as to impair its finances with consequent jeopardy to its ability to render reasonably adequate service." However the commission has made no effort to force the company to provide decent service nor has the company even held out a hope of early improvement in service.

Then, too, Milwaukee Gas Light says its executives and past executives have huge salaries and pensions. Thus, Bruno Rahn, who was paid \$27,500 a year as president of the company, has been retired on a "pension" of \$7,500 a year.

The company's generosity in salaries does not extend to wages. In 1946 its employees were forced to strike to gain a modest wage increase. In order to prevent future strikes Milwaukee Gas Light joined with other utilities in Wisconsin to rush a compulsory arbitration law through the last session of the state legislature.

SECOND INCREASE

This "increase" was the second granted Milwaukee Gas Light in less than a year. In May 1947, the company was granted an increase to yield an additional \$573,000 a year. This was not a flat increase; large (industrial) consumers actually had their rates reduced while those of workers were greatly raised.

The Milwaukee Gas Light Co. is part of a complicated utilities trust which drains profits from consumers in a great part of the mid-west.

THE MILITANT ARMY

Sub Week Nets 428 Subscribers

Militant Sub Week had already

received 428 subscriptions with only

incomplete returns available. In

addition, New York Local of the

Socialist Workers Party had sold

more than 950 individual copies in

two mobilizations. All this was ac-

complished in the record-breaking

cold wave. Several branches will

hold Sub Week later than the origi-

nal Jan. 25 to Feb. 1 dates.

Individual readers also joined in

the spirit of the campaign by turning in subs for friends and fellow

workers.

Minnesota railroad worker, who

gets around, sent 10 subs from eight

states, coast to coast. Three were

from Minnesota and one each from

New York, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa,

Arizona, California and Washington.

Although *Looking Backward* was

not as important as the effect it

produced, it retains its significance

today as the first purely native so-

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ture. The sensation produced by

the book disproves the spurious

claim that Americans are basically

hostile to the Socialist idea and

have always plunked in favor of

"free enterprise" and "rugged in-

dividualism." As a matter of fact,

Bellamy's work and the movement

it inspired are but a single example

of the thread running through

American history of the efforts of

the working masses to shake off

the shackles of enslaving capitalism

and create a new socialist society of

cooperation and plenty.

others were tied up with union meetings—went out the first Sunday and obtained 18 subs in canvassing, with the mercury at zero.

Los Angeles reported 56 subs as a

starter. By West Side Branch

sold six in half an hour. Branch

scores were: East Side 18, West

Side 17, South Side 12, Hollywood,

5, San Pedro 4.

St. Paul sent 30 subs as a first

report, including two combinations with

Fourth International. A new

comrade sold four Militant subs

one Fourth International sub and

45¢ of literature. P. C. leads the

campaign with 12 subs, 10 obtained

in his shop.

One St. Paul subscriber is in a

far-away colony of American im-

perialism, but his wife renewed for

him, saying she sends the paper to

him regularly and "he couldn't get

along without it."

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Gandhi—His Role in Fight For India's Independence

By J. R. Johnson

The assassination of Gandhi was political news of the first importance, for Gandhi had become an international figure. His death has provided the capitalist press with an opportunity to wallow in hypocritical and sentimental outpourings of how extraordinary was the success of this religious personality in the hard brutal world of today. But this is nonsense. Gandhi was above all a political leader and it is this that explains his extraordinary career.

The least important thing about him was his theory of non-violence, his saintliness, his love of his fellow-man, etc. What is interesting to observe is how his political personality and methods fitted like a glove the economic and political needs of the Indian landlords and capitalists.

These two ruling classes were caught in a terrible dilemma. To ensure their exploitation of the peasants and workers, the Indian landlords and capitalists depended upon the British government. Yet to free themselves from the clutches of British exploitation, which was ravaging India, they had no force except the same millions of down-trodden and oppressed.

POLITICAL GIFT

Subscriptions: \$1 per year; \$6 for 6 months. Foreign: \$2 per year; \$1 for 6 months.

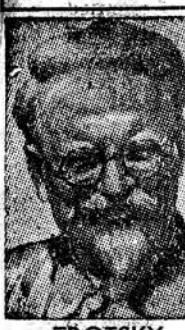
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Monday, February 9, 1948



"A quarter of a century proved too brief a span for the revolutionary re-arming of the world proletarian vanguard, and too long period for preserving the soviet system intact in an isolated backward country. Mankind is now paying for this with a new imperialist war; but the basic task of our epoch has not been changed, for the simple reason that it has not been solved."

Leon Trotsky, In Defense of Marxism, 1939.



LENIN

The Stalin-Hitler Documents And the Moscow Trials

There is a saying that a lie can travel half way round the world before the truth can put its shoes on. That is the theory that Stalin worked on twelve years ago when he launched the series of Moscow Frame-up Trials.

In these trials, begun in 1936, the Kremlin sought to besmirch the outstanding Bolshevik leaders, who, with Lenin organized and led the Russian Revolution in 1917. Lenin's closest co-workers—Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev and a host of others—were accused of a traitorous conspiracy with the Nazis to destroy the Soviet Union.

Step by step, for twelve years, the truth has been catching up inexorably with this infamous lie. By now every brick in the elaborate structure of the Moscow Frame-up Trials has been ripped down, one by one.

The last bit of rubble was removed by the publication of the U.S. State Department of the documents and records from the German Foreign Office giving the complete details of Stalin's alliance with Hitler between Aug. 23, 1939 and June 22, 1941.

These documents show who was the criminal and traitor. They afford the final indisputable documentary proof of who in the Soviet Union plotted with Hitler. It was not those tortured defendants in the Moscow Trials who babbled the "confessions" put in their mouths by Stalin's GPU inquisitors. It was not Leon Trotsky, founder of the Red Army, who died under the pickaxe blow of Stalin's hired assassin.

IT WAS STALIN HIMSELF.

From the start of the Moscow Trials en-

Sliding Scale of Wages

Glib-tongued Walter Reuther, president of the CIO auto workers union, condemned the proposal of the Flint delegates for a sliding scale cost-of-living bonus at the recent General Motors delegates conference. Reuther's arguments are worth taking up, as they constitute the chief stock-in-trade of all the labor bureaucrats, including the Stalinist variety, in opposing the program of a sliding scale of wages.

Reuther's contention was that the sliding scale of wages program does not provide for any improvement in workers' living standards, because, he claimed, it does not permit wages to rise above prices.

This argument does not sound too sincere, considering that workers are now taking one wage cut after another because their wages are not even keeping pace with rising prices. The UAW demand for a 25-cent an hour increase will, according to Reuther's own testimony, simply bring real wages up to the point where they were at the time of the last wage contracts.

But actually the argument is based upon

The Power to Declare War

Who should have the power to declare war in this modern age when a new war may end in blasting civilization off the face of the earth? At present, the constitution gives that power to Congress. Now the brass hats, whose menacing influence in the government grows greater every day, are proposing to lodge this power in the hands of the president.

Here is the argument advanced by Col. Louis E. Coira of U.S. Air Force Headquarters, in the winter issue of Air University Quarterly Review, a magazine published by that branch of the service:

"The president must be prepared to take whatever action is necessary to preserve national security. If commitment of the nation's armed forces in an offensive-defensive effort is required, he must be prepared to accept the responsibility for issuing the order. In no other way can the security of this nation be maintained in this age of advanced military technology."

This does not refer to the president's power to use the armed forces to repel attack, even without Congress declaring war, because the president already has that power. This cynical term, "offensive-defen-

sive effort" is brass hat language for war.

As "justification" for this outrageous proposal, Coira points out that "by his handling of foreign relations a president can bring this nation to the brink of war and actually make hostilities, and a Congressional declaration of war, inevitable." That's true, and The Militant has called attention to it again and again.

But instead of being an argument to turn over this life-and-death power to the president, it is an argument against permitting it to be exercised even by Congress. In short, it is an argument to turn it over to the people themselves, who must do the fighting and dying.

Let the people, through a democratic referendum, decide the questions of war or peace! Take the war-making power out of the hands of Wall Street's Congress! Smash the plot to install a brass hat dictatorship!

Some people will say that "in this age of advanced technology" it will be impossible to let the people vote on this question. Our answer is that in this age above all, when war will determine the fate of every man, woman and child, it is necessary to take the war-making power out of the hands of the war-mad ruling class.

Franc Devaluation Undermines Scheme for West Europe Bloc

CIO Board Against Third Party



By a vote of 33 to 11, with two abstentions, the CIO executive board voted "against the establishment of a third political party." Here CIO President Philip Murray and Sec.-Treas. James E. Carey discuss the question as the executive board listens. President Emil Rieve of the Textile Union and President Joseph Curran of the National Maritime Union who voted with the majority are shown seated between Murray and Carey.

Federated Pictures

neither position was used by American capitalism to stop the French devaluation. Is it possible that Wall Street was not averse to seeing pressure exerted against the trend toward nationalization in England? Wall Street does not mind using the European "socialists," but it has no use for even their brand of "socialism."

But this has been the sole stock in trade by means of which the British Labor Party has been able to camouflage its reactionary role and prevent the restless working class from turning in a revolutionary direction. Right now, even with the present controls, demands for higher wages have reached tremendous proportions. The devaluation of the franc will further shake the British economy and can only make wage demands more urgent. That's why the statesmen in London were so excited over the French devaluation.

Nor is the devaluation of the franc more than a gamble for the French capitalists. At best, only a temporary increase in exports can result. Domestic price rises generally follow devaluation. And that means that corresponding increases in costs of export commodities must follow. As to the hoarders, a fall in the value of the franc has always induced them to hang on all the more tenaciously to gold and strong currencies. It will take more than monetary tricks to make them part with their savings.

It is certain, however, that the workers, who made only slight wage gains during the November-December strikes, will soon feel the pinch of rising prices. In fact, there are already reports that "Catholic and Socialist as well as Communist trade unions" have brought protests to the government against the devaluation. That spells new wage de-

mands, new strikes, and a new political crisis for the French government.

The American business magazines have good cause to moan about the European situation. "Decisions, firm policies, big plans of statesmen keep coming undone," writes U. S. News. European recovery, co-operation, unity are proving impossible under capitalism.

But the latest mass demonstration of the de Gaulle movement in the city of St. Etienne, where the General proclaimed his "social" program which smacks of the Fascist corporate state, is reported to have cost some 300,000 to 400,000 dollars—

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De Gaulle boasted at St. Etienne

that while he was president of France there was not a single strike.

The Stalinists, in reply, themselves

claim credit for this achievement.

For once they are right. But de

Gaulle was no more grateful than

the master class generally is to

treacherous labor leaders.

Events on the International Scene

By Paul G. Stevens

FRÉNCH WORKERS' VIEW OF MARSHALL PLAN

Not everyone in France is waiting with bated breath for the salvation of the Marshall Plan. And not everyone who refuses it enthusiastic acclaim is an agent of the Kremlin. The way the thinking French worker looks at it is best expressed by an editorial in the current issue of the Trotskyist paper *La Verite*. Of the 17 billion requested from Congress for all European countries for four years, it says,

"The share provided for France in the course of 1948 is around 1.35 billion dollars, or 162 million francs . . . Let us grant that the best figure will be 170 billion francs for the first year and compare it with a few others. It just about equals the loss in national revenue caused by the strikes last November and December, that is, by the bosses' and

SIDELIGHTS ON DE GAULLE

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TROTSKYISM IN CEYLON

Under the above title, the London weekly, *The Economist* of Jan. 3 devoted a full length article which gives an informed review of the development of the revolutionary movement in that far-off island. It starts out by calling attention to the "curious phenomenon that the chief stronghold of Trotskyism in the world today" should be there, noting that the Lanka Sama Samaj Party won 10 seats and the Bolshevik-Leninist Party 5 out of a total of 95 elective seats in the island's Parliament.

Intentionally or not, the writer creates a bit of confusion here. The Bolshevik-Leninist Party is the Trotskyist party of Ceylon, the official section of the Fourth International. The Lanka Sama Samaj Party is an organization formed by a group which last year split away from the Trotskyists.

Elections are of minor importance, because they determine the political policy, and back of that political policy is the constant pressure of the men trained to arms, enormous bodies of disciplined men, wondering if they are never going to be allowed to use their education and their skill and ravage some great people with the force of arms. That is the meaning of armaments . . .

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"This House rejoices that, after many years of subjection to foreign rule, the struggle of the people of Ceylon for freedom has culminated in the attainment of independence."

The Fourth International Secretariat addressed a letter to the Lanka Sama Samaj Party on this issue, wherein it asks:

"What possible justification can there be for abstention on an issue which poses squarely genuine independence versus camouflaged subversion to imperialism?"

Activities of 'Militant' Readers and the Socialist Workers Party

AFL Executive Council Upholds 2-Party Misrule

(Continued from Page 1)

porting Wallace "would play into the hands of Soviet Russia's expansionist policy" — but that's a thin disguise for their own slavish support of Wall Street's imperialist program.

They also claimed a third party would "split the liberal vote." We've heard that song before — at every election since 1932 and every time the workers demand their own political party. The last time we heard it was in 1946. The workers didn't "split the liberal vote" and got the most reactionary Congress in decades anyway.

If the AFL leaders don't go for Wallace's third-party movement — and they are correct when they say it does not spring from the labor movement — how do they propose to free the American workers from subjecting to the two old political machines of Wall Street?

It was on this issue particularly that the AFL leaders in Miami staged an exhibition that would be drag up some Democratic politician for the life of the American labor movement, and such an insult to the more than 7 million hard-working AFL members who pay the salaries of the "fat and stately business" — aiding the railroad corporations.

At this writing the LLPE is still without a national figurehead.

What voice have the AFL members had in the life-and-death question of the political course they must travel? None whatsoever. The 16 bureaus luxuriating in Miami have never given a thought to consulting those who pay the dues and assessments.

It's high time for the AFL members to put a stop to the disgusting conduct of those who presume to speak in the name of seven million workers. The voice of the ranks must be heard. They must decide.

The demand must be raised in all the great bodies of organized labor for a National United Labor Conference, with rank and file representation from the AFL, CIO, Railroad Brotherhoods and independents, to map out a program of independent political action for the labor movement.

Such a conference could end the shoddy maneuvers and deals on the top with capitalist politicians. It could launch the mighty legions of labor as a truly independent force by organizing labor's own party and running its own candidates next November.

that old Democratic wheel-horse and pre-Pearl Harbor darling of the American Firsters and isolationist ultra-reactionaries—Senator Wheeler. Wheeler brought this whole farce to a head when he telephoned the AFL leaders that before he'd take the \$20,000 a year for the use of his name, they'd have to know "I just couldn't abandon my law business" — aiding the railroad corporations.

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The Sky's The Limit

By Albert Parker

Listening to the speeches, messages, resolutions, documents and platform planks pouring out of the various campaign headquarters nowadays, you might get the impression that nothing is too good for the Negro people and other minorities. In that case, you will be surprised next December, when all the shouting is finished and the votes are counted, to find the minorities in pretty much the same position as before.

Of course, the battle of the demagogues is just getting started and you haven't seen anything yet. But already it is plain that in 1948 the sky will be the limit in campaign promises to the important Negro vote. Taft promises he will fight against segregation in the proposed peacetime conscription program. Wallace calls for the complete abolition of Jim Crow. Truman rushes off his civil rights message to Congress with a list of points long advocated by the Negro and labor movements.

There is an old saying: By their fruits ye shall know them. Taft never lifted a finger against segregation in the armed forces either in peace or war. Wallace never abolished Jim Crow in the cabinet departments he headed. And Truman's fruits are just as rotten.

To prove that, we call attention to just one aspect of his Feb. 3 message to Congress. "During the recent war and in the years since its close we have made much progress toward equality of opportunity in our armed services without regard to race, color, religion or national origin," he said. "I have instructed the

Secretary of Defense to take steps to have the remaining instances of discrimination in the armed services eliminated as rapidly as possible."

We won't go into a lengthy argument here about the falsity of Truman's remark about "progress toward equality" in the armed forces; every Negro who ever had anything to do with the armed forces knows that segregation (the foundation of discrimination) is the most rigidly enforced policy in the armed forces, and that instead of getting better, it is getting worse all the time.

But here is the main point: Truman tells Congress to act on the poll tax, lynching, FEPC, etc., because they are in its department. Correct—but what about the issues that are in his own department? As commander-in-chief of the armed forces, Truman has the power to issue an executive order outlawing segregation in the Army, Navy, Marines and Coast Guard. He doesn't need the permission of Congress or anyone else to do this, and he could do it this very day if he wanted to. Instead, he makes a vague reference about instructing the Secretary of Defense to do something about discrimination—while he completely skirts around the crucial issue of segregation.

Some Negro leaders are going around saying that this is fine. Let the candidates keep on bidding against each other, they say, and then let the Negro people vote for the one who promises the most. But if the Negroes deliver their votes on this basis, it will be worse than selling their birthright for a mess of pottage. If worse comes to worst, you can always eat porridge, but you can't get any nourishment at all out of campaign demagogery and claptrap.

Death in the Mayor's Office

By Grace Carlson

On Tuesday, Jan. 13, four-month old Arthur Jensen a liquid diet. Later in the day, the baby's condition became worse and Mrs. Jensen took him back to the hospital's receiving room. The baby was given a chest X-Ray and an injection of penicillin, with the advice that he be brought back to the clinic the following day.

(At the public hearing, the harassed and overworked young intern, who had examined the baby, pointed out that General Hospital is terribly overcrowded; a fact that all city officials know—and carefully ignore.)

Mrs. Jensen pleaded with the doctor to keep the baby in the hospital but was told that his condition did not warrant hospitalization. During the night, the baby became worse and cried a great deal. In the morning, the agitated parents brought the baby in a taxicab to Mayor Hubert Humphrey's office in the vain hope that he could arrange to have the baby admitted to the hospital immediately. And as he lay on the desk in the Mayor's office—waiting for the representatives of this rich, capitalist government to come to his aid—tiny Arthur Jensen drew his last breath.

The baby had been at the Minneapolis General Hospital for about a week earlier in the month with an infected ear. He was discharged from the hospital on Jan. 10, but later developed a cold and fever. On Jan. 12, the child was taken to the hospital's baby clinic, where he was examined. The doctor advised the mother to take the baby home and keep him on

To My Uncle in Italy

By John F. Petrone

Dear Uncle:

Thanks for your letter about the Italian strikes. I hope that by this time you have received the CARE package we sent. As soon as our budget allows, we will send another. But that is not the purpose of this letter. I am writing this at the suggestion of a man with considerable power in our government, the Honorable Alexander Wiley of Wisconsin, a Republican member of the U. S. Senate who is noted for speeches extolling the quality of cheese produced in his state. Sometimes he discusses broader subjects in the Senate, as he did when he said recently:

"American citizens writing abroad should write about true conditions in America, stressing the many blessings that we enjoy in this land of freedom, the comforts, the conveniences, as well as stressing the aid that we have already extended abroad for the noblest of humanitarian purposes—both as individuals and as a nation." This strikes me as a good idea.

First, a word or two about that chief blessing, the high American standard of living. Of course, it is higher than the Italian standard, but it is nothing like what you see in the Hollywood films. Money wages are much higher than ever before, but that is true in Italy too, isn't it?

Last week a New Jersey mechanic told a Senate Committee he earns \$2,500 a year, but because of high prices he and his family do not have enough food, or milk, or money for medical care. "We are just existing, not living," he said.

And in Cleveland a post office worker earning \$2,700 a year, declared he and his family had been better off during the depression when he worked in a steel mill for 60c an hour, or less than \$1,300 a year. To be worse off than during the terrible depression my father used to write you about—such blessings we can well do without.

I think you have already had the chance to become familiar with some of the other blessings we enjoy in this land of freedom.

For example, President Truman has for the last

Notes from the News

HUDSON FOREMEN WIN—A 9-day strike won for union foremen at the Hudson Motor Co. what 6 years of courtroom maneuvering failed to achieve—a promise of a contract within 30 days. Hudson foremen are members of the Foremen's Association of America.

Carl Brown, National FAA president said, "If foremen are determined to have a voice in determining their job rights, they can have them despite all the Taft-Hartley laws the opponents of labor can devise."

POPULATION GROWING—The census bureau revealed that on Oct. 1 the U.S. population stood at 144,708,000. This is a gain of 13 million since 1940 and 13 million more than in the 1930-1940 decade.

STRIKES DOWN IN 1947—The Bureau of Labor Statistics released figures that strikes dropped to 3,600 in 1947 compared with 4,985 in 1946. The number of man-hours lost in 1947 was one-third less than the previous year.

GESTAPO RAID—Four agents of the Federal government swooped down on the Washington office of the CIO United Public Workers. Armed with blank subpoenas, they demanded the union's records, questioned union representatives regarding their "loyalty," and ordered the office workers around. This raid is an outgrowth of the strike of 1,500 poorly paid Negro workers, with whose union Government Service, Inc. Caffetters refuse to negotiate a wage increase, because union officers have refused to sign the Taft-Hartley affidavits. "To us—and to the CIO Executive Board which endorsed the strike—it looks like a clear case of Federal officials engaging in union-busting," states the Feb. 2 CIO News.

WEST-GERMAN GOVERNMENT—Washington announced that on July 1, the War Department would turn the government of the American zone over to the State Department. Meanwhile the American and British military governments are to issue a charter establishing by Feb. 15 an "ersatz government"—a Bizonal German Economic Administration.

THE MILITANT

PAGE FOUR

NEW YORK, N. Y.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 1948

Detroit UAW Leader Calls for Sliding Scale Wage Program

Railroaders Win Strike in Akron

A six-day strike of railway trainmen against the Akron and Barberton Belt Line, reported in the Jan. 19 *Militant*, has been won, according to *Trainmen News*, official organ of the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen.

The Belt Line is a small but very strategic road serving the industries of Akron and vicinity. It is owned jointly by the Pennsylvania, Erie, Baltimore and Ohio, and the Canton and Youngstown Railways. These companies used the Belt Line as a miniature testing ground for strikebreaking a la Taft-Hartley.

With the Pennsylvania Railroad paying 50%, and the other companies sharing the remainder of the costs, more money was spent to break the Belt Line strike than it would have cost to meet the demands of the strikers for the next ten years. Against the 22 striking trainmen, the company hired 70 armed guards. These, and seabs, cost the company \$3,000 per day. The increased cost of changes in six working rules asked by the strikers would amount only to \$5,000 yearly.

Barberton witnessed an invasion of the city by "special police" hired by the company, who cruised the street. Finally the mayor ordered these company thugs to put on uniforms and badges or go to jail.

Despite this lavish spending on the part of the company, the strike was effective. Thousands of freight cars piled up in the Akron yards. Manufacturing concerns were faced with tremendous losses. The rail barons who were trying their union-busting technique on the small Barberton lodge with an eye to a future attempt to smash the railway unions, have learned that even 22 militant and determined union men are no push-over.

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