

Mass Actions Herald Coming Crisis in Italy

— See Page 3 —

Workers of the World, Unite!

THE MILITANT

PUBLISHED WEEKLY IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. XII.—No. 8

NEW YORK, N. Y., MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1948

PRICE: FIVE CENTS

WALLACE CANDIDATE SWEEPS ELECTION

What Labor Must Fight For Now

An Editorial

The break in commodity market prices should alert American labor to the danger of depression. We cannot say with certainty that the slump in farm prices is the beginning of an economic crisis. But we would be blind not to see the warning sign: Prepare!

We CAN say with certainty, however, that the drop in commodity market prices will bring no immediate significant fall in the cost of living. All business and government sources advise that retail prices—what the consumer pays—do not reflect wholesale price declines until months later.

As a matter of fact, certain food prices are still rising. Many fresh vegetables and fruits are now selling for two and three times the prices of a year ago. Meat prices, an Agriculture Department official warns, may go to higher levels than before.

Non-agricultural commodity prices are still up. Price boosts have been announced for many products, from automobiles to men's suits. Average rents have risen 15% in eight months—and landlords hope to torpedo what's left of rent controls.

This all points to one thing: There must be no let-down in labor's drive to restore real wages to the level of the spring of 1946. NO FORESEEABLE PRICE DEVELOPMENTS WARRANT THE SLIGHTEST REDUCTION IN PRESENT UNION DEMANDS FOR BASIC WAGE INCREASES OF 25 TO 30 CENTS AN HOUR. And since there can be no assurance that prices won't rise once more, basic wages must be fortified by including in all wage contracts the sliding scale cost-of-living bonus. This will provide automatic pay increases in the event of further price rises.

Hand-in-hand with the fight for higher wages should go an immediate drive for measures to protect the workers against unemployment. Unemployment is a menace NOW in the midst of so-called "prosperity."

Reports from all parts of the country reveal what the Wall Street Journal has called "creeping unemployment." The U. S. Census Bureau figures disclose a steady rise in unemployment—400,000 more in the month of January alone.

Several hundred thousand Detroit auto workers have suffered layoffs for weeks. Now 35,000 Ford workers face a layoff of at least three months because of model changes. In Akron, the rubber center, the Jan. 25 Beacon-Journal reports, "The trek to relief agencies has begun in earnest again—what with layoffs, increasing cost of living and winter illnesses. It's the largest trek since depression years." New York City's Welfare Commissioner has asked a 30% increase in the welfare budget because of the anticipated rise in relief cases.

An estimated 14 million workers were unemployed for some period during 1947. This year, depression or not, many more millions will suffer periods of unemployment.

RIGHT NOW THE DEMAND SHOULD BE RAISED FOR THE 30-HOUR WEEK AT 40 HOURS PAY AND FOR UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE EQUAL TO TRADE UNION WAGES

Why should the hereditary billionaire Henry Ford II be able to lay off half his River Rouge workers whenever he claims he hasn't enough work for them? Spread the available work through the shorter work week, with the same take-home pay as before.

Why should laid off workers be forced to exist on present unemployment insurance pittances? Let the jobless worker be assured a decent living standard by receiving unemployment compensation equal to his weekly union wages.

State Department Interferes in CIO Affairs

Direct evidence has come to light that the U. S. State Department is intervening in affairs of the American labor movement and is actively influencing internal policies of the Murray leadership in the CIO.

This evidence is contained in a Washington dispatch by Louis Stark, veteran labor news correspondent, in the Feb. 11 N. Y. Times. His article deals with Philip Murray's threat to purge national CIO appointees and elected local and state CIO officials who back Wallace or refuse to "go along" with the Marshall Plan.

The State Department, Stark disclosed, recently demanded from top CIO officials an "explanation" for the action of Paul Schurr, secretary of the San Francisco CIO Council, because he wrote officials of French and Italian labor unions that the Taft-Hartley Act is "the domestic program of American imperialism which now attacks free trade unions in the European countries as well."

When top CIO leaders found out about Schurr's letter, "they began an inquiry," Stark writes, "in the midst of which they were asked

by the State Department for an explanation of the 'incident'."

This high-handed intervention by the State Department should have been sternly repudiated by the CIO leaders. Instead they bowed and scraped, and hastened to assure their State Department bosses that they had already dealt with the offending member.

They told the State Department, reports Stark, that they "had rebuked Mr. Schurr and had advised him that any communications addressed to members of the world labor federation must channel through the national CIO offices." This would amount to complete censorship under the inspiration of the State Department, of free interchange of opinion between CIO members and unionists in other lands.

The CIO top leadership's "State Department unionism" has become a crying international scandal, particularly in connection with their support of American imperialism's aid to the bloody monarchial dictatorship in Greece.

After halting Truman's military backing of the Greek dictatorship as "aid to democracy," the CIO leaders were considerably embar-

Dan Hoan Enters Mayoralty Race In Milwaukee

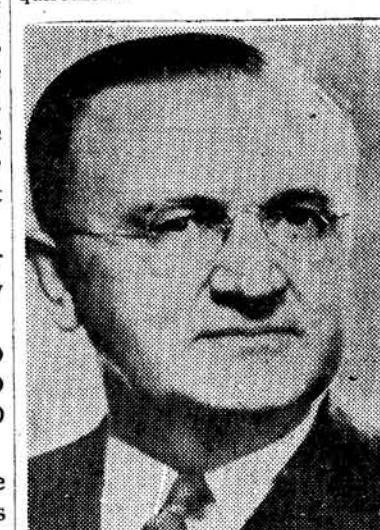
Boulton Denounces Turncoat Socialist

Interest in Milwaukee's mayoralty election increased with the announcement of Dan Hoan that he would bow to "popular demand" and become a candidate. Hoan had served as mayor from 1916 to 1940 as a Socialist. Since his defeat in 1940 he has abandoned the Socialist party for the Democratic party. In 1944 and 1946 Hoan was the Democratic candidate for governor of Wisconsin.

In a speech given the day after Hoan's announcement, James E. Boulton, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor, lashed at Hoan's record of betrayal of the working class. Boulton assailed Hoan's desertion to the Democratic party. "Mr. Hoan has done the greatest damage to the cause of Milwaukee Socialism by his major achievement in building a bridge to the capitalist Democratic Party for a stream of deserters from the workers' movement," asserted Boulton. This statement was prominently featured in the Milwaukee capitalist press.

The immediate loser because of Hoan's action will be Frank Zeidler, the last vote-getter left to the dying Socialist Party. Zeidler is running without SP endorsement, so as not to offend any capitalist support. He has the tacit backing of one wing of the Democratic Party and seems prepared to follow the same road that Hoan did.

Because he is the only candidate endorsed by and responsible to a party organization, Boulton's campaign is meeting with great interest from thousands of Socialist workers. Despite bitterly cold weather, Boulton's workers found no difficulty in getting almost 50% more signatures than the legal require-



Thomas B. McCabe, reactionary Republican Philadelphia banker and president of the Scott Paper Co. (Scott Tissue), who was appointed by Truman as chairman of the Federal Reserve Board. He replaces Eccles, the Roosevelt New Deal financier from Utah.

Murray's Executive Board, while previously calling for a "substantial" wage increase, has not speci-

passed when the Greek government on Dec. 8, 1947 passed its own version of the Taft-Hartley Act, WHICH INCLUDED THE DEATH PENALTY FOR STRIKERS.

But for nearly two months the CIO leaders kept silent about the fascist anti-labor decrees in Greece. Finally, after they were subjected to much pressure, the CIO Executive Board on Jan. 22 voted to request the U. S. State Department to lodge a protest against the Greek death-to-strikers law. Philip Murray wrote a letter to Secretary of State Marshall, published in the Feb. 2 CIO News.

Murray's chief concern, his letter makes plain, is lest such a flagrant demonstration of the anti-labor character of the Greek government "diminish the support among American industrial workers" for the Marshall Plan.

The Feb. 9 CIO News carries Marshall's reply, under the misleading heading, "Greeks to Kill Anti-Strike Law." What Marshall wrote was simply that the Greek prime minister says he will "propose" repeal of the anti-labor laws to the Greek Parliament "as soon as the elections" of Greek government

Unemployment in Detroit



Thousands of auto workers jammed Detroit's Unemployment Compensation Commission offices to pick up jobless pay checks after many factories closed down because of a fuel shortage that followed the recent cold spell. UAW President Reuther demanded a Congressional investigation of the Detroit gas shortage which, it is believed was artificially created by the utility trust.

Federated Pictures

Steel Union Heads Give No Lead in Wage Drive

Philip Murray has informed the steel corporations that he is ready to accept any crumbs they may offer in wage negotiations this April with the CIO Steelworkers.

That is the meaning of his demonstrative declaration on Feb. 16 that the steel union will not strike to enforce its forthcoming wage demands. His statement was made to a press conference after the opening session of the Steelworkers Executive Board meeting on the wage question.

Murray emphasized that "we do not propose to abridge, set aside or undermine our collective bargaining agreement" which contains a no-strike clause operative until April 30, 1949. Murray and the steel bosses slipped this shack on the steel workers last spring, when in return for a skimpy wage raise that was quickly wiped out by price rises, he incorporated a two year no-strike clause into the contract.

Now Murray seems to be planning to make the same sort of deal, although it would take not less than a 30-cent an hour basic wage increase to compensate for the rise in living costs since the last contract was signed. Most of the other leading CIO unions are demanding 25 to 30 cents an hour. The Oil Workers Industrial Union joined the auto, packinghouse, rubber and other unions by adopting a 30-cent demand on Feb. 11.

Murray's Executive Board, while previously calling for a "substantial" wage increase, has not speci-

March, has chosen a responsible National Executive for the Greek Labor movement."

This means that when the Greek despotism has murdered enough leaders of the Greek workers and fully reorganized the Greek Confederation of Labor under control of its own stooges, then the government might repeal the death-to-strikers law.

The CIO leaders are now trying to apply a new coat of whitewash to the Greek dictatorship. Clinton Golden, Murray's representative on Truman's "American Mission to Aid Greece," on Feb. 13 told the N. Y. Times correspondent in Athens that the "elections" of Greek government

hires in Greek unions are "under conditions permitting free balloting, thus rendering remarkable demonstration of democratic procedure."

Actually, when the Stalinist and anti-monarchist labor leaders won the union elections in 1946, the Greek government promptly "invalidated" the elections. Thousands of labor opponents of the regime have since been imprisoned or murdered. A "caretaker" authority, set up by the Greek prime minister, says he will "propose" repeal of the anti-labor laws to the Greek Parliament "as soon as the elections" of Greek government

rules the "free" Greek unions.

Clinton Golden reached the heights of cynicism in his answer to a protest sent by a CIO Tobacco Workers official on the arrest of Antonios Ambatielos, head of the Greek Confederation of Labor, who faces a death sentence.

Golden said: "Those trade unionists and others who desire to cast their lot with the Communists must assume whatever risk goes along with such actions."

The right-wing CIO leaders—and the top AFL leaders are no different—are acting as agents of American imperialism. They are slavishly following the guidance of the U. S. State Department.

They assail government direction of unions in Russia, but are themselves stooges of the Truman regime, attempting to tie the CIO to Wall Street's foreign policy. They are conducting a bureaucratic purge of CIO members and officials who are under the "outside influence" of the Communist Party. But they themselves are a transmission belt for the outside influence of labor's deadliest enemy—Big Business—exerted through its government and State Department.

A New Kind Of Party

Eugene Dennis, General Secretary of the Stalinist Party gives the low down on exactly what the Wallace third party is:

"It is not a labor party, nor even a farmer-labor party. It is a new type of people's anti-war and anti-imperialist and democratic people's coalition which is being created within the U. S. and reflects in its own way the struggle between the world camps of progress and reaction."

Murray Steps Up Attacks Against Stalinists in CIO

CIO President Philip Murray for the first time has made a public attack on CIO supporters of Henry Wallace—principally the Stalinists—and opponents of the Marshall Plan.

Murray's open declaration of warfare was made in a vitriolic address on Feb. 10 to the Cleveland convention of the Industrial Union of Marine and Shipbuilding Workers.

Heretofore, Murray has been waging a form of undercover war against his former allies, the Stalinists. He has confined his personal attacks on them to the closed meetings of the CIO Executive Board.

Although, as is his custom, Murray named no names in his speech there was no mistaking his target and intent. It is clear that Murray intends to proceed as ruthlessly as he can to suppress opponents of his political action and foreign affairs policies.

Murray harangued against any third party "at this time" and accused the pro-Wallace elements of splitting and dividing the labor movement and paving the way for the election of reactionaries this November. He did not explain how each Congress up to now has been more reactionary than the previous one.

PROPS UP DICTATORS

Murray also charged that the Marshall Plan opponents are "misrepresenting" his "purpose" in supporting the Marshall Plan. Actually, he himself is misrepresenting the Marshall Plan as "aid to the starving," when it is designed to bolster anti-labor and dictator regimes in Western Europe.

Murray's choice of the IUMSWA convention as the arena for his first open attack on third party advocates in the CIO was not accidental. The IUMSWA is under the complete control of reactionary elements, including the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists. The atmosphere for Murray's speech had been prepared in advance by redacting tirades and resolutions.

The IUMSWA, down to a shadow because of postwar shipyard layoffs, is being built up as a catch-all for split-off groups from Stalinist-controlled unions and new unions that Murray wants under his own thumb. The convention received into membership 25,000 members of the Progressive Metal Workers Council, a right-wing split-off from the Stalinist-dominated Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union. It also approved the merger of the United Railway Workers into the shipbuilders union.

Murray's speech at the Shipbuilding convention and the action of the latter in taking in a secessionist CIO grouping show how the break between the Murray-Reuther bureaucracy is growing deeper and more bitter all the time. This last week, Murray's appointee, Martin Wagner, president of the Gas, Coke and Chemical Workers Union, summarily removed from office a Stalinist supporter, Gavin Mitchell, regional director of the Buffalo area. The previous week a split was engineered in the Greater Newark Industrial Union Council, when representatives of the auto, textile, steel and other unions decided to split the Council and set up their own competing organization, headed by William Mackey, a field representative of Murray's steel union.

FBI agents, acting on direct orders of Attorney General Tom Clark, perpetrated their most brazen action to date in the current witch hunt drive, when they arrested for deportation Ferdinand C. Smith, National Secretary of the CIO National Maritime Union and CIO Executive Board member.

Smith, a well-known Negro trade union leader, is charged with being a member of the Communist (Stalinist) Party and for that reason is marked by the government for deportation. The IUMSWA is under the complete control of reactionary elements, including the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists. The atmosphere for Murray's speech had been prepared in advance by redacting tirades and resolutions.

Isaacson Victory Shows Disgust With Old Parties

By Albert Parker

NEW YORK, Feb. 18—Clouds of gloom settled over Democratic Party national headquarters and the White House last night as their candidate for Congress from the 24th District in the Bronx went down to crushing defeat by the Wallace-endorsed candidate of the American Labor Party. This first electoral test for the Wallace movement strengthened the likelihood that Truman's goose is cooked unless he is able to work out some deal with Wallace.

EXCEPTIONAL CONDITIONS

For one thing, the vote was only about half the size of the one cast in 1946, and the proportion of Wallace votes would probably go down in a regular election. Another exceptional factor was the heavy proportion of Jewish voters in this district, something like 50%, and this had an important effect because most Jewish voters are today highly incensed at the transparently two-faced role of the Truman administration on the Palestine issue. Furthermore, this district was the second biggest stronghold of the ALP in the state.

It has also been noted that New York City is the major stronghold of the Communist Party, which is the chief representative of the Wallace movement in the trade unions. The CP forces were able by concentrating their city-wide strength in this district to achieve an effect that would be impossible in a regular election.

All in all, however, the election results are definite proof that dissatisfaction with the two-party system is spreading; that Wallace's break with the Democrats has enhanced his popularity; and that his candidacy can cut heavily into the normally Democratic and Republican vote.

One of the Bronx campaign's high points was Mayor O'Dwyer's public appeal on Feb. 12 to "liberals like Henry Wallace" to reconsider the "serious blunder" of leaving the Democratic fold and "return and carry on their fight within the Democratic Party, side by side with us."

It was notable in Wallace's reply three days later that he did not explicitly reject this appeal, even though he continued his attacks on the Democratic Party. An estimate of future trends must take into account Wallace's refusal to definitely commit himself against a return to the Democratic machine, because the future of the movement he leads

(Continued on Page 4)

Witch Hunters Arrest NMU Secretary Smith

hearing was only to determine if there had been any irregularities in the arrest and that he felt there hadn't been any. At the same time Judge Medina gave his verdict on habeas corpus hearings for Eisler and Williamson. He ruled against them and consequently they will remain imprisoned at Ellis Island until final appeals up to the Supreme Court have been heard. This may very likely be several years.

The arrest of Smith—the 23rd arrest in the current deportation hysteria—must serve as a warning signal to the entire labor movement.

The whole labor movement must now rally, not only to defend Smith from FBI persecution, but to smash the foul FBI conspiracy to deport alien unionists and terrorize the whole working class. All true militants must realize that Stalinism cannot be fought with the aid of, or in alliance with the FBI. Because Hoover's G-men are persecuting the Stalinists as the first installment of the carefully planned red-baiting attack on the entire labor movement—an attack which aims at nothing less than resurrecting the notorious Palmer raids of 1920 and hacking the labor movement to shreds.

The deportation drive must be stopped!

Washington and Lincoln—Part of the American Revolutionary Tradition

By George Breitman

Nothing embarrasses the American capitalists so much as the truth about their own revolutionary past. That is illustrated in their current eulogies of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, on the occasion of their birthday celebrations. How the present rulers hate to be reminded that the United States was born and grew great as the result of two revolutions conducted and won by "force and violence"! How they squirm at the memory that their own ancestors led "subversive" movements! How they sweat, even while paying tribute to these two national heroes, to obscure and belittle the real significance, achievements and traditions of the 18th and 19th century revolutionists!

The reasons for such behavior are not hard to find. When American Big Business is reaching out for imperialist domination of the world and using all its resources to preserve an outworn and oppressive social system, it is naturally not interested in extolling American revolutions and civil wars for independence and the establishment of new social systems.

But every man should have his due, and those of us who are the most consistent fighters against the tyranny of Big Business willingly give credit to the revolutionary forerunners of the present ruling class for the struggles they led against tyranny in the past. For us, unlike the apologists of Big Business, the truth about the revolutionary past, and such figures as Washington and Lincoln, is not a source of embarrassment but of enlightenment and inspiration, providing many rich lessons still applicable in the current struggles against oppression.

Why They Are Remembered

Washington and Lincoln are remembered with affection by the American people above all because they were leaders of revolutionary struggles. True, they were not the most consistent or most far-sighted leaders of these struggles and there was much that they left undone, but that does not detract from the honor due them for what they were and for what they did achieve.

The fight for independence from Britain and for democracy in the American colonies did not begin when Washington took command of the Continental armies. That struggle had been going on for many years before 1776, with the most energetic role being played by the radical elements among the working population. It assumed organized form with the demonstrations by the Sons of Liberty against the oppressive Stamp Act in 1765, and then ebbed and flowed for over ten years before it erupted in civil war to overthrow the British crown.

The revolution was made by an alliance between several classes—the planters of the South, the radical merchants of the North, the farmers, and the artisans and mechanics in the cities. The merchants and planters were sometimes at odds with the democratic and popular elements; they were often shocked by the militant methods of the masses, and they showed a greater readiness to conciliate with the British. But compromise was not in the cards, and in the end the planters and merchants provided most of the top leaders for the revolution.

George Washington represented the Virginia planters and land specu-

lators. He himself was the richest planter in the colonies. Like the others of his class he deeply resented British restrictions and taxes which held down the native propertied interests in favor of their British counterparts.

He became part of a syndicate that laid claim to hundreds of thousands of acres on the western frontier. As a youth he made a trip to this territory to survey it. Later he joined Braddock's troops to smash the French attempt to seize this territory. But the Quebec Act of 1763 took away the colonists' right to claim these lands and reserved them for the British crown. Measures of this kind were the source of Washington's radicalism.

Freedom from British rule therefore had a very definite content for men like Washington. It meant the chance to end British taxation, the opportunity to repudiate debts that were crushing many planters and merchants, it meant free trade and free access to the land. It meant freedom for capitalist relations here to expand without hindrance by the British. To the poor farmers and working people it also meant many of these things—and much more besides: a chance for greater equality, democracy, opportunity. Thus they were able to unite in the struggle against the common foe.

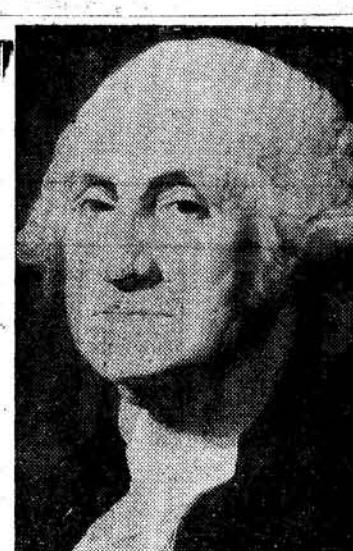
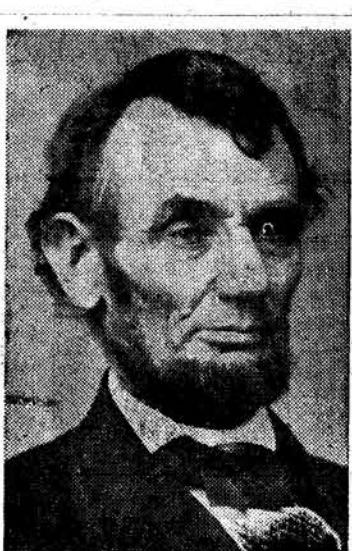
"Seditious And Subversive"

That struggle was labelled seditious, disloyal and subversive by the forces of "law and order"—and so it was from the viewpoint of the British crown and its Tory supporters in America. But that's how American democracy came into power—by defying oppressive edicts and laws and by overthrowing oppressive institutions and governments. American history would have taken a different and less dynamic course if the revolutionists of the 1770's had capitulated to the powers that be if the revolutionists had capitulated to the Taft-Hartley Slave Labor Act.

Washington was neither the founder, the theoretician nor the political leader of the revolution. His selection as commander-in-chief was due primarily to the desire of the Massachusetts merchants to cement their alliance with the Virginia planters. But he grew steadily in stature as a leader.

These were the times that tried men's souls; the revolutionary war was conducted under extremely discouraging conditions and lasted for seven long years. But Washington never faltered. He "pledged his life, his fortune and his sacred honor" to the rebel cause, and in the end he led it to victory. That alone was enough to establish his claim to lasting fame and gratitude in the hearts of his countrymen.

But although the first successful revolution laid the foundation for a free and united nation and for the development of the productive forces,



in other forms of active and passive resistance. The petty bourgeois abolitionist movement carried on militant propaganda and agitation for emancipation. And they were joined later by the Northern capitalists who could expand production and intensify the exploitation of the national resources only on the basis of wage labor and the overthrow of the slaveholders' power.

Like Washington, Abraham Lincoln represented the conservative rather than the more radical elements in the revolutionary coalition of his time. Unlike Washington, he was born poor and had to educate himself and make his own way in society. A product of the small-farming system on the frontier seething with democratic ideas, the slave system had no attraction for him. Like many a talented youth in that period he placed himself at the service of the rising capitalist class, becoming a lawyer for the Illinois Central Railroad.

He entered politics and proved to be a skillful speaker. His humble origins and frontier background enhanced his popularity among the masses; his carefully expressed political views won him a following among the capitalist politicians. He shone most brightly in the task of mediator and arbitrator between the right and left wings of the Republican Party which was formed in 1854 to bring together most of the opponents of the slaveholders.

The Crucial Emancipation Issue

While Lincoln opposed the extension of slavery to the western territories and worked on behalf of the capitalists to take the power out of the hands of the slaveholders' representatives in Washington, his stand on slavery was conciliatory to say the least. For one thing, he favored enforcing the fugitive slave law; for another, he preached the sanctity of the U.S. Constitution which permitted slavery. Even after his election to the presidency and the outbreak of the slaveholders' insurrection, he refused for two years to accede to the demand of the abolitionists that he emancipate the slaves.

His first concern was to maintain (and then regain) the unity of the country and safeguard the newly acquired political power of the capitalist class. He said again and again that he would do this any way he could—by preserving slavery if necessary—or by abolishing it. The long protracted and hard-fought Civil War convinced him that he had no alternative, and from Jan. 1, 1863 he was compelled to take the road of the abolitionists.

Again it was the masses who launched the fight against reaction.

The radical farmers and workers, who wanted access to the western lands coveted by the slaveholders, pressed for vigorous action against the slaveholding oligarchy, and where necessary fought them, arms in hand, long before the outbreak of the Civil War. The slaves, who wanted freedom, staged rebellions, ran away, organized underground railways and engaged

Yellow Gold



Labor Union lost a series of strikes which sealed the organization's doom.

The financial crisis of 1873 ruined existing unions and bankrupted small farmers wholesale. At the same time it increased trustification. The whole country was in the grip of monopolies—especially the powerful railroads.

THE GREENBACK PARTY

A call was sent out for a convention in Indianapolis in 1874 to form a new political organization of the people, by the people and for the people, to restrain the aggressions of combined capital upon rights and interests of the masses, to reduce taxation, correct abuses, and to purify all departments of government." The Greenback Party was born.

At first this party had little labor support. It was composed mainly of heavily-mortgaged farmers and monetary reformers who hoped to break the power of the bankers by the financial issue of "cheap" money or "greenbacks" not based on gold (as during the Civil War). In 1876 the new party nominated for president Peter Cooper, the philanthropist and labor reformer. He received over 85,000 votes.

The next year, 1877, the great railroad strikes were brutally smashed and the angry workers started streaming into the party whose name was changed at the next convention to the Greenback Labor Party.

HIGH WATER MARK

In the 1878 congressional elections, the party polled a million votes and elected 15 representatives to Congress. Six were from the East, six from the Middle West and three from the South. This was the high water mark of the Greenback movement. Soon afterwards rapid decline set in.

The downfall of the Greenback movement can be ascribed, in large measure, to its almost exclusive emphasis on money reform. When gold payments on greenbacks were resumed in 1879, without the drop in prices the Greenbackers were predicting many farmers lost faith in the greenback panacea. As grain and cotton prices went up the rural support of the movement began melting away. Moreover, the labor supporters of the movement found themselves at odds with the right wing. These labor men were

were fatal.

LABOR REFORM PARTY

At the 1886 convention of the National Labor Union, his motion for the formation of an independent political party based on the NLU was adopted. The new party was called the Labor Reform Party. It is interesting to note that Sylvius also advocated affiliation with the First International, founded by Marx.

One of the leaflets of the Labor Reform Party reads in part: "The working people of our nation, white and black, male and female, are sinking into a condition of serfdom. Even now a slavery exists in our land worse than ever existed under the old slave system."

The promising Labor Reform Party suffered a great blow in the untimely death of Sylvius in 1889. Sylvius might have been able to guide the young Labor Reform Party through the difficulties it now confronted. As soon as the labor party showed strength and promise, politicians and opportunists from the old parties began to flock into it. They entangled the party in alliances with the old parties and watered down its program. As the labor party began losing strength because of this, the leaders attempted to get support outside the ranks of labor by watering down the program still more. The results were fatal.

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labor movement could be ascribed, in large measure, to its almost exclusive emphasis on money reform. When gold payments on greenbacks were resumed in 1879, without the drop in prices the Greenbackers were predicting many farmers lost faith in the greenback panacea. As grain and cotton prices went up the rural support of the movement began melting away. Moreover, the labor supporters of the movement found themselves at odds with the right wing. These labor men were

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THE MILITANT ARMY

Third party movements were started in many places. Many won local victories. The farmers continued to play a leading role in attempting to build a new party to end the rule of Wall Street's Democratic-Republican combine.

The farmers found that despite periods of so-called good times, they never could win the game against the money power. A financial panic, a drop in the grain or cotton market would ruin them or throw them back into debt. The railroad trusts fantastically overcharged the farmers, and discriminated against small producers in favor of the big. In addition the banks gouged them with a mortgage and credit system that kept them continually in debt. The farmer did not deal directly with the buyer and was squeezed by commission merchants, grain elevator trusts, speculators, and a host of other parasites. What particularly angered the farmer was that if he borrowed money one year that was the equivalent of 100 bushels of wheat, a drop in prices the next year meant that he had to repay the debt by paying 200 bushels. Out of this situation arose the cry for money that would not change in value to the farmers' detriment. It was this condition that gave rise to the money reformers who demanded that silver as well as gold become the basis of currency. The program for the free coinage of silver and the regulation of monopolies became the main slogans of the new and growing Populist movement, as it came to be called.

THE MILITANT

A WEEKLY NEWSPAPER

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The Big Business Campaign Against the Co-op Movement

By A. Gilbert

In September, 1943, a closed meeting of big grain, oil, lumber and coal interests was held at the Morrison Hotel in Chicago. They set up an association at this meeting to stop the farmers and workers from engaging in "free enterprise"—through democratic cooperatives organized to give the farmer a better deal in the sale of his products, and to give the city worker a better deal in the purchase of his food, fuel and other necessities.

Not too surprisingly, they first named their organization the "League for Protection of Private Enterprise." They now call it the "National Tax Equality Association." Its leading figure, and until recently its president, is Ben McCabe, a big grain operator in the Minneapolis market. The organization pretends to be composed of small business fighting for survival against the competition of the co-operatives. It makes exaggerated claims to over a million members. Actually, the "small businessmen" are only fronts and stooges for the big operators.

Although their real purpose is to wipe out the small business man, they pose as being friendly to "legitimate co-ops." Just as the bosses are friendly to "legitimate unions"—unions that never ask for higher wages or strike. The NTEA uses propaganda methods that are no different from those of totalitarians anywhere. The strategy is to tell a customer to his sales or purchases made through the co-op. They represent over-charges which the co-op contracts to return at the end of the year. If corporations would make the same kind of rebates to their customers, instead of keeping all the profit for their non-productive stockholders and chair-warmers, they could avoid paying income taxes on this money just as the co-ops do. The law treats both the co-ops and corporations alike in this matter.

Co-op competition has not eliminated private business, as only a small percentage of all business in this country is done co-operatively.

The issue of taxes is not the real issue. It is only a smoke screen to confuse the real issue—total elimination of all co-ops, whether composed of farmers, auto workers or office clerks. This was proved when NTEA officials refused to accept an offer by the co-ops to settle the tax question.

The current drive against the co-operative movement represents an

about-face in the attitude of Big Business, and its government representatives. Up to 1943, it was generally customary to support farm co-ops as long as they did not get too big. It paid off in dollars and cents, as a happy and satisfied farmer could be exploited more profitably than an angry and impoverished farmer. But the co-op movement got out of hand. It spread from farmers to city workers. Credit unions and the government-sponsored farm credit structure started to compete with the loan sharks and banks. Co-ops became Big Business themselves and now compete with other business.

MINOR DIFFERENCE

Co-ops are taxed identically, with two other types of business—individual ownerships and partnerships. The difference in taxation between co-ops and corporations is that co-ops do not pay income taxes on profits retained as reserves, or paid out as dividends on stock (with only minor and unimportant exceptions); real estate taxes; personal property taxes; excise taxes; social security taxes; capital stock taxes; and many others.

EXPLAINS THE ABOUT-FACE

That explains the causes for the switch in attitude toward the co-ops. As late as Oct. 1946, the ultra-reactionary National Association of Manufacturers characterized co-ops as "legitimate forms of private enterprise." Today they see the necessity for "re-evaluating" their previous position, and have officially adopted the NTEA line. Representative Knutson of Minnesota, who is now busy with tax reductions for the rich, is one of the congressional figures spear-heading the anti-cooperative drive.

As the issue of "tax-dodging" is becoming somewhat threadbare, though by no means worn out, a new issue is being built up. This will be the issue of the "Americanism" of private profits as opposed to the "Communism" of the co-operatives. Red-baiting is the order of the day. It is being used to whittle down both ends of the workers' real wage. The Taft-Hartley Law uses it to destroy labor unions and keep wages low. The National Tax Equality Association uses it to destroy co-ops and keep living costs high.

Co-op competition has not eliminated private business, as only a small percentage of all business in this country is done co-operatively.

The issue of taxes is not the real issue. It is only a smoke screen to confuse the real issue—total elimination of all co-ops, whether composed of farmers, auto workers or office clerks. This was proved when NTEA officials refused to accept an offer by the co-ops to settle the tax question.

The current drive against the co-operative movement represents an

allowed.

Some opposition candidates did make the ballot in spite of the bureaucratic procedure and received good votes. The president, Griffith, although he was re-elected for the 14th straight time, was opposed for the first time by two candidates, one of whom received sizable support.

The set-up of the Los Angeles NAACP is one that lends itself to the maintenance of a conservative leadership. No opportunity for proposals of action from the membership or CIO and AFL were thus kept off the ballot.

Election procedure legally requires three members of the NAACP to nominate candidates in writing prior to the meeting. The nominating commission, which is established by the constitution, instead "reviewed" all candidates, rejecting those who did not meet with their approval—instead of coming in with a list of recommendations.

"This happened when I was blind with cataracts in both eyes," writes Connelly, "and could not read for four years, 1940-44. In September, 1944, I was operated on and got some glasses so I can now read." He read through twice "The Case for Socialism" and immediately started passing it around among his friends. "The comrades all proved real Socialists. I was glad to get it."

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60c for 6 months. Foreign: \$2
per year; \$1 for 6 months.

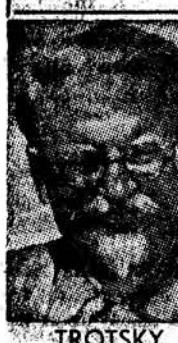
THE MILITANT
Published Weekly in the Interests of the Working People
mater Mar. 7, 1947, at the Post
Office at New York, N. Y.
under the act of Mar. 3, 1939.
116 University Pl., N. Y. 3, N. Y. (Phone: AL 4-9330)
FARRELL DOBBS, Editor

Vol. XI - No. 8

Bundles: \$5 or more
copies: 5¢ each in U.S. &
each in foreign countries.

Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent The Militant's policies. These are expressed in its editorials.

Monday, February 23, 1948



"Bolshevism brought an invaluable contribution to Marxism in its analysis of the imperialist epoch as an epoch of wars and revolutions; of bourgeois democracy in the era of decaying capitalism; of the correlation between the general strike and the insurrection; of the role of party, soviets and trade unions in the period of proletarian revolution; in its theory of the soviet state, of the economy of transition, of fascism and Bonapartism in the epoch of capitalist decline; finally in its analysis of the degeneration of the Bolshevik party itself and of the soviet state."

—Leon Trotsky, Stalinism and Bolshevism, 1937.



LENIN

For A National PAC Convention!

Last week The Militant pointed out editorially that 33 top bureaucrats of the CIO Executive Board are trying to dictate to the six million CIO members what their political policy is to be in 1948. The CIO members have never been asked, and have never had the chance to say who they want to support for President next November, and whether the CIO should break with the two corrupt old parties and help launch a new party.

Now we have Jack Kroll, national director of PAC, the CIO's political arm, saying that anybody in PAC who doesn't follow the Murray machine's pro-Truman policy or who supports Wallace, had better turn in his resignation.

Kroll said in Cleveland on Feb. 10 that "I made it clear in a letter to all PAC representatives that our group was bound to follow the rejection of Wallace's candidacy by the CIO Executive Board and suggested that those who desired to support the third party had best divorce themselves from the PAC."

By what right does Kroll presume to say what political policy the PAC members are to follow? Kroll isn't even an elected official of PAC. He was APPOINTED by Murray, after the death of Sidney Hillman. If anything, Kroll's pronouncement is even more brazen, arrogant and presumptuous than the CIO Executive Board's. Kroll can speak for no one but himself. Certainly no PAC member ever had a chance to vote on the

policy he expounds or, for that matter, to vote for Kroll as PAC director.

We hold no brief for the Stalinists, who are using the most undemocratic methods in lining up unions under their control behind Wallace. Up until recently they were loyal henchmen of Murray and helped him keep the CIO members politically-gagged and tied to Wall Street's two-party system. Now they are committing certain CIO unions to Wallace's campaign without a by-your-leave to the membership.

The fact remains, that so far as the-PAC membership is concerned, it has not voted for any specific political policy. And it's about time that the CIO-PAC members have the chance to say something about PAC policy. Before Kroll goes shooting off his mouth any more about what PAC policy is or isn't, and making threats against anyone who doesn't go along with the two-party system, let's hear what the PAC members think about political action in 1948.

Do the PAC members want Truman or Wallace or as The Militant advocates—a party of their own, a Labor Party running its own independent candidate? THAT CAN BE DETERMINED ONLY BY A NATIONAL PAC CONVENTION WITH RANK AND FILE REPRESENTATION FROM ALL THE LOCAL BODIES. Until such a convention is held and the question of PAC policy is democratically decided by the membership, nobody—Murray or Kroll or anyone else—has the right to speak of any political policy in the name of PAC.

The Kremlin's Counter-Blast

The Kremlin has replied in kind to the U. S. State Department's publication of captured Nazi documents revealing the inside details of the Stalin-Hitler Pact, including the secret deal to jointly carve up Eastern Europe.

Now the Soviet Information Bureau charges that American economy helped build up Hitler's war industry; that Britain and France appeased Hitler, agreed to his seizure of Czechoslovakia and so made war inevitable; that the Allied imperialists tried to turn Hitler against Russia before the Stalin-Hitler Pact; and that the British imperialists tried to negotiate a treacherous separate peace with Hitler behind the back of their Russian ally. To back its charges, the Kremlin has quoted from certain documents and promises to publish them.

We have no reason to doubt the Kremlin's charges against its wartime allies, just as we cannot deny the authenticity of the charges made by Washington. In both cases, we are merely receiving confirmation of historic facts whose general outline has long been known. Now that the thieves have fallen out, more of the truth is coming out.

This "war of documents" serves a useful purpose not intended by the Kremlin or the U. S. State Department. It sheds new light on the cynical lies they each told on behalf

of the other when they were in their wartime embrace.

For years, the U. S. government assiduously spread the propaganda that Stalin and Molotov made their alliance with Hitler merely to gain time for the "defense of democracy." Who does not remember the lying, State Department-inspired film, "Mission to Moscow"? In return, the Kremlin bureaucrats obligingly lauded the "anti-fascist, peace-loving democracies" of England, France and the United States.

Now they besmirch each other for the same purpose as they once praised each other—to whitewash their own crimes and gain credence for the lies they tell about themselves today and new ones they will tell tomorrow. Consider the wretched and stupid denial of the Stalinist charges issued by the British Foreign Office. Attlee, Cripps, Morrison, Bevin are trying to repudiate the very charges they themselves made unceasingly against the Chamberlain government of appeasing Hitler and inciting him to attack the Soviet Union.

By all means, let us have the documents—ALL THE DOCUMENTS. And not after the war, betrayals, crimes and mass murders. Let us have them now—so that the peoples of the whole world can see how the imperialist connivers and double-dealers are preparing a new war.

Seizures of Factories and Land Herald New Explosions in Italy

By Marcel Rogier

Since November Italy has been experiencing extraordinary times. The whole country seems suddenly seized with a collective fever. Observers compare the rising tension here with the cooler temperature in France on the other side of the Alps, and they explain this difference by the "southern temperament." The leading sections of the Italian Communist party attribute the difference between the French and Italian situations to the existence of the unity pact which still ties the CP with the SP in Italy.

But in reality it is something much more complex. One need only attend a workers' meeting, see a demonstration, or participate in a strike meeting, to become conscious of the essential difference in the atmosphere prevailing in the two countries.

The French working class has been dominated by the CP since the period before the "liberation."

It has permitted this bureaucratic leadership to impose a systematic policy of passivity and capitulation which lasted until 1947.

On a few occasions, during the first half of 1947, it broke away from that grip.

But the Stalinists, resting on their trusted worker cadres, which have been rooted in the working class for two decades, succeeded in regaining control of the mass movement.

OPPOSITION TENDENCIES

It is quite different in Italy. The Italian working class, once freed from the fascist dictatorship, has shown an admirable fighting spirit ever since 1943.

Although the masses followed the CP in large numbers, this party never exercised over them the absolute control which it did in France. The Stalinist Party itself, suddenly springing up after two decades of illegality, never possessed a fanatically "obedient" apparatus.

The rightist line which Togliatti followed for three years continually clashed with opposition tendencies of the rank and file. In Naples ("Communist and Socialist Movement of the Left," 1944-45), in Rome ("Communist Movement of Italy"), in Milan ("International Communist Party," with a Bordighist leaning). One opposition movement after the other appeared, often numbering thousands of members, and playing a leading role in events, as did the "Communist Movement of Italy." The spontaneous pressure of the masses has been rising slowly but surely since 1945.

At present, the CP is executing a left turn like its French sister party, and attempting to regain more direct control over the masses. Nevertheless the masses have been developing and maturing for three years. The working class is now more experienced, has had more opportunities for reviving its old revolutionary tradition, more possibilities for developing its sense of initiative and its critical spirit. All its admirable qualities are expressing themselves today in action. The Italian workers are fighting today in the vanguard of the European working class.

OCCUPATION OF FACTORIES

Several weeks ago the conservative newspapers in France, Switzerland and England were singing the praises of the "liberal" Italian finance minister, Signor Einaudi. By imposing rigorous restrictions on the allotment of credit to industry—no matter what financial straits they were in—and at the same time importing food products in great quantity, Einaudi hoped to check inflation and bring about a substantial drop in the cost of living.

He succeeded in causing a rather sudden drop in wholesale prices of

Gathered about the blanket-shrouded body of one of the workers killed in a mine explosion at Greenwood, Ark., grim-faced relatives and friends seek to identify the victim. The blast ripped through the gas-filled main shaft of the Sunshine coal mine, killing eight miners.

Federated Pictures

certain black market products (Olive oil, macaroni, etc.). But scarcely two months after these successes, the disastrous effects of this policy made themselves felt.

While the workers' cost of living scarcely dropped at all, industry suddenly began to suffocate. Factories closed down as the capitalists refused to operate at a loss. Great trusts were suddenly unable to pay their workers. Coming at a moment when Italy was undergoing a grave export crisis, the inflationary crisis threatened to bring about a huge increase in unemployment.

But the working class refused to submit any longer to the consequences of decaying capitalism. The workers of a metallurgical plant in Milan set the example by occupying the factory in the latter part of November, after three days of futile negotiations with the owners who wanted to shut down. While the leaders of the Italian CGT had been

engaged for weeks in interminable arguments over the question of the owners' demand for ending the restrictions on dismissals, the workers were following the example of the Milanese workers in one city after another.

WORKERS' CONTROL

The lengthening of the period of military service burst like a bombshell among the recruits of the class of '45. The majority of these men have already been under arms for more than a year. Protests broke out spontaneously. At Milan almost the entire garrison suddenly left the barracks, surrounded the prefecture and demanded their immediate release. It was not by accident that the government did not dare to send troops against the demonstrators!

As for the peasants' movement, it is concentrated, after the overwhelming victory of the general strike of the agricultural workers last September, in the regions of Venice, Apulia and Emilia. Committees of agricultural workers were set up in many places. In the provinces of Modena, these committees seized important sections of land, expelled the owners and operated it collectively.

These struggles which have flared up in every part of the country are harbingers of new explosions to come.

Detroit Presents Sat. Open Forums

Beginning this coming Saturday, Feb. 28, the Detroit Branch of the Socialist Workers Party will present an open forum each Saturday afternoon at 2:30. The discussions will be centered around the topic "Highlights of the American Labor Movement." The Detroit Branch Address is 6108 Linwood Ave., telephone Tyler 7-6267.

The men in the city of Brescia went further. While a great demonstration of workers who had been laid off was taking place throughout the city, a mass of workers who had not received their wages for two weeks joined the procession. The police tried to disperse the demonstration with tear bombs. The workers immediately tossed them back. Sirens started blowing and a general strike paralyzed the city.

Barreling themselves behind overturned trolley cars, the workers succeeded in occupying the entire center of the city under the direction of their "committee of agitation." Life quickly became normal.

These struggles which have flared up in every part of the country are harbingers of new explosions to come.

Key Role of Trotskyists in the Indo-Chinese Uprising

By Lucien

The heads of the capitalist and feudal parties in Indo-China—Cao-Daiists, Hoa-Haoists and Nationalists—were terror-stricken by the revolutionary wave that erupted throughout the country after the Japanese defeat was announced on Aug. 16, 1945. Three days later, in an effort to stave off the revolution, these political nobodies convoked their general assembly and decided to form a "united national front." The following day this capitalist-feudal bloc issued a joint manifesto inviting the people to demonstrate, under their leadership, in celebration of national independence on Aug. 21.

What is the nature of these three

sumed the role of political and police agent of the Japanese general staff.

The situation within this party changed after the Japanese coup of Mar. 9, 1945 which unseated the French capitalist government. While its leaders took an oath of loyalty to the Japanese emperor, its followers revolted.

The Hoa-Hao Party, another religious sect, containing over a million poor and middle class peasants, played an equally important role in support of the Japanese army. Hoa-Haoism was distinguished from Cao-Daiism in that it managed to secure an alliance between the urban workers and the agricultural proletariat, but on condition that the class struggle be completely rejected. Both these parties are instruments in the service of foreign imperialism and are savagely opposed to all social revolution.

The National Independence Party, avowed agent of the native capitalists, composed mainly of middle class intellectuals (teachers, engineers, journalists, lawyers and former functionaries of the French government), is completely barren of any theoretical and political principles. It is a group of rotten careerists and professional opportunists.

From 1939 to 1944 no revolutionary voice could be heard among the masses. Hundreds of militants from the two parties who fought under the banner of the Fourth International (the LaLeute group and the International Communist League) were deported, exiled, imprisoned and a good many disappeared in prisons and concentration camps.

But toward the end of 1944, the Fourth International movement renewed its activity. The ICL, reconstituted at Saigon in August 1944, at the beginning contained only about a score of members, five of whom were founding members of the Trotskyist movement with at least 12 years experience in revolutionary struggle. To these were added a number of experienced comrades sent by the section in the northern region (Bac-Bo).

Immediately after the Japanese coup of Mar. 9, 1945, the ICL issued a manifesto calling on the revolutionary masses of Saigon to prepare themselves for a fast-approaching

GIGANTIC DEMONSTRATION

On Aug. 21, at six in the morning, over 300,000 people of both sexes, assembled in columns on the Boulevard Norodom in Saigon. Streamers and placards flew over

this human ocean. The Cao-Daiists and Hoa-Haoist peasants formed a column of 100,000 with the monarchist flag at their head.

The ICL boldly unfurled the enormous banner of the Fourth International. The flag, proudly borne by an old Trotskyist worker, drew the attention of hundreds of thousands.

Revolutionary slogans were inscribed in giant letters on a series of placards and streamers which floated over our heads: "Down with imperialism! Long live the world revolution! Long live the Workers and Peasants Front! People's Committees everywhere! For the People's Assembly! Arm the people! Land to the peasants! Nationalize the factories under workers' control! For a Workers and Peasants Government!"

Even the peasants grouped separately under the supervision of reactionary leaders lent an attentive ear to our speeches on the national and peasant questions. No longer respecting the political discipline of their parties, they vehemently applauded every time the banner of the Fourth International passed by.

(This is the second part of an eye-witness account on the outbreak of the revolution in Indo-China. The third will be printed in next week's Militant.)

Men embraced joyously in the

Another Mine Tragedy



Events on the International Scene

By Paul G. Stevens

CAMPAIGN AGAINST TROTSKYISM IN EASTERN GERMANY

The weekly *Weltwoche* of Zurich, Switzerland reports on Jan. 23 that one of the main topics dealt with at the Institute of the Soviet Military Administration located in Koenigs-Wuestenhausen near Berlin is—Trotzkyism. Hundreds of Stalinist functionaries, trade union officials and returned prisoners of war from Russia are trained at this institute for high office in Soviet-occupied Eastern Germany. "Against America and Trotzky," an article signed Thomas Vandenbergh says, "a much fiercer struggle is waged than against the remnants of Fascism or militarism." Although Trotzkyism has been declared "dead" for years by the

Party press served with "gag order."

December: In West Bengal a new oppressive "Public Safety Act" calls forth militant demonstrations of students outside the Assembly. Tear gas, batons and bullets are poured into the demonstrators with 1 killed, 25 injured, 200 arrested. Police open fire on sit-down strikers at Birla Mill in New Delhi; on workers holding an indoor meeting at Jalpaiguri (Assam), and on peasants "under Communist influence" in Mandiguda with 5 killed and 6 injured.

The New Spark of Dec. 20 reports: 150,000 government employees strike in Madras; prominent Indian Trotzkyist and trade union leader, S. Amarnath arrested "preventively."

A united front of trade unions, student organizations, women's organizations, backed by a bloc of the parties of the left (there are several calling themselves Revolutionary socialist or Communist, Bolshevik, Republican Socialist, Forward Bloc, etc.), in which the Indian Trotzkyists participated prominently, organized huge demonstrations on

three successive days before the West Bengal Assembly in Calcutta, to obtain the revocation of a particularly vicious "Special Powers Ordinance."

The Socialist Party, in the past affiliated to the Indian National Congress, had called a one-day token strike against the arbitration machinery set up by the Congress leaders in the Bombay government.

Comrade Ajit Roy, recently returned from a long stay in England, continued his successful tour with a mass meeting attended by 15,000 in Madura, at which a Stalinist attempt to break up the meeting failed miserably with the workers driving off the CP hooligans.

STRIKE WAVE HITS "PROSPEROUS" BELGIUM
American loans have not been able to solve the problems of inflation there any more than anywhere else; the workers are forced to strike in order to get wage increases to meet rising costs.

The official leadership condemns the strikes: "Yet there is a strike wave, 'wild cat' though it is. The Cominform certainly plays a negligible role here compared to Italy and France. But the mass of the workers in Belgium, as in the rest of Europe, show that they are determined to fight and solve their problems in struggle. The strike wave in Belgium is thus a resounding refutation of all those who try to picture the fermenting class struggle in Europe as simply an emanation of the Kremlin."

Activities of 'Militant' Readers and the Socialist Workers Party
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Political Savvy—Who's Got It?

By John F. Petrone

Credit for the sturviest hack job of the week goes to Allan L. Swim, editor of the **CIO News**, for an article on Henry Wallace in that paper's Feb. 16 issue, entitled "Hank May Have Meant Well But—He Caused Trouble."

Swim is one of those bureaucrats who can hardly conceal their low opinion of the union members' intelligence. Discussing Wallace's record in three high government jobs, he says:

"In none of these posts did he distinguish himself as a champion of the things for which labor was fighting . . . he didn't roll up his sleeves and get into the fray when the chips were down and the going was tough. CIO officials who called on him for aid learned to regard him as a 'preaching liberal'—not as a 'practicing liberal.'"

Now, that happens to be the truth. But it will certainly come as news to those CIO members whose estimate of Wallace was formed on the basis of what they read about him in the **CIO News** in the past, and of what they were told in a thousand speeches by Philip Murray and all the little Murrys.

Do Swim and Murray think that the members of the CIO have forgotten what happened at the Democratic Party convention in 1944, when Murray, Hillman and the other PAC leaders almost busted a gut pleading for the renomination of that "preaching liberal"—Henry Wallace? Do they think the workers are going to follow the CIO leadership's political counsel today when they see what shameless lies they were told yesterday?

Continuing his attack on Wallace, Swim then makes another very damaging admission:

The Negro Struggle

A Glorious Page of U.S. History

By F. Forrest

Many pages of the Negro's history in America still remain unwritten. Not only has the capitalist historian kept the Negro's contribution to the development of America out of the school textbooks, but even "adult" books specifically devoted to the Negro problem, including the 1,483 pages of the pretentious *An American Dilemma*, have seen fit not to do serious research to fill those blank pages. The most glaring gap is that of the Negro's role in the Populist movement in the 1880's and 90's, and it is to that period that we wish to turn our readers' attention.

This is a particularly glorious page which explodes many of the stereotyped conceptions of the Negro. It is alleged, for instance, that it is impossible to organize the Negro into a cohesive movement, yet the Colored Farmers Alliance in that period numbered no less than one and one-quarter million members. Another myth blown to bits is that the Negro has followed the Republican Party from the days after the Civil War until 1932 when he changed to the "New Deal" Democratic Party. Actually, the Colored Farmers Alliance was a part of the Populist movement. Not only that, it was its left wing and in the forefront of the struggle for a third anti-capitalist, anti-landlord party, which then took the shape of the Peoples Party.

This party was later swallowed by capitalism, becoming a part of the Democratic Party, but in its time it was a revolutionary movement that united with the labor forces—the Knights of Labor was part of this movement—and threatened the power of the capitalists. It was strong enough then to elect governors and

congressmen. The infamous union of Northern capital with the Southern slaveocracy dates precisely from this threat to capitalist rule. To conquer the threat of Negro and white unity, the plantocracy united with the railroad interests and raised race discrimination to a principle. The Southern Bourbons to this day live on this.

There are some "liberals" who wish us to think that in the South, in any case, it is impossible to unite white and black. That myth too is branded as a lie by this page of American history. For the populist movement that united black and white swept the prejudice-ridden South immediately after the notorious doctrine of "white supremacy" had just won its first counter-revolutionary battle against Reconstruction.

Then the economic plight of the cotton picker, sharecropper and tenant farmer had welded them together as one, irrespective of color, against both the Southern oligarchy and Northern capital.

In Tom Watson, *Agrarian Rebel*, C. Van Woodward reports the following:

"For the first time in his political history, the Negro was not regarded as an incompetent ward of white supremacy, nor as a ward of military intervention, but as an integral part of Southern society, with a place in its economy. . . . Never before or since have the two races come so close together as they did during the Populist struggle."

What the CIO has done in the economic field, an independent Labor Party could accomplish in the political field. In the forging of that instrument the Negro will play a part that will bring his role in the Populist movement of the 90's to twentieth century dimensions.

Notes from the News

FRIENDSHIP CARAVAN—A caravan of 700 cars and trucks converged on Bakersfield, Calif., last week with food and clothing for the 1,100 striking members

of the AFL National Farm Labor Union who are continuing their 4-month strike against the Di Giorgi Farms Corporation. H. L. Mitchell, president of the Farm Union, said: "The 'Friendship Caravan' will be the most significant demonstration of the unity of organized industrial workers with agricultural labor ever to occur in the United States."

EAST-GERMAN GOVERNMENT—In reply to the action of Britain and the U. S. in western Germany, the Russian overlords set up their own ersatz German government in the Eastern Zone.

TRUE TO FORM—The U. S. Supreme Court, still upholding Jim Crow in education, last week for the second time rejected Ada Sipuel Fisher's request for admission to the lily-white Oklahoma Law School.

THE EFFECTS OF THE COMMODITY PRICE SLUMP

By John G. Wright

The February price break in the commodity markets signalled, in our opinion, the incipient crisis of American agriculture. It is still far too early to gauge the rate at which this crisis will unfold. But the prospect for the next few months is that, barring crop failures, agriculture will be compelled to absorb sharp cuts in its price structure.

Can such an "adjustment" in agricultural prices take place without affecting the existing price structure as a whole?

The present precarious balance of American industry is much more dependent upon agriculture than was ever the case in the past. Thus during the boom of the Twenties the equilibrium between industry and agriculture—worked out over a long number of years—rested on a ratio of 1 to 16. In other words, out of every 16 dollars of national income, the farmer received one dollar. The agricultural boom of recent years has sharply increased the farmer's share of the national income. According to Federal Reserve Board figures, he received in 1946 one dollar out of every ten. And last year, even more.

A NEW BALANCE

Industry has been operating on the basis of this new proportion, and any sudden shift immediately poses the problem of establishing a new balance. This cannot be done painlessly or in a brief space of time. Because farmers now dispose of a bigger share of the national income, every blow to farm income becomes more quickly translated into blows to other sectors of the home market, in the first instance, retail trade.

To illustrate, Gross farm income last year is estimated at 30 billion dollars. A reduction of 10% in crop prices would lop off at once several

hundred million dollars. A 20% slash would amount to more than the first year's projected "European Aid" program. Slashes of one-third and more would approximate last year's total foreign trade.

Thus, sizable declines in farm income imply not only profound repercussions in other sectors but drastic readjustments for industry and for the domestic market as a whole.

Weeks before the commodity price break, soft spots began to show up in retail trade reports. This "spotting" has recently become more marked, especially in rural areas.

PHONY ARGUMENTS

The argument that retail trade should profit from lower farm prices is obviously phony. Retail food prices, which have scarcely dropped at all, will tend to lag far behind any present or future declines in the commodity markets. As for the prices of manufactured goods, they were not much fall as fast or as much as do farm prices.

The argument that farmers will "well off" anyway, even with much lower prices for their crops also has little bearing here. Traditionally a free spender when his income is on the up-grade, the farmer is no less habituated to "do without" when the specter of lean days stares him in the face.

That is why bankers and industrialists are now keeping one eye cocked on weather reports while the other eye is glued on retail trade reports, especially from rural areas.

IN THE FACE OF DECLINING RETAIL TRADE

such an argument as the heavy backlog of orders in heavy industry is of little weight. During all booms, especially inflationary booms, imposing backlogs accumulate. But they tend to dissipate rather suddenly, as happened in 1920.

Perhaps the situation might not be so precarious if agriculture alone was involved. The whole

trouble is that industry, despite its outward signs of strength, has been fed too long by inflationary fires. This appears most strikingly if we view the economy from the standpoint of the physical volume of production during the last two years. Last year was supposed to be a peak year. But the truth is that over-all production last year was not much bigger than in the previous year, 1946.

Where we do find a whopping increase is in the dollar figures, in particular profits. This is admitted by such conservative bankers as the Guarantee Trust Company, who say in their Jan. 28 monthly letter:

"The year as a whole, however, witnessed no great increase in the physical volume of output. The rather striking gains that were reported in gross national products, income, expenditures and other dollar indices were due for the most part to the advances in prices."

In other words, virtually the same amount of goods which the country absorbed in 1946 on the basis of a gross national output of 204 billion dollars was dumped on the home market last year with a mark up to 235 billion dollars. The people were forced to buy the same goods as in 1946 while paying out 31 billion dollars more. This orgy of inflation placed an unbearable strain on the purchasing power of the masses.

LARGE SURPLUS

The resulting grave discrepancy between mass consumption and the inflated "gross national output" has been, of course, carried over into this year. The home market must absorb in 1948 at least as much as it did in 1947, if the economy is to continue operating at the same levels as before.

IN THE FACE OF DECLINING RETAIL TRADE

such an argument as the heavy backlog of orders in heavy industry is of little weight. During all booms, especially inflationary booms, imposing backlogs accumulate. But they tend to dissipate rather suddenly, as happened in 1920.

Perhaps the situation might not be so precarious if agriculture alone was involved. The whole

THE MILITANT

PAGE FOUR

NEW YORK, N. Y.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1948

Reuther Attacks Wage Program Of Five Flint Union Presidents

ALP Candidate Sweeps Election For Congress

(Continued from Page 1) depends largely on what he decides to do about this.

Drew Pearson reported on Feb. 13: "Henry Wallace has told friends that he would want his third party out of the running if the Democrats nominate Eisenhower, Douglas, Judge Thurman Arnold or any other Roosevelt Democrat."

Whatever happens in this respect—and the undemocratic nature of the Wallace movement deprives its members of the right to make the final decision—the ALP landslide in the Bronx has given a black eye not only to the two old parties but also to the Trumanite union bureaucrats who have been vying with each other in denunciations of Wallaces.

In New York State they went so far as to split the ALP over this issue. But their attempts to prop up the crumbling two-party system appear to be backfiring on them, rather than on Wallace. If the Bronx election is any indication, the bureaucrats' repudiation of Wallace may be transformed into a political repudiation of them by the union members.

DANGER TO UNIONS

The union leaders are treading on thin ice and may very well be sucked down into the icy waters of defeat along with Truman. That would be poetic justice, but unfortunately it also represents a terrible danger for the union movement as a whole.

That is why the union members must not permit their leaders to carry through the criminal policy of spending millions of the workers' hard-earned dollars in campaigning for Truman. That is why they must do everything in their power to force the holding of a national United Labor Conference, representing AFL, CIO, Railroad and Independent unions, to work out a new political policy for the working class and to launch an independent Labor Party.

The Bronx elections results are proof that the situation is ripe for a Labor Party. If a party supported by only a part of the unions can beat the two old parties, no limits at all can be placed on the prospects of a national Labor Party based on the whole union movement!

Newark Forum Will Discuss Wallace Role

Arthur Burch will speak on "Wallace and the Third Party" at a forum and social to be held by the Newark Socialist Workers Party at its hall, 423 Springfield Ave., Friday evening, Feb. 27, 8:30 P. M. Dancing and refreshments will follow the discussion.

Notes from the News

REACTIONARY MUSIC—The Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party charged Russia's three leading musicians, Shostakovich, Khachaturian and Prokofieff, with composing musical works that "smell strongly of the spirit of modern bourgeois music."

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EAST-GERMAN GOVERNMENT—In reply to the action of Britain and the U. S. in western Germany, the Russian overlords set up their own ersatz German government in the Eastern Zone.

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TRUE TO FORM—The U. S. Supreme Court, still upholding Jim Crow in education, last week for the second time rejected Ada Sipuel Fisher's request for admission to the lily-white Oklahoma Law School.

THE EFFECTS OF THE COMMODITY PRICE SLUMP

By John G. Wright

The February price break in the commodity markets signalled, in our opinion, the incipient crisis of American agriculture. It is still far too early to gauge the rate at which this crisis will unfold. But the prospect for the next few months is that, barring crop failures, agriculture will be compelled to absorb sharp cuts in its price structure.

Can such an "adjustment" in agricultural prices take place without affecting the existing price structure as a whole?

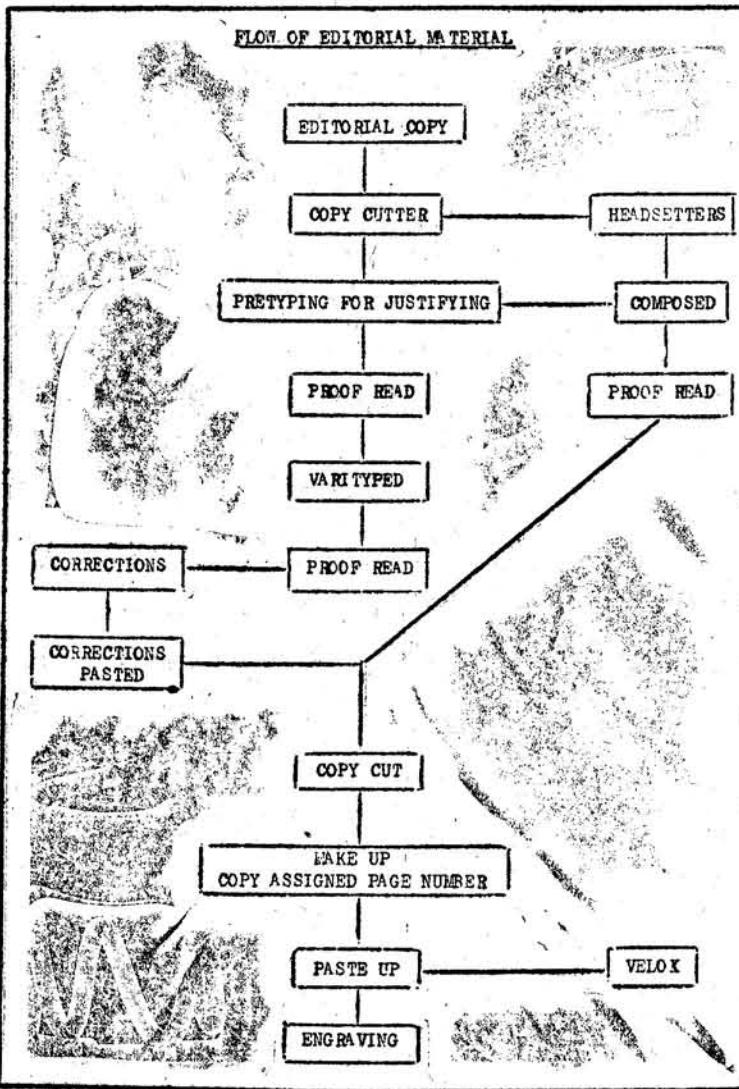
The present precarious balance of American industry is much more dependent upon agriculture than was ever the case in the past. Thus during the boom of the Twenties the equilibrium between industry and agriculture—worked out over a long number of years—rested on a ratio of 1 to 16. In other words, out of every 16 dollars of national income, the farmer received one dollar. The agricultural boom of recent years has sharply increased the farmer's share of the national income. According to Federal Reserve Board figures, he received in 1946 one dollar out of every ten. And last year, even more.

A NEW BALANCE

Industry has been operating on the basis of this new proportion, and any sudden shift immediately poses the problem of establishing a new balance. This cannot be done painlessly or in a brief space of time. Because farmers now dispose of a bigger share of the national income, every blow to farm income becomes more quickly translated into blows to other sectors of the home market, in the first instance, retail trade.

To illustrate, Gross farm income last year is estimated at 30 billion dollars. A reduction of 10% in crop prices would lop off at once several

Blueprint for Strikebreaking



This chart showing the flow of editorial material under the various process is from a 26-page plan prepared by New York publishers to fight the AFL International Typographical Union, when the printers contracts expire March 31. Almost all major papers in New York City have bought varitype machines in preparation for the coming fight. The blueprint is based on experiences of Chicago publishers who have fought the ITU since Nov. 24.

Federated Pictures

AFL Building Trades Workers Strike for Higher Wages in L.A.

By Pat Allen

On Feb. 2 the Los Angeles Building and Construction Trades Council placed the municipally owned Los Angeles Department of Water and Power on the official unfair list and swiftly and efficiently struck seven large building projects which are a part of the 200-million-dollar building program inaugurated by the city. The strike is 100% effective, as more than 1,000 construction workers left their jobs and many of the civil service employees respected the picket lines.

The building tradesmen have 16 grievances against the Department of Water and Power. For the past six months they have attempted to negotiate their grievances. On each and every occasion, Department and city officials have given a flat no to all proposals.

IMPORTANT BATTLE

The present strike is one of the most significant battles in the history of the L.A. labor movement. No union in the city is in a better position at this time to wage this fight than the building trades. They are well organized and are in a good strategic position to bring this boss-controlled city government to its knees.

It will be crystal clear to every union man in L.A. that the Merchants and Manufacturers Association run the city government without regard for already existing laws, or the welfare of workers on city payrolls; that the workers have no dependable representatives on the City Council, in the Mayor's office, or the Civil Service Commission for any other position of importance in the city government. The inescapable lesson will be learned during the progress of this fight that city offices have to be filled with union men.

Correction

Last week's article on the Army order continuing Jim Crow segregation of Negro soldiers contained an important typographical error. In one place it said: "... it will take a lot more changes in constitutions or laws to achieve genuine equality." It should have read as follows: "It will take a lot more than changes in constitutions or laws to achieve genuine equality."

PLAN TO CRUSH UNIONS

Lloyd Mashburn and Leo Vie, secretaries of the L.A. Building and Construction Trades Council issued the following statement. "We have taken every step possible to avoid a strike. But when the City Charter there was no other course for us but to authorize the strike in order to protect the jobs

FLINT, Feb. 9—A specially called meeting of officers, executive board members, committeemen and stewards of locals in Flint and Lansing heard Walter Reuther deal with wages and contract demands. The announced reason for the meeting was the drive for a union shop under the Taft-Hartley Act. Half of Reuther's speech, however, dealt with the demand for the 25-cent per hour wage increase advocated by locals in Flint and Detroit, the sliding scale of wages and the demand for a single contract termination date. Reuther singled out for criticism Jack Palmer, President of the Flint Chevrolet Local.

After Reuther's lengthy criticism of Palmer and the five Flint GM union presidents, Regional Director Chapman hurriedly terminated the meeting to prevent any questions or discussion.