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LABOR ACTION

DECEMBER 3, 1945 — A PAPER IN THE INTERESTS OF LABOR — ONE CENT

Their Fight Is Our Fight

BACK THE UAW TO VICTORY!

The strike of the UAW-CIO against General Motors, which began on November 21, continues without any prospect of an early settlement. The solidarity of the strikers and their determination to carry the fight to the auto barons stands out as a vivid reminder that the UAW is one union that the corporations cannot trifle with.

Ford's effort to aid the General Motors Corporation by laying off 40,000 men will not affect the spirit of the GM auto workers who have behind them their own powerful union as well as the most important sections of the labor movement.

To date, the GM Corporation has steadfastly refused to deal with the union. In his latest public statement, Walter Reuther, head of the GM division of the UAW, indicted the company on seven charges. Giving the "scoreboard against GM to date," Reuther said:

"First, GM refused to meet the union request for public negotiations; second, GM refused to discuss its ability to pay a thirty per cent wage increase; third, GM refused to agree to allow conciliators to participate in the negotiations; fourth, GM refused to arbitrate; fifth, GM refused to agree to further meetings with the union on the wage dispute; sixth, Wilson has refused to participate in public discussions of the controversy; and, seventh, Wilson finally has rebuked the Secretary of Labor."

The final charge against Wilson has interest only in that the charge is made that the head of the corporation had agreed to meet with the Secretary of Labor in an effort to reach a basis for negotiations with the union. Wilson promptly denied that he had made any such agreement. But, in addition to its refusal to carry out collective bargaining with the union, the company has withdrawn its insulting ten per cent offer in reply to the union demand for a thirty per cent wage increase.

Thus, at this stage of the struggle, there is no point of contact between the UAW and the GM corporation. There is no doubt that the fight of the auto workers will go on. It must go on to bring to its knees one of the most powerful corporations in the world, which has been fattening itself for years on the sweat and toil of the auto workers.

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BY MARTIN HARVEY

DETROIT, Nov. 25 — Over 175,000 General Motors workers walked out at 11:00 a.m. on November 21 in the greatest strike conducted by the UAW-CIO since the organization of the union in the 1930's. The strike was voted by a national conference of delegates from GM locals in Detroit when the huge corporation, swollen with war profits, refused to reply on time to a union offer to arbitrate the issues in dispute.

The union offer to arbitrate the thirty per cent wage increase demand was coupled with the following provisions: that the arbitrators, one from the union, one from the company and one chosen by these two, be given access to company books and records, that any wage increase be awarded on the basis of no price increases, and that the arbitrators be empowered to recommend price decreases if the full thirty per cent wage increase were granted and profits were still high enough to permit price decreases.

The company rejected this offer two days after the union deadline and, in addition, withdrew its two previous offers. These were for a forty-five hour week at straight time with slight increases in pay, and for a flat ten per cent wage increase. Both were understood to be based on price increases to make consumers pay for the wage boost.

Labor Solidarity Demonstrated

The GM strike, which finds the largest and most powerful corpora-

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GM Rejects Union's Offer Of Arbitration

By DAVID COOLIDGE

After its success in pushing General Motors Corporation into a corner, throwing obstacles in the path of the anti-labor capitalist press and placing itself in a favorable tactical position before the "public," the UAW, as a final conciliatory step, made a proposal to General Motors for "voluntary arbitration" of the strike dispute. The union made the offer of arbitration just one day before the strike took place, setting as the deadline for the corporation's reply, 4:00 p.m., Tuesday, November 20. The only reply received from the company was an acknowledgment of the UAW arbitration proposal and the statement that its reply would be ready Friday, November 24. The company having failed to reply by the time set by the union, the strike went into effect the morning of Wednesday, November 21.

The UAW arbitration letter included the following:

1. The parties submit this dispute to a three-man board of arbitration composed of one representative of management (the corporation), one representative of labor and a chairman selected by the other two members.

2. The board of arbitration shall have full access to the books, records and other documents of both parties which, in the judgment of the board, are essential to an intelligent and factual solution of the dispute.

3. The board of arbitration shall make a final and binding decision of this dispute.... We challenge you to match our action in relinquishing use of the strike by laying the arithmetic of this wage dispute before a board of arbitration.... We prefer the conference table and the hearing room to the picket line. Do you?

It can be assumed that the UAW offer of arbitration, as set forth above, was only one more carefully planned step by the union to place the corporation on the defensive, to expose the unwillingness of GM to bargain collectively and to win the support of the "public." Furthermore, it may be assumed that the UAW leaders were convinced that the reply of GM would be a blank refusal to submit the dispute to arbitration. Even if this is granted, however, we express disagreement with the union leadership on the question of arbitration in the specific and concrete conditions which existed at the time the offer was made. In the first place, the negotiations had been in progress, in one way or another, for a three-month period. The union said in its letter to GM that "for the past three months the UAW-CIO has been attempting to carry out collective bargaining in the constructive spirit called for by President Truman. The General Motors Corporation has persisted in treating its bargaining with the union as meaningless and futile, or, in the words of President Truman

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W. P. Cites Need to Fight Smith

LOS ANGELES, Nov. 25—This Sunday afternoon Gerald L. K. Smith held his third open rally at the Polytechnic High School—the same place where twice now mass picket lines of 20,000 have encircled his meetings.

Today there was no picket line, no demonstration, no counter mass meeting. The Mobilization for Democracy as well as the CIO played dead. Fuehrer Smith has waited for them to back down. He now boasts that he has won.

Smith took full advantage of the retreat at his meeting. Both his speech and that of his sponsor, Willis "Ham 'n' Egg" Allen, chortled that "the picketers have been whipped." Allen gloated: "We wanted to wear these pickets out. They've been worn out. To be frank with you, that's why Mr. Smith stayed in California—to wear his enemies out."

Where a few weeks ago William Bidner, newly appointed executive director of the Mobilization, breathed fire with the promise that Smith would not be allowed to hold fascist

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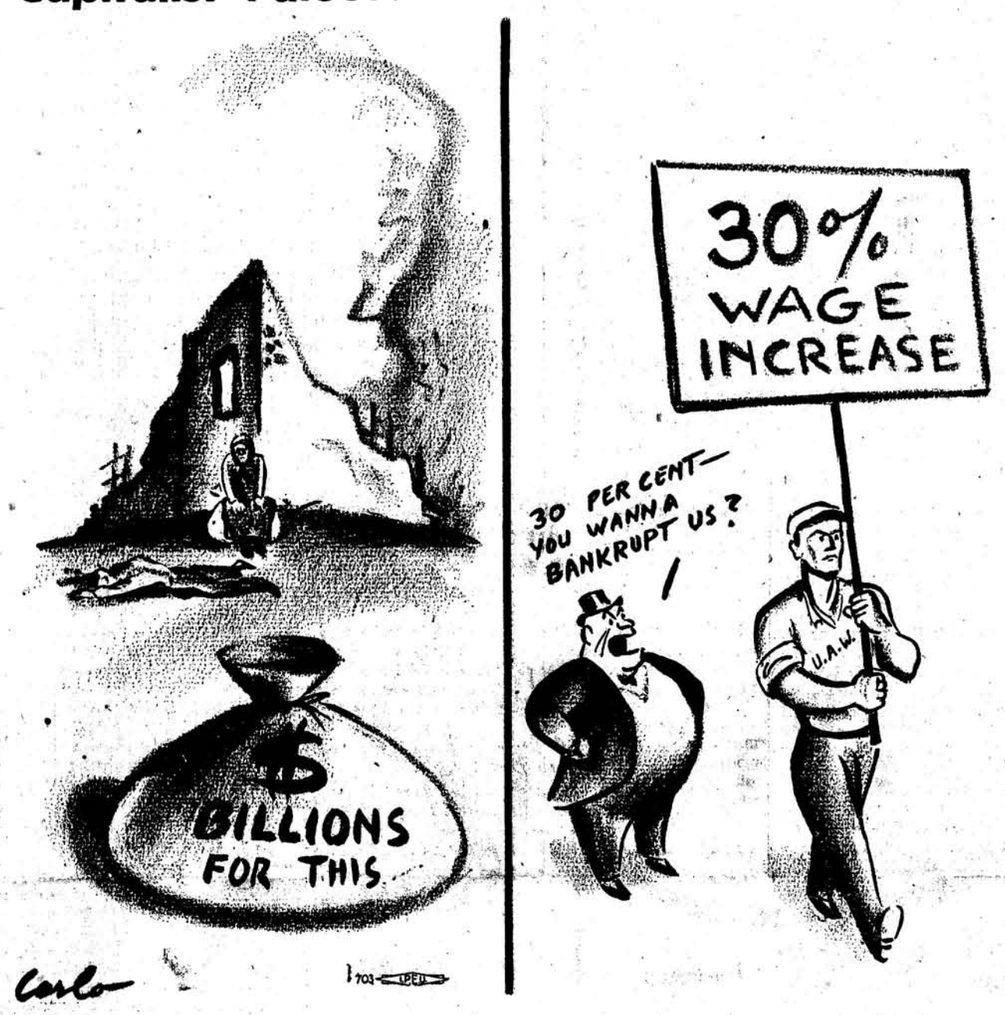
Capitalist Values!



McCormick Vote Raises Vital Issue

CHICAGO—By a vote of 3,100 to 1,760 the workers of the McCormick plant of International Harvester rejected the United Auto Workers-CIO in an NLRB election on November 6 and retained instead the Communist (Stalinist) Party dominated Farm Equipment Workers-CIO. This is a serious blow to the plans of the UAW to absorb the tiny FE union, which has rival jurisdiction.

The UAW had planned to win at McCormick's first, where the strongest opposition to the Stalinist régime exists, and then topple the other FE plants one by one. This strategy had been adopted after the Stalinist FE international leadership had refused to carry out an order of the national CIO Executive Board to merge with the UAW and because large numbers of workers were clamoring for the UAW to step in as a means of throwing off the petty union dictatorship of the CP and the lack of decent wages and working conditions. But the dilatory tactics of the "generals" of the UAW membership drive, which dragged out for eight months, wore down the McCormick opposition under the ceaseless pounding of the Stalinist hatchetmen.

All logic and reason pointed in favor of the UAW, since it is forty times larger than the FE and more capable of getting a 30 per cent raise from the company. Compared to the FE, the UAW is a democratic organization with annual conventions and free elections of stewards. The FE, on the other hand, has expelled stewards and members without provocation and the majority of the McCormick stewards had been appointed against the will of their constituents. The election should have been a pushover for the UAW, yet the workers turned it down by a 2-1 majority.

WHY THE UAW DEFEAT

The UAW Executive Board and the Chicago regional director, Joseph Matson, are to blame for the defeat. They allowed the Stalinists in FE to outdo them on strategy and publicity at every turn. Here are some of the causes of the UAW defeat:

1. When the Stalinists captured office by a narrow margin in McCormick Local 108 last December, they rapidly built their machine throughout the plant under the guidance of the FE national office and by means of frequent beatings of oppositionists. **They bureaucratically removed the majority of elected stewards and appointed their own followers and taught them how to entrench them-**

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GM Can't Break Union Say Linden Auto Strikers

By SUSAN GREEN

LINDEN, N. J., Nov. 27—To this reporter's question: Do you think the company is out to break the union? strikers and members of the strike committee gathered at headquarters of Local 595, UAW-CIO, in this city, shouted a resounding Yes! To the question: Can they do it? the rafters rang with a thunderous NO! One striker put it, **"They have as much chance as that snowball in hell."** A member of the strike committee thinks unionism is as indestructible as the worker himself. He said:

"I can remember when my father was a union man striking for things the workers demanded. He remembered his father doing so. I expect my son and his son to do so. There will always be more good union men."

While the Linden General Motors plant is the largest in the east, the UAW men on strike number only some five hundred. This is due to the fact that the plant is in process of reconversion from airplane production to auto production. At the height of war production 14,000 working men and women were turning out 300 planes of the Wildcat type monthly. When reconversion is finished some 5,500 workers will slide Buicks, Pontiacs and Oldsmobiles off the production lines. What about those 8,500 workers for whom there will no longer be jobs at the Linden division of GM? Six thousand women workers have been fired, along with the other 2,500 deemed dispensable.

The UAW - CIO men have been joined by about a thousand AFL ironworkers, tinsmiths and others engaged in reconverting the machinery, and the plant is shut tight as a drum. The pickets have permitted entry only for protection. Office workers have stayed away. The union has offered to pass some fifty office workers to allow the payrolls to be made up, since the company owes the workers substantial back pay. However, the company declines to unbend, even to the extent of arranging to pay workers their earned wages.

At each of the plant gates groups of pickets were on the job under their strike captains. Strike buttons bore the slogan: **"30% or Fight"** Placards much in evidence read: **"We fought the Axis—now we fight GM for a living wage," "Mussolini, Tojo, Hitler learned we were tough—soon GM will say they had enough." "You supported us in Pacific, Africa, Europe—back us now against GM."** It is noteworthy that the strikers put GM, economically speaking, in the same category as the Axis and their thoroughly discredited dictators. The last slogan applies to the veterans of World War II on strike who joined the picket line.

In one section of the plant yard about three hundred brand new trucks squatted on their motionless wheels. These are en route from Baltimore to New York to be loaded on ships and exported — evidence of GM's bid for post-war foreign trade. The trucks will keep the pickets company until the strike is won.

The strike committee and the men are confident of themselves and of the strength of their case. Asked if there was a chance of accepting the company's high-handed terms for reopening negotiations, namely, that the union recede from the demand for a thirty per cent wage increase to be paid out of profits, not higher prices, the chairman of the strike committee, John Connolly, said: **"Emphatically no! We believe that we are running this strike, not the company."**

It was the opinion of the men at union headquarters that they have plenty of evidence in their own plant that GM wouldn't mind breaking the union. They said that real negotiations never took place with the Linden division of GM because the company kept stalling on trivial issues. Before the present controversy, GM's anti-union tactics were shown in their refusal to have grievances settled through shop committees, thus letting the accumulation of grievances bring the workers to their wits' end. One member of the strike committee attributed such provocations by the company to the no - strike pledge.

ATTITUDE OF WORKERS

The men well understand why the Big Three auto companies now come out in open combat for a show-down. The men know that industry is in a most favorable position, due to tax rebates, to great reserves from war profits, to the opportunity to buy government machinery and plants for a song, etc. The workers are in no such position and definitely cannot expect government money and privileges, as can the companies. The most the workers get is unemployment doles—and not even that when they are on strike. As to the backlog the workers have accumulated out of their "fabulous" war wages, Chairman Connolly referred to the survey

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Vet Learns the Facts And Joins the Strike

By JANE POWELL

In the November 19 issue of the New Republic, Ralph G. Martin, former combat correspondent for Stars and Stripes and Yank, writes of an interview with Joe Wadrzyk, combat veteran and General Motors striker.

"I got my first pay check this week," says Joe, "and you know what I got? I got $39.90, and by the time they sliced off the dough for taxes and insurance, I had thirty-four bucks left to take home. Can you imagine that? Thirty-four bucks a week, only fourteen more than when I started as a messenger boy for General Motors twenty-two years ago. Isn't that a laugh? It's like starting all over again now."

When Joe was an infantry rifleman he almost succumbed to the violent anti-strike feelings of most of his fellow soldiers: "...It seemed like every time I picked up a paper or turned on a radio, there was another strike going on. It just seemed like too much, as if ninety per cent of the workers in America were out on strike."

It wasn't until Joe was released from a German prison camp that he learned the other side of the picture. When his $400 in back pay disappeared like magic under inflated prices, when he found that his old buddies who had worked during the war at General Motors hadn't got filthy rich, and when he found that there was no "gravy" job waiting for him, only a breakneck piecework job at ten cents an hour less than the one he had before—then he knew what was really going on back home.

The lifelong dream of a trip to California, a home of their own, even a new suit of clothes for Joe, are unthinkable luxuries now for Joe and his wife.

Joe Wadrzyk understands clearly when he asks for more money that General Motors can well afford to grant the thirty per cent increase without raising the cost of automobiles, and still make more money than they ever made before.

"Now get this straight," says Joe Wadrzyk, striker. "I don't want to go out on strike. I'm not going to make any money while I'm striking. But if the company won't give us any more money, then the strike is the only weapon we've got left to use.

"I'm not asking for the moon," says Joe. "I just want to make a decent living."

U. S. Labor Swinging Into Action

By JACK WILSON

The post - war strike wave began last week to assume mammoth proportions as labor everywhere mobilized to stop the reductions in take-home pay and the union-busting campaign of the Wall Street corporations.

Besides the 350,000 auto workers involved in the General Motors strike, 75,000 unionists at the Montgomery Ward stores were on a one - week strike to protest the violations of collective bargaining by the arch-labor-baiter, Sewell Avery.

Over 250,000 telephone workers were ordered to stand by this week for a possible nation-wide strike unless union demands were met.

On Wednesday, 640,000 steel workers of 766 steel companies took a strike vote under the provisions of the Smith-Connally Act to enforce their demands for a $2.00-a-day increase to make up take-home pay reductions.

Also, on Wednesday, 16,000 workers of the Western Electric Company plants in New York and New Jersey took a strike vote. This is just part of the national campaign by the CIO Electrical Workers, in line with the CIO policy of mobilizing the strength of the workers in the shops to back the CIO leaders in their negotiations with the company.

In the rubber industry, efforts of Firestone and Goodyear to block strike votes by refusing to obey the provisions of the Smith-Connally law are being smashed and the rubber workers are taking strike votes anyhow.

Over 4,000 Railway Express Agency workers voted to strike beginning on Saturday in New York. This also involves over 7,500 truck drivers in big cities, who are expected to join.

The entire power and gas service of New Jersey might be shut off this week as 3,000 maintenance workers warned the Public Service Electric & Gas Co. to meet demands or face the consequences of a strike already approved by vote.

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE LABOR FRONT

The GM Strike and "Free Enterprise"

By EMANUEL GARRETT

The world's largest union has struck one of the largest corporations in the world. Under any circumstances this would make the strike of the United Automobile Workers against General Motors Corporation a strike of unusual significance. But there is more involved in this strike than the simple matter of size. The auto workers' strike has a significance rare in the history of the labor movement in this country, or any country, because in it basic issues of principle between capital and labor are presented on a new and fundamental level.

There have been big, important, vital strikes before. Many of them. Our history as a labor movement is full of them. Strikes established labor's right to union organization. Strikes established the eight-hour day. Strikes have raised the wage level. The auto workers themselves played a heroic part in the great sit-down strikes of 1936 which defended the principle of industrial unionism and resulted in major union gains. The sit-down strikes, the mine strikes, other strikes, were each of them milestones in our history of struggle. The difference between these strikes and the present strike is that labor has here for the first time, through a union that speaks for 1,000,000 workers in a basic industry, clearly and specifically challenged the system of private enterprise.

There is, thus, more at stake in this strike than a demand for a thirty per cent wage increase. For, to effectuate its demand for a wage increase, the union has demanded the right to participate in the determination of prices and the distribution of profits. And the adamant stand of the company executives derives not only from their unwillingness to pay the increase demanded, but from their decision to make this a defense of their system of free enterprise. Let us, then, examine both sides of the argument, see who is right, who is wrong.

GM is "Right"...

In what sense, though? In the sense that they are defending the interests of the employers, the capitalist system of free enterprise For, that is how they are putting the fundamental issue.

On the surface is may appear that they, and other spokesmen of big business, are engaged in what is no more than a union-smashing campaign. That is, to be sure, involved. They would like to smash the unions today, as always. More so. But they know they can't do it. Behind their promotion of anti-labor legislation, behind their circulation of ponderous documents that "unions are against the public interest" lies this fundamental issue.

They are right in defending the system of free enterprise. It is THEIR system; they thrive on it. THEY know that the logical consequence of labor interference in price and profit regulation is the end of capitalist free enterprise. THEY know it leads to workers' control of production and that workers' control of production leads to a workers' government.

The corporation views as intolerable the union's demand that it open the books. It tells the union to "abandon your attempt to negotiate wages on the basis of past profits, assumed future profits and our selling prices." Under the system of free enterprise the employers are free to exploit labor, are free to foist their own monopolistic prices on what they so tenderly call the "public," and are generally free to gouge as much profit as they can out of labor. And all of this makes sense if that system serves your interests, provides you with wealth and luxury.

Free enterprise is no longer entirely free when labor can look at the books and tell the boss: **"You're making too much profit; you're soaking the public too much for this product; you're able to pay a thirty per cent increase and still make undeserved profits."**

General Motors is right As a capitalist corporation it defends capitalist principles. But...

Reuther is Right...

That is to say, he is right from the point of the working class and—give this close attention—from the point of view of society as a whole.

How has the union argued for its wage increase? Show us the books and we—WE, the men and women who actually produce General Motors products—we will decide your (the corporation's) ability to pay wages, the extent of your profits, the necessity, if one exists, of an increase in prices. In other words, the union is telling the boss that it wants a voice in the operation of the industry. And what does that amount to but the undermining of the system of free enterprise.

Reuther, as leader of the auto workers in this struggle, has already marshalled incontrovertible statistical facts on the company's ability to pay the wage increase without an increase in prices. The capitalist press has either had to grudgingly admit the validity of the union's position, the impressiveness of the union's figures or (in greatest concern over THEIR system of free enterprise) shied away from their publication.

In effect, in making these figures known, in demanding that GM open the books so that the accuracy of these figures may or may not be established, the union is proposing to dictate wage, price and profit policy. And, we repeat, it is right in doing so. The men and women who actually operate the machines, turn out the product and produce the profit are most legitimately concerned with what the bosses make out of the workers' sweat.

Further, it is the union that, in making these demands, displays itself as representing the general interest of the people. GM may say all it wants to about the interests of a mythical public. In GM terminology the "public" equals those who profit from capitalistic big business.

GM defends its right to soak the consumer any price it chooses to fix on its products. The union, however, says NO! In doing so it reveals labor as the champion not only of its working class interests, but of the entire people (excluding only profiteers, coupon clippers, editors of the capitalist press and others of their ilk whose welfare is exclusively linked with the system of exploitation called free enterprise). Thus, Reuther is right—right for auto workers, right for labor as a whole right for the mass of people generally—just as GM is right for the capitalist class. We get, however, to other aspects of this discussion, and we find that...

GM is Wrong...

Wrong from the point of view of which we have just spoken. The system for which it speaks is against the interest of the vast majority of the people, is outlived, is bankrupt, stands in the way of progress.

Free enterprise is a fetter on production. That's a phase out of any socialist text. It organizes production exclusively with the purpose of providing the owners with the highest possible profit. At one time, historically, this corresponded with the progressive development of the productive machine, its ability to produce limitless quantities of articles for the satisfaction of human wants.

But the productive machine has now reached a level where it is impeded by free enterprise. It has the capacity to produce plenty for all. The class interest of the employers, the exploiters, denies this plenty to all. Instead of plenty there is want, wages do not cover the necessities of life, there is unemployment.

When GM circulates a statement by a Chicago professor (who at least knows on which side his bread is buttered) which reads: "For my part, I simply cannot conceive of any tolerable enduring order in which there exists widespread organization of workers along occupational, industrial functional lines," it is merely saying that the organization of labor is a threat to ITS system of order. When it speaks of the "public interest" it is speaking of its OWN interest.

Are workers part of the "public"? Are farmers? Are others whose interests are best served by the struggle of labor? There is no such thing as a "public" interest. How can corporation executives and working men possibly have the same interest? Does it mean the mass of people? Then it is clearly obvious, on the basis of the argument that we have already made, that the GM stand is wrong. There is more to it, however, than that, for...

Reuther is Wrong...

He is wrong in so far as he does not fully appreciate the far-reaching consequences of his own logic. There is one logical development of the union position, namely, to advance toward the nationalization of industry **under workers' control.** Because the union's demands as they stand now are fundamentally incompatible with a system of free enterprise, it is impossible to reconcile them with or to confine them within the framework of this bankrupt system.

In making this criticism, we are not in any way belittling the position of the Auto Workers Union. Reuther and the auto workers have already immeasurably raised the level, the political and economic and social level, of labor's struggle in the United States. They have performed a tremendous service to the labor movement, elevating the quality of its struggle to encouragingly new heights.

That is precisely why it would be wrong to go no further. The issue has been raised. It cannot be left in mid-air, nor will it permit itself to be left in mid-air because of the very potency of its logic.

(Continued on page 3)

LEFT JABS By SHAW

The recent news dispatch about the one week's strike at Montgomery Ward reminds us that we haven't yet told our readers what the A.P. dispatch said. Seems that when the Army took over Ward's and ran it, they managed to end up with an all-time high insofar as profits were concerned! If you will tear off the top of Sewell Avery's head and mail it to us with a stamped self-addressed envelope, we'll be glad to send you the confidential information that the workers got none of that extra moolah.

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ARMY SCRAPS WARPLANES COSTING MILLIONS

But we can't afford to increase unemployment insurance to $25 a week.

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It is impossible to send food or medicine to anti-Nazis in Germany. The State Dept. has consistently refused to open its German blockade . . . Food is a weapon as potent as guns, and politically-conscious workers will, if necessary, be starved out of their political consciousness.

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Here are official government figures on how much it cost to kill one person in various wars:

Russo-Turkish War of 1928—
$1000 per person killed
French-Mexican War of 1866—
$1100 per person killed
Russo-Jap War of 1904—
$3200 per person killed
U. S. Civil War—
$4,400 per person killed
Russo-Turk War of 1876—
$5,300 per person killed
War of 1812—
$6,000 per person killed
Franco-Prussian War
$6,700 per person killed
Boer War (1889)—
$7,200 per person killed
World War I—
$21,000 per person killed
World War II—
$50,000 per person killed

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KISS-OF-DEATH DEPARTMENT

As we have had occasion to remark before, the nearer you get to the borders of the USSR, the smaller the vote received by the Communist parties. In the recent Hungarian elections, the Communists were snowed under by the conservative Small Landholders party. This vote should be interpreted not as an endorsement of the policies of the conservative party but rather as a protest against domination by a foreign imperialism. Best proof of this is that the Socialists, who hoped to hop on the patronage bandwagon by presenting a combined Socialist-Communist ticket got snowed under almost as badly.

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At the opening session of the intergovernmental Committee of Refugees, the Russian delegate branded those Polish, Baltic and Yugoslav displaced persons who refuse to return to their home countries as "Fascists fleeing from just punishment as war criminals." Reminds me of the oldie about the bird who happened to notice great numbers of rabbits fleeing across the border from Russia. Swooping down low, he hailed one of the rabbits who had paused to draw a few anguished breaths of air: "Hey, what are all you rabbits running from Russia for?" "Well," replied the rabbit, "there's a big drive on against all giraffes for being disrupters."

"What are you running for? You're not a giraffe!"

"I know that," replied the rabbit wearily, "but does the G.P.U. know it?"

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TONGUE-IN-CHEEK DEPT.

Queen Wilhelmina speaking on the East Indies:

"I am greatly concerned about recent events in Java. I follow the fate of the innumerable children, women and men who have been robbed, who are in danger of their lives and still not liberated from the threat of the confused masses. . . . I deeply regret the sorrows that will inevitably have been inflicted upon the population of Java before order and tranquillity have been restored."

Flee to the hills, men! Her shovel might break any minute.

Back the UAW to Victory--

(Continued from page 1)

tion in the country lined up against the militant Auto Workers Union, was expected to be a long and bitter one. The whole auto industry, which GM dominates, is lined up behind the corporation. Statements issued by the Automobile Manufacturers Association indicated that the corporations were planning an industry-wide lockout to fight the union. George Romney, director of the AMA, provided the public excuse for this action by claiming that GM supplies every other auto manufacturer with essential parts and that a prolonged GM shutdown would result in an industry-wide tieup. This claim was characterized by UAW leaders as "baloney." The few parts that GM supplies for most companies could easily be supplied by other parts manufacturers.

This united front of capital against the workers, however, is countered by a most remarkable demonstration of workers' solidarity. Reports of the walkout from Detroit, Flint and other cities with GM plants indicate unanimous enthusiasm for the strike of GM workers. In Flint, GM stronghold, workers marched out of the Buick plant in a body singing Solidarity Forever. This was repeated in other GM plants over the country. The workers know that this will be a long, tough fight but they have the utmost confidence in their own strength and determination.

Rallying to the support of the GM strikers, the whole UAW is pledged to back them to the hilt, with support from other CIO unions assured. In addition the AFL and other unions have announced their cooperation. The AFL Building Trades Council in Detroit reported that all its members were called off jobs in struck GM plants. The AFL Teamsters Union is stopping all truck deliveries or shipments to and from struck plants. Completing the picture, the Railroad Brotherhoods have stopped all railroad transportation to GM plants.

Office workers are still being allowed to enter the plants to complete the final payroll. Within a week, however, the shutdown will be complete with the exception of certain maintenance workers who will be permitted to maintain necessary facilities.

Open the Books!

Of special significance in this strike are two demands being made by the union in addition to the thirty per cent wage increase. These are the demands that the company open its books to the union, and the rejection of any wage increases based on price increases. Both of these demands are related to questions that go far beyond the immediate strike issues.

The demand that the company open its books to the workers is being presented for the first time in a major industry. It is based on the fact that the corporation rejects every demand for a wage increase with the cry that it can't afford it. This is an obvious lie even on the basis of published profit and tax figures. But the real extent of the company's profits is hidden by all sorts of financial maneuvers and tricky bookkeeping. The company is afraid that knowledge of their swollen profits will spur the workers on to demanding the greater share that they so justly deserve. Further, the company executives are not over-anxious to expose their monopoly prices and shady financial deals to the view of stockholders and public. Hence their adamant rejection of this demand. The corporation reply to the union proposal, presented by Vice-President Walter Reuther, was a blunt and vigorous, "Hell, no!"

This answer cannot be accepted by the labor movement. If the corporations cannot afford to pay higher wages, let them prove it. Let them show their books to representatives of the workers who have as great a stake in the profit as anyone—**they produced it!** These aren't competitive business secrets that are being kept from the people. It is common knowledge that the huge monopolistic corporations share their "secrets" with each other, share them in order to be able to unite more effectively against the working class and the public as a whole.

If they can afford higher wages, the workers must know. If, because of years of mismanagement, they can't, the workers must know that too. That would be additional proof that the capitalists cannot manage industry for the good of all and their "right" to control industry comes into conflict with the needs and interests of the working class and society as a whole. If this is so, then the conflict between the "right" of a tiny minority to monopolize industry and the right of the vast majority which depends on industry, either as workers or consumers, must be resolved by taking from the capitalists their "right" and placing it in the hands of the working class through workers' control of production.

BUSINESS MANAGER'S

PRESS ACTION

BY PAUL BERN

One man picketing the lonely outpost of a railroad siding prevented gigantic locomotives from pulling their long box cars into General Motors plants for the purpose of making deliveries. This little lonely picket halting a powerful steam locomotive represents the UNITED STRENGTH OF LABOR. Labor which represents the vast majority of the people is solidly behind the General Motors strikers. Not only is labor supporting this progressive action of the automobile workers but all the little people who recognize this battle as their battle against the profit bloated, price chiseling monopolists.

But what about the newspapers? Who supports the General Motors strikers as wholeheartedly as the labor press? And who among the entire labor press presents the issues of clearly as our own LABOR ACTION?

General Motors Workers!

This is the paper you should, you must read every week. LABOR ACTION—THE PAPER IN THE INTERESTS OF LABOR. We wholeheartedly support your fight, we explain it, we draw its political lessons. The main political lesson is that just as capital is on the other side of your picket line in this strike, it is on the other side of the picket line in politics. YOU MUST RECEIVE LABOR ACTION EVERY WEEK.

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Workers Party Members and All Our Friends

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Linden Strike--

(Continued from page 1)

made by the United Steel Workers-CIO showing that the average savings in cash and bonds is $300 per family.

All the men were most anxious to talk and answer questions put by this reporter. Asked if they thought the company has the right to keep its books secret, the answer came back: **"Not when a company becomes as large as GM. Then its business is everybody's business—the workers' and everybody else's."** Ford's demand for "company security" was treated with grand derision. **"We have no security from Ford,"** they said. **"What about a guaranteed annual wage? What about reinstating workers' seniority? What about eliminating physical examinations that put workers of forty on the scrap heap?"**

The workers in the Linden division have suffered at least a thirty per cent cut in take-home pay due to reduction in working time to forty hours, due to down-grading of skilled workers, and for similar reasons.

Asked whether the families of strikers are ready for a long fight, Chairman Connolly replied that they were. He said that with take-home pay now averaging $32 and $33 a week, their wives are right behind the men, joining the picket line and giving full support. He also said that the town of Linden was very sympathetic to the strikers, judging by contributions. The people realize that unless the workers make enough to buy a decent standard of living, the town as a whole cannot be prosperous.

The strike committee was very emphatic on the point of taking care of every striker. None shall want for food and shelter. At union headquarters the culinary department was replete with coffee, sandwiches, soup and stew. At the plant gates were little cupboards for coffee and soup to keep the men on four-hour picket shifts satisfied.

Everything, in short, points to the ability and determination of the men out in Linden to fight the good fight to a good finish. It is up to all organized and unorganized labor, and to all who realize that labor is fighting for a better life for all of us, to give unstinted evidence of solidarity—and material support!

Issues in the FE Vote--

(Continued from page 1)

selves. Their strength and morale ascended constantly, not by any victories for the workers over the company, but by victories over the UAW forces.

2. The CP leadership of FE at the same time tied the hands of the UAW by appealing to Philip Murray and the national CIO, who prevailed upon the UAW to suspend its drive in favor of negotiations for merger at the top. **The drive had opened last February with good prospects of sweeping to victory before the Stalinists had time to consolidate their forces. Months of fruitless negotiations, however, left the UAW supporters in the plant hanging in mid-air and demoralized them.** The FE did not give an inch in negotiations, with the result that the UAW had to pick up where it left off months earlier, but now in a much poorer position.

3. The UAW refused to set up a unified, full-time command for the drive. Matson did not set up a full-time organizer until election day was near. The organization of the drive was almost entirely in the hands of the local caucus, and the handicapped part-time workers could not match the full-time professional CP strategists. Most of the UAW publicity was mimeographed by workers after working hours. On the other hand, the FE publicity was designed to obscure the real issues by slander, identifying the UAW "raiders" with the defeated officers in the last elections, who lyingly were termed thieves and Negro-baiters.

4. **The principal weakness of the UAW was its confusion on the main issue at hand—the meaning of Stalinism. While the CP-FEers did not hesitate to label all kinds of opponents as "Trotskyists" (even the most conservative Catholic elements), the anti-Stalinist caucus always avoided calling publicly the FE leadership what it really is. After the fining and expulsion of twenty-two members last spring, the caucus steering committee determined to launch a campaign to expose the Stalinist agents and their purge methods. But the UAW vetoed this policy, declaring it to be "red-baiting," and concentrated on a purely abstract presentation of "strong, democratic" unionism in opposition to the FE.**

●

Since the recent election victory for them, the Stalinist FE leadership is trying to whip up its majority into further attacks on the UAW minority, including an attempt to run oppositionists out of the plants physically. So far they have not succeeded in their scurrilous and slanderous misuse of the race issue in the local union to accomplish that end.

On the other hand, the defeated UAW men in the shop put forward a leaflet announcing their desire for unity with the FE workers, now that the majority has spoken out decisively for the FE. They demand, however, that the FE leaders change their ways and reinstate all workers expelled for UAW activity, rescind the fines on others, renounce the physical violence against UAW supporters during the drive, and hold elections for stewards on a democratic basis.

In the coming struggle to wrest a 30 per cent wage increase for the Harvester workers from the company, the local is going to need a maximum of militant workers acting in a democratic spirit together. The Stalinists give every indication at present of deliberately promoting further division within the union in order to perpetuate their rule.

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NEXT WEEK IN LABOR ACTION:

NEWS FROM THE GM FRONT
Reports from LA Correspondents

●

THE MEANING OF PEARL HARBOR
By Walter Weiss

●

THE GM WAGE THEORIES
By Ernest Lund

●

ATOMIC ENERGY: FOR BARBARISM OR SOCIALISM
PART III *By the Editors of Labor Action*

A PAPER IN THE INTERESTS OF LABOR
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Editorials

The GM Strike and Politics

Observe the way in which the classes in this country react to the strike of the UAW-CIO and you will get a clearer picture of the real meaning of the struggle of the auto workers. The demands made by the UAW have raised this strike to a level never before witnessed in American labor struggles, for in their essence these demands are not merely economic, but social and political, conflicting with the fundamental interests of the capitalist ruling class and its government. This will become increasingly clear as time goes on.

Although the union has done a good job of presenting its case to the "public," the fact remains that only labor and the "small" people stand on the side of the UAW. Arrayed against it is the whole capitalist class, its press and its government. Those workers who looked toward a friendly administration in Washington to come to the union's assistance are disappointed now. The President has adopted a hands-off policy, which means in essence that he stands with capital against labor in this fight.

This is not strange. In a capitalist society, government is capitalist. That is, it stands on the side of the profit system. Its job is to maintain an equilibrium in society; and since it is a government which stands upon the foundation of capitalist society it cannot but act, in the last analysis, in the interests of this system of exploitation. To be impartial in a struggle between capitalist and labor means to take the side of capital, because, as against the profiteers and its means of propaganda and political rule, labor has only the strength of its numbers.

So the Truman Administration does nothing save plead with both sides to come to an agreement.

But in Congress, which is only another segment of government, the legislators are hard at work preparing drastic anti-labor bills. Congress wants to "crack down" on labor and the Military Affairs Committee of the House has already approved a bill to accomplish that. This bill would:

1. Take away for a year the collective bargaining rights of any union striking in violation of no-strike agreements.
2. Make unions liable for civil damages.
3. Ban unions from making political contributions in a national primary, election or convention.
4. Repeal the section of the War Labor Disputes Act which requires the government to conduct strike votes if properly notified.

A few days ago, the House Appropriations Committee voted to cancel funds for the taking of strike votes as provided for in the Smith-Connally Bill. All this, however, is only the beginning of a new wave of anti-labor legislation.

Where are all the political "friends" of labor in this situation? Where are the senators and representatives whom labor, through the PAC, helped to elect to office? What are they saying about this great struggle of the auto workers? What voices do they lend to the fight of labor? As a matter of fact, where is the PAC in this fight, and what lessons has it drawn from the cowardly silence of the men it put into office? And the President himself, whom the PAC endorsed as "labor's candidate," how has he conducted himself? The very posing of these questions gives the answer.

Labor engaged in political activity in the last elections. But this political activity, under the direction of the labor leaders, was misguided and self-defeating. The PAC merely acted as an agency of capitalist politics, as a vote-getting machine to elect professional capitalist politicians of both capitalist parties. After the lessons of the war years and the immediate post-war period, the PAC, that is to say, the labor leaders who direct the political activity of the union movement, are silent about the most important fight of labor.

They are silent about the fight of the UAW, but they are not inactive. No, they are preparing a new campaign for the 1946 elections which will repeat the 1944 model. The PAC is once more preparing the mobilization of labor to support a new gang of political aspirants of capital for office.

The crying need of labor in this country, however, is a political party of its own, a Labor Party. The UAW strike has emphasized how essential it is for the workers to have their own political organization to supplement the economic struggle. A political party of labor would be of incalculable assistance to the unions in their battles. But that is not the only or main reason for the necessity of a political party of labor.

In the last analysis, the realization of labor's just demands, the improvement of the lot of the worker, the achievement of genuine peace, freedom and security, depend upon political power of labor and political rule by the workers. Every one of the demands made by the UAW in this fight shows clearly why a Labor Party and a workers' government are necessary.

The fight against economic class collaboration must be extended to the field of politics!

CAPITALIST BARBARISM IN EUROPE

PART II

By STEPHEN PARKER

Poland is in many respects worse off than any other country. The country is occupied by the Russian army and its government is the servile creature of the Kremlin.

CONDITIONS IN POLAND

Here are some of the conditions in Poland as described by Gladwin Hill, the Times' correspondent in Warsaw. On housing:

"According to the Ministry of Social Welfare 800,000 are now living in holes in the ground and dugouts and with continuing repatriations the number is likely to reach 1,000,000, nearly one-twentieth of Poland's population."

On food:

"Each town is an island surrounded by an agricultural belt off which it is living; if there is a surplus of potatoes in one place and a shortage somewhere else there are scant means of adjusting the disparity. The belt around Warsaw, which formerly fed its 1,500,000, is being stripped uneconomically to support one-third that number. This at the height of the harvest season; when winter comes and supplies are smaller and transport more difficult, the situation will be severe."

On UNRRA:

"Almost 25 per cent of the goods imported by UNRRA have been foodstuffs, but the total imports for six months are only $25,000,000 worth, or about a dollar's worth for every person in Poland. It can be seen that this is only a drop in the bucket."

Perhaps what is most frightening of all is the state of health in Poland. Ten thousand Poles are dying each month of tuberculosis alone. The rate of incidence is no less than ten per cent; in some places it is as high as eighty per cent.

A further menace to health are the rats. Hill reports:

"Warsaw health authorities estimate that at least 100,000 bodies are still in the ruins, breeding rats, and there are facilities to remove only 20 per cent of the rats a day."

At least the rats have benefitted from this war.

THE BALKANS AND THE EAST

Poland and the Balkan countries, with the exception of Greece, are in the Russian sphere of influence, and they are occupied by the Russian armies. There is such misery everywhere that it is impossible to state which country is worse off. The Balkan countries are Rumania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia.

Conditions in Rumania are so bad, according to the Times' correspondent in Bucharest, that even the Russians, who have been extracting heavy reparations from Rumania, promised to help the food situation by granting 300,000 tons of grain. Even if this is forthcoming, says the reporter, **"Rumania would lack 200,000 metric tons of grain to meet her minimum requirements—and that minimum was nearly a third below normal consumption. The latest official estimate is that the harvest is even worse than estimated and shortages below the minimum needed to prevent suffering will be 400,000 tons of grain."**

The same conditions exist in Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Greece. Everywhere famine is the prospect for the winter. There is insufficient clothing and fuel, transportation and communications are disorganized and puppet governments serve the interests of foreign imperialisms.

Austria and Hungary are also suffering acutely. Things have reached such a state that the Times' correspondent can report almost as a matter of fact, after describing conditions there:

"These facts make it inevitable that many will die in Vienna this winter. Local health officials expect the death rate, now 5,000 a month, to double by Christmas. If there is an epidemic of influenza, as many doctors fear, the situation may get out of hand, since months of undernourishment coupled with insufficient heating and insufficient fuel, have left the Viennese in no condition to withstand disease."

ELSEWHERE IN EUROPE

Italy, France, Belgium, Norway and the Scandinavian countries to a greater or lesser degree, reveal the same situation. It make no difference whether they are vanquished or victor or even neutral for most of the plain people of Europe. Their prospects for the future are all bitter.

An entire continental economy has fallen apart. The war destroyed many of its resources. The occupation exhausts what is left. The spirits of the peoples are crushed. Everywhere there is a haunting fear of the next world war, the atomic war, that may destroy the little that is left.

The German people face the worst winter in all modern times. Freed from the yoke of Hitlerism for the first time in twelve years, they now find themselves under the yoke of the Allies. Germany is today divided into four zones, each administered by another victorious power. It is estimated that there will not even be a minimum requirement of 1500 calories for each person this winter. There is no fuel. And what may be even still worse, the people are thoroughly demoralized politically.

This is the Europe that capitalist decay has brought about. The victorious British-American imperialists are desperately striving to restore the old capitalist forms in the countries they occupy. Their main rival in Europe is the Russian bureaucratic-collectivist structure which seeks to expand its power and influence.

Russia may nationalize some of the land in the countries that it occupies, but it takes away the machinery and livestock which makes the land productive. Everywhere the Russian army and political battalions have gone there is bitterness and disillusionment.

Where Britain and the United States rule there is also bitterness and disillusionment.

ONLY ONE HOPE REMAINS

This then is the fruit of the greatest war in the history of mankind. One gang of bestial rulers has been replaced by another. The great promises of the Atlantic Charter and the Four Freedoms held out to the peoples of Europe were broken long ago. The "liberation of the peoples" which was promised in the early years of the war has given way to a new enslavement.

The peoples of the Continent are being crushed by the inability of decaying capitalism to build a peaceful, free and prosperous life. The peoples of Europe are paying with their lives for the lustful desires of the ruling classes in the victor nations.

But all is not hopeless. There is a way out of this barbarism bred by capitalism, of the totalitarianism spread by Stalinism: that is the free socialist society which would bring true peace, freedom and security for all the peoples of Europe. This is the cause and the only hope to which all who labor in order to live, whether in Europe, Asia or America, must devote themselves. Otherwise, everything is lost.

DEMOBILIZATION

Who Is Served by Occupation Army?

By JOE LEONARD

The only foundation on which a lasting peace can be built is that of a union of free nations based on the rule of the people, the workers; not the rule of big business behind the backs of the people, but the rule of the vast majority in their own interests. These interests are not served by wars, nor by depressions, nor by unemployment, nor by armies of occupation.

For example, Hitler's armies of occupation in Europe, even in Denmark, where he tried to be "nice," and Tojo's armies of occupation in China and the South Sea islands succeeded, not in establishing peace and order, but in establishing perpetual guerrilla warfare, assassinations, sabotage, underground organizations, fanatic nationalism. The American army of occupation will have no better luck, especially this coming winter when hunger and cold pervade the man-made deserts that once were nations.

WHAT THEY PROMISED

The Atlantic Charter promised world-wide democracy, but everyone can see today that the signers wrote it only as a piece of wartime propaganda. In Greece, Italy, France, Belgium, Holland, Indonesia, Indo-China—the people of each of these countries are demanding that the Allies withdraw their troops. In Korea there have been demonstrations because the Americans are keeping the Japanese oppressors in office, as puppets for OUR oppression. There have been armed outbreaks against our "liberation" already and more will be forthcoming.

Some people think that our armies of occupation are primarily concerned with eliminating the fascist elements and thus making easier the establishment of a democratic government. The facts, even the few the papers have printed, all indicate just the opposite. The Italians had to take the punishment of Mussolini and the top fascists into their own hands. The Greeks had succeeded in driving out the collaborators and the monarchists, but the British shot and bombed the Greeks and restored the militarists to power. In Indo-China and Java the British even use Japanese troops to shoot down the people who are insisting on national independence.

In the conquered countries, Germany and Japan, it is pretty much the same story. The people demonstrated and demanded Tojo's death while American doctors were giving him transfusions. The Japanese big shots and the American politicians agree on the Emperor: he is the last force holding the Japanese from revolt. Now there is another force; the American army of occupation has undertaken the job that the Japanese government was no longer able to do. In Germany, General Patton let the cat out of the bag when he said he had no particular interest in de-nazifying Germany. Patton was not talking only for himself; he was just talking too much. Every week the newspapers carry new reports of "former" Nazis kept in office by the American military government while the German population protests.

SAVING CIVILIZATION!

The American press has been engaged in a campaign to smear the entire populations of Germany and Japan. Let us not be fooled. The first victims of the dictatorships were the mass working class organizations, and right up to the surrenders the rulers were engaged in shooting and imprisoning "dissident elements." The reason that those countries remained dictatorships is obvious: the rulers could not, and knew they could not, rely on the democratic actions of the people to keep them in power.

The American army of occupation's REAL purpose is to keep the rest of the world, or as much of it as we can "liberate," poor. Will smashing the German machinery help raise the standard of living in poverty-stricken Europe? Will sabotaging the Japanese economy accomplish anything but hatred for ourselves and unemployment for them? Machines and mass production are the secret of modern civilization. Anyone who proposes to smash thousands of factories is not talking of building a peaceful world but of going back to the old slave world. In fact, the Russians are actually enslaving thousands of Germans in Russia. In America, the "hard peace" politicians are the same "hard" minds that paid farmers to plow under their crops while millions were undernourished. Now these great minds are concerned with preventing anyone from underselling American machine-made goods (in which case they could BUY food). We are not building peace, we are building famine. We are preparing the next war.

The hard peace should be reserved for the German bosses—the Nazis, the Prussian generals and THEIR bosses, the German industrialists. And for the Japanese bosses, the militarists and industrialists.

WHO WILL EDUCATE?

The politicians in Washington tell us we are going to educate the Germans and Japs. The army of occupation is the club the "teachers" have to have. But what are we going to teach them? How to run the country without unemployment? We can't answer that one ourselves! How to keep all the factories producing goods for the people? How to avoid inflation? How to get rid of race prejudice? How to eliminate poverty and slums?

The question isn't only HOW we're going to teach them, or WHAT we're going to teach them, but WHO is going to teach them?

With the present policies of the capitalist government in Washington, our armies of occupation today are not instruments of peace and progress, but of smoldering hatred and reaction.

WITHDRAW THE TROOPS!
END THE DRAFT!
RELEASE THE SERVICEMEN!

UAW vs. "Free Enterprise"--

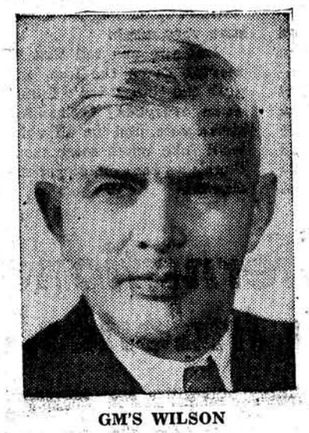
(Continued from page 2)

The time is ripe for the next step, and Reuther, as spokesman for this huge and powerful body of workers, is in a position to raise the issue for solution in all its intrinsic lucidity.

As we have already said, GM knows that the existence of free enterprise is at stake. Victory for the auto workers does not automatically abolish the capitalist system. It would, however, represent a major triumph over that system. GM knows as much. It is wrong for labor not to equally understand the implications. We have to understand plainly that our future depends upon how we come to grips with free enterprise, and upon how we declare...

What is Right?...

And let us summarize what is right. Industry, in this case through General Motors, has declared itself incapable of providing a decent wage and acceptable standard of living for the working class. Against the needs of the working class, and of the vast majority of the people, it pits its "right" to wrest unlimited and uncontrolled profits out of its private ownership of industry.



GM'S WILSON

The monopolists have admitted that they cannot operate industry in the interest of society as a whole. The Workers Party, in a statement issued some weeks ago, at the beginning of the strike wave, called this a challenge, a challenge that the auto workers, who have **implicitly** recognized the situation for what it is, must take up completely.

"This is a challenge. It should not remain an empty phrase. If it is to mean something, the organized labor movement must say:

" 'The monopolists stand in the way of the life interests of the masses of the people. They are confessed bankrupts. We demand the nationalization of big industry [and General Motors is big industry] under workers' control.' "

Labor is fully capable of operating industry—and operating it in the interest of society! This is no extravagant claim. Labor has the industrial know-how. And its interests are one with society as a whole. The auto workers have demonstrated this in their price control demand. They have also demonstrated, in the argument they have made on the financial condition of the company and in their earlier recommendations on organizing production that labor lacks nothing in the knowledge necessary to operate industry.

The bloodsuckers who call themselves "captains of industry" have confessed their bankruptcy. The auto workers have already, in their demands, taken steps that LEAD, in our opinion, to freeing production from the restrictive, bankrupt hands of these monopolists, and putting it in the hands of labor. We know that labor is capable of operating industry. From that it follows that industry must be nationalized UNDER WORKERS' CONTROL.

Nationalization will not be given us on demand. The "captains of industry" will not readily yield their system of monopolistic enterprise (for that is what so-called "free" enterprise really means). Nor will the government give it to us, for it is the government of the industrialists. It is THEIR government. It is based on this system, which breeds insecurity and want on one side, and incredible wealth and indulgence on the other.

Just as the issue of higher wages raises the issue of the entire system of capitalist enterprise, so too it raises the issue of the kind of government we want. They will not give us nationalization of industry under OUR, the workers', control. But a workers' government will! That, then, must be the ultimate goal of our struggle: from demanding a decent wage standard — to genuine year-around security—to nationalization of industry under workers' control—to a workers' government.

Yes, brothers of the union movement, that is socialism! But that is RIGHT. That is how we can give DECISIVE meaning to our struggle. And in conclusion let us quote again from our Workers Party statement:

WALTER REUTHER

"All that socialism sets itself to do is to achieve plenty for all, peace, brotherhood, security, freedom. As socialists, we of the Workers Party march hand in hand with the workers in every step they take toward improving and strengthening their economic, social and political position. That is, we are unreservedly with the labor movement and with the just demands that it is making."

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL
for November
contains
CHARACTER OF RUSSIAN REVOLUTION
By Leon Trotsky
•
JAPAN'S DAYS OF DEFEAT
By William Braden
•
SOCIALISM OR ATOMIZATION
By Willem De Voorter

Take Note!

We are binding a number of volumes of CHALLENGE OF YOUTH, the organ of the Young People's Socialist League (4th International). With the exception of three missing issues, this includes the entire series from 1938-41.

Since the supply is limited, those who desire a bound volume should order in advance. The price is $5.00.

These volumes are invaluable as a history of the development of the Socialist Trotskyist youth movement in this country. After the few volumes which we are now binding are sold out, this material will no longer be available.

The Camera Eye

By LIBBIE COLEMAN

"The Southerner," a United Artists Production.

A better example of the sterility of the movie industry can hardly be found than the recent saccharine portrayal of the sharecropper in "The Southerner." After paying its respects to the monopoly cotton interests and to the theoretical home-spun philosophy of all's well that ends well of the mass of movie-goers, Hollywood has produced a picture that can neither enlighten nor offend anyone, except for a few hotheads like myself, perhaps.

Here, then, is the story of a handsome, hard-working farmer who loves the land and his family, and wins through to success after the sundry adversities of weather, pellagra, a villainous neighbor and his half-wit nephew. It is a press agent's dream of a sure-fire saga of America at its best, a movie to make one cry a little, laugh a lot and sigh for the days of one's youth, or some such similar rot.

The plot deals with the tribulations of the hero, Zachary Scott, as he essays the life of a tenant farmer, reclaiming unworked bottom land for the plantation owner in an attempt to become an independent producer. His main obstacle to this achievement is an embittered neighbor, J. Carrol Naish, whose attempt to gain similar independence cost him his wife and daughter, his land and his mule.

Now that he has finally gained a measure of success, he tries to bring to his neighbor the suffering he endured, both by petty meanness, and by such a cruelty as ruining the vegetable garden which is to save the life of Scott's child from the ravages of pellagra.

Wind, weather and flood also add to the trials of Scott, who is aided throughout by his stalwart wife, Betty Field, and his querulous but good-hearted mother, played by Beulah Bondi. The latter is a watered-down version of Grandpa Joad in feminine gender, and a travesty on eccentric grandmothers in general.

The moral of all this seems to be that right does win out over might, and mind over matter, but what is the right and what the might is in this case carefully concealed. Furthermore, the picture, perhaps due to the French background of its director, Jean Renoir, seems inspired by a fallacious conception of the tenant farmer as a representative of American peasantry, which if it exists at all in this country, does definitely not exist in the South.

Certainly there is material for a movie, and a great one, in the lives of Southern sharecroppers. But such a movie would have to go honestly into the crippling effects of the one crop system and plantation economy on the farm population, as well as the ignorance, disease and prejudice that consequently disable so much of the South. But such a movie will not be forthcoming until Hollywood reaches a degree of independence from Southern moneyed interests which it has not previously shown, and probably will not show in the foreseeable future.

ATOMIC ENERGY: for Barbarism or Socialism?

A SERIES BY THE EDITORS OF LABOR ACTION

PART II

The magnitude of destruction caused by the new bomb will usher in tremendous changes in the "science of warfare." Hiroshima and Nagasaki were only a preview of the next world war. The disintegration of these two cities merely indicated the destructive possibilities of the bomb. We have the opinions of the scientists to support this view.

Dr. Arthur H. Compton, Nobel Prize physicist and one of those who worked on the bomb, wrote in the New York Mirror that "science sees no reason to doubt atomic weapons will be made that, related to the present atomic bomb, will be as the blockbuster to the blunderbuss."

In an interview printed in the New York Times of October 13, 400 Los Alamos scientists who worked on the bomb project declared:

"Before many years they (other countries than the U. S., Britain and Canada) may also be manufacturing bombs—bombs which may be tens, hundreds or even thousands of times more powerful than those which caused such devastation at Hiroshima and Nagasaki."

What would such bombs mean concretely? The scientists have testified before the U. S. Senate that with robot atomic bombing, forty cities the size of New York and tens of millions of lives can be wiped out in a few minutes!

Some scientists put it this way: if another war takes place, atomic warfare will mean the death of one out of every four persons in the country.

THE NEW TYPE OF WARFARE

This type of warfare will not even require pilots. All the new devices in the technique of mass slaughter developed in this war—rocket planes, rocket bombs, radar, radio-directed weapons — can be applied to the queen of them all, the atomic bomb. The "science of warfare" has become so elevated that every city in the world can be razed. Capitalist civilization has at last produced a weapon that can truly destroy itself.

The bomb has antiquated the present concepts of warfare by mass armies, air fleets and navies. It has revolutionized warfare in a more fundamental way than did the invention of gunpowder. The mass army in the next war, if it miraculously succeeded in surviving an atomic war, could only be used to occupy wastelands, devastated areas with millions of dead, so great is the disintegrating force of the atom bomb.

Even more significant than this is the fact that there is no defense to the atom bomb. The new weapon has destroyed the military cliché, "To every offense a corresponding defense."

"We might surpass by far the defensive achievements of this war," writes the Oak Ridge group of atomic scientists, "but even if we could keep nine of these missiles from their goal, dare we hope that we could stop the tenth as well?"

IS THERE A DEFENSE AGAINST IT?

Only the House of Representatives' Naval Affairs Committee insinuated that "an effective counter-measure to atomic bombs had been developed." What that might be, they have not indicated. The atomic scientists of Chicago, however, stated October 13 that:

"... Expert scientific opinion contradicted a report issued Thursday by the House Naval Affairs Committee." They called the report "highly misleading" and said that its "attempt to minimize its (the atom bomb's) importance and convey the impression that the armed forces will soon bring the situation under control can do incalculable harm."

Another direct refutation came from Dr. H. J. Curtis, one of the leading scientists on the Oak Ridge project:

"We scientists can offer no hope of a specific defense against the atomic bomb. Counter-offensive warfare will not restore the ruins of our cities nor revive the millions of our dead."

This opinion is supported by Drs. David L. Hill, Eugene Rabinowitch and John A. Simpson, Jr., of the Chicago group, who say:

"No specific defense against the bomb itself—i.e., a device which would explode them before they reach their targets—is in sight. Irresponsible claims that such a device has been invented only stimulate wishful thinking. ... The conclusion cannot be avoided that in the atomic age it will be difficult if not impossible for any one nation, big or small, to make itself secure against a crippling attack."

The Chicago group was even more graphic in its description of a future atomic war. It stated: **"In the not too distant future, many nations might possess the several hundred atomic bombs which would be sufficient to annihilate in a few minutes sixty per cent of our industrial resources, paralyze ninety per cent of our productive capacity and destroy one-third of our entire population. (These figures represent the part of our population and national economy concentrated in thirty metropolitan centers.)"**

Just think, the present atomic bomb devastates an area of four square miles and damages a surrounding area of a hundred. No city of a population of 100,000 would remain an effective operating center after the first hour of an atomic war. Twenty-five per cent or more of a nation's population could be wiped out in an initial blow.

What, then, should one think of a scientist like Einstein, who writes that "no new problem has been created" by the atomic bomb?

INDUSTRIAL POTENTIALITIES

Up to now we have dealt solely with the military consequences of the creation of the atom bomb. The question naturally arises: What are the industrial, or non-military, potentialities in the control of atomic energy?

In answer to this question, the opinions of the scientists are not uniform nor so sure as on the other aspects. The reason for their equivocation may be found in the fact that our capitalist government developed the bomb at great expense for destructive purposes, but has never contemplated any peacetime industrial project similar in scope or expenditure which might compete with existing private enterprise. However, there is much evidence and testimony available to indicate that atomic energy has just as great significance for the revolutionizing of industrial production as for the "science of warfare."

According to Professor Compton, there is no indication as yet that atomic energy may be used in automobiles or airplanes, because the radioactive waves produced by nuclear fission make it impossible to use safely in such relatively small machines. However, he says with certainty that *"at this moment the obviously great field open to atomic energy is that of the production of useful heat and power."*

Dr. Enrico Fermi, one of the foremost of the atomic scientists, communicated his opinion to the Kilgore Sub-Committee that *"The industrial potentialities can be exploited."*

In his testimony before the Senate Military Affairs Committee, reported in PM on October 15, Dr. Oppenheimer asserted that "... a million kilowatts of electric energy is not far off, possible five years or less. *But to fit this into our economy may take a long time."*

Other than military use of atomic power also concerned the Chicago group. In its Life (October 29) report, it states:

"The scientists are often asked: What about the peacetime applications of atomic power? These, too, will depend on how successfully the specter of atomic warfare is banished from the earth. We may look confidently to benefits which the production of new radioactive elements will bring to science, industry and medicine, since small-scale atomic plants will be sufficient to provide an abundance of these invaluable tools for scientists, doctors and engineers. *On the other hand, only in a world free from fear of war will it be possible to give full freedom to the development of large-scale atomic-power prospects."*

Thus we see that the future and complete answer to this question lies in the field of economics and politics.

Arbitration Issue In the GM Strike - -

(Continued from page 1)

before the Labor-Management Conference, 'as a step-child.'"

Why the Arbitration Proposed

The next point to be considered is the fact that the union had thoroughly indoctrinated the membership with its intention not to be deflected from its determination to tackle GM in the most thorough-going manner. A few months before, so set was the leadership on its GM course that strikers at Kelsey-Hayes were disciplined for an action which the UAW leaders said was interfering with the progress of the organization of action against GM. Furthermore, the whole course of the negotiations, the nature of the union's demands and the preparation of the membership for decisive action, had created a situation in which a last-minute proposal for arbitration, coming from the union, could only disorient the membership and create demoralization, not only immediately in the ranks of the UAW but among other unions and workers who were watching anxiously to see what the UAW would do. This is one of the most important considerations in connection with the arbitration proposal in the concrete situation which prevailed at the time the offer was made.

While it is true that the whole question of arbitration as against militant class action is involved in the consideration of this particular arbitration offer, it is not the point which we are stressing right now. We say, for the reasons given above, that whatever the position of a union may be on arbitration, the proposal made by the UAW was incorrect and if indulged in will certainly defeat the organization in its present fight with General Motors.

The UAW proposed that a three-man board be selected and that its decision be final and binding. But first there was the problem of getting the three-man board. The two members from industry and labor were to select the third man who would be the chairman. Obviously this would take time and while labor and industry haggled over the naming of a chairman, to be followed by long days of discussion in which GM would certainly not have given an inch, disintegration of the solidarity of the membership and demoralization would have set in.

What the Proposal Means.

The proposal to go to arbitration ignored the real nature of the demands made by the union. The demands made on the corporation were not simple wage demands. The "arithmetic of this wage dispute" included as a a fundamentally new departure the demand that the corporation open its books so that the union could demonstrate to the consumer that the company could increase wages without increasing the price of its product. This was a higher form of "arithmetic" than has been used heretofore by the labor movement in collective bargaining and transcends the traditional bounds of collective bargaining.

At the time the offer to arbitrate was made and under the concrete conditions the union really could not submit this particular dispute to arbitration. The demands made by the union and what was implied in them, thoroughly understood by the corporation, could not really be submitted to arbitration. As we said above, this flows from the pre-arbitration proposal negotiations and the militant nature of the demands.

"We prefer the conference table and the hearing room to the picket line." Such a position was really preposterous in the concrete situation. If there was ever a situation in which the mass militant picket line is indicated it is exactly this situation where a union demanded the right to examine a corporation's books and have a say in what prices should be charged for the product. The whole capitalist ruling class, including the press, rushed to the side of GM when the UAW made what the corporation called "unreasonable demands."

It is the position of the Workers Party that in issues enjoined between the working class and the ruling class, between the unions and the employers, the rule should be to resolve the conflicts in militant class struggle action. There can be no such thing as an impartial arbitrator in a dispute between labor and capital, drawn from the ruling class. All arbitrators in labor disputes do come from the ruling class or from its middle class hangers-on. It was just such an individual who would have been the chairman of the three-man board proposed by the UAW. This would have meant that the ruling class would have had two members of the board and labor one. And this, in a situation where the union is demanding that its experts examine the corporation books and that the union have a say in the control of prices.

We say again that this particular proposal to arbitrate was particularly flagrant and only underscores the need for extreme caution by labor in writing arbitration clauses into its agreements with the employers. The content of the proposal tended at least to the acceptance of arbitration as something to be accepted as a regular procedure in the dispute between the ruling class and the working class. It was in effect a proposal to substitute the conference table, dominated by the ruling class, for militant class struggle action by the workers and the unions themselves. This is the all-important factor in this situation as it is usually the important factor in all the relations between the working class and the capitalist ruling class. We hope that the membership of the UAW will maintain an alertness and a constancy that will serve notice on the leadership that the union is prepared to fight this strike through until its aims are won.

ON THE AUTO ASSEMBLY LINE

By BILL

Well, boys, the assembly lines are moving faster again —I guess it's really true about the war being over. Boss come around the other day and says, "Jerry, orders have come down from above that we got to push the line some more." He's looking at my steward button now, he don't dare look me in the face. "Now some of the boys have been bucking the line, and that won't do. We gotta make our production. We've only been making thirty-five cars an hour, and we gotta do better than that to make our costs."

Lefty's a pretty good foreman, so I don't get mad. I say, "Well, if the brass hats want more production, why don't they hire more men, there's plenty of 'em walking the streets." Lefty looks at my steward button again. "That's not for me to say, Jerry. I gotta do my job. I'm a union man myself, but if I don't get the work out, they'll get someone else to do it. The lines are gonna start moving tomorrow, and I want you to tell the boys to keep up with it. I don't want nobody bucking the line."

He goes back down the line, and I get back to my job starting the nuts from the rear fender to the running board. The line is jumping, and believe me, you got to jump to keep up with it. Lefty doesn't have to come down here to get moving. I'm already moving, and I know it.

WORKING ON THE "LINE"

I don't know how many people know what the line is like. After you work on it a while you get so that you feel like you don't know anything but the line. There's just a steel belt with chassis, bodies, blocks or transmissions squatting on it. You stand near the line with a motor, or a wrench or a box of screws, and the blocks keep on hopping down at you.

When they first break you in, it seems like you'll never be able to do it. The sweat pours off your face just as if you were out walking in a heavy rain. There's a relief man to help break you in, otherwise you'd never be able to keep up with the line, and the first thing you'd know, you'd be down in the next fellow's station, and he'd be cussing you all over Jordan for screwing him up and keeping him from getting his work out.

When I first went to work in a factory, I was put on the motor assembly line. The blocks come down from the building where they machine them on a long conveyor, and as soon as they hit our belt, the boys start throwing tappits and pistons and con rods into them like you'd hardly think was possible. When the blocks come to my station, they were right side up, and the head and the spark plugs were already on them. There's thirty-two studs sticking up through the head and just a little way up the line there's a fellow starting nuts on the studs.

Right over my head there's an air motor which is hanging from the ceiling. I got to use the motor to put down those thirty-two nuts and that holds the head in position on top of the block. The blocks were coming down the line about fifty or sixty an hour and it seems like you never get a chance to let that motor alone and rest your arms. You gotta pull that motor down thirty-two times for each block and them coming at you every minute or so. After about an hour, you feel like you're gonna die, but pretty soon you get your second wind, and that keeps you till lunch time. But after lunch, every stud sticks up a mile, and you get to hate them so bad it's pitiful.

WHAT PEACE HAS BROUGHT

That was a long time ago, and now if they gave me a job like that I'd know it was a cinch. Every year I've seen the line's going faster and faster, every year we got to pull the hide off our backsides more and more. I work on all the lines there are, chassis, body, trim. I've worked in the machine shop and in the press room, and every year I've seen the boys working harder and harder.

There's been only two times since I've worked in the shops that I've seen the lines slow down a bit. The first was when the union come in—the good old UAW. We scared the hell out of the bosses then, and they didn't dare push the line too much, or they knew that the boys would give them the old heave-ho out the window. But after a year or two, they started pushing the lines again and we didn't do anything because we knew if any of us got fired that we wouldn't get any backing from the international.

And then during the war, the lines slowed down a little. We didn't make cars, and tank motors started rolling down the lines instead, and wing sections for airplanes. The lines slowed down because the jobs had to be put together better, the parts had to fit exactly. It wasn't like with an automobile—just thrown together. The jobs had to be pretty near perfect, so the line slowed down. The company was getting cost-plus, so they didn't care very much.

But you can tell that it's peace again. The cars are moving down the line, and the bosses are starting to push the line. I don't think they'll get away with it because everybody is bucking the line. We just had our strike vote, and we all voted for strike, so I don't think we'll take much more from the company. Yessir, boys, there's a peace on, so get moving. You gotta get out production.

British Fourth Internationalists Protest Policy in Indonesia

The following protest letter against the policies of the Attlee government in Indonesia and Indo-China was sent by the Political Bureau of the Revolutionary Communist Party of Great Britain, a Fourth Internationalist organization.

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10th September, 1945.

To the Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
Westminster.

The news that British troops are being used in Java and Indo-China against the nationalist movement is a matter of grave concern for the working class and the socialist movement in this country. The reports in the "Daily Herald" go to show that the British military authorities are openly collaborating with the Japanese authorities in putting down the revolution of the popular masses.

The true interests of the British working class demand that we support the Indonesian peoples in their struggle against Dutch and French imperialism. The policy of your government, in intervening on the side of the oppressors is entirely contrary to the interests of the working class. It serves to discredit the Labor Government in the eyes of the oppressed peoples of the world. Such a policy can only succeed in creating a gulf of mistrust and a wall of hostility between the mass of the oppressed colonial people and the working class movement of this country.

We believe that the overwhelming majority of the workers and middle class people who voted Labor into power, oppose the reactionary imperialist policy now being pursued by your government and we are voicing the desire of all class conscious workers in demanding that immediate steps be taken by your government to stop this imperialist intervention, to withdraw all British troops from Indonesia and thus allow the native peoples to freely choose their own form of government.

Yours truly,
Jock Haston,
For the Political Bureau,
R.C.P.

WP Cites Need to Fight G. L. K. Smith

(Continued from page 1)

meetings in Los Angeles undisturbed and that his organizing drive would be fought "to the end," today these "anti-fascist leaders" bowed before Smith's insistent challenge.

Workers Awaited Call

The Workers Party here, having discovered during the week that these gentlemen were going to sit it out, decided not to attempt a "quickie" substitute for this Sunday. All anti-fascist workers who want to fight rather than quit may now be faced with the problem of reviving the campaign against Smith where the Mobilization and the Communist Party are dropping it.

That thousands of workers were awaiting a call from the Mobilization for Democracy and the CIO to continued struggle against the fascists and were grossly disappointed is indicated by rank and file reactions in the unions and by phone calls to the Workers Party inquiring "what had happened." However, a large squad of WP members sold the pamphlet, "The Truth About Gerald Smith," at the Polytechnic. Scores of pamphlets were sold, proving (as we knew) that Smith's audiences are not made up entirely of hardened fascists.

Whether the Mobilization and the CIO have definitely turned away from the task of militant anti-fascist action and returned to their original milk-and-water perspective of countering Smith ONLY with talk fests among themselves and legal proceedings ad infinitum, will appear more clearly after today. Previous to the last two picket lines, general meetings of the Mobilization, with delegates from all constituent organizations, were held to decide on and organize action. This time no such meeting was held. The decision to do nothing was made completely on top. There is no doubt that the executive committee of the Mobilization was unwilling to face such a broader powwow with their policy of abdication.

Inquirers were told that the Mobilization was limiting itself to recommending that its participating groups hold neighborhood meetings and conferences. However, practically nothing was done along these lines. One such was held this afternoon—in one of the swankiest hotels in the city, the Beverly - Wilshire, clear across town from the Smith meeting, sponsored by the "59th Assembly District Victory Council" in Beverly Hills—featuring James Roosevelt as main speaker. Roosevelt, introduced as "a business man," came out strong against "the spirit of hate" and for "the better life."

This turn on the part of the Mobilization for Democracy and the CIO should not surprise readers who have been following LABOR ACTION. These columns related in some detail how the Communist Party-liners of the CIO (Phil Connelly in particular) and the Mobilization, at first opposed the very idea of mass picketing Smith and were forced to jump on the bandwagon only after widespread discontent in the local unions and motions passed by them, and in the ranks of the Communists themselves, who wanted to know why the Communist Party was "letting the Trotskyists take the lead in fighting Smith." This was especially true after the Workers Party showed the way by picketing Smith's first big rally in Los Angeles last June, and by publishing its popular pamphlet,

A Bank Solves Unemployment!

Want to know how to solve the problem of unemployment? The **Business Bulletin** of the Cleveland Trust Company, which is circulated among business interests, has just master-minded two suggestions that ought to end all discussion.

First, says the Bulletin, even though there will be large-scale unemployment, and to the jobless worker it may look, feel and smell like depression unemployment, it won't be anything of the sort. Oh no, millions of unemployed workers will be "enjoying" a very "special" form of unemployment that the Bulletin calls "frictional unemployment." Maybe this refers to the sensation the hungry, jobless worker will feel when he pulls in his belt so tightly that there's friction between his belly and his spine.

Having assured the millions of unemployed that their joblessness is imaginary, the **Bulletin** then offers two suggestions to increase employment. It suggests, first, that the number of USES offices be increased. The second suggestion is so fantastic that we'd better quote directly from the September 15th issue of the **Bulletin**, which says,

"The other measure is to make tires widely available just as soon as possible so that workers seeking jobs can hunt for them"!

Of course, the **Bulletin's** editor doesn't specify where the jobless worker is supposed to get a car and gas. However, if he does have a car, he can always retire to it with his family and take up light housekeeping, after he's been evicted from his home for non-payment of rent.

These ideas aren't something dreamed up by the Mad Hatter, out of Alice in Wonderland. They're the result of some very serious thought on the part of a perfectly respectable organ of the capitalist class. Although they're about as ridiculous as any suggestions we've come across, they differ only in degree in the way they reflect the inability of "free enterprise" to solve the problem of unemployment.