

**WORK FOR A WORKERS WORLD;  
JOIN THE WORKERS PARTY!**

# LABOR ACTION

SEPTEMBER 6, 1948

A PAPER IN THE INTEREST OF SOCIALISM

FIVE CENTS

## Czech Regime Hits Labor's 5-Day Week

The workers of Czechoslovakia are finding out what their "popular democracy" means, under a Stalinist totalitarian government.

In this country, which was taken over by the CP gang only six months ago, the "new life" is being spelled out. The trade-union federation—that is, the organization which USED TO consist of free trade unions—has started a campaign against the five-day week, in favor of a six-day week.

What is reprehensible is not merely this fact alone. One can certainly imagine that a government has the abstract right to ask its workers to add an extra day's work in order to help production in an emergency. For example, in this country, union progressives did not object to the wartime 48-hour week as such, but rather fought for the retention of time and a half and double time for Saturday and Sunday work.

What is revealing about the Czech announcement is the attempt by the Stalinists to deny that the five-day week should even be an AIM of workers and trade unionists!

The newspaper of the Czech totalitarianized "trade unions," denouncing advocates of the five-day week as defenders of their "personal interests" as against "those of the national economy," writes:

"All economic arguments speak for a six-day week, which in most workshops has been in force for a generation."

In this dead give-away we have the mouthpieces of the "new popular democracy" appealing to the precedent of the old regime for its own exploitive and oppressive measures. This is from the mouths of the very people who once loudly asserted that the system that had been "in force for generations" was a system of soulless exploitation. They now announce that they are the inheritors and continuators of its practices. The paper continues:

"If anybody is so foolish as to think that the five-day week is modern progress we have to remind him that in the whole history of the workers' struggle there never has been any talk about a shorter working week, but only shorter hours."

### OUT OF THEIR OWN MOUTHS

This fantastic lie, of course, could be uttered only in a country where the liars need not fear refutation. It will be sufficient for us to point to the pamphlet put out by International Publishers (the American Stalinist fountainhead of "approved" literature) entitled *The History of the Shorter Workday*, by the Labor Research Association. This pamphlet has a special section (pages 40-42) taking up precisely the fight for the shorter working week. The section is entitled "Unions Win the Five-Day Week," and we have room to quote only its opening sentences:

"Some four million workers in the U. S. in 1941 had the benefit of the five-day week or two days off in every seven. And this benefit was a direct result of trade-union efforts to gain some measure of leisure for their members."

The Alice-in-Wonderland argument of the Czech Stalinists goes on:

"In the socialist country, the Soviet Union, they did not introduce the five-day week. [This certainly clinches a point—but it is not the Stalinists' point!] Finally, no other people's democratic state is forced to give attention to this issue."

The article goes to the length of arguing also (on principle!) against a five-day week even for married women, with children, house responsibilities, etc. Rather it reveals that the Czech "five-year plan" calls for the recruitment of even more married women into the factories.

## GM AUTO WORKERS ARE ON THE ESCALATOR!



### AN EDITORIAL

## One Answer to the H. C. of L.!

The cost of living is still going up. But there are over a quarter of a million workers who have found a way, through their union, of at least hanging on to its tail.

In the month of July the HCL jumped another two points. It now stands at an index of 173.7 as compared with an index of 100.8 in January 1941, which was the month used as the base for the infamous wartime "Little Steel formula."

And the current number of Business Week says of the helium-inflated cost of living: "It's still going up. And it won't come down much until the cost of food stops climbing. Despite bumper grain crops, that won't happen for at least a year, when the grain has been turned into wheat."

"At least a year" . . . Meanwhile, what does that mean for workers whose contracts call for so many cents per hour, regardless of what happens to those pennies when their wives go shopping? It means their wages are cut—real wages, which are measured not in cents but in what the money can buy over the counter.

But it does NOT mean that now for the workers of the General Motors Corporation. No thanks to GM itself! Those workers are "different" because their union, the United Auto Workers (CIO) fought for and won a contract with a special provision which even the New York Times radio called "history-making." That was the so-called "escalator clause."

Back in May, the UAW forced

strike-bound GM to agree to pay its workers one cent an hour more for each 1.14 points by which the cost-of-living index rose in each quarter. As a result, these workers have now AUTOMATICALLY obtained a three-cent-an-hour raise, for some 265,000 hourly-rated men. And 68,000 salaried workers will get \$15 each in December as an adjustment for the preceding quarter.

The escalator clause has paid off. Business Week warns: "Other companies that do not hitch wages to the price index are more likely to get a delayed reaction. They will have to bargain again with unions next spring though."

Translating this into a warning for workers (rather than Business Week's businessmen): other workers will not be able to hitch up their wages until next spring—if then. And then only if they fight hard enough. Meanwhile their wives will continue paying for those extra points on the index.

Anyone can see now why progressive unionists (and, for years, LABOR ACTION) have been fighting for such an escalator clause—a sliding scale of wages to rise with price rises—as an essential for the protection of labor from profiteering.

When the GM section of the UAW signed that contract last May there was more than one voice raised against it, even within the union. Their mouths ought to be pretty well stopped now. (Unfortunately, that won't stop some of these people from

backing the new Leonard caucus in the UAW.)

We'd like to see more unions bring up this question of an escalator clause, demand it and fight for it. It doesn't solve the basic questions involved in the terrific price-gouging, but it's a "must" for even alleviating the kicking around that the worker-consumers are getting.

The GM auto workers have given a demonstration.

## "Purgers" Fire Legless Vet

Kutcher Case Brings New Low in Disgraceful Witch Hunt

By JAMES M. FENWICK

NEWARK—Another disgraceful episode in the government's hit-and-run campaign against all non-conformist political opinion has just taken place.

The victim is James Kutcher, who was fired on August 13 from his job in the Newark Veterans' Administration. He was accused of being a member of the Socialist Workers Party.

"I have never denied my membership in the Socialist Workers Party," Kutcher stated. "I do not deny it now. On the contrary, I proudly reaffirm it. What I do deny is the false accusation that the Socialist Workers Party is subversive or advocates the overthrow of the government by force and violence."

"You have the right to disagree with my views, but not to deprive me of my job for holding them," he added.

Kutcher, who is the sole support of his parents, is a World War II veteran. He lost both his legs in the fighting in Italy, after having gone through the African and Sicilian campaigns. As a result of his injuries he was hospitalized for two years.

A Civil Rights Defense Committee has been set up to fight his case and to work for an immediate hearing before the federal loyalty board. Carl Holderman, president of the state CIO, has pledged support.

In a statement on the case, Kutcher said:

"I entered the armed forces in January, 1941. My draft board did not ask me about my political views or the party to which I belonged; they drafted me."

"I became an infantryman. When I was at San Pietro, Italy, in November, 1943, the German mortar crew did not ask me about my political

## 3 CP EX-OFFICERS EXPULSED BY NMU!

### ALP-Tammany Deals Seen As Dirt Flies

By WYATT LEE

NEW YORK—In the middle of a heat wave that turned New York's tenements into reasonable facsimiles of steam baths, a political rumpus last week raised the temperature a few more notches in the clubrooms of Tammany and the American Labor Party.

Representative Vito Marcantonio and Mayor William O'Dwyer, buddies during the last election, turned in a name-calling bout that competed with the weather for the headlines of the town's newspapers.

Marcantonio, speaking as state chairman of the ALP, called O'Dwyer a "double-talking, double-dealing, double-crossing hypocrite," in rejoinder to the mayor's orders to oust all ALP members from patronage posts in the city government. He charged that the mayor's wrath stemmed from the ALP's refusal to back Tammany's candidate for surrogate in the coming election.

The surrogate's post is one of the juiciest plums in New York County. Under the county's laws, all financial affairs of widows, orphans and other "wards of the court" must pass through that office, with appointments of administrators, executors, etc., made by the surrogate. The party which holds this key post is in a favorable position to reward political henchmen. O'Dwyer had a row with the official leaders of Tammany when they attempted to nominate a judge whose political reputation would assure defeat for the Democrats.

### THE DIRT FLIES

As a compromise, the Democrats gave the nomination to Judge John A. Mullen. The Republicans nominated one "George Frankenthaler, who was promptly supported by the Liberal Party. The ALP, after one nominee refused to accept, put forward the name of O. John Rogge, one-time U. S. assistant attorney general.

Rogge started the pot boiling a couple of weeks ago, just before he sailed to attend the Stalinist-controlled World Congress of Intellectuals held in Poland. He called in reporters to denounce the maneuvers of Eugene Connolly, an ALP city

councilman, who, Rogge charged, had asked him to withdraw in favor of Mullen, the Tammany candidate. This was the first public indication that O'Dwyer, in an effort to offset the Liberal support to the Republican candidate, wanted to make a backroom deal.

Whether Connolly acted with the consent of other ALP leaders in approaching Rogge is not known. According to Marcantonio, the proposals came from O'Dwyer and Hugo Rogers, Manhattan borough president. In a telephone conversation, Marcantonio charged, O'Dwyer offered to double-cross the Democratic candidate in Marcantonio's congressional district if the ALP chairman would substitute Mullen for Rogge on the ALP ticket. When he refused, Marcantonio stated, O'Dwyer pledged political vengeance. The ouster of ALP members from the city payroll followed.

Marcantonio's account of political double-dealing has the ring of truth. Side by side with his faithful adherence to the Stalinist line, the New Yorker from East Harlem runs his district in a hard-bitten manner that is the envy of Tammany. Neither he nor the ALP is unaccustomed to deals with the Democrats; such shady deals have been their stock in trade since the formation of the ALP. O'Dwyer admitted to reporters that ALP failure to support his candidate for surrogate "changed the picture."

### NO HOPE IN ALP

Whether the current feud between O'Dwyer and Marcantonio means a permanent break in the ALP custom of supporting Democratic and Republican candidates remains to be seen. At the present time, the ALP is supporting six Democratic candidates for Congress, one of them Paul O'Dwyer, the mayor's brother. It may be that the surrogate deal fell through simply.

(Continued on page 2)

### UE CONVENTION

Turn to page four for special articles devoted to the problems facing the national convention of the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers (CIO).

By N. R. GADEN

NEW YORK, Aug. 31—At a monster-sized Port of New York membership meeting of the National Maritime Union last night, the rank and file voted 1462-523 to uphold the findings of a trial committee and expel three leading Stalinists from the union.

The trio—Howard McKenzie, former vice-president, Ferdinand C. Smith, former secretary, and Paul Palazzi, former port agent of New York—had been brought up on charges by President Joseph Curran and Treasurer Hedley Stone. The charges were five in number—all dealing with violations of the NMU constitution, committed while these men held their offices in the union:

- (1) That they conspired and misused facilities and properties of the union in an effort to place the union under the domination of the Communist Party or, as an alternative, to disrupt and destroy the union.
- (2) That they misappropriated and mispent union funds and used these funds for factional purposes.
- (3) That they wrongfully exercised powers not approved by the membership in accordance with the NMU constitution.

### NEXT WEEK—

LABOR ACTION will discuss editorially the significance of the NMU's expulsion of Smith, McKenzie and Palazzi. This action deserves the closest scrutiny by the labor movement. We also expect, to present in greater detail the evidence presented.

(4) That they committed wrongful acts with respect to publication of the union organ, The Pilot, by publishing material not approved by the editorial board (consisting of the national officers) and printing slanderous and libelous statements against union officers.

(5) That they brought the union into ill repute by subordinating the best interests of the union and its membership to the Communist Party.

### DETAILED PROOF GIVEN

The above charges were thoroughly substantiated by detailed evidence presented. Receipts and vouchers signed by the three defendants showed moneys illegally withdrawn from the union's funds in the neighborhood of \$4,000.

Correspondence was presented showing that the union narrowly escaped a libel suit arising from their misuse of their authority as officials and their political connections with the editor of the union paper; it was proved that they changed the approved contents of the paper and inserted slanderous accusations for their own factional purposes. It was also proved that the accused issued false statements and tried to stampede the membership into a strike last June 15, after the union had taken a position that a strike at that time would be disastrous.

In general, it was made thoroughly clear that the three were being expelled for overt acts which no honest union could possibly tolerate and that this was being done on the basis of documented proof presented to the rank and file's judgment.

The trial committee, whose chairman presented the report last night, had been elected in accordance with the constitution by the previous regular membership meeting and consisted of five rank-and-file unionists.

The committee had tried thirty-

(Continued on page 2)

## New Pro-Fascist Front in Israel

By ED FINDLEY

A Revisionist Party conference convening in Jerusalem on Friday, August 27, voted to ratify an agreement reached by its executive committee and the leadership of the Irgun's "Freedom Movement" to merge both organizations.

Under the terms of the agreement, the Irgun is to receive fifteen seats on the top committee of the new political unit while the Revisionists must content themselves with six seats.

In addition, the Revisionist daily, "Hamashkif" (which used to herald Franco's victories in Spain as the victories of "our side"), will be discontinued. Its place is to be taken by the organ of the Irgun, "Haheiruth,"

under a combined editorial board headed by the notorious labor-baiter, Uri Zvi Greenberg.

This merger of the Irgun with the anti-labor, pro-fascist Revisionist movement of Palestine should occasion some soul-searching among "liberal" and "radical" American apologists for the Irgun, who vociferously denied or minimized the political kinship between the Irgun and the Revisionist movement out of which it emerged and with which it is now organically united.

It is not clear, as yet, whether the National Federation of Labor—a tiny, strike-breaking company union operated by the Revisionists in an attempt to break the Histadrut Haovdim, the general trade union of Is-

raeli labor—is to be disbanded or taken over by the new "Freedom Movement."

However, in view of the bitter anti-Histadrut campaign being conducted by Beigin & Co. [the Irgunists], it seems unlikely that use of this dual-union outfit will be foregone.

### SUCH FRANKNESS!

As we go to press, it is reported that Zhdanov, No. 2 warden in Stalin's prison state, has died. The Moscow announcement says cause of his death was "PARALYSIS OF THE HEART."

## Geltman—for-Congress Petition Filed; Signature Goal Passed

NEW YORK—Nominating petitions to place Emanuel Geltman on the ballot as candidate for Congress in the 19th District were filed with the Board of Election on Friday, one day ahead of schedule.

Altogether a total of 6180 signatures were gathered during the highly successful petitioning campaign. Required number is 3000.

While the Workers Party has in every way complied with the many and contradictory technicalities of the law on petitions,

there still remains a period of three days during which any individual or group may record a challenge of this petition. The challenger then has six additional days in which to specify the nature of the objection. There are no indications at this time of such a challenge.

Plans for the election campaign proper are getting under way this week, beginning with visits to the many people who requested more information about the Workers Party.





# United Electrical-Radio-Machine Workers Union Faces National Convention—

# ISSUE AT UE CONVENTION IS CP CONTROL

By M. WARD

Although a swelling tide of membership resentment endangers its control, the Stalinist officialdom of the United Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers of America (CIO) intends to proceed with its plans to use the union's national convention as an occasion for a noisy demonstration of the Wallace party's "mass labor support."

If the show falls flat, it will not be for want of trying. Long before the convention's opening date of September 16, the Stalinists began preparations to summon all their available New York manpower to pack the convention galleries, buttonhole delegates, circulate through convention corridors and committee rooms generally creating "atmosphere," and for the numerous other tasks of keeping the convention in line. Not the least of these is the organizing of the Yankee Stadium Wallace rally during the convention week, to serve the double purpose of impressing delegates with the Stalinists' power and providing an opportunity to parade their UE "labor leaders" and "labor rank and file" before the public gaze as Wallace supporters.

Without at least some pretense of labor support the third party would be totally incapable of exercising pressure upon the American government. Therefore to strengthen this important adjunct of Russian foreign policy, Emspak, Matles, and the Stalinist clique have enlisted the name, power, finances, and publications of the UE in the Wallace campaign.

That they will continue this policy, whether or not they ask for formal endorsement of Wallace at the convention, is demonstrated by their past unflinching adherence to the Kremlin line—as for example when they denounced the Wallace-Roosevelt administration throughout the period of the Stalin-Hitler love pact, and switched to supporting that administration the day after Russia was attacked.

### NEED DYNAMIC PROGRAM

The chief issue before the convention will be the fight to break the Stalinists' bureaucratic stranglehold, which has stifled independent thought, driven out non-conformists, and paralyzed membership initiative—and which has used the UE for purposes alien to the interests and contrary to the wishes of the membership.

Although this aim is held paramount by almost all the opposition groups within the UE, and has been acclaimed in a new upsurge of membership rebellion against the UE leadership, it appears that little progress has been made in convention representation.

The total number of opposition delegates will probably not exceed 30 per cent, and this total includes a large number of independent opposition groups, as well as the UE Members for Democratic Action, the national caucus led for the past several years by Harry Block and James B. Carey.

The explanation for the low delegate strength of the opposition lies in the failure of the MDA caucus leaders to elaborate a dynamic progressive program that would serve as an alternative to the Stalinist-Wallace platform, and to conduct a coordinated national campaign for support of such a program.

Instead, they conceived the illusion, nurtured by some glib fellows at the top of the CIO whom they consulted, that the Stalinists would make their opponents' job easy by pulling the UE out of the CIO. The time schedule in that story called for the Stalinists to quit the CIO sometime this fall. The MDA leaders are apparently still waiting.

Far from harboring any plans to leave the CIO, the Stalinists will fight to the last ditch against any move that might be made to squeeze them out. The Stalinists do not obliquely intend to commit political suicide for the benefit of their opponents.

No effort has been made at any time during the past year to encourage an orderly nation-wide discussion among MDA caucus members, with a view to developing the independent program so urgently needed as the basis of an appeal to the UE membership.

MDA caucus leaders have simply confined themselves and their caucus to a passive and uncritical acceptance of "CIO policy," and as a consequence, Philip Murray's failures have also become their failures. Although the MDA has been able to criticize the arms and methods of the Stalinists, it has also revealed itself as being highly vulnerable to attack.

### REALIGNMENTS POSSIBLE

Many anti-Stalinists in the UE have simply become disgusted with the MDA failure to provide constructive answers, and have sunk into apathy. Groups here and there, some in the leadership of locals, have expressed their desire simply to escape—by seceding immediately after this convention.

A number of local caucuses, formed independently of the MDA, have

successfully elected delegates to the convention on the basis of fairly advanced programs. The emergence of these groups holds forth the possibility of a realignment of the anti-Stalinist forces on a more progressive basis, either through a merger with the MDA or the formation of a completely new national caucus.

Three of the issues before the convention will provide an opportunity for the anti-administration forces to expose the Stalinists: the wage policy of the UE; foreign policy; and political action.

To cover their failures, the UE leaders have denounced Philip Murray for his last steel industry contract which banned strikes for this entire year and therefore became a tremendous obstacle to the steel workers' demands for wage increases. At the same time the UE leaders have proclaimed themselves far and wide as having been the vanguard of the CIO fight for this year's round of wage increases. Matles, for example, made such statements before last month's meeting of Local 475 in New York City.

UE members are fortunately not as uninformed as he would like them to be, or as they would be under the kind of government which he admires. They are therefore aware of the fact that it was the UAW that cracked the employer front at General Motors and Chrysler, laying the basis for a national wage pattern and the resulting wage grants for both the steel workers and the UE workers in Westinghouse and General Electric. Wage negotiations between the UE and Westinghouse and General Electric had been broken off for a period of several weeks and were only resumed after the UAW settlement.

### IMPERIALISM VS. IMPERIALISM

Although it is clear that the UE Stalinist officials' militancy in words and timidity in action should be a subject for strong criticism on the convention floor, those delegates who endeavor to defend Murray's policies will find themselves subject to equal-

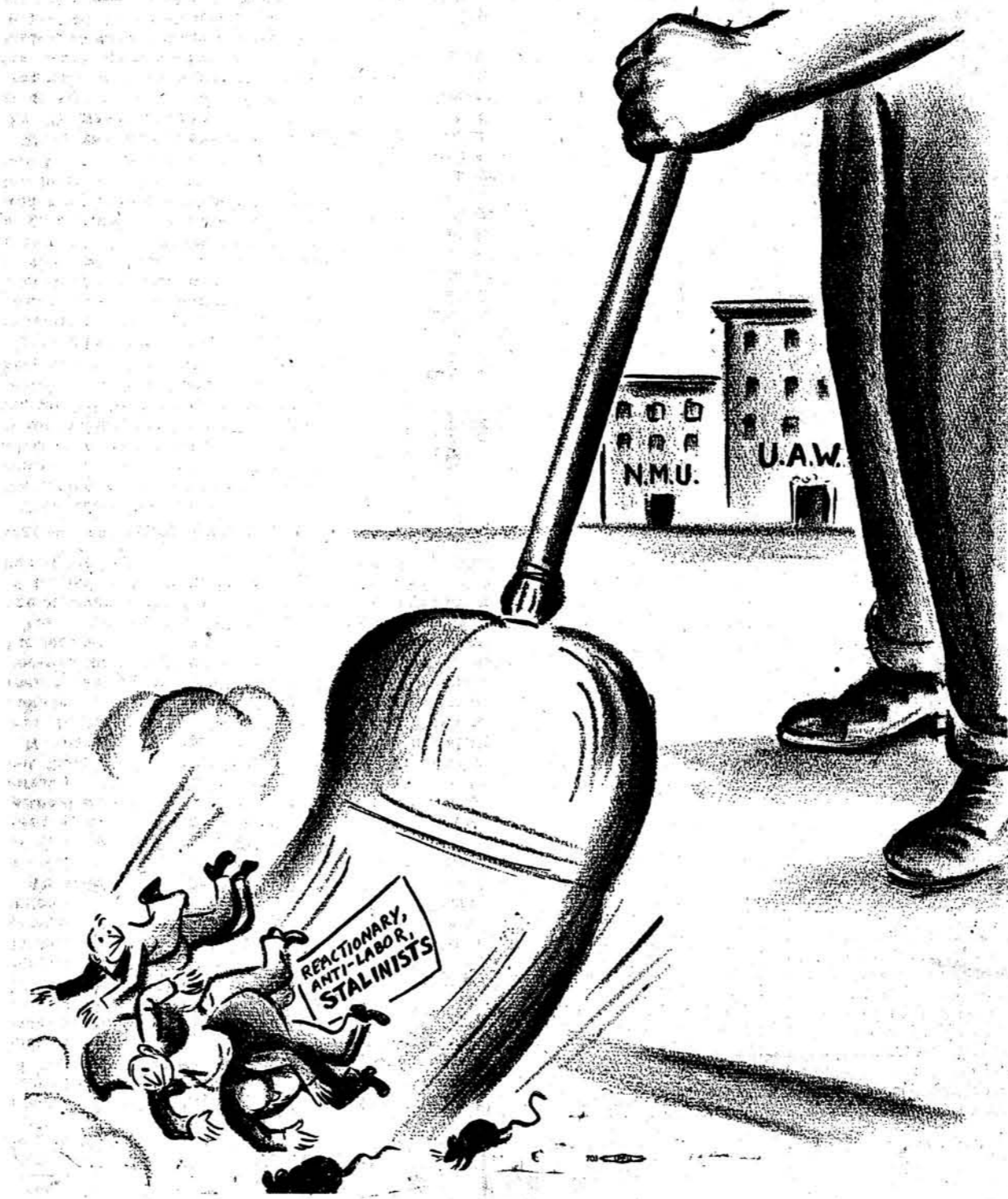


ty just attack. By utilizing the opportunity to make such an attack, the Stalinists can divert attention from their own guilt.

Nowhere is the UE leaders' subordination to Russian imperialism more apparent than in their discussion of foreign affairs. While they fulminate unendingly against American foreign policy and internal conditions and the external policies of America's allies in the cold war, not a single whisper of criticism of Russia or its satellites has even been known to come from them—although it is reliably reported that Fitzgerald once made a slip of the tongue in a private conversation when Matles had his back turned.

However, criticism of the UE leaders on this score by the MDA caucus is blunted by its defense of the Marshall Plan and ERP. There is no dearth of ammunition for attacking America's dollar imperialism. Clearly, the only correct policy for the anti-Stalinists in the UE is opposition to all imperialism, whether Moscow's or Washington's.

Similarly, Murray's fumbling support to the reactionary Democratic Party and the Truman administration is hardly enticing as an alternative to the Stalinist Third Party. Only a proposal for a new political realignment in the form of a labor party can effectively answer the political problems before the delegates.



## Local 107 Protests Use of Union Papers to Back Wallace, Truman

PHILADELPHIA, August 24 — On Saturday, August 21, the membership of Westinghouse Local 107 voted almost unanimously to direct its delegates to the 13th UE national convention to protest the use of the UE News as a propaganda periodical in support of Henry Wallace and the Progressive Party without the approval of the membership of the union.

All political news in the paper has been limited to approval and support of the Wallace Party. Articles have been printed without signature, and without any editorial comment to the effect that the pro-Wallace views are not those of the union membership.

No space has been provided for letters to the editor so that individual members and the locals may express their views opposing Wallace and advocating support of other parties or the formation of a Labor Party.

The resolution on the UE News was one of several submitted by the newly formed "anti-administration" caucus of the local.

### GROUP PRESENTS PROGRAM

This caucus recently elected four of the local's ten delegates to the convention on the basis of a program advocating: Constructive opposition to the Wallace third party; for opening the UE News to all union views; repeal of the Taft-Hartley Law; and keeping the UE in the CIO.

This is the first time in many years in Local 107 that an election slate has been based on a program. The introduction of the convention resolutions by the new caucus serves notice that it intends to carry through its campaign promises. The incumbent local leadership presented no resolutions to the local for adoption and presentation to the convention.

While the resolution condemning the UE News centered around lack of democracy in the union press, resentment was also expressed against the active participation of the UE leaders (notably president Fitzgerald) in the Wallace movement to the extent of obvious neglect of union duties.

In the course of this discussion Francis Bradley, business agent of Local 107, announced that he had withdrawn as a congressional candidate on the Progressive Party ticket, partly to forestall locally the development of any feeling similar to that expressed regarding Fitzgerald's activity.

### HIT TRUMAN SUPPORT TOO

A resolution was also passed condemning the CIO News likewise for its presentation of political news.

The CIO's publication implicitly supports Truman.

Opponents of the resolution denied that there were any rumors of the UE splitting from its parent organization and said they saw no need for the local to reaffirm its stand on CIO unity.

The local rejected, by a narrow margin, a resolution to condemn the Wallace Party. The maker of the motion refused to motivate his action and thus lost a certain amount of support.

At the close of the meeting, the comment was made from the floor that Local 107 was no longer concerned with collective bargaining but was indulging in political "field days." This accusation is only true in a very limited sense, for on pure trade-unionism issues the local is one of the most aggressive and most effective in the entire CIO (as has been demonstrated in its recent walkouts over contract negotiations and loyalty purges). Also the local has been one of the country's most democratic.

Ardent exponents of "independent" political action have tried to capture the Democratic Party and more recently carried on a serious flirtation with the Wallace third party. Not a single pamphlet or leaflet has been issued by the local to educate the vast portion of the membership on the political needs of the union.

### AN EDITORIAL

## No Witch-hunters!

By a curious "coincidence" that should puzzle no one, the House Labor Subcommittee which is engaged in "investigating communism in trade unions," headed by Rep. Kersten (R., Wis.), announces that it is turning its attention to the United Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers on Thursday. It just happens that the UE national convention is scheduled to start a few days later.

There can be only one mind in the UE with regard to the intervention in the life of the union by these reactionary snoopers. And that is a stern injunction addressed to them: **Keep your hands off the union movement!**

These articles in this issue of LABOR ACTION on the problems facing the UE should leave no doubt as to where we stand on the issue of Stalinist domination of that union and the great injuries it has wrought. These government labor-baiters merely want to use the issue of CP domination in order to take a swat at all labor in general and at labor militancy in particular. It is our firm principle that labor must clean its own house. It can't contract that job over to the agencies of a government which has passed and is enforcing a Taft-Hartley Law, which has brought the strikebreaking injunction back to

### ACTION NEEDED

However, it must be admitted by even the most loyal of union members that over a period of the last several years—during which time Local 107 has been officially on record for a Labor Party—the great amount of discussion on the union floor on political issues has resulted in absolutely no concrete action on the part of the local to advance either the organization or the education needed for the formation of such a party.

Up to the present, refusal to sign has afforded the Stalinists the opportunity to strike a heroic pose, to make the gesture of being "militant." They were able to contrast themselves with others in the labor movement who were labelled as cowards and conservatives. They exhibited themselves as the only intransigent opponents of the Taft-Hartley Act. In short, they found a cheap way to cover themselves with the glory of being "fighters."

One of the tasks of the new caucus will be to arouse and inform the membership of the needs of the union and to break the Westinghouse local away from the confines of "pure and simple" unionism.

## Leaders Harm Union By Affidavit Policy

There are now many indications that the Stalinist-dominated General Executive Board of the UE will reverse its present stand and sign the Taft-Hartley affidavits sometime within the next year, in order to give the UE access to the machinery of the National Labor Relations Board.

After the November national election is out of the way, the Stalinists will buckle down to the job of trying to restabilize the position of their own machine in the UE by a series of measures which will probably include such signing of the affidavits.

### SOME PREDICTIONS

To relieve the pressure, the Stalinists will, after November, refrain from using the UE name, finances, power and publications as a part of the Wallace party machine in as flagrant a manner as in the past. More time and emphasis will be given to an attempt to show that the UE leaders are concerned with the simple bread-and-butter trade-union problems of wages, working conditions, and union security. This will be combined with their usual totalitarian methods of intimidating the opposition by threats, removal from office on framed-up charges, and discharges in connivance with the employers.

The decision to sign will, of course, be made in close consultation with the Communist Party. Discussions are now going on in the upper levels of the Communist Party and its trade-union bureau with regard to the problem of signing in certain instances, and as to the advisability of revamping the general policy of all Stalinist-controlled unions on the question of the affidavits. The tiny Farm Equipment Union, tightly controlled by the Stalinists, has already signed.

If the UE Stalinist leadership decides to sign, a considerable reshuffling will be made to take certain individuals out of posts where they are constitutionally labelled "officers." In other posts they can effectively serve the machine without having to sign the affidavits.

As always, the decision of the Stalinist leadership will be made on this question without reference to the interests of American labor, the union or its members, but solely from the viewpoint of the private needs of the Communist Party.

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And they accomplished all of this without actually striking a single blow. For it is a plain fact that refusal to sign the affidavits does not in any way undermine, weaken, modify or interfere with the Taft-Hartley Act or its functioning, under conditions where it is only an isolated gesture.

### POLICY HURT UNION

The refusal to sign the affidavits also served as a substitute for a genuine fight against the Taft-Hartley Act. The Stalinists bar an effective campaign against the Taft-Hartley Act, since that would require the organizing of independent political action of labor through a Labor Party, rather than a Stalinist-controlled third party whose chief function is serving as a lever to influence American foreign policy in a more pro-Russian direction.

Of course, the policy of not signing has greatly injured the membership of the UE and its locals by depriving them of the chance to use many of the legal rights labor still retains even under the onerous provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act. This policy necessitated a tremendous additional expenditure of time, money and energy by the union and its membership as a result of the many struggles rendered more complicated and more difficult by failure to fully utilize all legal bargaining rights. It has resulted in the loss of many shops and the failure to organize many new ones. It has resulted in the diversion of energy and attention from the genuine fight for labor's rights and interests to the false issue of signing or not signing the affidavits.

But the Stalinists considered all this a small price to pay for the chance to appear militant without actually launching any large-scale fight.

In the light of the fact that refusal to sign affidavits contributed nothing to overthrowing the Taft-Hartley Act, Matles, Emspak, Fitzgerald and the other national leaders who lay down the line in the UE have been unable to explain what motivates their refusal to sign.

Instead, they raised a whole series of false arguments implying that there are no circumstances under which any union gains any practical advantage from using what legal rights are left under the Taft-Hartley Act. However, these arguments have been answered by the loss of several UE shops that could have been retained within the UE if the affidavits had been signed, and collective bargaining elections had been made use of.

While the majority of the UE locals may be able to retain their positions without recourse to the NLRB machinery, it is evident that there will be many locals that will find themselves in a critical position as a result of failure to use their full rights under the law.

### POLICY BOOMERANGS

In new shops, for example, UE locals faced by the intervention of another union must go through the complicated, confusing and dangerous procedure of urging workers to vote "no union" and then striking for bargaining rights. In such cases, the right to appear on the ballot tremendously facilitates the fight for bargaining rights.

In addition, no UE local can now legally obtain a union shop clause in any contract. This necessitates a lengthy and cumbersome procedure, involving the signing of individual checkoff cards by every member, as a substitute for the standard union-shop clause, even where the employer has been compelled to acquiesce. Compare this with the procedure of other unions, which have won 99 per cent of all NLRB union shop elections and thereby facilitated their winning of the union shop and strengthening of the union.

The Stalinists in the UE have followed a policy that has multiplied the dangers and difficulties faced by the membership in every local.

Now that this policy is beginning to boomerang in the loss of too many locals and too large a section of the membership, as well as in the loss of many prospective members, the Stalinists are considering a change.

The convention delegates should not permit the decision to be made in the private chambers of the Kremlin clique. The delegates should order the national leadership to sign the affidavits so that locals can make use of all legal means they find necessary for maintaining and expanding the union. Such a demand must be linked to the program set forth in LABOR ACTION as the only effective means for defeating the Taft-Hartley Law.