

UAW Convention Faces Issue Of Political Crisis

All Questions Lead to Washington; Only Answer Is Labor's Own Party

By Joseph Andrews

Delegates to the 13th annual CIO United Auto Workers convention which convenes April 1 to 5 in Cleveland, meet at a time of political crisis for the American labor movement. They will weigh problems which involve no less than the whole future of the working class.

THE MAJOR ISSUE

The major question before the convention is this: how to protect the living standards, working conditions and organizations of labor against the Big Business-dictated policies of the Truman administration.

When the United Labor Policy Committee split with the Wage Stabilization Board, and then with all the war mobilization agencies, the labor leaders took a big step forward. Labor cannot fight against the wage freeze, runaway prices, soak-the-poor taxes, uncontrolled rent increases, threatened conscription of labor, inadequate housing, and government strikebreaking, while the union leaders serve as window-dressing for the Truman-Wilson anti-labor program.

The convening of a national labor conference of AFL, CIO and independent unions, lacking though it was in rank and file representation, was nevertheless a progressive step toward mobilizing the powerful forces of labor against the Big Business-government offensive.

But the break with government agencies and the labor conference in Washington still do not answer the question: where do we go from here?

It is necessary to face two facts squarely and to draw the correct conclusions.

MAIN PROBLEMS POLITICAL

First, the economic position of labor can no longer be protected by pure and simple trade union methods. Gains made in struggle against the corporations are stolen from the workers by legislation, and executive rulings in Washington. The greatest dangers to the workers are the destruction of their living standards and the weakening of the unions themselves, through the political domination of Big Business.

These are political issues. They can only be fought on the political plane.

Second, labor does not have a single genuine spokesman in Congress. Truman's 1948 "Fair Deal" promises have all been betrayed. Congress is completely

dominated by anti-labor elements. Truman's executive agencies are packed with corporation executives and financiers.

Thus, at the very time when all of labor's problems lead to Washington, the unions have no independent political voice. That is the end result, today so clearly demonstrated, of the policy of depending upon Democrat and Republican "friends of labor."

A LABOR PARTY

The burning need is the formation of an independent labor party, which can mobilize the potentially gigantic political strength of the working people.

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Howard Lerner Runs for Michigan Board of Regents

DETROIT — Howard Lerner, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Regent of the University of Michigan, spoke March 18 at Budd local 306, Turnstedt Unit of local 174, and Dodge local 3, of the UAW-CIO. In his speech Lerner supported the recent labor walkout from the Wage Stabilization Board and its criticism of the "legalized robbery being perpetrated upon the American workers."

"Hand in hand with legal and illegal blackjacking of American workers," Lerner said, "has come a usurpation of democratic rights. Who has forgotten how war was started in violation of the constitution — which gives Congress the right to declare war. This not only violates the law, but tramples upon the sentiments of the people."

AGAINST KOREAN WAR

A recent public opinion poll showed that the great majority of Detroiters were against the Korean war and favored immediate withdrawal of troops.

The audiences at the local union meetings listened intently as Comrade Lerner said, "As regent of the University of Michigan I would teach the youth the basic right of American citizens to decide whether the country should go to war or not."

Workers of the World, Unite!

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United Labor Parley Blasts Profiteer-Rule in Washington

AUTO WORKERS CAN SHOW THE WAY

An Editorial

Delegates to the United Automobile Workers Cleveland convention should carefully estimate the run-off election results at Ford Local 600.

Joe Hogan, running for this local presidency for the first time, campaigned on a program whose two main points were: 1. End the Korean war. 2. Build a labor party. Against a well-oiled machine backed by the International officers, Hogan received 16,188 votes to incumbent Carl Stellato's 16,664. Only 239 votes determined Stellato's hairline victory.

The secret of Hogan's surprisingly strong showing is his program, which expresses both the needs and the wishes of the rank and file.

One out of two Ford workers showed he understands the connection between "Operation Slaughter" against the Korean people and "Operation Big Steal" against the American people. Big Business is behind both. It profits from both.

The Korean war was initiated without consultation of the Congress or the consent of the American people. Every poll recently conducted shows that the great majority want to stop the Korean war now, want the troops brought home.

American workers and the majority of the middle class on fixed incomes, are all suffering the consequences of Korea. The Truman-Wilson program preparing for all-out war is aimed at unloading the ever-increasing costs of militarization upon the backs of the people.

If labor wants to lead, as it must, the struggle of the people against the costs of war, it must oppose the war itself. The best means of expressing these anti-war sentiments is the demand for a national referendum on the use of U.S. troops on foreign fields. This demand would rally tens of millions behind labor. Let the people decide on the issue of peace and war.

A Program of Action

But a slogan alone is not enough. To show that labor is serious, concrete actions must be taken to give political leadership to the vast majority who oppose the Wall Street dominated administration and Congress program.

This requires an independent labor party — a demand which the Ford workers demonstrated in their recent election is one that will inspire the rank and file.

Mobilized on the political field as an independent force, armed with a militant anti-war program, labor could emerge as the undisputed leader of the American common people against the Big Business war lords.

This is the way to stop inflation, prevent unbridled profiteering, protect living standards and defend free labor from the threatening regimentation by the big brass and anti-labor politicians who dominate both the Democrat and Republican parties.

The auto workers can show the way!

It is time to speak out boldly.

For a national referendum on peace and war! For an independent labor party!



Mazey Hits Cover-up of Truman's Role

By George Lavan

WASHINGTON, D. C., March 21 — American Labor met here today in unity and delivered a condemnation of Big Business control of government unprecedented in U.S. history. At the United Labor Conference were seven hundred delegates from city and state organizations and international unions of the American Federation of Labor, the Congress of Industrial Organizations, the rail unions and the Machinists — practically all organized labor except the United Mine Workers and the operating rail unions. The conference voiced its unanimous determination to break the monopoly control by the corporations of the mobilization program.

INSPIRED BY UNITY

Delegates were obviously delighted with the AFL-CIO solidarity in the present struggle. They were not seated by organization but intermingled throughout the great auditorium. Every reference by speakers to the historic significance of the united meeting — the first since 1935 when labor split on AFL and CIO lines — evoked genuine enthusiasm.

Highlights of the conference were speeches by UAW International Secretary-Treasurer Emil Mazey, and by Ed Wells of the Knoxville, Tennessee Central Labor Union.

BLAMES TRUMAN

"One phase of the problem has not been adequately covered here today," Mazey said. "Truman was elected on a fair deal program — I respectfully submit that the president has made but feeble attempts to put that program into effect. And we are getting a raw deal today. Truman has the responsibility of removing C. E. Wilson. The President can't escape his share of responsibility for the mess today."

Wells declared, "The speeches yesterday and today have been fine. But the big question that arises here today is what can we do to be effective about the information we are getting. I am not at all satisfied despite what has gone on here today that we have steered the labor movement to what it wants to accomplish. We've got to work on the government and on the Truman administration. The Truman administration is delicately balanced in its power in this country. It's in power by the skin of its teeth. If United Labor is going to walk out of the Truman administration and out of the Democratic Party then we are going to get somewhere. The least we can do is get the Central Labor Unions and the State Federations of Labor to pass resolutions for a Democratic Labor Party or a Farmer-Labor Party!"

LABOR PARTY
No sooner had the words "Labor Party" left the speaker's mouth than a loud voice cried out: "Mr. Chairman He's out of order! He's speaking about a Labor Party!"

To this, the Knoxville delegate belligerently shouted back: "So what? Are you a Republican?"

A Declaration of Principles, presented to the conference and unanimously adopted, states:

"We are shocked by the cruel disregard being shown for the interests of every-day American families. We are shocked by the privilege and favoritism bestowed upon a single group.

"This special privilege is apparent for all to see in the ineffective price control program, in the tight wage freeze, in credit controls, in the deterioration of rent control, in the misdirection of civilian manpower authority.

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Joseph Hansen Flails Minnesota McCarthyite

By Harold Kent

MINNEAPOLIS, March 14 — A forum featuring Joseph Hansen and State Senator Fay Child was held on the University of Minnesota campus today. Before a large and interested audience of students and faculty members the representative of scientific socialism and Minnesota's own version of Senator Joe McCarthy took up the cudgels over "The Trend of Radical Thought in America." The spokesman for socialism carried off all the honors.

The audience laughed when Child reiterated all the absurd charges made by Senator Joe McCarthy that the Truman administration is harboring "radicals" in top government posts. Child named Sidney Hillman as the one man most responsible for this development. He named Frankfurter, Keyserling, Acheson and others as "radicals" leading the country toward socialism.

Child then trained his guns on "radical influence" on the campus. He named Isaac M. Kolthoff, chief of analytical chemistry, as one of the radicals, because Kolthoff has lent his support to the defense of civil liberties.

LITTLE SYMPATHY
Child, who is a renegade from the Farmer-Labor party, is making a frenzied attempt to blot out his "past" and to prove that he is the best red-baiter in the business. His witch-hunting found little sympathy among the students.

Brewer adds in another dispatch that "basically, the Barcelona situation has not changed... all the causes of the crisis remain... there is bound to be further trouble... the next time it may well be more serious."

One fact of greatest significance is that Franco did not dare to call out regular army troops. The commander in the area "confined his troops to their barracks saying the two-day strike was not an army matter," reported the Associated Press. Instead Franco had to send special marines in five warships and 13,000 special police and Civil Guards by train and plane to Barcelona from hundreds of miles away. It is evident that Franco does not consider his army conscripts reliable.

This bears out a report made almost two months ago, on Jan. 27, by C. L. Sulzberger, chief foreign correspondent of the N. Y. Times. He revealed "unrest is growing in Spain's Army because of... low pay and rising prices" and that "an important Spanish general" said "that he could not be sure of the Army's loyalty if full mobilization involving all elements of the population were to be ordered."

Without a reliable army, Franco is vulnerable. The masses know it. The days of his regime are numbered. Only Washington's aid in money and arms can prolong his evil, brutal rule.

In sharp contrast to this, Joe Hansen's speech was received with quiet attentiveness. Hansen was introduced as a representative of radical thought. He lost no time in proclaiming his radical philosophy. Radicals are always in the forefront of social progress, he said. In the revolutionary days, the radicals led the fight for American freedom and independence and in the 1800's the radicals took the lead in the struggle to abolish slavery.

Today's radicals, he said, are "fighting the outmoded social system of capitalism. As long as it exists, we will continue to have depressions, wars and fascism."

GROWTH OF MCCARTHYISM
Hansen said that psychiatrists would advise us to humor the type of mentality represented by Child and McCarthy. "But we can't do that now," he said, "because that type of mentality is dominating our government at the present time. The power of the McCarthy's is growing bigger and bigger."

Hansen traced the dangerous

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NO CRIES OF WELCOME FOR U.S. 'LIBERATORS'

After U.S. forces reentered the rubble of Seoul, South Korean capital, we were again treated to reports about how the populace "welcomed" their "liberators." An Associated Press dispatch claimed "old men wept unashamed. Women hugged and kissed us... squealing children fought to touch us."

Another, opposite and more true-sounding report comes from Gordon Walker, Chief Far Eastern Correspondent of The Christian Science Monitor. "No more than a handful of the former population of 1,500,000 remains to comb over the ruins and search for lost homes and families," he wrote from Seoul. And when the first patrols entered the city on March 15, "there were no shots fired nor were there any cries of welcome."

GREETED BY SILENCE

"Instead, the advancing UN soldiers were greeted with silence by sullen and resentful knots of people who were tired of the war and of constant 'liberation' and who in many cases would even prefer Communist domination to the destruction and misery which have been their constant lot for more than eight months..."

Barcelona--Foreshadow of Franco's Doom

By Art Preis

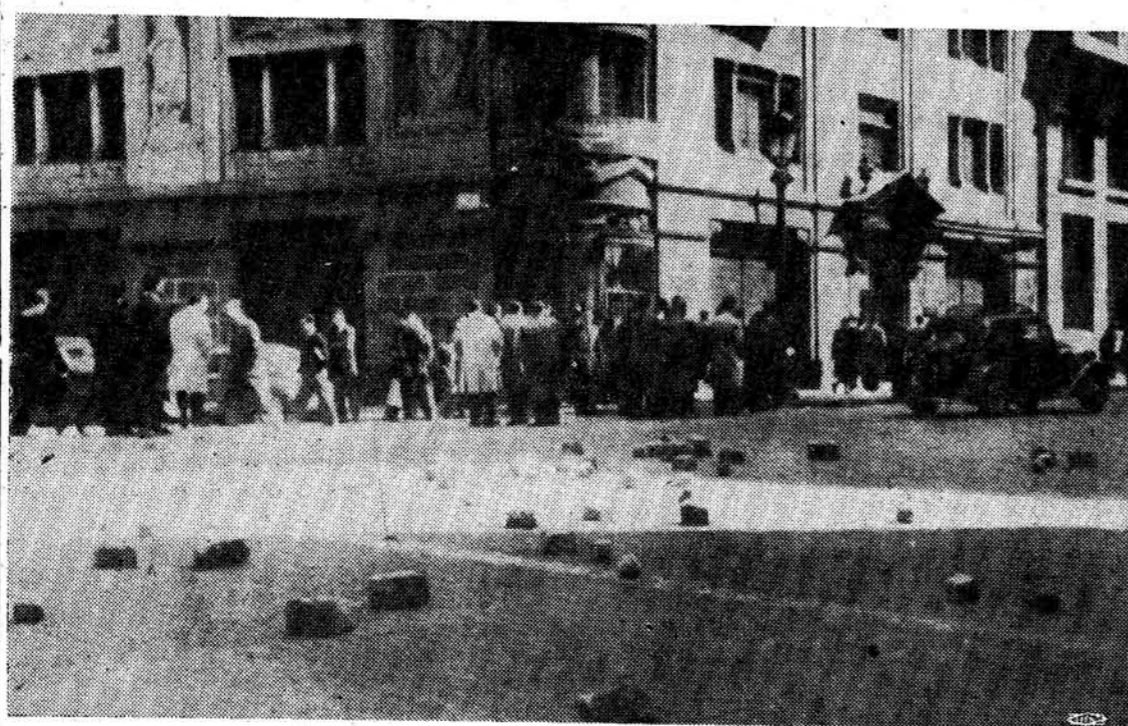
If we knew nothing more about the Barcelona events of March 12 than the bare fact that this largest industrial city in fascist Spain was paralyzed by huge mass demonstrations and a general strike of 300,000 workers, we would be justified in hailing this as the most inspiring news from Western Europe since the overthrow of Mussolini. The strike, which also affected at least four other industrial cities in Catalonia province, would be equivalent to a general walkout in the industrial heart of America from Pittsburgh to Detroit.

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

Under conditions of fascism in Spain, where the workers have lived for 12 years under the most brutal armed terrorism and repression, the Barcelona upsurge has the greatest revolutionary implications. It reveals that the spirit of revolt has become so widespread and reached such a pitch that it dares to break into the open and that Dictator Franco's repressive apparatus has been cracked and weakened.

It is these very facts which have inspired a semi-blackout of the news about Barcelona in most of the U.S. press. The Truman administration and its State Department don't want the American people to know what is going on in Spain at the very moment Washington resumes "cordial" diplomatic relations with Bloody Franco, pours millions of our money into his coffers and tries to sell the American people on the "need" to make fascist Spain a pillar of U.S. imperialism's Atlantic Pact military machine.

The Militant, which headlined the Barcelona struggle last week, has since received reports from



A view of cobble-strewn street intersection Barcelona, Spain, just after fascist police killed two demonstrators during general strike on March 12. —Wide World Photo.

various parts of the country that many newspapers did not carry a line about the Barcelona strike or at most a buried paragraph or two. We are indebted to Sam Pope Brewer, N. Y. Times correspondent, for most of the available information.

FRANCO RETREATS

Brewer reports from Spain that far from crushing the Barcelona workers, Franco has been forced to make concessions. Originally, the Franco government had announced that all strikers would be fined and all those arrested, numbering more than a thousand, would be fired, if not sent to prison. Under threat of renewed

action by the workers, the government hastily announced that although workers would be docked for time lost "they would be allowed to make up the money by working overtime." (N. Y. Times, March 18.)

It was also announced, Brewer reports, that arrested workers "would not be automatically dismissed, as originally ordered." The original order directed the dismissal of everybody arrested and did not take into account the possibility of mistaken arrests in the heat of developments. What it did not take into account actually was the workers' power to resist.

A further concession to the demands of the workers was Franco's order for the removal of the civil Governor of the province, Eduardo Baeza, whom the workers held responsible for the killing of three demonstrators and the injury to many others when Baeza sent his police to shoot and club them.

No fascist dictator can afford to make concessions under the pressure of the masses. Every such concession, even the smallest, emboldens the workers.

MOST SERIOUS BLOW

Brewer describes the Barcelona strike as "the most serious blow that the Franco regime has had to face since the civil war ended

