Fourth International

AMERICAN LABOR LEADERS

1. John L. Lewis
2. Philip Murray
3. Dave Beck
4. Walter Reuther

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Manager's Column

One of the outstanding characteristics of Marxists is their capacity to combine theory with practice. They are not cloistered observers; they are energetic participants in the battles of the working class. In periods of great upsurge of the labor movement, they invariably demonstrate their ability to lead workers in decisive struggles to better their living conditions and advance toward socialism. And in times of relative lull and passivity, Marxists demonstrate this living unity of theory and practice by turning their energies to such seemingly prosaic tasks as getting Marxist publications into those places where they will do the most good.

This was well illustrated at the Fourteenth Convention of the Socialist Workers Party, which was recently held in New York. After a rounded Marxist discussion of the new economic and political developments that have occurred in the past two years, the delegates turned to the concrete tasks facing the socialist movement in America. One of the decisions, we are sure, will interest readers of **Fourth International.** It was a pledge to help the theoretical magazine of American Trotskyism to expand its circulation. A similar pledge was made for **The Militant,** America's leading socialist weekly.

James P. Cannon summed up the general sentiment. In this period, he said, increasing the circle of readers of socialist literature is a "No. 1" task for all who believe in the socialist future of mankind. We must "rediscover" the socialist press and "restore it to its rightful place at the head of socialist activities."

* * *

Socialists in other countries hold **The Militant** and **Fourth International** in highest esteem, said Comrade Cannon. And both publications enjoy a solid reputation for their integrity, accuracy and searching analyses of the great problems facing the labor movement. But in America "we perhaps have them too close to our eyes to know how good they are." We tend to take them for granted. One of the consequences is an unnecessary drop in circulation.

"I don't know whether that is because some of the comrades encountered too much difficulty or whether some of them got so 'theoretical' and 'political' they didn't have time for this humdrum activity."

In the old days, socialists put promotion of Marxist literature at the head of their planned activities. Comrade Cannon suggested revival of this socialist practice. The tendency to passively accept resistance to the program and literature of socialism "can only be overcome by systematic work planned in every branch."

"I consider it one of the great glories of several of the branches that in face of all this tidal wave of reaction which has been rolling over us, they have systematized and organized their work of distributing literature and kept it going by main strength and effort. Although it sometimes now takes four times or ten times as much work to get a subscription or to sell ten copies, where they have recognized the political importance of this work in preparation for the future, they have made good scores."

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Comrade Cannon stressed the need for the leading socialists in each locality to set the example by participating actively in the planning and execution of this No. 1 practical activity.

"One of the important messages for the delegations to take back is that distribution of socialist literature goes on the top of the agenda of every branch, organized not by delegating it to some comrades but by making it an activity of the entire branch with the most important party leaders participating in it."

These remarks, we are sure, will be appreciated by every one of our readers aware of Comrade Cannon's wealth of experience in building the revolutionary socialist press in America.

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The September-October issue of **Fourth International** featuring a number of articles on the theme "Asia in Revolt," was well received. "This issue is hot stuff," writes **Dan Roberts** of **Seattle.** "Please rush us another 25 copies immediately." Comrade Roberts found the articles on the civil war in Korea and its relation to the imperialist drive toward a new world conflagration of great value in preparing for a debate on the subject on the campus.

From **St. Paul, Winifred Nelson** also ordered more copies. "The comrades are selling them right and left and we're all out again!"

Al Lynn of **Los Angeles** reports "there is a lot of interest in this issue on Asia and we anticipate a good sale. One newsstand sold out 15 copies within a week or so and I brought him 10 more."

And **Frank Roberts** of **Chicago** says, "You can best judge the reaction to the FI by the fact that we are increasing our bundle. I think that this issue on the Asian revolution will be a permanent part of our literature. Starting in January, we are going to start pushing the FI on newsstands and at bookstores."

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From **West Bengal, India, H. S. Chakra** writes: "We happily inform you that the Leon Trotsky memorial issue of the **FI** created a great sensation among the local people." A study circle is being formed, he says, "to discuss world events and Marxism. Let your literature be our guide."

FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

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American Labor Leaders

BY THE EDITORS

In the following pages our readers will find portraits of four prominent union leaders: John L. Lewis, chief of the United Mine Workers and founder of the CIO; Philip Murray, head of the steelworkers and his successor as leader of the CIO; Walter Reuther, president of the United Auto Workers and a likely candidate as next head of the CIO; and Dave Beck, a typical representative of the AFL craft union hierarchy. Although far from complete, this group strikingly illustrates the kind of leadership holding sway over organized labor in the United States today.

The last two decades have witnessed two remarkable developments in this country. One is the explosive growth of monopoly capitalism with its swift rise to world supremacy. The other is the equally explosive expansion of trade unionism. These processes are intimately interlinked and the unfolding relations between them are bound up not only with the future of the United States but also with the destiny of all mankind.

The upsurge of the CIO marked the greatest advance in the history of American labor. It overturned the open-shop regime in basic industry, compelled the corporations to recognize unions in their strongholds and to deal with them.

Thanks to the victories of the past fifteen years and their present membership of sixteen millions, the unions today possess colossal powers for mobilization in any contest with employers. Assured of the allegiance of the ranks, the leaders can summon hundreds of thousands onto the field of action. This power is exhibited in every big test of strength such as the battles of the miners during the Second World War and the postwar strikes in steel, auto and other industries.

Thus the key unions have at their command more than enough forces and resources to make great gains for their members and promote their interests in every sphere of social life. As the record of the miners indicates, wherever this latent power is released and relied upon, even on the most elementary economic level, it can achieve imposing results.

Big Business is well aware of the threat to its power, profits and positions contained in this formidable strength of organized labor. The hostility and hatred of the monopolists toward the labor organization has not abated one bit and they use every available device to whittle down union strength. But, having been unable to keep the unions out of their plants, the corporations have been compelled to utilize new means of curbing the onward movements of the workers. The chief agency invoked for this purpose is the government.

The confrontation of such gigantic forces as monopolist capital and organized labor and the far-reaching economic and political effects of their collisions have impelled the government and its apparatus to intervene to an ever-increasing extent as arbitrator and regulator in their disputes.

In the craft union era the union leaders collaborated directly with the employers while the federal government interfered only in extreme cases where the conflict of the classes erupted in violent form and then it acted as an open strikebreaking arm of the industrialists.

Collaboration in New Situation

In the new relationships established by industrial unionism through the upheaval of the Thirties, the administration has time and again entered as a "friend of labor" and in the office of "impartial umpire" to shield the corporations from the full force of labor's onslaughts and pressures. The success of this new and more complex mechanism for effecting class collaboration depended upon acquiescence and cooperation from the union leaders. Where this could not be secured, as Roosevelt discovered in his dealings with the striking miners during the war, the mechanism stalled and failed.

But the bulk of the labor bureaucrats have proved only too ready to participate in this game of class collaboration. They have no taste for combat against the monopolies. Accustomed to hold back and suppress the militancy of the ranks, they succumb quickly and easily to the inevitable pressures from the capitalist magnates and the government at their service.

This habit of subservience flows from their corruption by American imperialism. The labor bureaucrats are lesser stockholders in the global enterprises of Big Business, feasting on the revenues derived from the exploitation of the workers at home and abroad by the bankers and the industrialists. Their personal privileges are princely. They enjoy huge salaries and expense accounts, hobnob with the rich and the powerful, dispose of thousands of well-paying jobs. Like Dave Beck, they live and think like big business men, feeling far more kinship with them than with the members who sustain them in office.

With personal stakes of this magnitude it is not surprising that even the most "liberal" of the top labor leaders today take it for granted that the interests of U. S. im-

perialism and the movement they direct are identical. That is why most of them have become such compliant promoters of Washington's foreign policy and militarization measures not only in their own organizations but on an international scale. The Economic Cooperation Agency commissions of the State Department are heavily staffed with these labor representatives.

Thus through their support of the policies of the capitalist-controlled government and participation in their execution, the labor officialdom is drawn into line with the monopolists and converted into defenders of their system of rule. By supporting the administration, or one or another of the two major parties, the bureaucrats seek to extend their privileges and power by soliciting favors and winning assistance from the administration, either in their controversies with the industrialists or in most instances in clashes with their own rank and file. Having no confidence in a program of independent action, they look for a higher power to win their battles.

Role of White House

Because of the vast forces set into motion by every large-scale conflict between labor and capital and because of the attitude of the bureaucracy, the White House has more and more become a prime factor in contract disputes through fact-finding boards, mediators and behind-the-scenes negotiations. The federal government has become the chief intermediary in effecting the alliance between the monopolies and the union officialdom; the officialdom, the main intermediary in fettering the labor movement to the chariot of imperialism. These are the gears in the mechanism by which the capitalists maintain their supremacy over the labor movement and prevent it from exercising its rightful role in American life and politics.

The labor bureaucrats are not simply passive supporters of the major policies of imperialism; they actively apply them in the unions. In their acquiescence in the purges of militants, the red-hunts, and restrictions on internal democracy, they function as a special type of police for the capitalist regime inside the labor organizations and are the greatest internal obstacle to the progress of the American labor movement.

The union leaders believe that they can maintain indefinitely their present coalition with imperialist Washington and their policies of collaboration with the corporations. They expect to travel hand-in-hand with Washington and Wall Street on the supposition that they can serve two masters equally well at the same time: labor and its worst enemies.

But these rosy expectations of enduring harmony are bound to run up against hard realities. U. S. imperialism and its bureaucratic appendages prosper together. But whatever unsettles the one, upsets the other. The instability of U. S. capitalism on the one hand and the irrepressible vitality of the unions on the other periodically disrupt the relations between the industrialists and the workers, throw out of gear the complex machinery of class collaboration and frustrate the schemes of the corporations, government and union officials for maintaining passivity.

Despite all efforts to yoke them together, capital and labor keep heading in different directions and their interests clash at every vital point. Every important contract negotiation drives this lesson home. The anti-labor legislation and reduced living standards caused by inflation and higher taxes accentuate the antagonism between the workers and the capitalist rulers.

A similar divergence of interests manifests itself in foreign affairs. While the working people ardently desire peace, Wall Street plunges into colonial wars and speeds preparations for global atomic war. While the workers are democratic-minded, Washington and the Pentagon embrace Franco, Chiang Kai-shek and half-a-dozen other dictators and butchers of labor.

Today, amidst encircling reaction, widespread repression and the artificial arms-boom prosperity, the union bureaucracy appears extremely powerful and the prospects of triumphant resistance to its regime quite dim. But during the Twenties the AFL moguls seemed no less strongly entrenched. The ensuing social crisis which shook American capitalism from top to bottom likewise weakened the old-line bureaucrats and created conditions for the emergence and victory of the new industrial unionism.

New Tasks Require New Leaders

After 15 years, the development of their union movement has confronted the industrial workers with new tasks. The most urgent is to bring forward a new leadership from the ranks to replace the capitalist-minded bureaucracies on top of the CIO and AFL. This new type of leadership will resemble in many respects the heroic militants and radicals who besieged the open shops, defeated the industrialists, and built the foundations of the present power of American labor during the Thirties. But it must be as different from the present bureaucracy as the CIO was from the old AFL. The new leadership must proceed on different premises and be guided by different ideas and aims.

1. It will recognize that the basic interests of monopoly capitalism and labor cannot be harmonized and that it is necessary to act at all times with the workers against the corporations, and not play along with the corporations to the detriment of the workers.
2. On the industrial arena it will foster reliance on the massed power of union organization and militant methods of struggle to win demands, instead of appealing to the "fairness" of the employers or supposedly impartial arbitrators.
3. It will cut loose from all ties with capitalist parties or their politics and sponsor a mass party of the working people as the indispensable political arm of organized labor.
4. It will teach distrust of all capitalist agencies and remain independent of the capitalist government.
5. It will safeguard and cherish internal union democracy.
6. Above all, it will understand that the goal of the labor movement goes beyond the betterment of labor's positions within a system of exploitation which cannot help but worsen them. Trade unionism, if it is to survive and remain independent, must become a school wherein the advanced workers are prepared to take charge of the government and economy of the whole country.

To fight effectively against the evils of monopoly capitalism or even to fight at all to safeguard their interests against the capitalist class, the ranks of labor will find themselves thrown into increasing opposition to the policies and domination of the officialdom. Any new forward movement of the industrial workers, arousing and radicalizing them, will necessarily be accompanied by a growing struggle against the conservative bureaucracy. The progress of this struggle is the key to a new and higher stage in the labor movement of America.

John L. Lewis

By HARRY FRANKEL

John L. Lewis occupies a unique position in the labor movement today. Leader of a bare three percent of the numerical strength of the American unions, he is the unchallenged pioneer in new developments in the industrial struggle. Autocrat supreme, he sits at the top of a bureaucratic machine of the traditional repressive type, yet his words and actions more closely represent the moods and interests of the mass of American workers than those of leaders in far more democratic unions. Isolated and scorned by the whole "official" labor movement, he everywhere enjoys the highest esteem of the union ranks. Government, industrialists, newspapers, politicians of both major parties, and other "labor leaders" conspire against him and his union, which nevertheless remains more powerful than ever before.

The attempts of labor historians and Lewis biographers to unravel the "mysteries" of Lewis are doomed to failure so long as they hinge their analysis on purely personal interpretations: Lewis is an "egomaniac," Lewis is "power-mad," Lewis is "stubborn." An epoch of history cannot be understood in terms of one man's characteristics. However impressive the individual may be, he lives and works in a society shaped by far more powerful forces than he can singlehandedly overcome. Lewis has placed a deep personal stamp on the labor movement of America, but that mass labor movement and its environment have shaped Lewis and marked out the fundamental course of his own development. The "mysteries" of John L. Lewis are to be deciphered by understanding the development of American labor over the past thirty years, and first of all the United Mine Workers which is Lewis's solid base.

Hazards of Coal Mining

The United Mine Workers of America is an organization of men in one of the most hazardous and difficult of all occupations. The death and accident rate in the American mines is the highest in the world. During the years 1913-22. 4.4 persons were killed per 1000 man years in the coal mines of the United States and Canada. In only two other countries, Germany and South Africa, did the rate exceed 2 per 1000.

The death rate now is almost four men per million tons of coal, which means that in an average year almost 2000 men are killed outright in the mines. The frequency of accidents for bituminous coal is about three times that of industry in general. Accidents in the mines are far more severe, so that total time lost in accidents is more than six times that for industry in general. The miner can figure, each morning when he goes into the pits, that his chances of escaping unharmed through the year are slightly better than 9 to 1.

While recent struggles of the miners have raised their rate of pay to one of the highest in manufacturing industries, the annual earnings for a miner are more severely limited than in other industries. The mine industry suffers badly from that peculiarly capitalist plague known as "overproduction." While the capacity of the industry to produce has at times approached one billion tons, average production is less than half that figure, and depression production fell to less than one-third of that. Thus, even in "good times," most miners go without work for a large part of the year.

From 1923 to 1932, the industry worked at only 60.4% of capacity. In 1929, the best year of "normal" American capitalist prosperity, the average earnings of a coal miner were $588. By 1933, at the depth of the depression, average earnings dropped to $235. For this munificent sum, the miner took his 9 to 1 gamble on life or death.

Miners' Militancy

Working under the most hazardous conditions at back-breaking toil, for an industry which keeps them perpetually pauperized, the miners are naturally inclined to make a militant response to their exploitation. There are additional factors. The miners are hemmed together in tiny rural settlements, which tends to increase their bonds of solidarity and strengthen their resistance to bourgeois pressures. The miners could never have been organized save in an industrial union, and the mine union has been an industrial union from the first.

Nor have Jim Crow locals been permitted. The miners would have found their approach to the Southern fields permanently barred by such a policy and without the Southern fields, the union would be crippled and in constant danger. Thus the mine union has been from the first a militant, industrial union, organized without regard to racial lines. With all its shortcomings, the UMW stood head and shoulders above all other unions of the AFL in the earlier days of trade unionism.

This is the domain in which John L. Lewis sought and won hegemony.

Lewis's career began as an administrative assistant in the old mine union and AFL. His talents, his speaking ability, his aggressiveness early brought him to the attention of Samuel Gompers, who appointed him legislative representative for the AFL in 1911. Later returning to the United

Mine Workers, he was elected Vice President in 1918. From this time forward, the leadership of the UMW fell to Lewis since Frank Hayes, nominal head of the union, was a drinking man who left the actual running of the union to Lewis.

Lewis and His First Battle

Shortly after his election as Vice President, Lewis was flung into a battle of great scope. The national coal strike of 1919 was the prototype for the miners' battles to come. Lewis, presiding over the UMW national convention of September 1919, faced a stormy convention representing a rebellious membership. The miners, restive under the wartime wage freeze, were pinched and starved by the rising prices of the war and postwar period. They demanded government ownership of the mines in a convention resolution passed by the 2000 delegates with only one dissenting vote.

The Nation reported: "The leadership, its reputation staked on ability to negotiate contracts and make the miners live up to them, was assailed as conservative, reactionary, 'pets of the coal operators'." We must remember that the mine union was then a far more democratic organization than today, UMW conventions were stormy, delegates were organized into caucuses and factions representing varying points of view, the left-wing labor groups were well represented, and the membership was noted for the scant respect with which it could treat the leaders.

Thus Lewis was compelled to serve as spokesman for the rank and file of the UMW in its most militant heyday. The September convention called for a 50% pay increase (from $5.00 to $7.50 per day) and other subsidiary demands. The coal operators were buttressed by the federal administration which maintained the fiction that the First World War was still going on. President Wilson employed as his personal representative during the coal dispute none other than Attorney General Palmer of "Red Raid" notoriety. A federal anti-strike injunction was sought and obtained, and in the face of this injunction, the miners struck. The pattern of future battles may be clearly seen.

Lewis was flung into a terrific class battle before he had scarcely gotten his bearings at the top of the UMW. He led the union in maintaining the strike in defiance of the federal injunction for more than five weeks. When he called off the strike, he did so with the statement, "I will not fight my government, the greatest government on earth." This was four days after the indictment of 84 UMW leaders under the injunction. The pay increase won by the strike amounted to about $1.50 a day. Lewis had been christened in his first big battle, had felt the pressure of government and operators on one side, and of the vigorous ranks of the union on the other.

The Sequel to the 1919 Strike

The sequel to the mine strike of 1919 was a lesson for Lewis. Attorney General Palmer was indiscreet enough to take the announcement by Lewis of acceptance of terms as the finis to the strike, although union militants were proclaiming that the strike would not be over until the Indianapolis ratifying convention, summoned for December 10, had made its decision. On the morning of December 10 Palmer wired Wilson: "The miners will meet promptly at two o'clock and will promptly acquiesce in the President's plan." This assignment of the miners' ranks to the role of a rubber stamp for Lewis caused him no end of difficulty. Palmer was compelled to disavow his wire as a misquote, and Lewis faced a bitter and rebellious convention. Only the feverish efforts of the machine, combined with the brilliant oratorical talent of the young Vice President, brought the convention to a ratification. Even so, "wildcat strikes" swept the coal fields for months after the settlement, with a portion of the miners succeeding in adding 7 percent to the agreed settlement on wages.

The atmosphere of strife in which Lewis made his 1919 debut on the national scene was to surround Lewis constantly during the three subsequent decades. Lewis is often capable of learning from experience. He learned much from the experience of 1919. The ranks taught him in 1919 that they are in the unions for purposes of struggle. Lewis has always taken this militancy into account. He has often reflected it, and no less often betrayed it, especially in his period of arrant class-collaboration during the Twenties and early Thirties, but he has never omitted it from his calculations.

His Bureaucratic Machine

While Lewis has shown himself in recent years to be a union leader who reflects, to a greater degree than any other at the top, the capacity for combativity and class independence of the American workers, he has supplemented this with another feature that has characterized his rule in the mine union. Lewis takes no chances with his personal power. He has attemped to deliver the goods for the workers who have followed him (to the best of his understanding and within narrow trade union limits), but he does not leave to chance the fortunes of his personal rule. He has built a bureaucratic machine which is intended to hold power *whether it can deliver the goods or not.* This is the task which occupied him during the Twenties and the early Thirties.

The Lewis machine in the present International and down through the districts of the UMW was once only one of several factions in the UMW. During the Twenties, Lewis controlled the top posts in a turbulent federation made up of relatively autonomous, districts and factions: the hard-coal miners of eastern Pennsylvania, the Illinois District dominated by Frank Farrington, a powerful and unscrupulous fighter similar in many ways to Lewis himself, the Kansas District led by Alex Howat. The left wing factions headed by the Socialist and Communist parties and other groupings fought a bitter battle over the emaciated body of a dwindling union seeking to survive in a sick capitalist industry.

At one time the power of the union over which Lewis presided had almost disappeared everywhere but in the Illinois fields, and the Illinois District was controlled by Lewis's most powerful opponents. In March 1930 a convention of the insurgent districts claimed the banner of the union at a gathering in Springfield, Illinois, where 500 delegates were brought together. Lewis ventured into many of the mine fields only at the peril of his safety and was

very often prevented from speaking entirely at meetings in rebellious districts.

John Brophy, one of Lewis's union opponents, wrote bitterly in 1929: "Between then (1919) and now lies the tragedy of broken faith, lost hopes, bitter defeats and the almost total destruction of a once powerful union. . . . Smug satisfaction with itself marked the Lewis leadership."

A Justified Indictment

And the resolution adopted by the so-called "rump convention" at Springfield reviewed his record as follows: "The history of the United Mine Workers of America under the regime of John L. Lewis has been an unbroken series of defeats. The regime has thrown hundreds of thousands of our members and their families into the depths of poverty and destitution. Election stealing, convention packing, and slugging of delegates have reduced the old time democracy of the union to a ghastly farce."

This indictment was justified. But out of this degradation, with the tremendous upturn of the mass movement beginning with 1933, came a new and different chapter in the life of the mine union and in the career of its leader. This was symbolized by the fact that critic Brophy became one of his chief lieutenants in the organizing drives of the Thirties.

While Lewis assiduously built a machine during the Twenties, and scorned no method of dictatorial and bureaucratic rule, the consolidation of his power came only with the resurgence of union spirit and the great organization drive of 1933-34, which Lewis initiated, and a large part of its success must be attributed to his leadership. Bureaucratic methods alone could not secure for him unchallenged dominion of the UMW. A great union victory which gave the rank and file for the first time a degree of confidence in his leadership was required.

The largest part of the mine union is today under centralized, dictatorial rule which originated in "provisional" appointments and receiverships during the Twenties and early Thirties. District heads and organizers are appointed by the International office. (This system was carried over by Philip Murray into the Steelworkers Union, where Murray provided for the United Steelworkers of America all the defects of the United Mine Workers machine without any of the advantages.)

While Lewis is today generally accepted as "boss" in the union, the militant elements of the ranks maintain a suspicious watchfulness, and make their independence felt from time to time. The miners are quick to resent the implication that they do not make their own decisions and give public demonstrations of this feeling in case after case.

Workers Learn a Lesson

The depression of the Thirties by its catastrophic severity revolutionized the thinking of millions of workers and taught them the fundamental lesson that capitalist-owned and controlled industry cannot provide even minimum living standards for the working people. The first major conclusion drawn from this lesson by the workers was that they must build their own organizations as the only reliance in the fight for economic security. This found expression in the vast unionization of the Thirties.

The United Mine Workers seized the opportunity from the first. Where years of pounding had not succeeded in making any dent in the anti-union coal fields before, now all barriers dissolved before the anger and turmoil of the masses. Workers flocked to the UMW by the tens of thousands and made the union cause their cause. In 1933 the union had dwindled to less than 100,000 members, the treasury to $75,000. Within a few months, the UMW was built up to its solid fighting strength of half a million. Never before had the country seen anything like it.

The CIO can trace its origins to this great UMW drive which was only the first expression of the new consciousness of the mass of American workers. The months immediately following the great miners' organization drive were full of warnings to the AFL bureaucrats. Deep rumblings in the depths of the mass of the unorganized industrial workers foreshadowed great impending battles. The Minneapolis teamsters' strikes of '34, the San Francisco longshore and general strike of that year, the Toledo battles in the automotive industry showed that the tidal wave of industrial unionization was at last arriving.

Lewis saw the signs and interpreted them correctly. His assault on the AFL hierarchy and his definitive split with the old Federation demonstrate that he banked all on his interpretation of what he saw. Whatever his personal motives, it is sufficient to understand that the moves taken by Lewis along with a portion of the old AFL officialdom in 1935 were caused by the impressions made upon them by this vast and turbulent movement of the American workers.

This segment of the old AFL brought to the new movement the prestige, finances, and manifold strength of established organizations. It also brought the not inconsiderable organizing and strategic talents of John L. Lewis. The American industrial workers could have done much better, had events and past developments provided them with a Marxist leadership. They also could have done worse.

Type of Leadership Required

The industrial workers of 1935 surging into the union movement required three things of their leadership in those days:

1. They wanted leaders who would venture wholeheartedly into the mass production field with the industrial union structure.

2. They wanted leaders who were not afraid of a split with the AFL hierarchy.

3. They wanted leaders who would not interfere with the militant methods of struggle which they were choosing and which were essential to victory.

Lewis, and we may add, Lewis alone of the top hierarchy of the old AFL, supplied all three requirements. He made clear his fundamental break with craft unionism and his readiness for a split with the AFL in a series of dramatic demonstrations on the floor of the AFL convention in 1935, culminating in his "Macedonian call" speech and his physical attack on Bill Hutcheson, proceeding from there to the organization of a committee for industrial unionization and resignation from the AFL Executive Council. He made clear that he would go along in the most militant

methods of struggle during the fateful crisis days of the CIO of the General Motors strike battles of December 28, 1936 to February 11, 1937.

Lewis describes the situation at the time of the 1935 AFL convention in the following words:

> By 1935, the workers were in a state of ferment. They had arisen, after the passage of the NRA and particularly Section 7A. To them, this was a proclamation of freedom; and as the workers responded and demanded organization by the AFL, the AFL, squirming with fear, shrank from the responsibilities which the workers of the nation were literally thrusting into its hands. Instead of leadership the AFL gave them a number of chicken-livered business agents who knew nothing except collecting dues, issuing some charters, and keeping peace and harmony. Their business agents feared any kind of an upsurge as being something "radical" or, of course, dangerous. The character and convictions of these business agents were such that they could check out of their union offices on Saturday and begin work for the National Association of Manufacturers on the following Monday.
>
> The workers were seduced; they were sold down the river; they were betrayed; and only a burning passion on the part of the vast masses of the unorganized kept them from being completely filled with disgust and cynicism and running up the white flag and turning their backs on the organized labor movement. Some of them did give up; some of them were so embittered by their experience with the AFL business agents, that they swore they never wanted to see another union man again. There are parts of the steel industry which never accepted the CIO and it will take at least a new generation to wipe out the foul taste of treason which the AFL left among steel workers in 1933.
>
> By 1935 the workers, embittered, frustrated, and filled with a certain degree of hopelessness, began to hate the conservative, short-sighted, ignorant labor leadership of the American Federation of Labor almost as much as they did their own employers who were exploiting them. They were caught between two interests, both selfish and short-sighted and both grinding their hopes and dreams into dirty dust. Bill Hutcheson represented symbolically the kind of leadership in the American Federation of Labor that the workers of this country detested. It was Bill Hutcheson's supporters and associates in the AFL who successfully blocked every single move that was made in the direction of industrial unionism. All I will say is that I never walked across an aisle so slowly and so grimly as I did that day in the 1935 convention. An act of some kind, an act dramatic to the degree that it would inspire and enthuse the workers of this country was necessary. Did I say necessary? It was essential. With this in mind, I laid my plans. The 1935 convention of the American Federation of Labor was to be the scene, and Bill Hutcheson, unknowingly, was to be one of the main actors of the cast. . . (John L. Lewis, by Saul Alinsky, p. 77.)

Lewis Forms the CIO

Whether Lewis's attack on Hutcheson was premeditated or impulsive, or a combination of both, things took place as Lewis describes them. The blow was struck, serving notice to the industrial workers that their anger against the AFL was equaled by his own. The next morning Lewis gathered a group of associates in the CIO formation meeting.

The great crisis of the CIO came with the General Motors sitdowns at the opening of 1937. The surge of the auto workers was initiated by no one but the workers themselves. Lewis and his group had chosen steel as the battleground, 1936 as the year of planning, and 1937 as the year of attack. However, the workers in rubber and auto, without the union background of the steelworkers, jumped over the heads of the leaders, made 1936 and the first month of 1937 the decisive time, and the cities of Akron, Detroit, Flint, Cleveland, Toledo as the battlegrounds, while the CIO leadership had its eyes fixed upon Pittsburgh, Youngstown, Gary.

The rubber workers' and later the auto workers' assault upon the corporations was a gigantic revolutionary act, the greatest event in the history of American labor. Without asking permission of any man (including their new CIO union leaders), they occupied the plants of their chief industrial enemies, and fixed a bulldog grip on the throat of the financiers' empire. Lewis's reaction in the face of this event was truly remarkable, and serves to distinguish him from every other national trade union leader of this day. He accepted the weapon the workers had presented and fearlessly matched their tenacity in the plants with a determination of his own at the bargaining table. In so doing, of course, he merely gave to the workers that which their leadership owed them, backing which matched their courage and tenacity. But how many others have paid this debt to the ranks when the chips were down?

Did Lewis Create the CIO?

Those who picture the CIO as the "creation" of John L. Lewis are deadwrong. Lewis dove into the field of industrial organization with the timing of a master of strategy. He possesses that attribute which is so rare as to be virtually extinct in the trade union officialdom today: the willingness and ability to sense the mood of the mass of industrial workers and to draw his strategy from that mood. He has displayed this characteristic time and again. But he did not "create" the CIO. The millions of unorganized industrial workers of America created it. They caught Lewis and other leaders up in a whirlwind of action and revolt and tossed them to and fro for almost five years in the stormy winds of a proletarian hurricane. This is the fundamental truth about the birth of the CIO.

The first five years of the CIO were the height of the power of John L. Lewis. During that period, he appeared to undergo a great transformation, from an encrusted mossback to a "dynamic" and "progressive" leader. This was especially gratifying to the liberals, the Stalinists and Social Democrats, and to the Democratic Party, to which he then adhered. Lewis, having been a traditional, dictatorial AFL bureaucrat, turned over a new leaf and became the darling of the reformers of the Thirties.

However, this was not only a period of dynamic achievement in the life of Lewis. It was also the period of one of his greatest betrayals. An analysis of the circumstances of those days soon makes this manifest.

The vast, uncontrollable upsurge of the Thirties which carried Lewis to the heights had great implications for the workers of the U. S. American labor appeared to be on the verge of a new era. It seemed that finally, the American workers were about to break their ties with the capitalist political world and unfold the independent political movement of the working class. It is now common knowledge

how this development was thwarted by the Democratic Party under Roosevelt in alliance with the labor officialdom.

John L. Lewis was an active junior partner in the Roosevelt firm. He acquiesced in the betrayal with word and deed. His occasional public clashes with the administration do not negate the general role he played. Quite the contrary, his partial independence of the government on the trade union field reinforced his authority among the workers and made him the greatest single factor in swinging the CIO into line. That is why Lewis's role at that time dealt a graver blow to labor than his fiercely red-baiting, machine-building, class-collaborationist years of the Twenties.

Lewis today protests that he realized from 1937 on that he was dealing with traitorous politicians who did not want to see labor go forward. His private attitude of those days and his present hindsight do not alter the public role that he played. Granting even that he knew better, as he now claims, that does not excuse his actions but only makes them more consciously unprincipled. From 1933 to 1939 he helped to create the reformist myths of the New Deal, and when he chose to break with Roosevelt, he found himself helpless before his own collaborators and the misguided ranks of the unions.

Lewis and the Federal Administration

Nevertheless during the Thirties, despite his part in the New Deal betrayal, Lewis maintained considerable independence from the government, if not on the political, at least on the trade union field. He did not permit the administration to set limits upon the organizing campaigns of the unions. In strike battles, he mercilessly exploited the contradiction between the "liberal" phrases and strike-breaking intentions of the administration.

Other leaders have lived through the seething cauldron of the Thirties only to succumb entirely to the threats and blandishments of American capitalism. In part, as we have indicated, Lewis was shaped by the stronger forces of a more militant rank and file. But to attribute his special role in the unions *entirely* to this factor is to take a view unworthy of Marxism which places great stress upon the part played by the personal factor in class battles.

John L. Lewis is today the chief protagonist of the following idea within the union movement: that labor must break the shackles that bind it to the government apparatus and proceed to fight for its demands unhampered by any ties which would restrict it. Lewis himself tells an interesting story intended to demonstrate that this has always been his principle.

In 1919 Lewis proposed to the resolutions committee of the Buffalo convention of the AFL that a large-scale campaign be initiated to organize the unorganized workers. He immediately came face to face with opposition from Gompers. Lewis describes the incident as follows:

> I felt that here was the perfect opportunity to launch an organization drive and build the ranks of organized labor in this country. I would have organized all the unorganized coal miners through the South, West, Virginia, and other places at the time, but I was stopped when Gompers came to me and told me about the status quo agreement which he had with Woodrow Wilson which forbade any disturbance or unrest such as a union organizing drive. Gompers insisted that the agreement be respected. When Gompers told me that, I must say to you that it chilled the very marrow of my bones; and I decided right then and there that I would never permit a union or myself to get so involved in and so dependent upon a federal administration that in times of crisis the ties of loyalty and agreement and obligation to that administration would paralyze me from acting in the interests of labor as it did with Gompers in 1919. The favorable opportunities for labor to organize are precious few, and they cannot be waived at the whim of a President. Every opportunity must be exploited to the full whenever it arises. (Alinsky, **op. cit.**, p. 28.)

Let us examine other of Lewis's statements on similar themes.

> It was during the winter of 1937, when we were gripped in fatal conflict with the corporation of General Motors that I discovered the depths of deceit, rank dishonesty, and the doublecrossing character of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. (**Ibid.**, p. 130.)

> In a quiet, confidential way, he (Roosevelt) approaches one of my lieutenants, weans his loyalty away, overpowers him with the dazzling glory of the White House, and appoints him to a federal post under such circumstances that his prime loyalty shall be to the President, and only a secondary, residual one to the working-class movement from which he came. . . . You mark my words, if Franklin D. Roosevelt ever tells Sidney Hillman to break a strike, Sidney Hillman will issue the order to break a strike. . . . Sidney often told me I could never understand what it meant to a person who was an immigrant not only to be welcome in the White House but to have the President call him by his first name. (**Ibid.**, pp. 183-84.)

> Philip (Murray) has often been that way. He just gets completely flattered when he receives any attention from any national figures, and as you know, at the White House, the President will treat him like an old dirty piece of laundry, and then call him in and order him as you would a puppy. (**Ibid.**, pp. 233-34.)

What Sets Him Off from the Others

These statements, when stripped of the personal and reduced to their ideological content, could have been made by no major trade union leader other than Lewis. They are saturated with a deep contempt for any manifestation of subservience and for any loss of independence on the part of a labor leader. Take notice of the bitter reference to those who owe their "prime loyalty" to the administration and "only a secondary, residual" loyalty to the labor movement. In this one sharp and bitter sentence is summed up 99% of the superior powers of Lewis. For him, the labor movement is and must be a law unto itself. And it is a form of betrayal to appeal to any higher court than the interests of the labor movement.

It may be objected that Lewis views the interests of the labor movement in a bureaucratic-power fashion. This certainly is so. As a matter of fact, this defect saturates the whole upper crust of the labor movement today. The loyalty of Lewis is largely the loyalty of a bureaucrat toward that which he controls and exploits. But bearing this in mind, he has made unionism more completely his "prime loyalty" than has any other major labor leader.

Lewis says today he believes that the labor movement must achieve independence from the government. We have seen this from his actions as well as from his words. His

recent battle to smash the protective device of the employers known as the Taft-Hartley Law, and to bring the corporations out in the open where they will have to fight with their own strength, is proof he is sticking to his guns. But the most dramatic and courageous demonstration given by Lewis of the fundamental policy that sets him apart was the leadership of four coal strikes in 1943 during the middle of the Second World War. Those greatest class battles of the war, displaying both the militancy of the miners and the courage of Lewis, decisively set him off from the common run.

Upon the mine fields of the United States and in the capital of the greatest warring bourgeois nation, Lewis developed a magnificent campaign. His great strategic talents displayed themselves as never before in those wartime battles. That the strikes ended in amazing victory serves as proof today that the American workers can fight and win against the greatest odds when given a leadership that is willing to go even part of the way with them.

Lewis places before us the picture of thirty years of complex and contradictory activity. How are we to assess this remarkable man? Judged from the "pure and simple" trade union viewpoint, Lewis is an extremely able leader. His fighting methods and his fighting words reflect the great fighting caliber of the American workers. Inspiring in battle, he is relentless at the bargaining table, shrewd in his maneuvering.

A Master Tactician

His maneuverability, as a matter of fact, is Lewis's greatest asset. Time and again, he has seemingly hung impaled on the horns of a dilemma, with no way out but capitulation. Lewis invariably finds an open path. He never sees a situation in terms of plain black and plain white; he searches out the shadings and alternatives.

His fertile brain has originated portal-to-portal pay, the welfare fund, the three-day work week, and the many ways of defying a government injunction with the power of the miners union. His resourcefulness combined with a willingness to free the battle spirit of the ranks make him a powerful general who stands far above the other national trade union leaders.

Lewis, however, cannot be judged solely as a pure and simple trade unionist when unionism has long ceased to be either "pure" or "simple." Every big union battle for the past twenty and more years has led straight to Washington The federal power dominates all. It is imperative for every union leader to grasp the political content of the prevailing state power, of imperialist wars, of the socialist goal which the modern working class is seeking, consciously and semi-consciously, to attain.

John L. Lewis, ofttimes Republican, and sometimes Democrat, has undoubtedly failed the working class in this respect. His political role has been shallow, opportunist and totally deficient when measured against the needs of the workers.

Of course, Marxists cannot join the chorus of the lackeys of the Democratic Party in the unions who raise their hands in horror when Lewis endorses a *Republican*, while themselves condoning the policy of supporting any *Democratic* strike-breaker and war-monger. They jeer at the Elephant with the hee-haw of the Donkey. For the workers, capitalist politics is a stick that is dirty at both ends. We must examine Lewis's politics from this critical and independent labor standpoint.

The Break with Roosevelt

The greatest political crisis in Lewis's career came at the time of the 1940 presidential elections, when Roosevelt sought his third term. Lewis had broken with Roosevelt personally some time before, and in the meantime, Roosevelt continued his campaign to "wean away" the CIO leadership from Lewis and labor. This campaign was entirely successful.

Lewis was like an enraged and wounded animal in those days. He was baffled by bigger things than had ever before confronted him. Without realizing it, Lewis was face to face with the inexorable decline of capitalism, and its consequent movement toward war and the regimentation of labor. While he still dreamed of a labor movement of 40,000,000 members, the powerful ascension of labor in the political realm with himself perhaps at the apex, capitalism commanded the labor movement to fall into retreat, and transform itself from an independent power to a mere auxiliary of the war machine. All the other national trade union leaders had already come to heel, with the exception of the Stalinists in the period the Stalin-Hitler pact (and they were soon to fall into line).

Lewis was left isolated, enraged, baffled, his course interrupted by the reactionary plunge of American capitalism which he had not foreseen, and to which he would not adjust himself as did the others. Like many another reformist who banks on the gradual evolution of society toward "something better," Lewis was disturbed and angered by the sudden disruption of his plans by the realities of capitalism. However, the capitalist system is evolving in accordance with fundamental laws which Lewis cannot overthrow and which operate despite his failure to take notice of them.

Lewis's Political Role

Lewis is helpless before modern capitalism because he has no political philosophy. He has stated: "I am not a Republican, I am not a Democrat, I am not a Socialist, I am not a Communist. I am for labor." Nevertheless, while boasting a lack of political orientation, Lewis has participated actively in national politics for the past thirty years and more, making political endorsements and political attacks, backed up by the active and financial support of his organizations. During the past 15 years he has not tied himself entirely to either of the two capitalist parties, and certainly has not subordinated his union activity to the dictates of capitalist machines.

What then is Lewis's political role? We have spoken before of the masterful maneuvering that characterizes Lewis in trade union battles. This method he has attempted to *transplant* onto the political field. His political activity has essentially been of a maneuverist type, seeking advantage in temporary alignments with capitalist politicians

and even at times with radical labor groupings while committing himself permanently to nothing.

However, maneuvering is effective only when conducted in the service of principles and for the achievement of worthy ends. When Lewis attempts to duplicate in politics his masterful strategic work on the economic front, he finds himself entirely helpless and has been defeated time and again. Why is this? Because, while on the trade union arena Lewis serves definite ends and labor principles, on the political field he is without such principles and without a goal. To characterize Lewis politically, we must name him an *unprincipled maneuverer.*

Lewis supported Harding, Coolidge and Hoover during the Twenties and early Thirties when he was a rock-ribbed Republican. During those years the coal industry and the mine union declined catastrophically. Lewis's obeisance before the "free enterprise system" paid no dividends for the miners.

He switched to Roosevelt in a strategic move designed to squeeze "concessions" out of the Democratic administration. Experience soon demonstrated that the Democratic Party and the president would hamper and restrict the CIO whenever possible without making it too obvious. However, Lewis went through his whole CIO period without unmasking Roosevelt. Then, when Lewis, enraged by the rightward and warlike course of the administration, broke with Roosevelt, he was helpless before the Roosevelt myth which he himself had helped create and spread in the labor movement. Confronted with this situation, he capped his whole miserable performance by endorsing the Republican candidate for president in 1940. This put a pathetic end to his heroic role of the CIO days and conclusively demonstrated the bankruptcy of unprincipled maneuvering, even when conducted by a master.

If the aim of trade union struggles is the bettering of wages and working conditions, what is the *political* goal of labor? No one can fulfill the role of labor politician without realizing that the ferocious contest of the two giant modern economic classes must terminate sooner or later in unchallenged supremacy of one or the other; that the workers' victory can be nothing less than a labor government leading to socialism; that all labor political struggles must be directed toward this end. Lewis is not willing to accept this. On the other hand, Lewis refuses to follow Murray and Green into the swamp of complete subservience to capitalist politics. Lewis cannot be a labor politician, he will not be a capitalist politician, and so he has rejected the political fight altogether.

Lewis in recent years has refrained from making national political endorsements, while continuing his harassment of politicians with his trade union battles. Some may draw from this the inference that Lewis is learning. However, Lewis has already passed his 70th birthday and will not continue his education too much longer. Without writing off this militant septuagenarian who still appears to have much life and battle in him, we can say that if he is learning politically, Lewis is learning far too slowly and too late.

John L. Lewis has surpassed his contemporaries among the union officialdom, and yet, for all his unusual merits he proved incapable of breaking loose from their basic limitations. In the last analysis, he failed to meet the leadership requirements of the advancing working class and its immense tasks and aims. But the pages of labor history made and illuminated by the industrial workers of this country during the past 15 years will feature his name in bold-faced capital letters.

Philip Murray

By V. GREY

In an age when history chooses to place a mediocrity like Harry Truman at the head of the mightiest capitalist power in the world, who can quarrel with her for elevating an equally dull mediocrity to the leadership of the mightiest section of the working class in America? Philip Murray in his own character hardly challenges the interest of the biographer, much less the reader. But his life, for all its conservatism and colorlessness, is bound up in the modern American labor movement, especially in its past decade. Unctuous, priest-ridden, capitalist-minded to the core, his personality has oozed over the CIO these ten years.

Philip Murray came to America, sixteen years old, in 1902, to "make good." He worked hard at educating himself at home, and probably had some intention of going into engineering (he mentions the study of calculus in an autobiographical article). Like many an otherwise conservative Scot, Welshman or Briton, he was shocked at the illegal and disreputable position the American union movement held at that time. If wages were lower in Scotland, at least the unions had achieved "fair" standards, and all the workers were in the unions.

Doubtless the nice young man whose respectable father had been a local union president was disturbed to find that he believed in something that only radicals were advocating in those days. Things accepted as matter of course in the old country, the results of half-forgotten struggles, were extreme demands in the Land of Opportunity. For example, the coal companies used to cheat the miner by dishonest weighing of his coal. Eighteen-year-old Phil suggested to the pit boss that they place a union man next to the company weigher as a "checkweighman" — at that time a well-established practice in British mines. The response was swift and arbitrary — discharge for being an "agitator" and a "troublemaker." When the foreman called him these names, Murray got into the only fist fight he claims he ever had in this country.

While it is surprising that he struck back — knowing his character as we do now — his reaction also indicates his moral righteousness and instinctive conservatism. He would resent being called an agitator but he would be quite unruffled at the term of "Roosevelt stooge" and even call *himself* a collaborationist!

Easy Tongue, Flexible Spine

There is no doubt that he had talents valuable to the struggling miners around him. He possessed an easy tongue and a facility for compromise. Unheroic as these gifts may appear, they still made it possible for him to be spokesman for the uneducated, and in many cases illiterate, miners. President of his local at nineteen, he was put on the Mine Workers' executive board in 1912 at the age of twenty-six.

In 1926, after 14 years on the executive board, Murray was elected Vice President of the United Mine Workers. This was not 14 years of struggle to gain the position, but 14 years of faithful timeserving. Murray, often praised today as a kind-hearted man in contrast to Lewis, was chief errand boy and valued hatchet-man for Lewis all this time.

His admirers, looking backward, trying to find some saving virtues, say that Lewis's dramatic personality may have overshadowed Murray, but Murray was the smooth negotiator of the team. Actually, smooth negotiators are a dime a dozen in the labor movement. The trouble is that the bosses steamroller over them pretty smoothly too. To be smooth *and successful* means you have to have great strength to back you up. Not only the strength of the united ranks, which is the first essential, but strength of individual character. In Murray's case he always had Lewis to back him up. He just played soft cop to Lewis's hard cop.

But if he had a soft personality, he was not troubled by feelings of tenderness to the opposition. At this time, and through the Twenties, the battles of the progressives against the Lewis autocracy were raging. Lewis ruled them out of order whenever they spoke at conventions and had their supporters thrown bodily out of the convention hall. When his opposition would actually win majorities and pass resolutions, Lewis would brazenly announce, "The same thing will happen to this resolution as to all similar resolutions." (Meaning it would go into the waste basket.)

A Diplomatic Hanger-on

Never a peep from Brother Murray about all this. He never joined any opposition. He never dared fight the Lewis bureaucracy when it might mean losing his own place in that bureaucracy. He did not oppose Lewis until Lewis was leading a progressive fight and he. Murray, was safely ensconced in a powerful presidential chair of his own. Thus young Phil Murray became a bureaucrat, heart and soul — a diplomatic, soft-spoken bureaucrat, but a bureaucrat all the same.

Lewis was not so conservative a worshiper of security as Murray. When the Memorial Dav massacre of Republic Steel workers occurred, Lewis openly chastised Roosevelt for his "plague on both your houses" attitude and his back-handed support of the steel barons. Murray stayed in the background — still an enthusiastic Roosevelt man. And this was a massacre of *steel workers*, in Phil Murray's union, in a strike Phil Murray had called!

Throughout the ensuing thunderous years until 1940, Murray kept tied tightly to Lewis's coattails and walked studiously in Lewis's shadow. According to acquaintances of that period, he belittled himself privately, and was extremely self-effacing at public meetings. This may have been fakery. But it is probable, as some claim, that he felt a real inferiority, after so many years under the dynamic Lewis.

As the momentous 1940 CIO convention drew near, Murray's fate was being forged between the hammer and anvil of contending factions. Why should Murray be president? The answer was simple. Because Lewis wanted him to be, and because Lewis's main opponent, Hillman, was too weak organizationally to take it himself, and was glad to settle for anybody but Lewis.

But beneath this simple answer, behind the contending factions, there was more at issue. The Roosevelt-Lewis break had been brewing for several years. Lewis, dependent though he was in many ways upon Roosevelt's aid and government collaboration, was still able and shrewd enough to seek more independence for the CIO than Roosevelt was willing to give. And he was tough enough to fight for it. Roosevelt's "plague on both your houses" malediction after the Memorial Day massacre was a calculated diplomatic retreat from the pro-CIO position he was accused of having, and a not-too-subtle declaration of war on Lewis. Roosevelt's basic strategy was to tie labor to all kinds of government boards, elections, mediations, etc. Moreover, he required a no-strike policy and a paralyzed labor movement for the coming war. Lewis did not fit so well into these plans.

The 1940 Elections and Their Aftermath

While both Roosevelt and Lewis were upholders of the capitalist system, they symbolized opposing poles of the system, and being strong men, they gathered more strength from the forces around them. Each conspired to replace the other with a weaker and more amenable man. Lewis plugged for Willkie, Roosevelt for Murray. Roosevelt won.

Lewis recognized that Roosevelt's 1940 election was something of a repudiation of himself and something of a defeat for his leadership of the CIO. But he was not so sure his own resignation was final, in spite of his own farewell speeches. Did he not give the palm to faithful Phil? Are not machine-men more loyal to the machine than to anything else in life? Lewis, with all his shrewdness, interpreted the whole thing organizationally. To him, Murray's later actions were merely those of a traitor.

Meanwhile, Sidney Hillman had been elevated from president of a great union to chief labor stooge in the Defense Advisory Commission, hobnobbing with the Washington big-shots. He was the pliant tool of Roosevelt. But even in his own person he was leader and spearhead of the right-wing forces (still a minority at the 1940 convention) in the CIO. He was one of those most anxious to get the CIO back into the AFL "house of labor."

It is hardly likely that Philip Murray connived much with Hillman, his chief supporter at the convention. Hillman

was too much an opponent of Lewis, and Murray was too cautious to dare collaborate with him at this time. But Roosevelt was a horse of another color. Every top pie-card in the country had been encouraged to sit around the feet of Roosevelt. And Murray had made the journey to Hyde Park even in 1932 when Lewis supported Hoover. Murray, too, was still playing soft cop to Lewis's hard cop after the Roosevelt-Lewis break. Lewis still needed his most trusted man to be "in good" at the White House. So Murray still talked with Roosevelt — and vice versa. If anyone beside Lewis put the CIO presidential bug in Murray's ear, it was none other than Roosevelt himself.

But whatever conflicting loyalties were in Phil Murray's troubled breast the November 1940 CIO convention found him in an apparently reluctant mood. His performance there is worth a detailed review.

Murray on the "Hot Spot"

Always cautious, always placating to the powers above him, he first of all denied rumors of a possible split between himself and Lewis. Then he let the convention in on what a great man *he* was. Pointing tragically to the general region of his heart, he said: "The hot spot has been here for a few days. I owe it to you and to the nation and to my colleagues, to give you what is beating within my bosom. I lay myself naked that you may have the truth. I disdain hypocrisy. I try, like the rest of you, to be an American. I hope I can be.

"Personally I don't want, and I want you to know it here in this convention today, the presidency of the CIO. I have no aspirations. I am content to plug along at the mill gate, and meet the people I have known throughout life. I want this convention to know before I take my seat that I am not a candidate for the presidency of the CIO."

Many reporters, in spite of their cynicism, took this remarkable statement for its face value at the time. People "in the know" say that Murray genuinely did not want the post, that the above speech was "humble," "sincere," etc. But a man who was fourteen years a vice president should be given credit for knowing how to put on a front. In one short paragraph he lays claim to having a heart, shows it to the world, and breathes the pious hope that he may be permitted to be an American. In just one more paragraph, he twice declines the presidency and identifies himself with the audience who are nearly all organizers who pass out leaflets "at the mill gate," and may be expected to vote for their own kind. This is a pretty good piece of stagecraft for a sincere and unassuming fellow.

However, it is true that Murray was torn two ways and needed coaxing — not because of his famous "modesty," of course, but for far more fundamental reasons of strategy which jibed with the strategy of Hillman and Roosevelt. The *New York Times* said: "He did not give the reason for his decision, but it was understood by some of his associates that he felt impelled to withdraw when he saw no possibility of the convention taking some action on the Communism issue."

While the "left wing" was disturbed at his insistence on an anti-Communist resolution, and Lewis refused to endorse the first extreme right-wing resolution presented by the Amalgamated, they all, including the Stalinists themselves, obligingly went along with the "compromise" resolution condemning Communism itself. This was a victory for Hillman and even more for Roosevelt, the man behind Hillman.

What secret understandings Murray might have had with Roosevelt in this connection may never be revealed. And it is unimportant to history whether they existed or not. The gradual changes in CIO policies did take place, and it was more or less inevitable, given the other conditions, that they would take place.

"I Think I Am a Man"

Murray needed a straight backbone at this time, if he ever did. Because he was beginning the long trek away from his past. By no means a strong man, who calculated great risks and then dramatically crossed his Rubicon, nevertheless he was intelligent enough and experienced enough to understand that he was going to have to lead a fight. And he must have known far better than Lewis that it would also involve a fight with Lewis himself (and worst of all, the miners' union was still paying his salary!). Hence his tears, his trepidations at this time.

"I think I am a man" (he had said this before). "I think I have convictions, I think I have a soul, a heart and a mind. And I want to let you in on something there; with the exception, of course, of my soul, they all belong to me, every one of them."

He was painfully conscious that everyone thought his soul belonged to Lewis. He was trying mightily to declare some independence from his old leader and from the old machine. He was extremely uncomfortable about it, and weepy. But the interesting thing is, so indulgent is history to its nonentities, that he was finally successful in doing just that!

The evening of the day of his election, he made a speech on a nation-wide hook-up that was a minor masterpiece in employing the tones and gestures of the Thirties while introducing the war position of the Forties. One of the basic aims of the Roosevelt-Hillman strategy was the unity of the AFL and CIO under terms that might greatly water down the militancy and the industry-wide effectiveness of the CIO in the interest of conducting the coming war. Roosevelt had demonstratively addressed the AFL convention on the unity question and ignored the CIO (perhaps fearing that Lewis might publicly rebuke him as in fact Lewis did rebuke Hillman).

So in this speech, Murray, still in the Lewis 5-year tradition of progressively fighting the AFL, still representing the spirit of the newly awakened rank-and-file millions of the industrial unions, openly warned his patron Roosevelt "not to force a shot-gun unity between the AFL and CIO." In the next breath, however, he said, "The kind of unity the nation is interested in, is unity between capital and labor." Here was a gnat swallowing a camel! *Business Week* could well gloat: "The former Lanarkshire breaker boy comes to the leadership of the CIO determined to keep the industrial peace."

If anything is hard to understand about such shallow characters as Murray it is this: how on earth can they be

capable of such cynicism? Is it possible they really know what they are doing? Isn't it possible that Murray, being more ignorant than Hillman, was less of a rascal? The difference is only lingual.

Creatures of the Same Mold

Hillman, Dubinsky, and their crowd knew what they were doing theoretically and philosophically also. They were the old European type Social Democrats — the kind that read Karl Marx in their youth, but became slick at dressing up class collaboration for the consumption of immigrant sweat-shop workers.

Murray, for all his Scottish birth, was by virtue of his lengthy office in the Mine Workers and his leadership of the steel workers, a native son with a home-grown line of class collaboration that met with equal approval from Wall Street, Roosevelt, and the Pope.

For Murray no philosophy, not even a renegade philosophy, is necessary. Religion, and Catholicism at that, suffices. Phil enjoys the double advantage of a priestly hierarchy to split his philosophical hairs for him—while he is more sensibly occupied — and at the same time to provide him with a broad and powerful political support.

In fact it is rather doubtful whether the cautious Murray would have ever accepted the leadership without solid assurance of backing from the Church. Priestly "advisers" were with him constantly during the 1940 convention. Many radical observers are inclined to think that the Church runs him and CIO policy completely. This is an exaggeration. Murray takes his final orders from imperialism itself, not from its clerical handmaiden.

Father Rice, main figure of the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists, is a frequent and welcome visitor in the Pittsburgh offices of the Steelworkers. But it must be remembered, the ACTU leaders are principled opponents not only of Communism but of any form of class struggle, and their allegiance is to the Church. Murray is an opportunist and a (workers') bureaucrat. The imperialist State and the Church may be the two stars he steers by, but he must also allow for the currents in the working class. Through heavy-handed, he is often more careful than Reuther, for example, in moving in on opponents in the locals. Where Stalinists, especially as individuals, gain power in a local, the ACTU'ers sometimes don't get the expected cooperation when they appeal to Murray for new elections.

Murray's Bureaucratic Machine

Murray's steel union staff was purged of Stalinists long ago, mainly before November 1940. Most of the organizers are strongly anti-Communist, and this naturally influences the local politics to some extent even if there were no caucusing by the International. (And it would be naive to believe there were none.) With this kind of machine already smoothly operating, the right-wing influence is applied with a minimum of purge or convulsion.

On the higher level of CIO leadership, as distinct from the Steelworkers as such, in the realm of ideas, policies, and glaring publicity, as well as practical politics, Murray has conducted a ten-year fight of maneuver and counter-maneuver against the Stalinists. He did so, for all his weakness, with a skill befitting a better cause, and a flexibility in tune with the times and the needs of the U. S. State Department.

Thus he frequently rose above the narrower prejudices of the Church in the service of imperialism and his own bureaucracy but, like Banquo, always kept his "bosom franchised and allegiance clear." In 1946 he was awarded the Monsignor Ryan medal as the leading Catholic layman of the year. Considering that he had just run a nation-wide steel strike, this shows a lot of confidence in his good intentions. He even won a "Christian Culture Award" in 1943, tendered to him by the personal representative of Cardinal Spellman (an outstanding Christian who recently ordered Christian graves to be dug by scab labor).

The effect of Catholic politics on the politics of Murray is sometimes quite direct. Lewis states categorically to his biographer that the CIO Executive Board did not take a position supporting the workers' fight against Franco in 1937 because Murray, under the influence of the pro-Franco priest-cabal, prevailed on them not to act.

Lewis revealed this long after his break with Murray. If true, it is quite a commentary on "shy," "kind-hearted," "self-effacing" Phil Murray, who was supposed to have "an almost evangelical attitude toward the ordinary worker."

With the Blessings of the Priests

Of course, from a class point of view, one might say it was just as bad to exchange kisses with Roosevelt during the imperialist war and give "labor's" blessing to the slaughter. But to be such a Christian as to support the Christian butcher Franco, the Christian Fascist landlords, the Christian Catholic Church in their direct and open war against the workers and peasants, against organized labor as such — it takes a peculiar kind of "labor leader" to do this. If he did as Lewis said Murray was certainly right when he said his soul did not belong to him. It belonged to the priests.

But, while Murray had the backing of the priests and the confidence of the Church, and himself "had his religion," he fought the Communist Party in these ten years as a machine man fights another machine, making deals, polite purges, compromises, etc. For some time previous to 1940, he had already been weeding Stalinist and pro-Stalinist organizers out of the Steelworkers, but always on the ground of inefficiency, failure — or some other pretext at which his associates would knowingly wink and congratulate him. But after becoming president of the CIO, a far more heterogeneous organization than the Steelworkers and composed of many machines and many leaders, he was compelled to zigzag. Even during the Stalin-Hitler pact he would "appease" the Stalinists somewhat while his patron Roosevelt was attacking them viciously and probably needling Murray to do the same. He continued to appoint the UE party-liner Emspak to important three-man committees (always being careful to flank him with two of his own close supporters).

But Lewis had often appointed similar committees with *two* CP members or sympathizers to one Mine Workers' man. For example, the important mediation committee at

the 1940 convention to decide on the merits of the right-left dispute in the N. Y. State CIO Council was composed of: Philip Murray, Reid Robinson and George Addes, the latter two active collaborators of the CP at the time. Murray immediately bent the stick the other way.

Considering that the militancy of the masses was rising in 1941 with new layers of workers fighting for recognition — with the Stalinists continuing to widen their base — the role of the individual, the role of Murray, was not inconsequential in this respect.

Murray and the Stalinists

But Murray did not become a lion overnight. The capable, talented, silver-tongued platform man knew most of the tricks, but like an old actress with wig, false eyelashes, and false breasts, he didn't have much of the real thing. He had skill, technique and cunning. But he could not crush his opposition like Lewis did in the Twenties. He was still fearful. And he had cause to be.

The pressure of the Stalinists during the Stalin-Hitler pact was noisy and ever-present. The great Ford strike in May, the Lackawanna and Bethlehem strikes in his own union, the whole new rise of the workers in 1941 took place in opposition to the war machine. This somewhat slowed down his activities in the Defense Mediation Board, of which he was now a member and, particularly at the time of the North American Aircraft strike, gave him the shakes, and probably helped bring on his heart attack later in the year.

(Roosevelt called the troops out during this strike. While Murray cried a little about this, he complained that the workers did not "give the Defense Mediation Board a chance.")

But Murray's big break came in the middle of this same difficult year. It was a break that comes once in a lifetime. On one hand it paralyzed the Stalinists. who were becoming more and more of an opposition to the man they had "gone along with" in the convention election; and on the other, it strengthened his hand against Lewis, the isolationist, to whom these same Stalinists had secretly been turning for leadership during this whole period. Still more than this, it laid the groundwork for a much more "peaceful," more "statesmanlike," more Murray-type of operation against these same Stalinists in the future.

This break from Murray was the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union.

The Stalinists' trade union reaction to this, slow at first, and predicted in its fullness only by the Trotskyists, was advocacy of industrial peace, full production, and finally open strike-breaking, to enforce their all-out support of Wall Street's war against German capitalism.

Murray began to feel much more comfortable. The Stalinists were coming conveniently under his thumb. The full tide of mass organization began to recede. It was clear that steel would soon all be organized. Soon he would have a big treasury of his own. His past conflict was becoming resolved. He would even defy Lewis. When the two met at Atlantic City during the 1941 convention, Murray finally cut away from his past, albeit with more tears.

Lewis had approached him, suggesting that the two unite forces to oppose the "interventionism" of Roosevelt. Lewis felt that the two of them together had the prestige to beat the new Hillman-Stalinist alliance, with a militant trade union policy, defying the war jingoism. It was another sample of Lewis's willingness to take a chance, to take the leap — the corner of his eye on history. But Murray, who had gone along with his chief in 1935, was himself a chief now — with Roosevelt, Stalin and Hillman all on his side.

Murray refused to go along. One short year after Murray, the loyal lieutenant of 20 years' hand-raising, was made the chief, he turned against the old chief. And he thought fatuously that Lewis (who took loyalty to himself far more seriously than anything in life) should have understood! Breakfasting the next day with William H. Davis, then chairman of the Mediation Board, Murray confided between sobs, "That was all he (Lewis) had to say after twenty years — 'It was nice to have known you, Phil'."

The Stalin-Hitler turn in Stalinist trade union policy reinforced Murray and enormously strengthened his pro-war position in the union. The more or less patriotic workers in the CIO and the new workers coming into the defense plants begrudgingly went along with the Murray-Stalinist "policy" of no strikes, no resistance to the profit-mad war producers. They went along because so many got jobs who had no jobs before, and because of the wretched little concessions Murray obtained from the War Labor Board.

Over the years that followed, Murray the compromiser, the unity man, seemed to re-enact his pre-1940 role of mediator between the factions, between Hillman and the Stalinists, whose quarrels were now softer. The general atmosphere was still a "liberal" one in labor circles. The easy-going leader showed a "tolerent" face to the public. Nevertheless, by 1942, his personal machine in the Steelworkers Union became nearly as solidified as Lewis's machine in the United Mine Workers. The "soft" man was becoming hard. He proved in spite of any *inner* weaknesses that he could build a strong machine.

But this can scarcely be set down on the credit side of his ledger. Every two-bit local politician is able to build a machine. Even an officer accidentally catapulted to power seems to feel an elemental urge to build little forts of protection around him. While it is an excellent thing for a leader with a program to have a loyal following, a leader without a program finds the personal, paid machine a wonderful substitute. Consequently the latter type often outshine the former in this ability — just as the sightless develop better hearing.

A "Patient" Capitalist Stooge

Murray's reputation and self-proclaimed character as a "patient" man is well earned and well deserved. But this patience should not be regarded as the forbearance of a good old man beset by malicious radicals who took advantage of him. No, his was the patience of the wily hatchetman waiting for the kill. As time went on and he was infused more and more with the strength of American imperialism, he moved more confidently. Finally, during the recent period of insensate red-baiting and gathering war

hysteria, the unctuous old timeserver, with all the appropriate adjurations to God and Country, cast out the Stalinist-led unions in 1949-50 — and became leader of a well-purged, and, he hoped, well-housebroken CIO.

But regardless of Murray's role as a full-time State Department stooge, and part-time tool of the Catholic Church, it must be emphasized that he is not only the policy head of the CIO bureaucracy, but also the so-far unchallenged leader of the million-strong Steelworkers Union. And he has actually led them in historic struggles. These struggles have twice brought to their knees some of the mightiest of monopolies and tied up the country only slightly less effectively than the long mine strikes. This cannot be interpreted by studying Murray's personality, but must be understood as a result of one of the profound contradictions of the class struggle itself.

All American trade union leaders of the present age find themselves at some time or other, with varying degrees of embarrassment and effectiveness, contending with the ruling class. Philip Murray, if he has no other interest to posterity, represents the extreme of this contradiction in American labor leaders. On the one hand he says, "Collective bargaining has become less and less a contest and more a collaboration." On the other he gives the signal in 1946 for one million steel workers to strike and soon idle five million others, while the wheels of his beloved capitalism grind to a stop. This is something of a record for a man who sincerely wants to "keep the industrial peace."

On January 26, 1946, at the height of the steel strike, *Business Week* made the following comment: "As leader of the largest strike army this nation has ever seen, Murray . . . is prepared to use standard radical tactics such as the nationwide strike, to achieve essentially conservative trade union goals. Murray has no sympathy, for example, with Walter Reuther's demands in the G. M. strike for a look at the company's books. His only basic interest is having his union get more money for his steelworkers. To do that, however, he is prepared to go to lengths that might daunt a more revolutionary labor leader."

We must repeat that Murray said two and a half years after this, "Collective bargaining has become less and less a contest and more a collaboration." But the soul of the collaborator lives in a body that is fed by an organization whose only reason for existence is the class struggle.

Murray exists in the midst of this contradiction. But let no one think that he has any *inner* contradiction or double personality. He is not torn between loyalty to the workers on one side and to the capitalist system on the other because he does not admit any basic antagonism between them.

During the last war he was one of the principal participants in, and upholders of, the infamous "no-strike pledge." He faces the next war far more determined to support it than the last one. He is tied more closely than ever to the capitalist government. But the capitalists, in the last war, gave crumbs of conciliation to labor and thus smoothed the road for Murray. . . . The road to the next war begins with labor already paying for the last one and with taxes and prices going up. The workers at a certain point will have to fight back.

True, a new stall is being prepared to delay their awakening. The capitalists are apparently willing — at the moment — to give labor some concessions, the better (with Murray's aid) to tie them up for the period of militarization.

Murray has grown stronger in the past ten years simply because his masters have done so well for themselves. It is not so fantastic after all that this sanctimonious pie-card "made good," as he himself puts it, considering the expansion of American imperialism in those ten years. But today American imperialism hovers over the abyss. Its vast internal market gave it unexpected strength. But its external commitments are already proving to be too great. The world proletariat and colonial masses are even now pushing against the pillars of Wall Street's empire.

Thus Murray is caught in the middle of two colossal struggles: the acute conflict between the U. S. imperialists and the peoples throughout the world and the growing antagonism between the monopolist rulers and the industrial workers. The stresses and strains arising from such a position would tax the resources of a far stronger personality with a better program than Murray possesses.

The American labor movement has to prepare itself for a new period of extremely rough weather. This is precisely the kind of atmosphere most unsuited to Murray. So long as calm prevails, he may pass for a seaworthy captain. But he is a worthless pilot in stormy weather.

Walter Reuther

By ART PREIS

Walter Reuther, president since 1946 of the powerful and strategically placed CIO United Automobile Workers, is generally regarded as the most "up-and-coming" of the new generation of labor leaders who began their rise with the CIO. Of all who rose to prominence and leadership in the UAW's early days — including some of not inconsiderable talents — not one has survived save Reuther. Homer Martin, Wyndham Mortimer, R. J. Thomas, George Addes, Richard Frankensteen and many others were forced out or dropped by the wayside. Reuther alone stayed on top. Today, he holds almost undisputed control of this key union in the CIO.

"Smart" and "shrewd" are adjectives frequently applied to Reuther. But for all his adroitness and cunning, he is by no means the "master of his fate." He has been shaped by powerful social forces, pressures and conflicts, particularly as these have affected and been reflected in the development of the UAW.

To understand Reuther's aims, methods, role in the labor movement and the direction in which he is traveling, it is essential to understand the kind of union in which he grew up and on whose mighty shoulders he now stands. For whatever is "unique" about Reuther is due, in the main, to the fact that he has come out of what has been, and in some respects remains, a unique union.

The UAW has been described most frequently as "dynamic." Until the past few years, this adjective was fully justified and even today, as a "settled" union with a hardening bureaucratic crust, the UAW still retains the sources of its dynamic character.

In its rise the UAW exemplified the spontaneous rank-and-file character of that titanic upsurge of industrial labor in the Thirties which built the CIO. The auto union's militancy became a by-word. If the auto workers did not invent the sit-down strike, they nevertheless perfected it and their use of it in the 1936-37 General Motors strike inspired its spread into a national phenomenon. They developed the famous "flying squadrons," those mobile shock troops of the picket lines which have become permanent institutions in many UAW locals.

This "dynamism" of the UAW was due not to fighting qualities exceptional to auto workers, but rather to the exceptional factors in the origin and traditions of the UAW. Its unique development was a direct reflection of its internal democracy, which permitted the workers' native militancy to find expression and allowed their initiative to flower.

Democratic Traditions of the UAW

The independence of the membership, their insistence on "running the show," revealed itself from the start when they fought the AFL bureaucracy's attempts to impose outside leadership upon them. Without exception, the auto workers' leadership has been raised from their own ranks. For most of its history, UAW conventions saw stormy revolts against any moves to strengthen the bureaucratic powers of the top leaders against the ranks.

They jealously guarded the right to maintain caucuses and the open factional struggles of tendencies in the UAW was a constant source of astonishment — and dismay — to the old-line officialdom who ran their own unions with an iron hand and never let anyone "talk out of turn." All political views found expression in the continuous struggle for program and leadership. New ideas found a favorable climate and the membership was educated in progressive social and political views. Far from weakening the auto workers' union, this internal democracy became the wellspring of its power and tremendous growth.

The UAW did not come by its militant and democratic traditions accidentally. Their foundation was consciously laid in the decisive early stages of the union by politically radical workers who were responsible for the first successful organization in auto and who led the auto workers to their initial victories.

The Toledo Auto-Lite strike in May 1934, a virtual mass insurrection which won the first major contract in the auto industry, set the pattern. This crucial battle was led by members of the American Workers Party, which a few months later merged with the Communist League of America (Trotskyist) to form the Workers Party (now the Socialist Workers Party). A year later Trotskyists played the chief role in organizing and leading the Toledo Chevrolet strike that established the first union beach-head in General Motors. In this strike the Trotskyists gave leadership to the opposition against the old-line AFL leaders whose policies of class-collaboration and reliance on government intervention were the chief stumbling-block to unionization of the auto workers.

Spearhead of Revolt

It was these Toledo auto workers, as the largest delegation at the UAW's founding convention in August 1935, who organized and spearheaded a revolt against the imposition of Frances Dillon, AFL President William Green's personal representative, as appointed head of the newly founded international. They submitted finally under threat of losing their new charter. But a year later — again with the Toledo delegation in the lead — the militants, organized as a caucus, overwhelmingly rejected Dillon and elected their own officers from their own ranks.

These first two conventions not only freed the auto union from the deadly grip of an established bureaucracy, but incorporated into the very structure of the new international the principles of democratic unionism. Thus, in 1936, when reactionary elements red-baited Homer Martin, who was subsequentlly to become the first elected president, the convention delegates rose up and wrote into their constitution those justly famous provisions against discrimination for race, creed, national origin and *political beliefs*. In 1941, Reuther's faction was to make the first major breach in this democratic constitution.

The May 1936 convention provided a remarkable demonstration of advanced political consciousness when the delegates voted overwhelmingly for the formation of an independent farmer-labor party. Direct intervention by John L. Lewis was required to force the delegates to attach a rider to this resolution endorsing Roosevelt for re-election.

The crucial test of the fledgling union came in the 1936-37 battle with General Motors. Here again it was radicals who gave decisive direction to the struggle. In Flint, Mich., where the battle centered, Kermit Johnson and Roy Reuther, both socialists, and Robert Travis, a leader of the earlier Toledo Chevrolet strike and by 1937 with the Stalinists, were the chief organizers and leaders of the great sitdown that brought victory. Contrary to a persistent legend, Walter Reuther entered the picture only toward the end of the strike and played no important role in its organization, strategy and leadership. But he did give it valuable assistance at its most critical juncture when thousands of workers from Toledo, Detroit and other auto centers poured into Flint. Reuther led a large contingent of his big, newly amalgamated Detroit West Side local, of which he was president, to support the sit-downers.

In those days Reuther was not exceptional for militancy and political radicalism. Everyone spoke — or pretended to speak — the language of mass action, rank-and-file control and advanced social and political ideas. The union in which young Walter Reuther got his start breathed mass

action and democracy. It was led by zealous young men, in many instances radical-minded, most of whom had earned their spurs on the picket lines. This union, moreover, was pressing toward far-reaching social and political goals.

For these very reasons, the top CIO leaders regarded the UAW as a "problem child." They feared the spread of its example. What would happen to *them* if their members got notions about rank-and-file control, union democracy, modest salaries for officers, annual conventions, the right to caucus and to oppose the leadership? Moreover, the CIO leaders were schooled in class collaboration, believers in the conference table and government favors rather than in strikes and class struggle methods. The UAW, in their opinion, had to be "tamed."

The new UAW leaders themselves were beginning to get a taste for power. Homer Martin, who was elected president in 1936, by 1937 saw himself in the role of "boss" of a big union. The Stalinists, with a strong machine, were pushing for control with a program to tie the union to Roosevelt's coattails.

The CIO leaders and the Roosevelt administration feared above all that the UAW might get "out-of-hand" politically. They had received one bad shock at the 1936 convention. They did not want to risk any more, especially since Roosevelt was already moving on the course that was to lead this country into war. For American imperialism and its labor supporters, it was imperative to curb the militancy of this "dangerous and explosive" union, harness it with a conservative bureaucracy and stifle its internal democracy.

His Credentials

There were not a few candidates for the job — Homer Martin, the Stalinists and careerists of all stripes. But, in the end, the forces of conservatism found their man in Walter Reuther. He had the proper qualifications, the right combination of talents and an appreciation of the nature and complexities of the task.

He had youth, energy, drive and ambition in a union that was young, vigorous and aggressive. He had a sharp mind and a fluent tongue that could express his ideas forcefully and clearly, although he lacked distinction in thought or style.

The son of an old-time Debs Socialist, Reuther got his real start in the labor movement as a Socialist agitator, when, at the age of 25, he campaigned for Norman Thomas and joined the SP. His early Socialist training and background had prepared him for the union movement, taught him how to appeal to militant workers, gave him a broader conception of the social system. A radical background was a good credential to the workers who built the UAW. And it did his reputation no harm that in 1933, after he was fired for union activity in the Detroit Ford plant, he and his brother Victor took their small savings and went to Europe, working 16 months in an auto plant in the Soviet Union.

Not the least of Reuther's talents was his skill at factional maneuver. In the factional game, he had the agility of a star half-back, quick to find holes in his opponents' line, slippery in the open and adroit at pivoting and reversing his field. To reach his long-sought goal of the UAW presidency, he had to twist and straight-arm and knee his way through powerful opposition in a bitter factional struggle of 10 years' duration.

Most of all, Reuther was completely identified with the auto workers. Following his return from Europe in 1934, he had plunged into the task of organizing the unorganized Detroit auto workers. By 1936, he was elected to the UAW's national executive board at that year's convention. By 1937, he had succeeded in amalgamating a number of small Detroit West Side shops into one big local, which gave him the original solid base in the membership on which he was to build his power.

Thus Reuther had grown up in the auto workers' ranks and participated in their struggles. And he knew how to exploit this fact. No matter how high he rose above the ranks or how far he moved away from their aspirations and needs, he was always careful that it was not so high and so far as to lose connection with them. Other UAW leaders, as shrewd and talented as Reuther, lost sight of this fundamental fact and sooner or later came a cropper.

This history of Reuther's rise to power is the history of the factional wars that raged inside the UAW from 1937 to 1947. There were no fundamental, well-defined differences in program between the contending leaders and there were many shifts and realignments in the unprincipled contest for posts and power.

Homer Martin made his bid for supreme control following the 1937 GM strike. He tried to curb "wildcat" strikes in GM with a letter to the company offering it the right to "discipline" participants in "unauthorized" walkouts. When his high-handed methods ran into opposition, he raised the hue and cry about "communists" and "socialists" and tried to change the constitution to give him more powers. He fired a number of organizers, including Walter and Victor Reuther. Ironically, a decade later in a period of strong reaction and witch-hunting, Walter Reuther was to put Martin's program into effect with a vengeance, from one-man rule and "company security" clauses to red-baiting and expulsions.

Martin climaxed his headstrong course by suspending a majority of the Executive Board members. By 1939, facing defeat, he tried to take the UAW back into the AFL. But the overwhelming majority of the auto workers refused to go along. Martin split and drifted into oblivion.

The Opportunist Emerges

The period of the fight with Martin marked a decisive turning point for Reuther in a vital respect. It was then that he underwent and completed his political metamorphosis. Reuther never did have more than a sentimental attachment to socialism. He had a disdain for Marxist theory. He was a devotee of "realistic" politics, by which is usually meant opportunistic politics in which principles take second place to posts and immediate advantages. Once immersed in union maneuvers and the struggle for posts and power, Reuther's socialism quickly melted away.

Even the light ideological baggage of Norman Thomas's Socialist Party hampered the young ambitious union leader. He figured to latch on to the political movement that offered the most promising and immediate

rewards, the New Deal. In 1938 he decided to support Frank Murphy, a Democrat, for re-election as Michigan's governor. At that time, the Socialist Party still maintained a policy of electoral independence and opposition to capitalist parties and candidates. But an amicable deal was cooked up. Reuther agreed not to embarrass the SP with a formal resignation at that time. Norman Thomas agreed to look the other way while Reuther jumped on the New Deal band wagon.

Another important aspect of Reuther's political evolution was his collaboration with the Stalinists in the UAW, which did not end formally until 1939. His attitude toward the Stalinists then was in sharp contrast to his bitter hostility of today. It was the heyday of the Stalinist "People's Front" and "collective security" program, when they wooed Roosevelt and transformed him from a "fascist" into a "friend of labor." Reuther could work with them then, although it was the time of the bloody Moscow Frame-up Trials and the betrayal of the Spanish revolution.

Significantly, his first clashes with the Stalinists were not over principles and program, but over union posts and advantages. He participated with them in the Unity Group caucus until late in 1938. But their conflict was foreshadowed at the April 1938 Michigan CIO convention. Victor Reuther was defeated for a post when the Stalinists failed to support him. This kind of blow is unforgivable to one who believes a good post is worth any number of principles. In due course, Reuther was to repay the Stalinists a hundredfold.

The 1939 Convention

The 1939 UAW convention, after Martin's split, was no feast of harmony. On the one side was Reuther, who had the backing of the Socialist Party fraction, a number of powerful Detroit locals such as Hudson, Chrysler and his own West Side local, as well as partial support from the top CIO leaders. On the other side were the Stalinists, allied with a group of careerists, who had the stronger machine.

The Stalinist-Addes forces, despite their strength, were not anxious for any show-down fight that would put them at odds with Lewis, Murray and Hillman, while the latter wanted the semblance of "harmony." They accepted the compromise offered by Hillman and Murray, Lewis's representatives at the convention and agreed upon R. J. Thomas as president, whom Reuther himself supported. Hillman and Murray agreed that all vice presidential posts would be eliminated — Reuther's included. Thus both the Stalinist-Addes and Reuther factions stepped back in favor of a man with no following at the time who had but recently jumped off Homer Martin's band wagon.

In 1940 and 1941, when the Stalin-Hitler pact, the unleashing of the European war and the Finnish-Soviet war inspired anti-Soviet hostility in this country, Reuther became the leader of the most conservative elements in the UAW. He lined himself up in the CIO with Sidney Hillman against John L. Lewis and became the most open UAW supporter of the Roosevelt administration's drive toward war. He became a vicious opponent of strikes and pushed Hillman's policy of complete union submission to the war machine and government boards.

At the July 1941 convention of the UAW, Reuther's faction commanded a majority. He took advantage of it to shove through the first anti-democratic change in the UAW's constitution — a discriminatory amendment barring "communists" from elective and appointive offices in the International. Reuther tried to bar the delegates from the Stalinist-led Allis-Chalmers local of Milwaukee from being seated and smear their strike. He pushed through a resolution condemning the strike of the North American Aviation workers, which Roosevelt broke with the use of federal troops.

Stalinists Outdo Reuther

But fate proved momentarily unkind to Reuther. Hitler had marched against the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, and the Stalinists were not to be outdone in servile support of American imperialism and strikebreaking. The Roosevelt-Stalin war alliance was mirrored in the unity between the Murray-Hillman and Stalinist machines in the CIO to enforce the no-strike pledge and support of War Labor Board arbitration. Reuther was outflanked from the right.

Now he could only try to compete with the Stalinists in demonstrations of loyalty to the war government, support of the no-strike pledge, schemes for labor-management committees to improve the speed-up, and the notorious "equality of sacrifice" program for which the auto workers were induced to give up their overtime premium pay.

In order to preserve his faction and differentiate himself from the Addes-Stalinist group, Reuther found it more and more necessary to maneuver with the militants. At the 1943 convention, he found a means of hitting a blow at his opponents from the *left*. He led the fight against the Stalinist resolution for the "incentive pay" system and it was defeated. Almost everyone in the CIO, outside the Stalinists, opposed "incentive pay," so Reuther took no risk. He joined with the Stalinists at the same convention, however, in reaffirming the no-strike pledge and complete submission to the war program.

On the slippery terrain of the war period, Reuther's shifty foot-work brought him close to disaster. His prestige sank to its lowest point at the 1944 convention as the result of his shabby maneuvers over the no-strike pledge, during the stormiest debate in UAW history.

He first tried to prevent the resolution for unconditional repeal of the no-strike pledge from being presented with a proposed rule to limit debate to a "majority" and a "minority" resolution, the Addes-Stalinist group's and Reuther's respectively, both reaffirming support of the no-strike pledge. The delegates howled this trick down and forced a vote on all the resolutions.

Reuther's resolution upholding the no-strike pledge contained a meaningless proviso that between the end of the war in Germany (nine months off) and the end of the war in Japan the Executive Board be empowered to "authorize strike action" in plants "reconverted to the exclusive and sole manufacture of civilian production" (of which there were none).

Reuther was cut to pieces by both sides in the debate.

The opposition to the no-strike pledge, led by the Rank and File Caucus, in which the Trotskyists played a big role, piled up 36% of the votes. The "majority" resolution was defeated with slightly less than a majority. Reuther's resolution was backed by less than 5% of the delegates. Reuther then joined with the rest of the leaders to squeeze through the unconditional no-strike pledge.

Reuther was an unabashed strikebreaker against "wildcat" walk-outs of the increasingly rebellious auto workers. He personally joined with Addes in attempting to break the 1944 Chrysler strike. His name was badly tarnished until the 1945-46 GM strike. Then, through this strike, at one stroke he was able to gain enough support from the militants, added to his caucus strength, to gather a narrow majority and win his longed-for UAW presidency.

Reuther and the GM Strike of 1945-46

The GM strike marked the big turn in Reuther's fortunes. The initiative was first taken at a conference of 400 local union officials from two big UAW regions in Detroit on June 14, 1945. Against the opposition of the whole UAW International Executive Board, the conference went on record for a 30% wage increase and the holding of an NLRB strike vote. As director of the UAW's GM Department, Reuther first tried to put the lid on the question of strike, although he covered himself with militant phrases. He stalled off strike action for months. Finally, on Nov. 21, he stepped to the head of the mounting movement and announced the strike was on.

Due to the "one-at-a-time" strategy Reuther had put through the Executive Board, the strike was to turn into a grueling 113-day battle. Reuther's policy was to limit the strike to GM. The most advanced militants wanted to spread it to bring the full weight of the million auto workers to bear on the entire industry and force it quickly to terms.

Truman first unsuccessfully ordered the GM workers to go back without a settlement, then resorted to his "fact-finding" board procedure, designed to whittle down the union's demands. Reuther complied with this procedure — the first time it was ever used. In the end, the GM workers' endurance and fighting spirit, augmented by the strikes in steel an dother industries, won an 18½-cent raise.

Reuther had proved more quick to adapt himself to the resurgent militancy of the auto workers than had Thomas, Addes and the other UAW leaders, who gave the GM strike only indifferent support. The Stalinists, with whom the latter were tied at the time, were thoroughly discredited. Thus, riding the crest of the GM victory, Reuther ousted Thomas as president at the March 1946 convention.

But in the very moment of his triumph, Reuther dropped his "militant" mask. He conducted his campaign for the presidency on strictly clique lines. He was silent on all the basic issues, the Ford "company security" clause which he had approved in the Executive Board, the participation of union leaders on government boads. He concentrated on winning conservative elements, making unscrupulous deals for posts to gain the backing of Jim-Crow and even gangster types, like Richard Gosser of Toledo. He talked about "responsible" leadership — meaning one opposed to class struggle. His keynote was "unity," an end to factions (all but his own. of course) and to what CIO President Philip Murray, in his convention address, termed "internal bickering." Reuther demonstratively promised he would be a "source of strength" to Murray, that timid apostle of "class harmony."

Reuther Gains a Clean Sweep

The 1946 convention did not give Reuther all that he sought — complete rule. His faction was in a minority on the Executive Board — the delegates didn't trust him with undivided power. By the next convention, however, he was able to make a clean sweep. This time it was not the militants who backed him. As in 1940 and 1941, he lined up the most conservative and reactionary elements, concluding an unsavory alliance even with the priest-ridden Association of Catholic Trade Unionists. The keynote of his program was anti-communism and red-baiting.

The reactionary trend was deepening in the country. Truman had proclaimed his "doctrine" of "containing Communism" everywhere in the world. Apathy and conservative moods dominated many workers and this was favorable to Reuther's cause. He pushed through the resolution ordering the UAW officers to comply with the Taft-Hartley law and rode rough-shod over the opposition to take full control.

With the union reins firmly in his hands, Reuther has unfolded his real program for the union. Its essential features are centralizing of power and curbing of internal democracy; crippling of militancy; collaborating with the corporations in imposing long-term contracts; restricting real wage gains while boosting speed-up and man-hour output. The auto workers are being put on a "war footing."

Reuther has ruthlessly pursued his drive to extirpate opposition. At the 1949 convention, his executive board secured powers to bring to trial and expel local union members. A campaign of local trials and expulsions has been instituted, since the start of the Korean war, against those accused of not supporting the war. Reuther has endorsed contracts permitting company managements to fire alleged "subversives."

Company security" clauses — the right of managements to "discipline" participants in so-called "unauthorized" strikes — have been incorporated, in one form or another, in all major contracts. The shop-steward method of settling grievances has been supplanted by the "impartial umpire," who on all important issues rules in favor of the company.

In 1949, to head off a strike at Ford, Reuther picked up the recommendations of Truman's Steel Fact-Finding Board and agreed to no wage increase in return for a pension limited to $100 a month, including social security, payable to workers over 65 after 30 years of service. Reuther's "pattern" undercut the demands of the CIO Steelworkers, who, after a prolonged strike, settled for a similar pension plan without wage gains.

A reputation has been fabricated for Reuther as a "slick" negotiator. Much light has been shed on this during the past three years. His "slickness" consists in

wangling small concessions in exchange for yielding previous gains or surrendering the union's major demands. Thus, in 1948, he agreed to a poorly worked out cost-of-living escalator clause, but gave away most of the GM workers' demand for higher basic hourly pay. Also, for the first time he abandoned the one-year contract and signed a two-year pact.

The long-term contract has become the heart of Reuther's policy of collaboration with the corporations and stripping the union of its fighting powers. This year Reuther introduced the 5-year contract, which binds the workers not to demand anything for five years and fixes a ceiling of four cents an hour annually for increases in basic wages. This policy, begun in GM, has been extended to Ford and other companies.

How Reuther Negotiates

How important a victory the corporations consider the long-term contract was indicated by the satisfaction expressed by GM President Charles E. Wilson, who pointed out that GM's rate of man-hour output will increase for the next five years. He did not fail to hail Reuther for accepting "the principle of progress" and said, "The boys (Reuther & Co.) deserve a lot of credit." *Business Week* summed up GM's gain: "GM has bought five years of labor peace. Its workers, with nothing to fight over for the next half decade save minor grievances, will almost forget they are union men. By 1955, UAW's GM unit may no longer be a militant bargainer." At least, that is GM's hope. And Ford's.

How has Reuther been able to put over his reactionary union policy? He has depended heavily, of course, on such classic methods of the union bureaucrats as suppression of criticism and opposition, centralization of power in the top leaders, curbing rank-and-file militancy.

But Reuther does not rely solely on these crude methods. He understands the traditions of the auto workers and has respect for the volcanic forces latent in the ranks. Despite his earnest desire to establish himself as an effective moderator of the class struggle and to enforce the "rule of the conference table" for the "rule of the picket line," he has been compelled time and again in the years since 1947 to tolerate and go along with strikes. In 1948 the Chrysler strike had to be endorsed and in 1949 the Ford anti-speed-up strike broke over his head. This past summer a wave of strikes spurred Reuther to hasty negotiations for wage increases.

He has not dared to move as fast as he would have liked against opposition and has been forced to impose a certain restraint and caution on the most reactionary elements in the union who want to go "all-out" at once on the "commies" and the militants. When the company stooges and ACTU gang at the outbreak of the Korean war started hoodlum attacks on alleged "communists" in several auto plants, Reuther sensed that a big kick-back would ensue from the democratic-minded auto workers and issued a warning against such methods, advising the more "legal" means of formal trial procedures and expulsions.

Above all, in maintaining his hold on the ranks, Reuther knows how to cover himself with a mantle of "progressivism" and "social progress." Of all the union leaders, he is the most adept at social demagogy. He does not even disdain to borrow slogans from the most anti-capitalist revolutionary source, the Trotskyists, when this serves his ends.

Thus, in the 1946 GM strike he picked up the "Open the Books of the Corporations" slogan from the Socialist Workers Party. It was an effective piece of propaganda in exposing the reluctance of GM to reveal its true profits. But Reuther turned the "Open the Books" slogan into a demand not for the *union's* right to investigate the corporation's records, but for the government's. After the strike, Reuther quickly dropped the slogan.

Reuther's cost-of-living escalator clause was likewise borrowed from the Trotskyist program of the sliding scale of wages to adjust wage rates automatically to the rising cost of living. But in his hands it was used as a device to limit gains in basic real wages and to justify the imposition of long-term contracts.

Reuther's reputation and the widespread publicity he gets, however, are based on more than his role and activities as a union leader. More and more he fancies himself in the part of a "social engineer" and "labor statesman," as the prototype of the labor leader whose functions reach out to national and world affairs.

His reputation as an advanced "social thinker" and "bold planner" is based on the various schemes he has elaborated from time to time for dealing with important social and political problems. All his plans have one thing in common: their brief span of life. None has survived more than a few months.

Typical was his scheme to convert idle aircraft factories into the production of 20,000,000 pre-fabricated housing units in 10 years and thus solve both the acute housing problem and the growing unemployment that appeared in 1949. At that time Reuther sneered at the demand for the 30-hour week at 40 hours' pay to meet unemployment and called it "idealistic and a dream at this time." Today his own scheme is forgotten. He had no program of action to put it into effect and, besides, the aircraft plants are producing war planes for Truman's tremendousiy increased armaments program.

Just after the Korean war began, Reuther came forth with his most grandiose scheme. It was nothing less than "A Total Peace Offensive" to "stop Communist aggression by taking the initiative in the world contest for men's minds, hearts and loyalties." This was to be accomplished through a program of "both" the "building of adequate military defense" and "launching total war against poverty and human insecurity" throughout the world. His main proposition called for the expenditure by the United States of $13 billion annually for 100 years (1950-2050) — a total cost of one trillion, 300 billion dollars — for economic and social benefits, part to be made available even to the Soviet Union. This vast sum was to be spent in addition to the then already staggering federal budget of $42 billion a year. This super-duper "Marshall Plan" was offered just when a CIO committee was bringing back from Western Europe a damning report on the original Marshall Plan which, they testified, had been a "miserable failure" so

far as the workers were concerned and had only further enriched the wealthy.

Scarcely was Reuther's new scheme in print, when Truman demanded and Congress enacted "supplemental appropriations" even larger than Reuther talked of. But the $18½ billion a year more that Washington is extracting from the American people is going exclusively for the "adequate military defense" (read imperialist war) part of Reuther's program. What the American people and the rest of the world are going to get from the administration which Reuther supports is higher taxes, inflation, shortages, less housing, repression, military dictatorship, wage freezes, longer hours and finally the descent into annihilating atomic war.

An Apologist for Imperialism

Nevertheless this latest, stillborn "plan" of Reuther's indicates how his mind operates and what his function as a labor leader is. He is aware that the American workers — including the auto workers — are very suspicious of the aims of American capitalism in the rest of the world and at home. They are wondering why Washington is supporting reactionary, anti-labor regimes in Europe and Asia, if its aims are so democratic. Is there to be another war to fatten the corporations and tear down labor's living standards? Reuther is convinced that to get and keep the support of the workers for militarization, it is necessary to give the war program the cover of professed progressive social aims.

It is as an apologist and "left" cover for American imperialism and its war program that Reuther's greatest significance lies. He is, in fact, the most aggressive and able representative in the labor movement of that most treacherous and deceptive tendency — social imperialism — represented in classical form by the European Social Democrats.

"Social imperialists" was the term Lenin applied to "socialists" who supported their own imperialist rulers in the First World War — "socialists in words, imperialists in deeds." The present-day social imperialist does not even remain "socialist" in words, but, like Reuther, speaks of grandiose reforms for capitalism.

Reuther is the darling of the pro-war liberals and Social Democrats, who long ago recognized him as "our boy," embraced, publicized and praised him. It is they — with Reuther's conscious assistance — who have contributed most to the myth of Reuther as a new-type labor leader who combines aggressive militancy in union economic struggles with streamlined organizational efficiency and, most of all, far-seeing social vision. The real Reuther is a coldly calculating opportunist, able to play the "militant" one day and the "responsible" aide to the ruling class the next, who knows how to cater to the aspirations of the ranks with high-sounding "social plans" which he never follows through with a program of action.

As Reuther sits in his presidential chair at the UAW headquarters in Detroit, he can see above him and before him the presidency of the CIO. Today he is widely spoken of as a likely successor to aging and ailing Philip Murray. But he sees something more. Beyond the CIO presidency looms the prospect of political power in Washington.

Reuther's ambitions are not so cramped as those of an old-type union leader like Murray. He represents a new and higher stage in the development of American labor. He does not want to limit his game to that of passive apologist for Wall Street's brutal plans for world domination. He sees himself and the labor bureaucracy, resting on the tremendous organized power of the unions, as more than propagandists and "labor advisers" on government boards, as in the last war.

The Political Ambitions of a Reuther

He envisions himself and the labor bureaucracy cut out for leading parts in running the government and determining its policies. He does not think that a government of "dollar-a-year" corporation executives can command the loyalty of the workers and keep them in line. For this, he believes, the labor leaders will be needed in commanding government posts.

He has many times indicated his admiration of the British labor leaders who have been in control of the British government since 1945. And he has had before him the example of the Social Democrats in Western Europe who have held top posts in coalition capitalist governments.

He has toyed around with the idea of a "third party" and even spoke of it tentatively in 1948, but dropped it when Truman was nominated for president. He has been the chief labor figure in Americans for Democratic Action, a formation of pro-war liberal and Social Democratic elements, which is seeking to build itself as an organizationally independent wing of "progressive" capitalist politics.

Does Reuther dream of himself as the American Attlee who will some day save U. S. capitalism from itself? If he has not permitted himself that hope, it is not because he feels unqualified.

But what Walter Reuther may become will be determined, not by his individual desires and ambitions, but by the self-same forces in the class struggle that have carried him to his present prominence. The decisive factor in his further career will be the auto workers and the CIO movement as a whole. He must go where they go — or he will not go with them at all.

Reuther must always be mindful and watchful of those hundreds of thousands of workers in the plant of Detroit, Flint and a score of other industrial centers who hold his destiny in their mighty hands. They have made Reuther what he is; they can unmake him or cause him to modify his conduct tomorrow or the day after.

But it would be unrealistic to expect any basic change in the characteristics and role which he has displayed in his ascent to office and his activities in it. These have become second nature to him. When it comes to the showdown, Reuther for all his bold talk readily yields to pressures from the government and the corporations. That is why he cannot give the auto workers the leadership they must have to maintain their conditions and go forward. That is why the aim of the militants is not to "reform" Reuther but to replace him.

Dave Beck

By DAN ROBERTS

When the next progressive move of the workers in the AFL on the West Coast begins, it will find one of its main rallying cries ready-made: Down with Dave Beck and Dave Beckism! For Dave Beck is the pillar of reaction in the West Coast labor movement and the employers' man up and down the coast.

Dave Beck has held the title of labor czar since the early Thirties. He arose in the Seattle labor movement in the late 1920's as a perfect representative of business unionism. His outlook was formed early. He came from a working class background but dreamed of becoming a business man. Unlike a Reuther or even a Lundeberg, whatever idealism motivated him in youth was spent by the time he joined the labor movement. He was a "finished personality" from the start of his career in the union movement — an apostle for craft unionism and business unionism.

In the Northwest labor movement to this day, many hide-bound AFL bureaucrats continue to give lip-service to the memory of the IWW. It is a mark of Beck's mentality that he repudiates them completely.

"These Wobblies are nuts. You can't beat the bosses by trying to destroy them. I have no use for class warfare," he says. What Beck did have use for from the very start was the hook-up of union and employers typical of the craft unions of the 1920's.

Beck brought to Seattle the labor-employer monopoly, in which a limited group of workers — in this case the "salesmen drivers" in the bakery, coal, ice, milk, laundry, and other trades — win improvements at the expense of the body of consumers and at the cost of maintaining the rest of the working class in a disorganized condition.

Beck organized the employers in these trades into price-fixing associations over which he emerged as the "czar," utilizing the union machinery — including his professional goon squad — to police price agreements. Beck's brand of unionism was an important feature of the American labor movement from 1890 through the early Thirties and became notorious in the Building Trades and Teamster crafts in many cities. It was the breeding ground for racketeers and gangsters (it was partially a source of Capone's power in Chicago) and of the notorious swindling union racketeers whose misdeeds form the subject of Joel Seidman's book, "Labor Czars."

What Dave Beckism Is

This type of unionism — even without the racketeering — represents the ultimate in class collaboration. It ties the union into a trust with the employers. It beats down upon the mass production workers and gains a few crumbs for a narrow group of workers at the expense of the rest. It disrupts labor solidarity. It elevates a dictatorship of officials over the union membership who are at the mercy of the business agents.

Through this type of unionism Beck grew and became labor overlord of Seattle. By 1934 he had established what was widely known as "Dave Beck's voluntary NRA."

He first established the labor-business monopoly in the laundry and dye and dry-cleaning industries as a means of advancing the laundry drivers whose secretary he became in 1924. In successive drives which jointly organized employer and driver alike, he included a variety of industries in which drivers play an essential role such as produce, bakeries, gasoline, coal, ice, milk, soft drinks.

The newspapers for 1936, 1937 and 1938 are filled with accounts of court suits detailing Beck's operations from which the pattern of Beck's business unionism may be reconstructed. Thus in May 1938, Beck, his lieutenants and 29 Seattle coal and wood wholesalers were named defendants in a suit brought by a group of owner-drivers who retailed coal and belonged to a CIO union. They charged the defendants with a conspiracy to refuse to sell fuel of any kind to any merchant who did not agree to retail coal or wood "at the price fixed by the defendants." They charged that two or more of the Beck goon squad had been placed at various coal mines around Seattle to prevent drivers from obtaining coal there. The coal drivers were not sustained in the courts.

The head of the cleaners and dyers association was William Short, a Beck associate and a former president of the Washington State Federation of Labor. $81,000 was paid annually by the industry to the association whose sole function was to police prices. Regular dues ranged from 1% to 3% of gross volume of business and fines ran as high as $100. The prices in the industry in Seattle were the highest in the country, but workers in 1937 took a 30% cut in pay. The association fixed the prices that the large wholesalers charged to the 500 or so small retail shops and the prices that the latter charged the public. If the small shops did not remain in good standing, drivers of trucks for wholesale plants would not pick up or deliver garments to be cleaned. Retailers were told by the association where to buy their wholesale work and were required to apply to the association whenever they wished to change wholesalers. Any attempt to operate outside of the association brought retribution in the form of bombings, use of caustic soda, stink bombs, etc.

Alliance with the Brewers

Beck's biggest victory of that time in the field of business unionism was the cementing of his alliance with the brewery bosses of the Northwest. Here, however, Beck did not become czar of the industry, but on a more modest scale served as the means whereby the big brewers — particularly Emil Sick — policed beer prices. For almost a year — 1937-38 — the brewers used Beck to keep Eastern and California beer out of the Northwest. The ostensible pretext for the Teamster-imposed boycott of these brands was the jurisdictional war between the Teamsters and the United Brewery Workers. But the employers profited from the boycott, using it to jack up beer prices in the North-

west and eliminating price competition among themselves. They rewarded Beck with a recognition of his jurisdictional claims over all brewery workers in their plants.

Beck brought to the art of business unionism all the necessary attributes — above all, a consciousness of what he was doing. He believes fervently in the partnership of business and labor. He believes in "free enterprise," tempered only by the necessary protection which collusion brings. Higher wages must come out of higher profits, and business must organize itself to remove price competition. He rejects militant unionism. He has an overweening ambition to be known as a great businessman, to be admired by the business community, to rub shoulders with eminent businessmen. He fawns upon the employers.

Beck is no demagogue. What he sincerely believes is readily ascertainable from interviews and speeches. In 1938 Richard Neuberger, a journalist, presented a portrait of Beck in his book, *The Promised Land*. We learn that Beck neither drinks nor smokes and exercises daily to keep down his girth. He rides to work in a flashy Cadillac, dresses like a conservative businessman, and his office looks like the office of a corporation executive.

"I run this place just like a business," Beck told Neuberger, "just like Standard Oil Company or Northern Pacific Railway. *Our business is selling labor.* We use business-like methods. Business people have confidence in us." (Our emphasis.)

Beck believes, says Neuberger, that a primary function of labor is to show capital how to make a return on its investment. Beck: "Some of the finest people I know are employers. I realize that labor cannot prosper unless businessmen and invested capital are given reasonable and adequate protection." And further: "There are too many filling stations in Seattle. More are threatened. We're going to close some of them. First, I advise promoters against starting new stations. If that doesn't work, the Teamsters will simply refuse to serve them. They won't last long."

Beck's solicitude for the employers and for the concept of the labor-business monopoly is explicitly embodied in a clause in the contract of the bakery truck drivers.

"Free enterprise" with stabilized conditions achieved through "regulation" by the powerful union official cooperating with business — that is Beck's conscious program. His ambition is to win the recognition of the business community for that program and for himself cast in the "czar's" role.

Beck is no "Welfare-Stater." He wants no part of the "mixed economy" schemes advocated by the Reuthers and others. "We want government to get out of business as quickly as possible — and stay out!" Beck declared in his speech at the 1946 Western Conference of Teamsters. "Several times in the past few years we have had to take our stand beside business, politically and otherwise, when we felt that government was encroaching dangerously upon free enterprise. *And we oppose the socialization of medicine.*" (Our emphasis.)

In the same speech Beck also said: "I read a statement the other day by a very outstanding spokesman for industry, who declared that the law of supply and demand would solve all our problems. I would like to ask him if he believes in the certificate of necessity. . . . The certificate of necessity is a wall preventing the operation of the law of supply and demand and prohibiting free and open competition; its purpose is to protect investment structures, insure service to the public, permit operators to earn enough so they can pay adequate wages and receive a fair return on their investments."

These two excerpts present the basis for Beck's program and motivate his dealings with the employers.

The Ethics of Beck

Beck has won his standing by being the employers' man. "Dave Beck never asks for more than the traffic will bear," "Dave Beck keeps his word" — this is what the business community says about him. And Beck has won high standing in the Northwest business community. He is an honored member of the Seattle Chamber of Commerce. Over the years he has been Civil Service Commissioner and Boxing Commissioner. He is a close friend of Emil Sick, the brewery magnate who made him a director of his Seattle Pacific Coast League Baseball Team. Beck is president of a corporation currently erecting a $3,000,000 apartment house in Seattle. In 1946, Beck's friend, Governor Wallgren, appointed him a regent of the University of Washington. Beck was a prime mover in the purge of professors accused of Communist Party membership and activities, and was rewarded this year with elevation to the post of President of the Board of Regents of the University of Washington.

(No scholastic attainments won for Beck the appointment to the Board of Regents. Nor is his union noted for promoting education among the Teamster membership. The only educational activity that the Seattle Teamsters ever promoted was a class in jiu-jitsu to provide extra beef for Beck's jurisdictional raids.)

Who are the real beneficiaries — outside of the employers — of the labor-employer monopoly? A certain group of privileged crafts — the "salesmen-drivers" — has undoubtedly benefited. But even they have at times had to take pay cuts when business conditions were unfavorable. Beck boasted of this to Neuberger.

Outside of the employers, the consistent beneficiaries of the monopoly is the large army of union officials and their henchmen composing the Beck machine in the West Coast Teamsters Union. There are approximately 1,000 Beck-appointed officials in the Western Conference of Teamsters. Beck openly acknowledges that he prefers to appoint secretaries and business agents, although he has stated that he will allow a local to elect its officials if it really wishes to do so.

The union officials are well paid — on principle. "We want the best secretaries and business representatives we can find," Beck declared at the 1946 Western Conference of Teamsters. "We must borrow from the book of industry; we must be ready to pay for ability. . . . Inefficient leadership of labor would inevitably result in more strikes, more turmoil, and more disruption of our economic picture."

Evidently to prevent turmoil, one official of the union — Frank Brewster, one of Beck's chief lieutenants — receives enough income to maintain a stable of race horses. Here one can see the difference between the bureaucracy of

a powerful union such as the Teamsters and the bureaucracy of a small outfit such as the Sailors Union of the Pacific. Beck's machinemen own the horses; Lundeberg's appointees must be satisfied with playing them. Acting on the premise that its vices are virtues, the Beck officialdom freely advertises Brewster's ownership of the race horses, and every year the Washington Teamsters use Brewster's connections to sponsor a special event — Teamsters Day at the Longacres race-track.

The machine benefits, and rules the union with an iron hand. Beck told Joe Miller, another journalist who interviewed him, "I'm paid $25,000 a year to run this outfit. Unions are big business. Why should truck drivers and bottle washers be allowed to make big decisions affecting union policy? Would any corporation allow it?"

Beck's goon squad is notorious in the Northwest as an instrument for terrorizing small employers in the "organizing drives" of the Thirties; as a shock force in jurisdictional raids; and especially as a police force in the union. The most infamous exploit of the Beck goon squad was the attack upon the Newsboys in Seattle in 1937. This attack, in which Beck undertook to police the AFL Newsboys Union at the request of its officials, was a veritable reign of terror which ceased only when the rank and file revolt had been crushed physically and the courts intervened to halt the operations of the goon squads.

Business Unionism in New Surroundings

Business unionism had its heyday in the Twenties, in the era of prosperity and the rule of the open shop in the basic industries throughout the country. Beck's brand of business unionism has arisen in new circumstances: the period of the upsurge of the mass production workers during the Thirties. Between business unionism and this new industrial union movement there is deep-going conflict.

The truck-driving industry is itself an arena of this conflict. On the one hand are the service trades — milk, bread, laundry, and other "salesmen," on whom the power of Teamster bosses rests in many cities. On the other hand are the over-the-road drivers and the "inside men," the warehousemen.

Beck's collusive agreements rested on the privileged crafts and were first made at the cost of the more exploited sections of the industry who were left unorganized. Beck was bound to come into conflict with the powerful new current. For a brief time, however, Beck managed to live side by side in peace with this upsurge and even to draw strength from it.

The 1934 maritime strike which solidly organized the West Coast waterfronts brought an influx of members into Beck's unions as well. Seattle longshoremen still relate how their refusal to handle goods brought to the pier by non-union trucks signed up a considerable number of drivers in General Drivers Local 174 of the Seattle Teamsters. The victory of the 1934 strike gave the signal for intensive organization in Seattle and Beck rounded out his own organizing drives by relying on the new momentum.

The 1934 maritime strike was followed by two and a half years of uneasy collaboration in the Northwest labor movement between Beck and the Stalinists, who headed the longshore union and were influential in the new lumber workers union. In the spring of 1936 the entire Seattle labor movement collaborated to elect John F. Dore — a friend of Beck — mayor of the city.

The high point of this alliance between Beck and the new union movement represented by the maritime workers and the lumber workers was the Seattle Post-Intelligencer strike in the fall of 1936. For over three months the labor movement of Seattle kept Hearst's paper shut down tight. Mass pickets were thrown around the P.-I. building, a "wall of flesh" composed of teamsters, longshoremen and lumber workers. Accused of having instigated the strike and being a troublemaker in general, Beck defended himself by saying: "This is the first time that we have ever been in a joint venture like that."

It was the first — and the last time as well. For it was only a matter of weeks before jurisdictional battle lines were drawn on the West Coast. The West Coast became the primary battleground of the struggle between the new militant industrial unionism represented by the CIO against the craft unionists of the AFL. Beck was named commander-in-chief for the AFL forces by William Green.

What recourse did Beck have against the mass upsurge of industrial unionism which threatened his whole way of life? To smash the upsurge and drive the industrial workers back to atomized conditions was no longer possible. He had to seek to capture it and to imprison these workers within the structure of the craft unions in order to guarantee the employers minimum disturbance from their demands and thereby preserve the advantages of the privileged crafts.

When Bridges launched the "march inland" in 1937, beginning with an organizing drive among all warehousemen in the coast cities, Beck announced his jurisdictional claims over the same workers. Beck had hitherto ignored the warehousemen as had all other Teamster bosses. But now organizing the warehousemen under *his* jurisdiction became absolutely necessary to Beck for the preservation of his labor-employer monopolies. The fight against the CIO was on in earnest.

Beck and the Over-the-Road Drivers

As the struggle against the CIO unfolded, Beck won over to his side a considerable section of the business community that had fought him and his collusive agreements and had favored open shop and "free competition." With the help of these employers, Beck captured the warehousemen in Seattle, although he lost out in San Francisco. Signing "sweetheart" contracts, Beck began to organize the over-the-road drivers, the most exploited section of the trucking industry. Here again it was necessary to move lest a more radical and genuinely industrial union drive should organize these workers, to whom the craft and business union outlook of the "salesmen-drivers" is completely alien.

In the Midwest the over-the-road organizing drive was under way under the leadership of Farrell Dobbs and other organizers trained in the Trotskyist-led Minneapolis truck-drivers union. This organizing drive, while conducted under the banner of the Teamsters, pursued militant methods and

the program of industrial unionism. In his organization of the over-the-road drivers on the West Coast, Beck copied many of the methods of the Midwest over-the-road organizing drive. But the aim of his drive was completely different.

The Midwest organizing drive had as its goal the achievement of an eleven-state area master contract with central negotiations between the association of the trucking operators and the drivers organized in a militant, industrial union. Although he operated through his Western Conference of Teamsters which covered the eleven Far Western states, Beck dealt with the employers individually, with all kinds of variations in contract conditions, settling with them on the basis of "ability to pay" (that is, any terms that might be obtained) precisely in order to keep from mobilizing the drivers for industry-wide battle.

Beck used the strategic position of the Teamsters — which is enormously strengthened by the huge distances between centers in the West — to corral an increasing number of the more exploited workers in a variety of industries, constantly pursuing the aim of freezing out genuine industrial unionism. Although head of the AFL side in the jurisdictional battle, he was far more concerned with herding these workers into his own unions. The Western Conference of Teamsters had been organized by Beck as a means of consolidating and departmentalizing his holdings and in order to systematically enlarge his domain. At present this branch of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters has a membership of 250,000 workers.

Beck's motives were made quite clear at the 1946 Western Conference of Teamsters where he explained why he took the cannery workers into the Teamsters Union after a long struggle with the Stalinist-dominated CIO union.

"I have been asked: Why did the Teamsters organize the cannery workers?" said Beck. "They might as readily ask why we organized the warehousemen. If a cannery is shut down, not only does the employment of the cannery worker stop, but the truck which hauls the cannery freight is halted and the driver is out of work. The truck operator's investment is jeopardized; industrial turmoil is caused. Our organization is determined to take to these cannery workers and warehousemen, who are so vitally important to the free flow of transportation, the kind of organization that will guarantee the maximum living standards with a minimum of industrial disturbance."

In this explanation by Beck, in which the reference to the "maximum of living standards" is wholly gratuitous, the whole pattern of business unionism under the conditions of mass industrial unionization is revealed.

And what about the "salesmen-drivers" — the privileged group of workers in the industry, how did they fare? In a speech delivered in 1943 before a Seattle mass meeting, Beck sought to justify war-time speed-up and the violation of Washington's eight-hour law for women laundry workers in exchange for meager wage concessions to the laundry drivers. "Let me ask you this: Are the drivers for the cleaning plants working for the same wages they received in 1942, plus the Little Steel farce? Of course they are not, because the volume of output of the plants has increased."

This incident — right out of the pages of the *Washington Teamsters* — reveals the whole pattern of Beck's present-day business unionism. The inside workers are the captives: here they didn't even belong formally to the Teamsters union. As women production workers, they can be kicked around. The employers coin huge profits from the speed-up and pass a small portion of these extra profits on to the drivers, while the women get almost nothing at all.

King of the Cannibals

Beck's appetite grows with eating. Jurisdictional raiding and the organization of mass production workers not only became a necessity for Beck; it also opened up new opportunities. Forced by circumstances to expand their domain, Beck and his underlings have become power-mad, seeking to incorporate more and more workers within their empire and constantly to increase their take.

The old-time slothful Teamster bosses were and are satisfied with carving out baronies in one city. The ambitious Beck and his underlings are out for a labor empire. The old slogan of the Teamsters was "everything on wheels belongs to the Teamsters." The new slogan put forward by Beck is "everything that can be moved on wheels belongs to the Teamsters." Beck is now executive vice president of the Teamsters International and in charge of its nation-wide organizing drives. He has elaborated a streamlined top structure for the Teamsters modeled on his own Western Conference of Teamsters in order to carry through his nation-wide jurisdictional struggles.

The turn to jurisdictional war as the predominant concern of Beck was made at the end of World War II and after the postwar upsurge of the American labor movement had subsided. The keynote for jurisdictional war was struck at the Tenth Western Conference of Teamsters in 1946 and has been his policy since.

"We will defend our jurisdiction come what may," Beck thundered. "We will never let any part of the labor movement inside or outside of the American Federation of Labor . . . interfere with our welfare and growth." "Jurisdiction is the lifeline of our union," etc., that is the war cry repeated at every conference. And every time that "our jurisdiction" is to be "defended come what may," Beck has enlarged it to swallow up another industry and another section of workers.

"Cannibal unionism" became a predominant feature of the labor movement after the upsurge of 1945 and 1946 had subsided. Beck became king of the cannibals. In alliance with Lundeberg and Ryan and lesser lights he started raiding AFL, CIO and independents alike, taking special advantage of strike situations in order to move in, in collusion with the employers, behind the strikers' picket lines.

As his raiding operations grow, so does his immediate dependence upon the employers. "For every enemy I have made in the labor movement," he recently declared, "I have made a hundred friends in the Chamber of Commerce."

His dependence upon the employers has grown so intimate that Beck has cut himself off from the crew of "Welfare State" union politicians, whose class-collaborationist schemes need the mediation of the state to a far

greater degree than Beck's. "I think what work I can do in the organizing field," Beck told Joe Miller, "is tremendously more important than what I might be able to do in the legislative field." And by "organizing" Beck means primarily his "sweetheart" contracts and his jurisdictional raiding operations.

Double, treble the membership of the Teamsters Union! — that is his goal. That is the means whereby he seeks to elevate himself to recognition as top labor "czar" of the country. He has already bent the top command of the AFL to his will. For the announced program of the 1949 AFL convention to recruit a million new members is essentially Beck's program. The tip-off on this program was given in an Associated Press dispatch from the AFL's Saint Paul convention. The AP quotes one high official as saying, "We've got to raid CIO unions or our organizing drive will flop." That is right down Beck's alley. Only Beck and his maritime ally, Lundeberg, are taking this program seriously and are seeking to put it into effect.

Beck and Anti-Beck

But there is not only Beck; there is also the fight against Dave Beck. That man is hated and feared throughout the labor movement of the Northwest and of the entire Pacific Coast. All the evils of labor bureaucratism are associated with his name.

He is an object of derision and curses. Derision for his corpulence, his pompous oratory, Frank Brewster's horse-racing shenanigans, and the abject bootlicking of Beck and the entire Teamster bureaucracy before the employers. Curses for his goon squads, his terrorization of the Teamster ranks, his deals, and above all his endless finking, strike-breaking and jurisdictional raids.

Beck's threat to the striking Boeing aircraft workers in Seattle in 1948 that he would cross their picket lines "again and again and again" aroused bitter anger in all circles of organized labor. For that is a standing threat to all workers on strike. It is this widespread hatred for the man and his methods that imparted to last year's NLRB election at Boeing aircraft the proportions of a major election campaign, with propaganda for and against Beck widely spread throughout the city. The victory of the Aeronautical Machinists over Beck met with wide acclaim.

In the struggles against Beck's raids and strikebreaking activities, his opponents in the labor movement, including conservative officials, have had to raise slogans of union democracy and labor solidarity, and rally unionists around that banner. In last year's NLRB election at Boeing's, the officials of Lodge 751 of the Machinists, passable bureaucrats in their own right, conducted their campaign around the issue: "The ABC of Democratic Unionism — Avoid Beck Control . . . For a Democratic Member-Controlled Union, Vote Aero-Mechanics Union, Lodge 751."

The lower bodies of the AFL on the West Coast have also been thrown into opposition to his raids. Thus the Washington State AFL convention of 1948 condemned Beck's raids against the Aero-Mechanics at Boeing which he launched during the middle of their strike. The Puget Sound Council of the Lumber and Sawmill Workers Union, an affiliate of the Brotherhood of Carpenters, did likewise in even stronger language. A whole group of unions, including prominent AFL locals in Seattle stood ready to give aid to the Aero-Mechanics, had the leadership of that union elected to make a fight on the picket lines against the Beck-recruited scabs, a fight which, if conducted, would have brought victory to the strikers.

In 1949 a similar array of opposition within the AFL greeted Beck's raiding against the AFL Retail Clerks in Oakland, California. There the East Bay Central Labor Council lined up solidly in an attempt to stop his organizing behind the clerk's picket lines.

Hatred for Beck is digging deep into the ranks of the Teamsters Union — especially among the over-the-road drivers and captive workers. They are the decisive forces in the fight to put an end to his power and ambitious schemes. The immediate impulsion to this opposition is the rotten conditions in the truckdriving industry.

An executive for a trucking concern recently told Joe Miller: "If we have to deal with unions at all, I'll take Beck any time. Last year he cost me $55,000 in wage increases. Any other labor leader would have cost me $100,000." The Teamster ranks are just as aware as the company executives of what Beck's alliances with the employers cost them in wages and conditions.

In many places Teamster contracts are breaking down altogether. Beck has always boasted that "his" Teamsters rarely strike and when they do it is a five-day job with victory assured on the fifth day. But the boast is not matched by reality in recent years. The Teamsters in Oregon last year were out on strike for 136 days before they obtained a new contract with the Pacific Fruit Corporation. There have been a number of other similarly lengthy strikes. Contracts have gone up to a year and a half beyond the expiration date and new ones have been signed with no appreciable gains.

In the spring of this year Beck told the Teamsters that the union would have to call a retreat — not in the "organizing drives," however! — as far as asking for new wage increases was concerned. Business conditions, he explained, don't permit it. The truth is that many employers, having used Beck for their purposes, now consider him superfluous.

The opposition to Beck within the Teamsters Union in Seattle was recorded when J. K. Patterson, a member of General Drivers Local 174, which includes the over-the-road drivers in Washington, was fired from his job because he refused to cross the IAM picket lines during the Boeing strike. Over one thousand members of the local signed a petition to reinstate him.

Even more powerful anti-Beck coalitions than have been formed in the past are sure to arise in the next upsurges in the labor movement. Especially in the Northwest will such coalitions count. For Seattle remains home base for Beck, despite his graduation to the status of a national labor leader. Here is his new expensive home. Here are his business investments. Here is where the employers love him best. Beck still retains Seattle as one of his headquarters, and it is his Northwest apparatus — his early cronies — who boss the new nationwide organizing drives, just as they have bossed the various "departments"

in the West Coast Conference of Teamsters. At the same time they retain all their offices in the Washington Teamster movement.

The Teamsters Union does not possess a genuinely centralized structure. Teamster bosses owe their power to local agreements. Beck is no exception. Beaten afield, he can still retreat. But there is no retreat for him from Seattle, as matters stand now.

To the genuine left-wing elements in the labor movement falls the task of preparing the struggle against Beck. They must review the experiences of past anti-Beck battles and draw the lessons. Above all, the programmatic lines of the struggle must be kept clear: For Democratic Unionism! For Unity of the Labor Movement in Action!

But a fight in the name of these principles cannot be successfully concluded under leadership of officials who are bureaucrats within their own organizations and who participate in raiding ventures on their own. Today in Oakland, for instance, the same East Bay Central Labor Council which condemned Beck in his raid upon the Retail Clerks during the Safeway strike and organized resistance to his strikebreaking there, turned around and supported Beck in his attempted jurisdictional raid upon the CIO warehousemen. Similarly, at the conclusion of the Boeing strike, which saw most of the AFL arrayed against Beck in the State of Washington, these same AFL bodies supported Lundeberg's attempted raid upon the Longshoremen during the 1948 waterfront strike.

Only an opposition based on consistent adherence to the principles of class struggle and union solidarity can successfully cope with Dave Beck, the upholder of business unionism and jurisdictional raiding.

Interview with Marshal Tito

The following excerpts from the interview with Marshal Tito by the Indian Journalist Kamalesh Banerji on July 15, 1950 offer a rounded presentation of the views held at the time by the head of the Yugoslav government. This interview is of particular interest in the light of recent changes in foreign policy by Belgrade. The text is reprinted from the Oct. 1 issue of Janata, organ of the Socialist Party of India — Ed.

* * *

I was to meet Marshal on the Adriatic Island, Brioni, one-time resort of the Hapsburg nobility. Since that time, many changes have taken place. It is now the summer residence of the one-time Croatian metal worker, the most plebeian Head of State of our time.

The grandeur of the old Brioni is gone with the Hapsburgs. What little remained was reduced to rubble by the bombing of the last war. It is now a quiet, unpretentious, lovely little watering-place, one of the best in the world.

I arrived at Brioni the 15th of July, accompanied by the bright and charming young U. S.-born Columbia graduate, Kordija Miloshevitch, who returned to her country about three years ago. She is now a high ranking Yugoslav civil servant. She was to act as the interpreter.

At four o'clock in the afternoon of July 15 we reached the Marshal's modest villa. As we entered the house, I was greeted by a strikingly handsome man of about 58, who looks at least 15 years younger. The Marshal was neatly and simply dressed.

We got down to brass tacks at once. I immediately asked a whole series of questions on Russia. I was anxious to find out how far the political and theoretical break with Russia was complete. His replies were frank. He never spoke with his tongue in his cheek. There were no cryptic answers of "yes" or "no." In fact the interview lasted two hours. I do not think that Tito had ever given such detailed replies to anv other jornalist before.

ATTITUDE TO KREMLIN

I asked: "How do you explain the hostility of Russia toward socialist Yugoslavia on a Marxist basis? Any antagonism between socialist states is not consistent with Marxist theory. Does it mean that Marxism is wrong? Or, if not, that the USSR has ceased being a socialist state and that the Soviet bureaucratic caste has become a class?"

I knew very well that the ruling clique in the Soviet Union is considered by all good Marxists outside the official Communist parties as a bureaucracy, which has the monopoly of all powers and privileges in the country, but in their view, it is not a class of private proprietors.

Marshall Tito replied: "This is an interesting question and I will begin from the end. Undoubtedly, the bureaucratic caste has taken hold in the Soviet Union and is now governing the country. This doesn't mean that Marxism is wrong, but that the Soviet leaders have deviated from the science of Marx and Lenin, regarding relations between socialist countries. The character of the hostility of the Soviet Union towards Yugoslavia is not the same as that between socialist and capitalist countries.

"It is a hostility of a caste towards a socialist country and not the hostility of the people of the Soviet Union. That caste became infuriated when a socialist country resisted its attempts at economic subjugation. The domination by this caste is not a class phenomenon as yet. The USSR is a socialist country regardless of the mistakes its leadership is making."

According to Marxian economy, the labor expended on a commodity determines its value. Since the productivity varies between backward and advanced countries, Russia is exploiting the undeveloped countries by demanding the same world prices for buying and selling. Russia, being the first socialist country, demands heavy sacrifice from other socialist states. Marshal Tito then passed on to characterize the Russian policy as "imperialist," which he would never have done even one year ago.

"This caste," continued Tito, "has introduced elements into the relations of the socialist countries, which are not unknown in the capitalist world.

"For example, the trade of the Soviet Union with the socialist countries is carried on a purely capitalist basis. They sell as high as possible and buy as cheaply as they can, trying to get as much as possible from socialist countries under the pretext of strengthening the international working class movement by helping the first country of socialism. Actually this means helping one imperialist country since Soviet foreign policy deviated completely from the right path — a path which consists of all-out aid to a small socialist country and non-interference in the affairs of other countries."

The next question was difficult for the head of a state to answer. What would be his attitude toward a movement for the overthrow of the regime

in Russia? I could see this startled the Marshal a little. **"In these circumstances, is the bureaucratic caste in the USSR counter-revolutionary, and if there were a movement to overthrow it, how would you look upon it?"**

Marshal Tito replied: "This is a big question. All factors tending to weaken the international working class movement contain elements of counter-revolution. The question of the overthrow of such a caste is not a simple one. The moment is not at all suitable for such a matter and I do not care to discuss the question further."

INDEPENDENT PARTIES

Next I asked: "Since the European Communist parties have become the agents of the Kremlin, would you view with favour the growth of independent Communist parties?"

This is the first time that Tito had called upon the Communists the world over to throw off the yoke of Moscow. He declared that the Communists had lost the confidence of the working classes and that conditions were ripe for building up new Communist parties, independent of the Kremlin. This is what the Marshal said:

"This is a timely question, because the Communist parties and trade union movements in many countries have regressed. This holds true of England, Germany, France, Belgium, and almost all capitalist countries, because the working class has lost confidence in its leadership, due to the fact that the Communist parties no longer follow independent policies and that the main struggle is not for the improvement of the living standards of the toiling masses, but on the contrary, they are becoming more and more instruments of the policy of the Soviet Union.

"The fact that they do not pursue an independent policy is becoming more and more evident to the masses, who see that their leaders obey dictates from outside, without any regard for the objective conditions in their own countries. The masses are deserting their organizations in large numbers and becoming a prey to non-Marxist influence.

"It is now necessary to create new organizations on a class basis. The conditions for building new parties exist in all capitalist countries. It is not important what they are called. What is important is their aim. This shouldn't mean the formation of splinter parties and small groups but the rallying of all such groups and individuals who are already organized within the working-class movement. Tho such a movement should be founded on a class basis as regards fighting for the day-to-day interests of the workers, it should at the same time be broad enough politically to rally all progressive people to fight for peace and progress and against reaction and calumny."

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

The question that naturally arises now is what is his attitude toward a new Communist International. Again for the first time, he explained in detail his reasons for opposing it. This reply can be divided into two parts. In the first place, he is of the opinion that the working class movement in each country should be strengthened. In the second place, he thinks that such an international organization should under no circumstances exercise centralized leadership.

Tito replied: "It is important that the labor movement in each individual country become strong. However, if the Communist parties in various countries cannot mobilize the masses, because they have lost the confidence of the working class, thanks to their own incorrect policy which consists in the subordination of the working class interests to those of the USSR, in that case the masses must be mobilized in some manner in their struggle for higher living standards and a better life. Any talk of building an international is for the time being premature, because there are no organizations that could constitute such a body.

"Even if some such organization existed this should not mean the founding of a new organization center for the world proletariat, and it would not be in the interests of the working class for such an international to exercise centralized leadership."

Is it because Tito has burned his own fingers that he added the following?

"It was proven by Moscow that this is a poor policy. If such an international were founded, after individual Communist parties were strengthened, it would have to be a medium of exchange of experience among them, without the power to dictate from above. We reproach the Communist Party of the Soviet Union because they dictate to others. We do not want to play such a role or allow any other party to play this role. The labor movement can very well progress without such a center. In the event that such an organization existed, it would be a co-ordination center or a body publishing a paper for the exchange of ideas, such as the Cominform journal was meant to be. But it degenerated into the ordinary mouthpiece of the Cominform."

This answer will doubtless disappoint many dissident Communists, who expected Tito to appear in the role of the Peter the Hermit of a new crusade. For them Tito's International is neither the Comintern in the days of Lenin, nor what it had become under Stalin — that is to say, the Stalintern — nor the latest version of the Communist International, that is to say, the Cominform.

Tito's International doesn't have the teeth. This is neither fish nor fowl nor good red herring.

NOT A NEW TENDENCY

Tito is against Titoism. He is very much opposed to naming the new oppositional tendency in the Communist movement after himself. **On the question of Titoism as an international phenomenon, he declared:**

"In general it is not correct to speak of Titoism and look upon it as some new tendency. We, Communists in Yugoslavia, are only fighting against revisionism. We have nothing that would correct the science of Marxism and Leninism from a theoretical point of view. We have only applied the science of Marx and Lenin to our specific conditions. There is no new tendency that could be called Titoism. This must be explained to the masses. Otherwise, it would be harmful to the international working class movement, if it were thought that this is some new tendency. A new theory is not needed.

"It is only necessary that the science of Leninism and Marxism be correctly applied and that the struggle be carried on against the perversion of this theory for momentary purposes, as the Soviet Union is doing in order to achieve the end of its imperialist policy."

We then came to a very ticklish subject, namely — Chinese "Titoism!" In the past the Marshal had consistently and carefully avoided this matter. I had a feeling that my fate was going to be no different. I was naturally pleased when he answered the question in great detail.

CHINESE "TITOISM"

"Do you think," I asked, "that the Communist parties in the Far East are likely to play independent roles in view of the little practical aid that they have received from Moscow?"

"These tendencies toward independence, in so far as the Far Eastern countries are concerned, will not manifest themselves for some time to come, because this struggle against the Soviet domination can only arise out of the attempts of the USSR to interfere in their internal affairs. If it interferes more and more in the affairs of these countries, these parties will offer resistance. In this connection it would be useful to bear in mind the difference between the Communist parties in the capitalist countries and those in power. Where a Communist party is in power it cannot accept dictation from abroad in the form of crude economic exploita-

tion, without undermining national independence. After the Yugoslav experience, I think the Soviet Union will be more careful in interfering in the internal affairs of other socialist countries.

"This question of interfering in the internal affairs of other countries doesn't have an ideological character but is of an economic nature."

Tito made the important point that the influence of the Soviet Union in regard to the Communist parties not in power assumes only an ideological character. As long as the Communist parties are not in the government, the Soviet influence, of necessity, cannot take the form of economic exploitation.

"The Soviet Union," Tito went on, "didn't put pressure on Yugoslavia for ideological reasons, because there were none, but in order to exploit her economically and subject her economy to its own. The Soviet Union is subjugating the Eastern European countries not in order to maintain them on a level of ideological purity, but in order to exploit them economically. If the Chinese people ever finds itself economically exploited, it is certain to resist."

A good deal of confusion exists about the question of Yugoslav participation in future wars. On this I found that many Yugoslavs were not quite clear in their minds. Whether morally Yugoslavia is going to be on the side of Russia in case of war is a matter which is worrying a lot of people. I think that Tito's reply finally disposes of this question, which was declared by the United Press to be the first definite pronouncement of Tito on war.

This is how I put it: "In case of war would you maintain the policy of independence with respect to the two blocs, if your country is not made a battlefield by one or the other?"

Marshal Tito: "Yugoslavia does not belong to any bloc. If not attacked, she will not participate in any war. She will only go to war if attacked. No aggressor can count on the sympathy of the Yugoslav people, irrespective of who he is, since this would be incorrect from the moral point of view. Aggression is not our method of spreading the revolutionary movement in the world."

Since the beginning of the Korean war, Tito had not expressed any opinion. The fact that Yugoslavia recognized the North Korean regime and didn't vote for the U. S. resolution at the Security Council appeared disturbing. What Tito said in this connection dissipates all doubts:

VIEWS ON KOREA

"The struggle of Korean people for unification and independence would be unconditionally just, provided that the Korean people were solving it themselves. But what are the motives of today's struggle? Will this struggle of the North Korean people against the South Koreans lead to independence? I doubt it. The Korean people, of course, has the right to find the solution to its own problems itself."

In his conversation with me, Tito again and again came back to the question of the bureaucracy in the Soviet Union. His main concern was to eliminate bureaucratism in his own country. I expressed the opinion held by many that the power of the bureaucracy in the Soviet Union was the result of the lack of vigilance on the part of Lenin's party, which degenerated without Lenin. Tito's remarks in this connection were revealing:

"Bureaucracy in the Soviet Union didn't spring up because of the lack of vigilance on the part of the Soviet leaders, but because of the method of leadership of the Soviet Union, which is directed from top to bottom. Nothing can be achieved there without approval from the top. There are no independent decisions."

THE RUSSIAN RULING PARTY

As to what he said about the composition of the Communist Party in Russia, with the knowledge and authority of a man who was so closely connected with it until 1948, ought to be an eye-opener to those who think that there still exists a Communist Party in Russia in the real sense.

"What is the Communist Party in the Soviet Union?" Tito asked. "It has about five million members. The million people in the NKVD (secret police) are party members, the members of the party in the militia, in the army — officers and generals — and in the bureaucratic apparatus and government institutions. This is the entire party. It is identical with the state apparatus and in no way represents the rank and file workers and peasants.

"This is a party of leaders, a party of bureaucrats. This is what has led the Soviet Union to the wrong road — from Stalin downwards."

This is definite proof for me that Tito has shed all Stalinist influences, politically, theoretically and even ideolgically.

We then passed on to the question of the new law affecting the workers in Yugoslavia, insofar as the management of industries is concerned. In terms of this new legislation, workers' councils have been set up with a view to eliminating bureaucracy in the sphere of industry.

WORKERS' CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT

To Tito Russia is not an example but a warning. The new law has introduced workers' control and management of industries, as opposed to state control. This is considered as "the beginning of the withering away of the state" to use a Marxian phrase.

At the next stage, the factories, mines, etc., are proposed to be transferred directly to the workers. Tito is mindful of the difficulties of such a step. Besides, if the state dies in Yugoslavia, it still exists in the surrounding countries. **Is not this process of "decentralization" as it is called in Yugoslavia, an invitation to aggression in the present state of international relations?**

Tito replied: "There are many well-meaning socialists outside our country who think that decentralization will weaken our state in the sphere of foreign policy. This is not accurate.

"Such decentralization is simply applied Marxism. We are giving factories to the workers, and this strengthens our state and makes the workers feel, more than ever, that it is their state, that they are the owners of the means of production and that it is they who are creating the prosperity of the country. This consciousness of the workers creates a moral factor which makes us monolithic and strong. The workers will defend the factories which they feel are their own. This is a source of strength and not of weakness."

Tito came back to the question of bureaucracy once again in this connection. "Bureaucracy is a very dangerous matter," Tito continued, "even in socialist countries, as has been proven in the Soviet Union. It is most dangerous when used as a method of leadership in a powerful centralized apparatus. There is no more fertile soil for the growth of bureaucracy than strong centralism. The working masses want to struggle against bureaucracy. Consequently, we do not risk anything and are not traveling along an insecure path.

"We know what the results are going to be. Today we are giving factories to the workers, not to be able to tell the Eastern European countries and the USSR that we have stolen a march on them, but because we consider that we have reached the stage of our development when it is necessary to undertake such measures, according to the science of Marxism and Leninism.

"Although not much time has passed since we took this step, we can already see that it is justified. In my report to both houses of the legislature, I referred to many difficulties facing us in our further construction. It is precisely because of these difficulties that it was necessary to undertake these steps, so that the workers, who perhaps are not conscious of this, should come to the realization that they are the real owners of the means of production. We will not push ahead where we are not certain, and where it is not necessary, but only

there where we see that it is useful for our country. We are not afraid of decentralization, not afraid that the workers will not know how to run the factories. In addition, state functions in the economy have not ceased altogether, but they now play a secondary role. The state still has the functions of control, planning, and co-ordination."

I asked Tito how he envisaged the transfer of factories directly to the workers and the distribution of profits which are unequal in different industries. Whether the difference in income is going to lead to inequality in living standards? Tito appeared to have a complete blueprint for the plan. Tito said:

AN OVERALL PLAN

"Our state has an overall plan and each factory receives the part of this plan which it is to work out according to its possibilities. Our factories are at various levels of productivity. Some that we are building now are modern, others are old. Our state also has a general fund for capital accumulation, and each factory is obligated to give a part of its accumulation fund to the state accumulation fund in relation to its productivity."

This is about all that the factories are to contribute to the general industrial development. After all these deductions are made, the rest goes to the workers.

"Surplus above this," continued the Marshal, "which is the result of the organizational capacity and the measure of endeavor of the workers is utilized to improve their living standards. Of course, there will be inequality in relation to living standards, but it will be a stimulant for the workers to make the greatest possible effort. In addition, our state fund is used for the modernization of all factories, especially those with a lower productivity. Also, a large percentage of the accumulation fund is assigned to those republics whose industry is undeveloped, as for example, Macedonia, Bosnia, Montenegro. The workers will also endeavor to raise the productivity of their own labor, since they know that it will be in their own interest to do so."

Tito was quite alive to the danger of the growth of bureaucracy in Yugoslavia and the ways and means to combat it. If in Russia a powerful totalitarian bureaucracy has grown up, the same conditions exist in Yugoslavia. Tito made this point in his speech on the 26th of June. In what manner can the bureaucracy act as a brake on popular organization, and what are the remedies? Tito said:

YUGOSLAV BUREAUCRACY

"Bureaucracy in Yugoslavia mainly expressed itself in a tendency toward leadership through administrative measures. Consequently, the administrative apparatus was overburdened and inefficient. This complicated matters, increased the cost of production, etc. We therefore began reducing the apparatus already last autumn. Non-productive administrative workers were transferred to direct production or to the provinces where they need experienced personnel. This process continues. It is a dangerous matter when many people are unproductive and expensive too, because it raises the cost of production. We have completed the decrease in the state and economic apparatus."

We then discussed the differences between the Kremlin and Yugoslavia during the war. Tito was extremely guarded in his statement on this issue.

It is perfectly clear that Tito was already pusuing a different policy from other Communist parties during the war. He refused to co-operate with the royalist forces in the country when they openly supported the Germans and the Italians. In fact, no co-operation was possible at that stage.

It was Churchill and not Stalin who realized that Tito was doing all the fighting during the war. It is significant that the first aid to Tito came from Churchill, and Stalin only followed suit a few years later. One thing was quite clear to Stalin: Tito was going to play an independent role. From that very moment Stalin really washed his hands of Tito.

Stalin had already written off Tito. Cordell Hull in his **Memoirs** reveals how Molotov and Eden made a deal behind the scenes, according to which half of Yugoslavia and Greece was to pass to the British in return for a Russian free hand in the Balkans.

This is the nub of the question. Differences between Tito and Stalin were already well advanced during the war. Tito did not deny these far-reaching differences during that period. What he said is very clear: "Ideological and political differences were not the reason for the break, **at least not from our side.** We had specific conditions in our country created through the uprising. As soon as our uprising started it took on a class character more and more. The bourgeoisie of Yugoslavia was on the side of the invader, so that our national liberation was simultaneously linked up with the class struggle. We had a People's Front with democratic forces led by the Yugoslav Communist Party. Our uprising was revolutionary from the very beginning. Such conditions existed nowhere else, thanks to the incorrect policy of the Communist parties, as for example in France."

Tito also drew a distinction between the resistance organizations in Yugoslavia and Moscow-dominated countries. This in my view was a cause of the break which came to light only in 1948. **Tito said: "Before the war we had a** People's Front with progressive forces which, perhaps, were not numerically strong. This front was created in the struggle against the centralistic regime of Belgrade and against national oppression. It was strongest amongst the oppressed nationalities and did not have merely a rhetorical character, as was the case in France, but it actually achieved something.

"In the struggle against the invader the People's Front grew stronger and took on a mass character. All those who loved their country rallied round the People's Front. Broad masses, the working class and the citizenry in general began to look upon the Communist Party of Yugoslavia more and more as a leading force.

"Under these conditions the People's Front in Yugoslavia took on a different character from what it had in other countries. It was born before the war and grew powerful in the course of it."

These remarks clearly showed that the People's Front in Yugoslavia was fundamentally different from those in Moscow-dominated countries. The fissure constantly widened, culminating in the rupture of 1948. To my mind it was a difference of principles, however loath Tito may be to admit it, for reasons which are obvious.

DEFENSE OF YUGOSLAVIA

To the question of whether the slogan of the defense of Yugoslavia should be popularized everywhere, Tito replied: "This should be done by all means. I think that it would be useful. It would help us and the labor movement throughout the world which would also gain from it in the struggle for its own objectives, if it would support us in our peaceful construction of socialism and our struggle against the slanderous campaign led from the East."

Tito is aggrieved that other Communist parties did not take up his cause at the time of his expulsion.

"If the Communist parties," said Tito, "were sufficiently brave at the time of exchange of letters between us and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to stand up and demand the investigation of our guilt, the situation today would not be such as it is. The labor movement would prove to the Soviet Union that it cannot gain everything that it wishes. This was the major mistake of the Communist parties."

Is Tito a Trotskyist? His reply speaks for itself.

TITO AND TROTSKYISM

"I do not agree with the Trotskyist Fourth International, nor with the Trotskyist ideology, with which I am acquainted from the time of Trotsky's struggle against Lenin.

"The Soviet Union today is using many Trotskyist precepts. The Trotskyist movement has no chance of growing stronger. I know that amongst them there are honest people but I do not agree with their ideology."

Tito, in my opinion, was still influenced by the Kremlin campaign against Trotsky. I should have thought it possible for a Marxist to disagree with Trotsky without believing what Stalin and his official historians say about him. I wish I had asked exactly what Trotskyist "precepts" had been adopted by Stalin after his extermination of Trotskyists and Trotsky himself, as well as of many more in the name of Trotskyism.

Tito only wanted moral support in building socialism in Yugoslavia. He said that the progressive people in all countries should become acquainted with the truth about Yugoslavia and not fall prey to the various lies and provocations concerning his country. I was convinced that Tito needed moral aid, but that could hardly be enough. He would need other help too.

Tito then enumerated the specific contributions of Yugoslavia to the cause of socialism.

"The fundamental lesson of the Yugoslav revolution is that it demonstrated that it is necessary to rely upon one's own internal forces, without waiting for liberation from outside. The second lesson is linked up with the breadth of our movement. We have proven that the working class can rely upon its allies, the middle and poor peasants and on the progressive forces. Also, our country proved that one small state under the leadership of the Communist Party can build socialism without the aid of other socialist countries, if it mobilizes all its forces."

Tito was of the opinion that the Yugoslav example was important for the colonial countries fighting for their independence.

"The importance of the Yugoslav revolution for colonial and semi-colonial people has already been proven. Concerning the national question I think we have solved it in the best manner possible."

To the question as to whether Yugoslavia can hold out without the help of the international working class and socialism in other countries, Tito replied:

"It can hold out. Why not? The best methods by which we can help the international working class consists of this: that we struggle to construct socialism in Yugoslavia with the fastest possible tempo and for the raising of the living standards, in one word, for the creation of socialism. This would be the best example for other countries.

"We are not afraid of being alone. It would be well if only the capitalist countries were against us, but we also have the socialist countries or those who call themselves socialists against us."

Marshal Tito in his two-hour talk never faltered for a moment in giving a ready answer to all the problems I raised, many of which were not so simple. He is quick-witted. His intellectual grasp is amazing. He hopped from one question to another doing justice to everything, although he had not the foggiest notion of the subject matter before the interview started. I was impressed by the Marshal. I came out with the feeling that I had met a great man.

Kalamesh Banerji

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