

MAY 17, 1943

A PAPER IN THE INTERESTS OF LABOR

### 'New Employer' **Has Changed** Nothing in the **Mine Situation** AN EDITORIAL

Coal mines all over the country are flying the United States flag and are posted with signs bearing the legend: "United States Property." It is said that the miners have a new employer, the government. According to this, they are no longer working for their former employers, the coal companies, but for the government. However this may be, the fact of the matter is that nothing fundamental has been changed.

The miners are back at work on a fifteen-day truce arrangement. Their strike has NOT been called off. It has not been called off because their demands have not been met. They are at work in the mines today for the same wages and under the same working and living conditions which existed before they laid down their tools.

Their base pay is still \$7.00 a day. Prices are just as high, or higher, in the mine towns as before. Working conditions are just as hazardous and unjust as before. The operators will continue to get their profits. Nothing has changed yet.

Mr. Roosevelt's speech didn't change anything. His order instructing Mr. Ickes to take over the mines did not change wages or working conditions. The fact that Ickes is in control has not brought any new burst of freedom for the miners, nor caused a reduction of prices in company stores, nor given the wage increase necessary to maintain living standards at the present low level.

Mr. Roosevelt said that "the mines must and will operate." Perhaps they will. They are operating now under the fifteen-day truce. But these "miners are hungry" while they dig the coal.



# PRICES MINERS WAVE STRUUULE BRINGS ISSUE TO A HEAD! Wage Raises, Labor Control **Of Prices Are Vital Needs--Subsidy Plan a Subterfuge**

### By ALBERT GATES

The Office of Price Administration has announced a partial and piece-meal roll-back of prices. This fact alone is proof, if any proof was needed, that prices of the essential goods needed by the mass of people were away out of line with their wage standards. What the OPA has said in effect is that the high cost of living has risen beyond all their expectations, and beyond the ability of the people to live on their present wage levels.

On May 4, the United Press announced that "OPA officials admitted that prices, particularly in the food line, are practically out of control."

What does this statement mean? It means that the OPA

### 5,000 Detroit **Workers Hit** Wage Freeze

DETROIT - Five thousand Detroit workers demonstrated against the high cost of living and the wage freeze in a "Thaw Out the Deep Freeze" mass meeting at Cadillac Square on Thursday, May 6. They came to this demonstration, the first against the government policy on wages and prices since the war started, in spite of poor last-minute publicity for the meeting and stayed to the end, in spite of a fine drizzle.

The rally was called by a joint CIO-AFL Labor Unity Committee. Speakers were Quinn, president of the Greater Detroit and Wayne County CIO Council; Richard T. Leonard, director of the UAW's Ford division; Tracy Doll, president of Labor's Non-Partisan League of Wayne County; with the keynote speeches made by Frank X. Martel, president of the Detroit and Wayne County Federation of Labor; and R. J. Thomas, president of the UAW.

did not exercise control of prices. There were no real price ceilings. The profiteers, in the form of the big farmers, connected with big business, the big commission and wholesale concerns, the large food processors, the immense chain outfits, were having a price holiday at the expense of the overwhelming majority of the people!

ONE CENT

Where was the OPA? Sitting on the sidelines watching the prices go up, and occasionally giving them a lift. The head of the OPA, Prentiss Brown, annouced some months ago, that it was impossible to really control the prices of the most essential commodities, and that prices for these necessities of life would rise steadily month after month! Why, then, the sudden decision to roll back prices?

The OPA announces that prices are "practically out of control." The miners and all other workers have known this for months. Prentiss Brown, director of the OPA, announced on the eve of the strike that prices would be "rolled back." Now he says they are "out of hand." Not only has nothing (Continued on page 3)





Resolutions passed called for a (Continued on page 4)

The answer is to be found in the heroic struggle of the United Mine Workers of America. It was the fight of the miners which called the attention of the whole country to the scandalous situation which exists on the price front. For this, the entire labor movement owes a debt of gratitude to the UMW. The miners' union declared the cost of living had mounted so high in their areas that, unless their wage demands were met, starvation would be rampant throughout the coal fields. It is a matter of life and death.

The demands of the miners met a cold response on the part of the coal operators, who are profiting out of the war effort. The operators were (Continued on page 3)

## Let the Bosses' Their Press and Their Stooges Howl--It Is Labor's Duty to Give the Miners 100% Support!

### By DAVID COOLIDGE

The present strike of the miners is the high point of a half century of almost continuous fighting by these workers to improve their working conditions, gain a decent standard of living and protection from injury and violent death by cave-in and explosion. To gain what little they have the coal diggers have been forced to go on strike almost every year since 1899.

All of these strikes were, like the present stoppage, concerned with wages and working conditions. They cover the administrations of eight Presidents from McKinley to the present Roosevelt. These mine strikes took place in peacetime and in wartime. In 1917-18, over 100,-000 miners were on strike. In 1919, over 450,000 miners struck for a 60 per cent increase in pay. They

movie.

**Next Week: 2 Pages** 

on "Mission to Moscow"

Next week's LABOR ACTION will be a six-page issue! There will

be a two-page insert taking apart Warner Brothers' scandalous distor-

tion of history, "Mission to Moscow." Do you want to know what really

happened at the Moscow Trials? Do you want to know why the Dewey

Commission charged that the trials were frame-ups? Do you want to

learn what Stalin's policy has been before, during and after the Stalin-

Hitler pact? Do you want to know why this movie was produced? Do

you want to know why we call it a "lend-lease offering to Stalin"? Be

sure to get next week's copy of LABOR ACTION. Order bundles of

this issue to give your friends and shop mates who see this monstrous

miss the next issue of LABOR ACTION!

The rest of the issue will again feature the miners' struggle. Don't

got 27 per cent. In 1935, over 400,-000 participated in a strike, and the captive mine strike of 1942 called out 325.000.

The government, in 1919, was able to obtain an injunction making it mandatory that the strike stop. This was the first year that John L. Lewis was president of the UMWA, and William Green was secretary-treasurer. When the officers failed to call off the strike according to the injunction, they were cited for contempt. Before being brought to trial, however, the union officials submitted. Lewis taking the position: "We are Americans. We cannot fight our government."

### What Victory Will Mean

It is interesting that, through all these years, the bosses have never been able to break this union; not

tions, threatened prosecution, clubbing and murder by the coal and iron police, and assaults from the National Guard and the Regular Army. Through all this persecution, the privation of long and bitter strikes, the enmity of government officials and labor-hating judges, the miners' union stands today, stronger than ever, the rock of the American labor movement, the vanguard of the trade union movement in battling for the economic demands of labor in the United States.

Despite this, despite their long past of victories and hard - won struggles, the mine workers face the gravest danger now of their whole militant career. They can suffer a major defeat. And a defeat now for the miners means a set-back for the whole labor movement in the United States. No worker, no member of any union, should disregard this warning. If the miners win, it will be a victory for every worker, for every union.

The struggle being waged by the miners is a struggle against the Little Steel formula, against Roosevelt's "hold the line" decree and against substitution of government boards for the employer in collective bargaining procedure.

If the miners win, the Little Steel formula will be broken, the "hold the line" decree will have to be modified, the WLB will be reduced to a decorative committee with no real authority-and, above all, the ranks of labor will have received a lesson in the way a union should go about gaining its objectives.

The bosses and their stooges in

one man against any concessions and bribes. being made to the mine workers. The Mongrel Press They know, and say, that if the will come in from other unions

even with the aid of court injunc- Congress and on the daily papers to war contract brokers, anti-labor of any other workers. Hence the atunderstand this. They are united as propaganda, lobbying in Washington

LABOR ACTION

MINERS' WAGE STRUGGLE

63.6

The entire boss capitalist press is miners get a wage increase, demands calling for the suppression of the miners and a denial of their dewhich will have to be granted. mands. This is to be expected, and These increases will cut into profits as it should be. There is no reason and reduce the amount available for to expect the capitalist press to dedividends, big salaries, commissions fend the interests of coal miners or

titude of the New York Times, the New York Herald Tribune, the Chicago Tribune, the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette and the Scripps-Howard papers should surprise no one. Perhaps the miners expected

better treatment from that part of the capitalist press that poses as liberal and friendly to labor. For (Continued on page 4)

Chicago, Buffalo, Detroit Lead Drive!

### By HENRY COLEMAN (Campaign Director)

N	inth Week: May 2-8 Returns	Per Cent o Total Quota Achieved
Detroit		202
Chicago	19	107
Buffalo	7	104
Streator		80
Akron		68
Los Angeles	16	65
New York	16	61
Cleveland		50
Reading		40
National Office	11	- 32
St. Louis & Missour	ri., 3	30
Sierraville		27
Philadelphia	1	15

WEEKLY TOTAL .... 91 GRAND TOTAL ..... 636

Going up! This week we doubled last week's total, and just barely missed hitting our 100-aweek quota. Next week it's got to be 100-no more playing around in the nineties! The percentages, which we put on the scoreboard for the first time, tell an interesting story. Each locality will draw its own conclusions. We only want to point out that the spread between 15 per cent and 202 what you think of us. We can take it!

percent is entirely too wide. Effort in the sub drive must be more equally divided. This does Cent of NOT mean that our champions can slow up. What al Quota is DOES mean is that the rest have got to catch up with them.

> CHICAGO and BUFFALO go over the top on their quotas this week! They join DETROIT on the honor roll; Detroit did the trick 'way back on April 11. Who's next? Los Angeles comes through this week in the old style-a big improvement on last week. Chicago boosts its returns also. Detroit is up. But we seem to keep on repeating the same thing. When will we be able to talk about New York and Philadelphia and Cleveland?

ALL THIS ADDS UP TO ONE THING: SIX MORE WEEKS TO GO! WE'RE DOING THE JOB-LET'S FINISH IT UP RIGHT!

TO OUR NEW SUBSCRIBERS: We ask your indulgence if there has been a delay in getting the paper to you, or if you miss a copy. Write us about it, and we will fix it up. But we're shorthanded at the office, and queer things happen in the mails these days. Bear with us. If you feel sore, send us a couple of subs and tell us exactly

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### NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE LABOR FRONT

## **Delegates at UAW Conferences Reject Incentive Pay Plan**

### **Michigan Delegates Defend** Miners, Boo Frankensteen

treat.

00,000 Michigan members of the ditions." Inited Automobile Workers at a onference here on May 2 staged a evolt against the kow-towing of ieir international leaders before President Roosevelt's wage - freeze rogram.

age 2

They demanded that the General Executive Board "take a firm and decisive position against all forms of incentive pay...and assist any local that wants to rid itself of piece-work systems."

They demanded that all UAW repesentatives resign from any government boards considering any such chemes. This was a crack at the recent appointment by the GEB of Frankensteen to such a committee of the War Production Board.

They rejected a resolution condemning John L. Lewis and the miners' strike despite some strong speeches in its favor by leading international, officers such as Thomas, Frankensteen and Addes, and the straddling speech of Walter Reu-

They adopted a resolution of solidarity with the miners and called on President Roosevelt and the CIO national leadership "to aid the miners in obtaining their just and fair demands." (This resolution was published in last week's LABOR AC-TION.-Ed.)

They demanded that, as against wage freezing and War Labor **Board** interference, wage increases agreed upon between management and unions be put into effect without submission to the WLB; and that a nation-wide wage agreement be adopted in the industry so as to establish equal pay for equal work.

They demanded that prices of all consumer goods be rolled back to the levels of May 15, 1942, and if this is not done, that wages be increased to meet the increased cost of living.

They decided, in agreement with the GEB, to organize housewives' committees in the neighborhoods to police prices in retail stores.

They called on the GEB to convene a national convention of the UAW at the earliest date consistent with the national constitution -most delegates favored July-so that the union could consider and adopt a militant program to fight the reactionary drive of the employers and the government against

ETROIT - Delegates representing were accompanied by several "con-

The UAW militants are against the plans in principle and in practice. Following President Roosevelt's recent wage - freezing "hold the line" decree, eleven Detroit locals, led by Emil Mazey, president of the Briggs Local, representing 145,000 members, went to the Cleveland meeting of the GEB on April 19 and demanded a fighting program and an end to labor's re-

At this meeting, Frankensteen presented a resolution for incentive pay with "guarantees"-that is, conditions which in practice would be bargaining points and then dropped. The resolution was not adopted, but tabled to a future meeting for consideration

### Pamphlet Quotes LABOR ACTION

In preparation for the special conference here, the Stalinist controlled Plymouth Local 51 issued a pamphlet called "Production with Incentive Pay" which states: "What is the source of the most

bitter opposition to incentive pay?

"A look at the official Trotskyite subversive publication of April 12, LABOR ACTION, will give a quick answer to that question. 'BEWARE OF INCENTIVE PAY,' screams that sheet's banner headline. (This article was reprinted in the Cincinnati Chronicle for its excellent working class opposition to "incentive pay."-Ed.)

"'How does it happen that the bosses and the government are willing to take a chance on the incentive pay scheme?' asks the writer of the paper's lead article.

"And the answer is given: 'Despite the weasel words of Murray. Thomas or the Stalinists, the rank and file of the CIO are not in a mood to continue blindly following their leaders. And so in an attempt to bottle up the dissatisfaction of the masses of labor they come out with the incentive pay schemes.... We know enough about the whole business to be against this incentive pay scheme.'

"I know enough about the 'whole business' of Trotskyism to know exactly why they are against these proposals. Their own published program urges: 'Against Both Imperialist War Camps.' They demand: 'No political support to the Roosevelt Administration,'" and so on. (It is too bad that not all the

ble. All other plans for wage in- methods and claim that the base pay Detroit if the conference was allowed France. Nor did he couple this with creases, in the face of Roosevelt's wage-freezing decree, are impractical, mere "pie in the sky." He added that "if we can't get the proper guarantees, the proper protection, then we won't put it into effect."

The empty promise was exposed by the fact that Frankentseen did not propose to abolish the incentive pay systems in UAW plants which have them if the bosses and the government do not accept the qualifying conditions or "guarantees." The delegates answered by adopting a resolution which would help the workers in these plants get rid of the piecework plans. **Delegates Oppose Incentive Pay** Walter Reuther was the main

speaker for the opponents of incentive pay. He stated: "Even to flirt with incentive pay is to compromise our fight for a decent living wage." He showed how adoption of this plan would mean defeat of national industry-wide equalization of wages (equal pay for equal work); would lead to speed-up and unemployment under conditions where there are already tens of thousands of workers being laid off in war plants. He stated that it would have a bad effect on labor morale, and therefore would mean decreased war production and be harmful to the union. He showed that the proposal of the War Labor Board to use present wage and pro-

duction rates as a base from which to calculate incentive pay would penalize the workers in the more efficient plants, and that the bosses would constantly change production

### Conference in N.Y. Leaves **Ranks Wanting a Convention**

Delegates to a special "War Policy" conference of Regions 9 and 9A of the United Automobile Workers, which met in New York on Wednesday, May 5, voted their support of the miners' fight almost unanimously and, again almost unanimously, defeated a resolution to put the conference on record for an "incentive pay" plan.

With about 170 delegates present, and forty international representatives, the leadership of the conference did what it could to head off died by an amendment. militant rank and file expression on the needs of the union, particularly the demand of several locals in Regions 9 and 9A that a special convention be called to rescind the no-strike pledge. That the conference went on record for the miners' demands and against incentive pay (for which Frankensteen put up a big fight) is

consequently double testimony of

how the union ranks feel on both

From start to finish, the leadership

Conducted Undemocratically

must be decreased. He placed speto run its own course. cial emphasis on the bad effects the plan would have on the standards of the workers in the post-war period. In the course of his speech, Reuther declared that President Roosevelt was being "driven" to take steps backward under pressure of sentiments. One expression of that the farm bloc and big business insentiment was the walk-out reterests and that it was necessary to ferred to above. During the dismobilize labor for counter-pressure. cussion on incentive pay, Frank-He attacked John L. Lewis for "exensteen was publicly identified by ploiting the legitimate grievances of a delegate with the Communist the miners," and said that the UAW Party clique because of his insist-. should not follow Lewis' example. ent pleas for incentive pay. And And for the first time that afternoon further, both Frankensteen and the Stalinists and their supporters Thomas were accused on the floor applauded Reuther, while the others of speaking in generalities and not booed him. having a program to combat the

During the discussion from the floor, James F. Lucas of Pontiac attacked the Communist Party as the organization whose members in the UAW were behind the incentive pay drive. "Uncle Joe tells them what to do or not to do," he stated. The incentive plans are "nothing more than a betraval of the workers." He charged that the government has not kept its promises of "equality of sacrifice," and "unless these promises are carried out by July, we will rescind the no-strike clause."

thusiastic applause. He then attacked the international leaders for their "straddling position" and spoke sharply against Reuther's attack on Lewis' strike policy. This defense of Lewis' course was warmly greeted by the delegates.

ing.

sy of the leadership which "would call a special convention if the .members wanted it," but mean-\_ while did everything within its power to prevent the conference from going on record for a convention, several locals walked out. Arguing against a convention, the bureaucrats seized upon the pretext that the resolution for a special convention wasn't worded to conform with the constitution, though that defect could easily have been remeunkind and as accurate.

His remarks regarding the removal Among equally "weighty" arguments, Thomas and his friends arthat the administrators under fire gued that transportation would be difficult (to which a delegate replied that the problem would become more difficult as the war went on), and that a convention would disturb...

### Boss Delegation At UE Conference Satisfied -- But Workers Are Not

WASHINGTON - The conference called for Friday, May 7, in Washington, by District 4 of the United Electrical. Radio and Machine Workers Union of America, for the ostensible purpose of applying pressure to have prices rolled back, was quickly converted by its leaders into a meeting to absolve the Roosevelt Administration of all blame for the rise in prices, and to justify the wage freezing orders.

In addition to the fifty delegates from various local unions, all in the New York City and North New Jersey areas, a strong delegation of manufacturers was invited to participate in the conference and was given a place on all committees. Although the conference failed to solve any of the needs of the men in the factories who had sent the delegates, it fully satisfied the employers' delegation, as it did nothing to assail the wage-freezing orders of Roosevelt, and tacitly endorsed a plan to subsidize manufacturers in the event of any price cuts.

The conference was dominated by the Stalinist element that controls District 4 and the national leadership of the UERMWA. This element attempted to foster its pet project of "incentive pay," or piecework, as a substitute for wage increases. In response to various questions put to him, W. H. Davis, head of the WLB, who was a speaker at the conference, stated that the War Labor Board endorses and encourages "incentive pay" systems.

A sub-committee of the conference was admitted to the office of Prentiss Brown, of the Office of Price Administration. This committee was told that the Roosevelt Administration planned to make price cuts, but intended to subsidize manufacturers and distributors for any reductions in profits they might incur through these cuts. When the committee returned to the conference it urged the delegates to put pressure on Congress to pass legislation to assist this subsidy plan.

Thus the Stalinist leaders of the conference were asking the delegates to subscribe to a plan which would make workers pay for price cuts, while manufacturers were reimbursed for any reduction in profits. In that way the large canning and packing companies, and the manufacturers and distributors, would have their profits guaranteed by the government. And the cost of this subsidy would ultimately be passed on to the consumer through taxation.

yond his control. Under this plan the company management, or the government, whoever is responsible for the lack of work, would be forced to pay the difference.

**Conference in Ohio Adopts** Weak Six-Point Program The delegates responded with en-COLUMBUS, Ohio-Three hundred shops. But their militancy was dis-

and twenty-eight delegates from sixty-six UAW-CIO locals met in Memorial Hall here last week in a regional conference that was addressed by R. J. Thomas, president of the UAW, Walter Reuther, vice-president, and several regional directors.

attack on labor's living standard

through price rises and wage-freez-

Thomas reached a disgraceful

depth of sell-out oratory by charging

that the struggles of the French

working class for better conditions

were responsible for the fall of

Thinly veiled criticism of Roosevelt was voiced by Reuther and Ed Hall, international organizer, who correctly placed blame for labor's plight in regard to wage and job freezing where it properly belongs. After a great deal of criticism of Chester Davis, Prentiss Brown, Paul McNutt and other Roosevelt appointees by Thomas and Reuther, Hall stepped to the microphone and called upon the speakers to "stop beating around the bush." He characterized Paul McNutt, Manpower Commissioner, as Public Enemy Number One and suggested that labor demand that FDR "take McNutt the hell out of there." His descriptions of other Presidential administrators were as

for their mild criticism of Roosevelt. Statement of Policy of McNutt came after he pointed out were FDR's appointees and therefore, he stated implicitly, FDR was their leaders, the conference adopted responsible for their stand. He then a statement of policy which had been hastily hedged in his attack on Roopreviously adopted by the Internasevelt and explained that he suptional Executive Board. Though pro-

bosses, who decided it was better For all of the attempt of Frankbusiness to play with Hitler than to ensteen. Thomas and Kerrigan to concede to the workers. run the conference "smoothly" in accordance with their own views, Frankensteen was roundly booed they couldn't completely prevent when he boasted that he has been the militants from expressing their against strikes during war since the

a single reference to the French

North American strike, which the delegates remembered as having established the seventy-five-cent minimum in the aircraft industry. Needless to say, Frankensteen had not a word to say about his promise, made several months ago on the West Coast, to support the movement to rescind the no-strike pledge if Congress repealed the \$25,000 salary limit-which it has!

In summation, if the conference was called as a way of deflecting rank and file sentiment from the demand for a special convention, it was a dismal failure. The militants in the UAW are not going to be satisfied with puny conferences. They want a convention!

sipated and their desire to end the

continual retreats of labor was frus-

trated by a lack of adequate leader-

During the discussion period,

their militancy became more ap-

parent when delegates from Toledo

locals took the floor. One delegate

spoke, in a veiled tone, of a "na-

tion-wide movement" of the UAW

to end the wage freezing policy of

the national administration, and

alluded to the no-strike pledge as

being the main obstacle in labor's

Paul Miley, an Ohio regional di-

rector and chairman of the meeting,

stopped what appeared to be a desire

to discuss this at some length by

taking the floor and explaining that

the no-strike pledge could only be

rescinded at a national convention.

ticularly reactionary and stupid role

at the conference. With mouthy ref-

erence to "this is a people's war,"

they took Reuther and Hall to task

With the militancy of the dele-

gates diverted by the verbiage of

Stalinist speakers played a par-

ship.

path.

### labor's living standards.

The conference also adopted a tax program which calls for the elimination of all taxes on workers' earnings less than \$2,500 a year, and for a 100 per cent war profits tax.

### Stalinists Favor Incentive Pay

The main problem before the conference was incentive pay. The Stalinists, the big corporations, Donald Nelson of the WLB, Philip Murray and the Addes-Frankensteen section of the GEB have been (and are) the chief proponents of incentive pay. Earl Browder, national secretary of the Communist Party, recently proposed the adoption of the vicious Bedaux piece-work speed-up system.

The General Executive Board of the UAW has tried to straddle the issue. At its March meeting, the board adopted a compromise resolution against incentive pay plans "in principle," but permitted locals to adopt such schemes providing they

delegates read the pamphlet, for then there would have been more than the eleven new LABOR AC-TION subs received at the conference.)

### Frankensteen Booed

"We will! We will!"

was that the workers must and will

produce more for the war, and that

in any case incentive pay is inevita-

of the conference employed every undemocratic device it could muster Frankensteen led off the debate to stifle the voice of the militants, for those who favor the incentive who were prepared to discuss a seriplan. He stated that 250,000 UAW ous and fighting union program. members were already working un-First, the convention was called to der such a plan. And added: "Can order at 10 a.m. Almost two hours anyone tell me what is wrong ...." to was given to lunch. After lunch; which delegates immediately replied with half the day consumed, it was from all parts of the hall: "Yes! Yes!" suddenly announced that Frankenand started booing him. Flustered, steen and Reuther had to catch a Frankensteen asked that his viewplane to California, and that the conpoint be heard, and that, if the deleference would have to end by 6:00 gates don't like it, they will have a p.m. Further, Kerrigan, chairman of chance "to take me out of office." the conference, chose his speakers Again the delegates loudly shouted: adroitly-so that few but known supporters of the Stalinist sell-out In view of the unpopularity of his line were given the floor. position, the burden of his argument

issues.

In protest against the undemocratic conduct of the conference and in protest against the hypocri-

unity! In other words, that a convention would reveal the widespread discontent with the leadership's "equality of sacrifice" (read: "sacrifice everything") program, and that it might give voice to the will of the ranks for a militant union program, such as that adopted at the

### Thomas and Frankensteen .

Bushkill conference.

Frankensteen opened the conference by saying that he did not want this conference to degenerate into the political factionalism manifested at the Detroit conference. Speaking with great anger, he charged that dissident elements were actually organized in Detroit against the leadership-as though that was the crime of crimes. This was his way of announcing that nothing approximating a real discussion of the union's problems would be tolerated. His concern with getting the conference over in the quickest possible time was apparent. He saw he would have been up against the same thing as in

ported him in previous elections and would support him in 1944.

#### **Reuther Cites Profits**

Reuther, who is in charge of all negotiations with General Motors, struck the most militant note of the international officers who spoke. He attacked the Little Steel formula.

He again asserted, as he did the previous week at the Michigan conference in Detroit, that GM had set aside a \$48,000,000 post-war contingency fund for the "coupon clippers" and announced that he would demand of General Motors and the WLB that a like fund be set aside for GM workers. On this statement, and on any other progressive or militant declaration he made, he received the most applause, indicating the temper of the delegates.

It was apparent from the reactions the delegates to the various of speeches that they represented the true feelings of the workers in the

gressive in some of its main features, the statement of policy indicates that the International Board still intends to rely on appeals to the various administrative boards, and to those whom Ed Hall called "the reactionary rats in Congress." The policy adopted contains six points. They are: (1) Roll back prices of all consumer goods to September 15, 1942.

(2) Stabilize wage rates on the basis of equal pay for equal work. This part of the program points out that it is manifestly unfair that workers doing the same work for the same government do not in all cases receive the same rate of pay.

(3) Guarantee full employment, or forty hours weekly pay. In this section the UAW urges the initiation of a national wage policy guaranteeing every employee engaged in essential war work a minimum of forty hours' pay per week when the worker works less than forty hours per week due to reasons be-

(4) An adequate food production program. This section contains some progressive features in that it urges that "the interests of working farmers must prevail over those of farm banks and corporations."

(5) Institute a democratic manpower program. This is the same old begging for a place on the industrydominated boards that were formed by Roosevelt for the express purpose of enslaving labor.

(6) For a coordinated economic wartime high command. This section of the program, which is generally the worst of the six, in that it would further embroil labor in the imperialist politics of the Roosevelt government, contains a point which, if carried out, will contribute to the political education of the workers. It provides for cooperation with other groups in the CIO and with other groups of organized labor to develop and effectuate a program of political activity. But unfortunately, the resolution did not take a stand for an Independent Labor Party

It was apparent from the leaders' own statements that UAW members cannot rely on any member of the International Executive Board to lead them in the direction that the situation dictates. These leaders intend to cling to FDR and his various anti-union boards. The decisions of the conference were consequently a far cry from the kind of program labor needs:

Rescind the no-strike pledge! Withdraw all labor representatives from the WLB!

Defeat the incentive pay plans! Organize an Independent Labor Party that will elect men from labor's own ranks to represent them!

Jhe Readers of Labor Action Jake the Floor

### **Cites Fink Role Of Stalinists**

### Dear Editor:

Readers of LABOR ACTION will be interested in how the People's World (the West Coast organ of the Communist Party) handled the mine workers' strike. On Saturday -May Day-they had a small article on the front page based on Friday's news releases that the walk-outs had begun. On Monday another short story anticipating Roosevelt's speech, as the paper went to press before the speech. On Tuesday, May 4, a short story on how the miners had gone back to work and on page four, articles by William "Zigzag" Foster and Louis Budenz attacking the strike.

The longshoremen have a word for this: FINKY. And that's just what the attitude of the Communist Party was toward the coal miners' strike -Finky.

Of course every militant trade unionist knew that the miners' fight was our fight and every worker's fight

As far as I know, LABOR ACTION was the only paper on the West Coast

with mass circulation which supported the coal miners 100 per cent. B. R. (San Pedro, May 4).

### National Bronze Adds A Plus to Cost-Plus

#### Dear Editor:

Once again-this time in Cleveland-the criminals who coin profits from other men's lives have been momentarily exposed for us to see. The United States District Attorney in Cleveland has been conducting hearings before a federal grand jury concerning the National Bronze & Aluminum Co., which has been deliberately shipping defective material to the armed forces.

As was the case with other such scandals-Carnegie - Illinois, which passed off bad steel for good; Anaconda Copper, which did the same thing with Signal Corps equipment, and Standard Oil's agreements with their capitalist friends in Germany -the case has been rapidly hushed up. The truth was too devastasing

an indictment of the whole capitalist set-up, and too clear an indication of why the war was being fought to remain in the boss press very long. The crime has been discovered, however, even if it will unpunished.

National Bronze & Aluminum is one of the world's largest producers of aluminum castings. Last year they sold \$8,000,000 worth of war material to the government and at present have a backlog of \$13,000,000 worth of unfilled orders. They are engaged exclusively on war work. Investigation has now disclosed that, in some cases, as high as sixty per cent of the parts were defective.

Three aspects of the dirty business stand out. In the first place, this was being done on a huge scale. Although the company was working exclusively on cost - plus contracts, the shipment of defective parts and the presentation of padded bills to the government enabled the company to make an extra cool million in addition to their already enormous "legitimate" profit haul. The facts that got out indicated that defective parts have been shipped certainly for many months, probably for several years.

In the second place, the entire business from start to finish was deliberate, conscious and planned. Company officials took government inspectors "out to dinner" while cracked castings were patched up and rushed through.

The third fact, and the most important, is that virtually nothing has been done about it! The government inspectors, of course, were out to dinner. Packard Motor Co., which used many of National Bronze's castings in airplane engines, knew what was going on and "complained" over a period of months. Finally, Packard notified the FBI. The FBI then carried on a lengthy investigation for several more months.

Finally, the case was turned over to the District Attorney. Did the government take over the plant in the flash of a second, like it did the coal mines? Were the murderous profitgrubbers thrown into jail? No. The government merely sued the company to get back the money it had paid for the defective parts. Did men die to create dividends for National Bronze? Really nothing, you know. Just get the money back and let them go.

Certainly, one would think, the owners would at least be removed from control of the plant. Well, think again! The directors removed the president of the company and installed in his place-the former assistant to the president! This was heralded as a complete shake-up!

As for the company's side of the story, they bitterly complained that their plant was so full of FBI agents, and that the agents questioned key employees so frequently and intimidated them so, that production was disrupted. The company demanded that the Truman Committee of the Senate investigate the FBI.

What a sordid, disgusting mess the whole business is. When Packard discovers what is going on, it complains for months and then calls in the FBI. The FBI, the company complains, only made things worse. Finally, the District Attorney takes action-to get back the government's money. The same

. 1

bunch of criminals are left in full control of the plant. Who can working people turn to

in order to put an end to things like this? The answer is plain-only to themselves. With the workers in the plant in control, it is needless to say the whole business could not have happened. The demand we must raise and insist on, then, is clear: CONSCRIPT ALL WAR INDUS-TRIES UNDER WORKERS' CON-

TROL! Gerald McDermott.



Place-Labor Temple, 14th St. and 2nd Ave., New York Admission-25 cents per lecture.

### LABOR ACTION



### ENGLISH WORKERS FED UP WITH CHURCHILL

There have been a number of byelections in England recently and all show that English workers are now turning definitely away from Prime Minister Churchill's National Union. Six by-elections were held during the month of February, for example, and at only one could the government claim an unqualified success. .In all the elections a Churchill candidate was challenged by an independent, in spite of the electoral truce established at the beginning of the war. Conservatives polled 58,405 votes against 31,326 polled by Common Wealth, and 13,593 by other independents. The Independent Labor Party had a candidate in only one election, and got 830 votes. The Common Wealth Party, only recently established, has in the meantime won one election. This party has a somewhat undefined program which calls for socialization of the basic industries and other measures of nationalization. On the other hand, it states that it does not want to be considered as a Labor Party, but rather as an organization of the common folk. There is much vagueness about its whole program, but this very vagueness rather adequately expresses the feeling of many people in Britain who, for a while, had been lured by Churchill's promises and are now bitterly disappointed over his clearly

### DUTCH WORKERS RESIST NAZI "LABOR FRONT"

The India of the Western Hemisphere

"Whenever the Labor Front arranges a meeting for a Woudenberg [head of the Labor Front] speech, it is spoiled by repeated muttering, coughing and applause until Woudenberg, forced to give up, leaves the half-empty hall. On one occasion, in the provinces, the municipal personnel was ordered to attend such a meeting by the 'temporary burgomaster.' Later the burgomaster wrote a circular letter to all department heads in which he said:

"'By means of shuffling of feet, coughing, jeering and sarcastic applause, the people tried to interfere sary." with the meeting. For jeering when

established course toward reaction. The distrust of governmental policies is not even adequately expressed in the election figures given above, since participation at the polls was at a record low. In certain constituencies only 20 per cent of the electorate voted at all. These election results show that the traditional parties have lost the confidence of the voters, who are groping for radical measures, groping for some sort of a socialist solution

No matter what the outcome of the war will be, it is already an established fact that the British Empire will either break down or become a' mands. junior partner of American imperialism; in both cases the privileged position which parts of the British working class and the lower middle classes heretofore enjoyed will have vanished. British capitalism-in spite of all the talk about the Beveridge Plan-will be forced to try to make up for some of its colonial losses by putting new burdens on the backs of the English people. Labor, on the other hand, as recent strikes and these election results forecast-will become increasingly militant. A period of deep-going class struggle lies ahead in England. The end of the empire will also mark the end of English "moderation" and "conservatism."

### I spoke, these people were guilty of insubordination. They will be severely punished. First, a number of bachelors will be forced to go to Germany to work and others will be instantly dismissed.

"'As deputy burgomaster, I shall in the future unexpectedly visit offices, workshops and schools. I have decided to decree that when I enter the personnel will have to rise and stand at attention, taking up their work again when I order them to. Finally, I wish to emphasize that I shall not hesitate to take sharper measures should they prove neces-

Europacus.

## **Miners' Fight for Higher Wages Focuses Attention on Scandalous Price Situation**

### (Continued from page 1)

playing a clever game. They knew that if they refused to negotiate a new contract with the miners the case would have to go to the War Labor Board, which operates under the infamous Little Steal formula. The formula of the WLB was a guarantee that the miners would get nothing from that body. It meant that the miners would have to go back to work under the same old conditions - unless they were prepared to stand up to the coal operators, the Administration, which was ready to beat the miners down with troops, and the miserable boss press, and tell them all that the miners were ready to strike for their de-

From the press, one received the impression that it was not the miners who were making this glorious fight for existence-but an individual named John L. Lewis. Would it have been different if the president of the UMW was named Smith, or Jones, or Brown? Nonsense! The miners would have been vilified and abused in the same way no matter who their leader was. But the coal diggers of America are old campaigners. They saw through the whole scheme because it was an old scheme of divide and conquer. They knew that if their demands are won, the only group who would suffer would be the coal operators and the food, clothing and rent profiteers. That is, they knew the only one who would be hit by their demands are those who get the profits from their toil.

When the miners struck they brought the whole situation to a head. They not only acted in their own behalf, but for the whole of the laboring people of this country. This was reflected in the tremendous wave of support which the miners received throughout the organized labor movement. Because the conditions in the coal mining. areas of the country are to be found in all other industrial centers.

It was only when the miners showed that they intended to strike that the OPA made the gesture of

sending investigators into the coal fields to discover to what extent prices were violated. But instead of sending investigators secretly to these areas, the OPA announced the step publicly, thus making it possible for price violators to lower their prices. What was the net result of the OPA investiga-

They found that prices in the coal areas were "not out of line." Prices averaged, said the OPA, "about five per cent above the ceiling prices." This is their conclusion from a sample testing.

But if prices are "not out of line," why does the OPA decide to AT-TEMPT to roll prices back to September, 1942? Because the real truth is that the cost of living has risen far beyond any wage increases that the workers have received.

### Why Have Prices Risen?

Why have prices risen? They have risen because the vested interests dealing in the commodities which the people need in order to live have been super-profiting under the special conditions created by the war. The capitalist-boss press lies when it says that prices have risen because the wages and salaries of the workers and the little people have advanced above the cost of living.

The best proof of that is to be found in the most recent action of the War Labor Board. The ink had hardly dried on the presidential "hold the line" order, when the WLB asked Economic Stabilization Director James F. Byrne to restore its power to grant wage increases to eliminate gross inequities. The War Labor Board proves by its own experiences that those wages which were increased had no effect whatever upon prices. It cites the fact that "in only eight cases out of every 3,000" were prices affected by wage increases, and that on the whole these wage increases, nowhere comparable to the rise in the cost of living, have had only "a microscopic effect upon prices."

But the workers do not need this kind of testimony from the WLB. They know by their living experience that the price situation in this country is a scandal, that there is no control of prices and the cost of living. They know that the only control exercised by the Administration has been control of wages, and an adherence to wage ceilings!

The OPA announces that it will roll back the price of many foods ten per cent. This is merely appeasing the laboring masses. George Meaney, secretary - treasurer of the American Federation of Labor, declared that it is not enough for the OPA to roll back prices on SOME food articles, and then only by ten per cent. Meaney said:

"This will not begin to give the little people of America the relief they need. When basic foods have gone up 20, 25 and 30 cents per pound, it is not enough to snip off a penny here and two cents there. A reduction of ten per cent on seven items, when an increase of 100 per cent and more has taken place on dozens of items, is not enough."

Price control is a misnomer. There has not been any price control. There has been an almost unlimited rise in prices and those who have had to pay for it have been the working people of the country!

#### **How Control Prices?**

We have already stated that one of the principal reasons why prices have risen is that there was no real attempt at price control by the Administration. When Prentiss Brown publicly stated that it was impossible to really control food prices, he merely gave the signal to the profiteers to go the whole hog. But another reason why prices have risen, with such disastrous effects upon the people, is that the labor movement, cooperatives, fraternal organizations of the people and the consumers in general, were not permitted to have say about prices or help in their control. In other words, those who directly suffer from price increases had nothing to say about it and had no means of exercising any control.

How does the Administration propose to roll back prices now? Here is the real joker in the situation. The Administration proposes to roll back prices (some prices and only to a limited extent) by giving a subsidy to the food profiteers. Under such conditions, the food profiteers will gladly roll back prices, because their huge profits will be insured by a handout from the government.

#### FDR's Subsidy Plan

Roosevelt's order for a roll back of prices was accompanied with the directive that the Reconstruction Finance Corporation aid the price roll back by setting aside \$300,000,000 to compensate the big farmers, the big commission houses, the merchants and the food processors for price reeliminate the war profits of big business.

The situation in the country 'is fast coming to a head. The miners' fight clarified the issues. All honor to them! The WLB was put on the spot, and the proof that the miners were right is that the WLB itself demands that it be given expanded rights in dealing with wage matters. The AFL and the CIO now threaten to resign from that body unless the Presidents order to "hold the line" is made more flexible so that the WLB can meet the demands of the workers faced with the high cost of living. The President himself is reported to be reconsidering the question of prices and wages-so unwhich fall on the people.

Page 3

The situation demands that, on the price front at least, labor and the consumers set up their controls. Nobody else can or will do it. But the labor movement and the consumer must have authority and power to exercise such control. If the control of prices remains lodged in the OPA and in individuals who represent big business, or are allied with them, or are influenced by them, the people of the country face the dreadful prospect of a worsening price situation and a continued lowering of their living standards. The miners pointed the way outlet it be a living example for the fair and unequal are the burdens rest of labor!

## Has Anything Changed in the **Mine Situation**

(Continued from page 1)

been done since Mr. Brown made his speech on the eve of the strike, but it is announced from his office that nothing could be done for probably a month. Why? Can't the government control the manufacturers and wholesalers of food products?

Mr. Roosevelt was very emphatic, as Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy, when he said that "the mines must and will operate." We suppose he meant that they "must and will operate" irrespective of whether or not "the miners are hungry," the wages are low, working conditions intolerable and prices continue "out of hand."

### It is clear, therefore, that the miners must stand by their demands. Perhaps "the mines must and will operate." The miners also must eat and get their pay increase and better working conditions.

The fifteen-day truce is all right. This will give the "new employer" an opportunity to investigate and bargain collectively with the representatives of the mine union. This the mine operators refused to do. That was why the miners went on strike. Now "Mr. Lewis has granted Mr. Ickes a fifteen-day truce." Mr. Ickes, as the chosen representative of the "new employer," thus has fifteen days in which to bargain collectively with the mine workers.

When they agreed to the fifteen-day truce, they had evidentlybeen promised various concessions. However, no sooner had they agreed to return to the mines, then came the big double-cross. Ickes announced that the demands, which the miners had evidently been led to expect would be granted, would not be granted, and that the case would have to go before the WLB after all.

Roosevelt was undoubtedly behind this piece of strategy. He evidently counted on getting the miners back to work by trickery, and, once back, confuse and demoralize the miners

## **Puerto Rico Starves for Democracy**

### By V. SEGUNDO

IV.

"Give them some education in the way of reading and writing, but no more. Even then I would say educate only the bright ones; not the whole mass. If you do educate the

field, and thereby helps spreads the larva of hookworm. "The Dutch government," Williams writes,

'eradicated hookworm among the whites of St. Martin by installing a policeman to compel the villagers to wear shoes. It would need an army to compel employers to pay decent wages, if hookworm is to be eradicated among the Negroes. The Negro cannot buy shoes when he earns twenty-five cents a day."

democracy will begin, for Puerto Rico, by freeing Pedro Albizu Campos.

But Albizu Campos remains in prison, with four more years of his sentence to run. And the principal thing the war for democracy has

whole mass of the agricultural population, you will be deliberately ruining the country .... Give the bright ones a chance to win as many scholarships as they can; give the others three hours' education a day ... but if you keep them longer you will never get them to work in the fields. If you want agricultural laborers and not dissatisfaction, you must not keep them longer."

This is from a report of a Trinidad legislative committee (quoted in Eric Williams' excellent little volume, "The Negro in the Caribbean"), but it represents no less the attitude of the planter class in Puerto Rico. The only difference is a rather unusual frankness. The results show it.

Illiteracy, 80 per cent in 1899, was still 35 per cent in 1935. Only 44 per cent of the children of school age attend school; of this number, half are enrolled on half time only. Four-fifths of the rural schools have facilities for the first three grades only. "Give them some education in the way of reading and writing ....."

The Puerto Rican rural laborer has an income of twelve cents a day for all necessities-four cents more than the cost of feeding a hog in the United States. The basic cause of this -sugar corporations-and the basic result-starvation-were the subject of three articles in this series. But these are only bare outlines, and some attempt must be made to round them out into a fuller picture.

#### How the Puerto Rican Lives

Let us follow a typical Puerto Rican through his life. To begin with, he has less chance of surviving his birth than an American, for the infant mortality rate is the highest in the world. He will have less than a fifty-fifty chance of attending school. His food will be coffee or coffee with milk for breakfast, codfish and vegetables for lunch, and rice and beans for dinner. It will not vary to any great degree throughout his life, and there will seldom be enough of it.

He will be tormented by preventable diseases. The most prevalent is hookworm, caused by bad sanitation and malnutrition. After more than forty years of American occupation, the pride and joy of American civilization - adequate plumbing-has yet to find its way South to the American India. The typical sugar plantation privy is so filthy that the worker uses the

After hookworm comes malaria. By various estimates, from 25 to 70 per cent of the population is infected at all times. Workers' houses are often in the swamps, since the good land is owned by the American sugar corporations. Mosquito nets are a luxury.

malaria, tuberculosis. After Puerto Rico, where the sun shines all year round, has almost the highest deathrate in the world from TB -15 per cent of all deaths from all causes.

The general death rate for Puerto Rico is 17.8 per thousand, as against 10.6 for the United States.

The chances of survival in Puerto Rico are not good. If a Puerto Rican does survive, how does he live? His home will be a shack, a hovel. His furniture will be a few benches, some empty boxes, a small table, one or two cots and a homemade bed-perhaps not so much. He will be crowded into a few rooms. By one survey on a sugar plantation, an average of 3.5 persons were found to be sleeping in a room; by another survey in the coffee, fruit and tobacco regions, there were 5.1 occupants per sleeping room. This is a basic cause, not only of ill health, but of the high birth rate, and of the large proportion of illegitimate births.

He will be poor, desperately poor. The per capita wealth of Puerto Rico is \$200; in Mississippi, the poorest of the United States, it is \$736. And finally, as a crowning climax, he will be confronted by the New Deal. Educational projects will be sent to him, to tell him not to live in swamps-but not how to get some other land from the grasping sugar corporations. He will be taught what to eat for a balanced diet, but not where to get the money to buy it. And finally he will be introduced to a war for democracy.

### **Democracy** in Puerto Rico

Democracy is something he is interested in. The leader of his Nationalist Party is in a federal penitentiary for fighting for national independence-one of the Four Freedoms, after all. Perhaps the war for

brought the Puerto Rican is still less food, still more starvation.

One other thing the war has brought to the island-a foul, stinking export that the United States Army takes with it wherever it goes in this world-wide war-Jim Crow. Under Spanish rule, and somewhat less so until recently under American rule, Jim Crow was virtually unknown in Puerto Rico. As recently as 1938 an article in Estudios Afrocubanos, a West Indian periodical, said: "In Puerto Rico we do not know yet what racial prejudice is." The word "nigger" is "without a possible equivalent in our vernacular." In general, "the conception of race for a Spaniard or Latin American is laid fundamentally in tradition, in language, in culture in general, and not in purity of blood.... Our socalled racial prejudice is fundamentally more social than national and its manifestations are more foolish and ridiculous than violent and cruel.'

This is not to say that Negroes had all the best of it in the old Puerto Rico. On the contrary, they not only shared the misery of the white jibaros, but in some respects got a fuller share. But in general a Negro was not imposed on every minute of his life because of the color of his skin. Theaters and buses were not Jim Crow. What slight discrimination there was, was social custom, not law. But the tradition of the United

States, and of the South in particular, is quite different. The Spanish were never noted for treating their slaves well, but it takes the obscene mind of an Anglo-Saxon Puritan to throw off children by his Negro slave, and then discriminate against those children for their colored skin. Only the British share the peculiar sensitivity to skin color by which a man can with perfect equanimity watch a coal-black Negro nurse put his baby to bed, can with high pleasure consort with a Negro mistressbut if between these episodes he sees a Negro PhD eating dinner in the same restaurant with him, he rants about like a spoiled child having tantrums.

Jim Crow-everything from segregation in buses to lynching-is undoubtedly the filthiest chancre on the body politic of these United States. And the U.S. Army goes forth to fight for democracy with

#### more by Ameriisland is Negro, can definition.

every aspect of segregation and

discrimination intact. That Army

is now in Puerto Rico. Only hints

of what is happening are allowed

to come out, but it takes very little

imagination to guess the rest.

About half the population of the

American imperialism, in its fortyodd years of rule, had brought to the island every misery, every heartache, every deprivation - but one. And that one, now it is there, may prove in the long run to be more devastating than any other.

(To be continued)

### Sparks in the News

"Higher cost of living than the figures show inspired a statistical rejiggering. Bureau of Labor Statistics soon will trot out revamped indexes. They'll reflect more closely effects of rationing, price ceilings, other wartime phenomena. But even the new gauges won't be accurate. Black markets make it impossible. British reports still include items not sold in wartime to keep the index down."-Wall Street Journal. -LA-

"A housing development for war workers is being built by the National Housing Administration at Farrell, Pa. It was originally planned to put the development on an attractive site in a good neighborhood, but when it was learned that Negroes as well as whites would live in it the plans were changed. The new dwellings will be surrounded by slums.' -The Nation.

ductions! This amount may be increased to \$500,000,000 if more than a few food items are included in the roll back.

What is the net effect of this subsidy? It will still guarantee the profits of these gentlemen. It keeps as heavy a burden on the people because in the end taxes will have to make up for the handout given the gentlemen who trade in food and the necessities of life. The whole subsidy idea is a subterfuge!

The food merchants like the idea of a subsidy. It makes no difference to them if they get their extra profits directly from the people, or if the government hands it to them in the form of a subsidy-later to be regained from the people. In the New York Times of May 10, Seeman Brothers, Inc., owners of White Rose products, published a full page ad with a speech of Raymond Gram Swing in support of the Roosevelt subsidy plan. Workers must not be fooled by all this. They must stand up and say: We want a real reduction of prices and we want a RAISE IN WAGES so that we can meet the increased cost of living!

The workers must say: We don't care about the profits of big business. You say that the war means equal sacrifice. For us it has meant real sacrifices-wage freezing, job

by telling them: "You're working for the government now." But that bit of strategy gives every indication of back-firing.

Roosevelt's strategy overlooked this vital point: the miners are 100 per cent behind their union, and they are veterans of too many union struggles to be intimidated by government intervention or cheap trickery. The demands they make are too serious; and too important, for the miners to be shaken. And bombardments in the capitalist or Stalinist press make no impression on them whatsoever; that is exactly what they expect.

The net result has been that the Roosevelt Administration, and NOT the miners, is now on the spot. Roosevelt knows that every militant unionist is in sympathy with the demands of the UMW, and the methods the miners are pursuing to win these demands. Any move against the UMW will react against Roosevelt... and there is an election year coming up! He is trying to salvage his reactionary wage policies, and the WLB. Both will go out the window with a miners' victory. Roosevelt knows this. He also knows that, however the leaders of other unions may want to act, the ranks of those unions will not be kept from making their own demands, essentially the same as those of the miners, if the miners win.

But win they will, if they stick to their guns. And there is no indication that they intend to do anything else. The miners are not an easily indimidated bunch. They have confidence in their union; that is, they have confidence in their own strength. If they continue to rely on that strength, and demonstrate it in action, as they already have, the victory will certainly be theirs. Meanwhile the situation is simply this: the miners are calmly waiting fifteen days to see if the "new employer" will grant their demands.

ATTENTION, LOS ANGELES WORKERS! HEAR MAX SHACHTMAN National Secretary of the Workers Party - Writer for Labor Action

on

### SOCIALISM, THE ONLY HOPE

In SAN PEDRO: Eagles Hall, 631 Ninth Street FRIDAY, MAY 28, 8:00 P.M.

In LOS ANGELES: Embassy Auditorium, 843 South Grand SUNDAY, MAY 30, 8:00 P.M.

**ADMISSION: TWENTY-FIVE CENTS** 



EDITORIAL PAGE

## Editorials

### **Negro Miners** In the Strike

An outstanding feature of the solidarity of the coal miners in the present struggle is the attitude of the Negro miners. They are standing shoulder to shoulder with their white brothers in the union.

Some outfit calling itself the National Negro Council issued a statement on Sunday, May 2, urging the 100,000 Negro miners to return to work on Monday morning at ten o'clock, the time set by Roosevelt. This statement said that "we are not unmindful that the United Mine Workers organization has never drawn the color line and maintained the union free from discrimination between workers, working conditions and pay scales.

"We submit, however, the Negro workers today, everywhere, like their sons, 450,-000 of them fighting alongside their fellow-American soldiers and sailors, must stand or fall on the incontestable and absolute power of the government of the United States and the Constitution. We second the command: back to the mines on Monday morning at 10 a.m. sharp, in the name of victory for the United Nations."

The statement says that the sons of Nearo miners are "fighting alongside their fellow-American soldiers and sailors." Yes, these Nearo miners' sons are in Jim Crow army units fighting alongside all-white army units. If they were miners themselves before going into the Army, they left an organization which "has never drawn the color line and maintained the union free from discrimination , . . " to be segregated, discriminated against and insulted in Jim Crow army units. They are separated even from their union brothers of the UMWA. And now this National Negro Council urges their fathers to separate themselves from the union which "has never drawn the color line ... " and return to work at the "command" of Roosevelt, who heads the government that heaps insult and degradation on their sons in the Jim Crow Army and Navy units. All this in the name of "victory for the United Nations."

LABOR ACTION A Paper in the Interests of Labor Published Weekly by the LABOR ACTION PUBLISHING COMPANY 114 WEST 14th STREET, NEW YORK, N. Y. (3rd Floor) May 17, 1943 Vol. 7, No. 20 Editor: Emanuel Garrett Subscription Rate: 60 Cents a Year, 75 Cents for Canada, New York and Foreign

The Negro miners didn't obey this "command," nor the advice of the National Negro Council. Like good labor men and trade unionists, they obeyed the command of their union and followed the instructions of their union president and policy committee. Nearo miners, like the white miners know that their strength lies in their combined numbers and in the power of their union.

### The Connally Bill

The House of Representatives is now considering a bill which combines the worst features of the Smith Bill, passed by the House December 3, 1941, and the Connally Bill, passed by the Senate last week. The bill, among other anti-labor provisions, would: require a thirty-day "cooling off" period before a strike becomes effective; require certification of a strike vote by the Secretary of Labor; provide penalties of one year imprisonment and \$5,000 fine for persons guilty of fomenting strikes in government-operated plants.

There are other provisions in the bill that are equally obnoxious. Its net effect would be to outlaw strikes and generally emasculate the unions through government interference.

What we propose to argue about here is the deadly and fallacious propaganda employed by weak-kneed labor leaders and Stalinist scoundrels in connection with the bill. They say (pick up almost any issue of the Daily Worker or the People's World to find the proof) that the miners are responsible for this antilabor bill, that militant union action is responsible. This propaganda is as dangerous as the Connally Bill itself. And the people, notably the Stalinists, who employ it are as guilty of anti-labor viciousness as Connally himself.

That is one point. The second, and more important point is this: militant action, the kind of thing the miners are doing, is **PRECISELY** what will lick the Connelly Bill. If the reactionaries confront a scared and intimidated working class, it will be duck soup for them to pass any measure they want. Show them that they won't get away with it, show them that their anti-labor efforts will be answered by an INCREASE in labor militancy, and they will be compelled to pull in their horns.

It is quite possible that, even if passed by Congress, Roosevelt will veto the bill. He has always preferred the more subtle

## It Is Labor's Duty to Give The Miners 100% Support!

### (Continued from page 1)

example, that journalistic mongrel known as PM has always posed as a friend of labor. The Sunday, May 2. edition of PM carried the following head on the front page around a cartoon of Lewis: "Don't Let This Man Run (and Ruin) the U. S. A." The second page featured a signed editorial by James Wechsler, ex-Stalinist stooge and PM's labor reporter.

Here are a few of the gems that Wechsler hands out: "The coal miners must learn...that their best hope for a decent and fair' solution of their troubles lies in Franklin D. Roosevelt, not in John L. Lewis. The stand of this newspaper is plain. We are against John L. Lewis and the strike which he-without daring to issue a strike call-has encouraged and blessed. We believe that the President of the United States must be supported in any moves he makes to insure the uninterrupted production of coal. When this strike ends -no matter how terrible the circumstances-we shall fight, in spite of John L. Lewis, for a full airing and a fair settlement of the miners' grievances. And we shall also fight to put John L. Lewis out of the business of labor-leading."

We don't quote this because we fear the influence of PM on the miners. We know better than that. We quote it to show where the socalled liberal press stands; to demonstrate that PM is no different from the New York Times, the Scripps - Howard papers or the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. All of these papers are willing for the miners grievances to be "aired" and "settled fairly." But the miners don't want air!

David Lawrence, in one of his "Today in Washington" columns, seems to think that the miners are fortunate in having Lewis as their leader. Lawrence says: "Lewis has again out - maneuvered the Administration and ... he has emerged as the most aggressive champion of organized labor that the country has today.

Despite the fact that Lawrence writes from the position of an anti-Administration commentator, and is certainly no friend of labor, what he says here is simple fact, clear to all except such weasel-word "liberals" as PM and its Wechsler.

The last comment we wish to make about the Wechsler-PM editorial is the threat to run Lewis out of the labor movement. We are glad that Wechsler added this. It makes the editorial funny. Just think, PM, with no influence at all anywhere, and Wechsler will fight to get a new leader for the miners. PM really hasn't influence enough to drive a two-bit Willie Bioff from the labor movement.

The New Republic, one of the "liberal" weeklies, also commented

erously admits that the miners have

grievances and that "in many re-

spects they have behaved better

than their employers." But "Presi-

dent Roosevelt's answer to Lewis'

challenge was the only possible one."

Evidently the New Republic is of

the opinion that it was not possible

for the miners to get an increase in

This "liberal" weekly thinks that

the "no-trespass" slogan of the.

miners has a "ridiculous" sound,

but it gives the miners "a feeling

of standing on respectable ground."

The New Republic goes on: "and

though soldiers may not be able

to force men to work, they cer-

tainly could prevent pickets from keeping away from work any who wished to obey the President of the United States instead of the president of the United Mine Workers,'

That is, the New Republic is saying here that the Army might not be able to break the strike by forcing loyal union miners to work, but the Army could break the strike by covering the scabs who attempted to get through the picket lines and into the mines.

These are samples from the "liberal" press. They will come to the aid of the mine workers AFTER the war is over! In the meantime, these workers can remain hungry, and the coal operators can work full blast at increasing their profits, dividends and salaries.

### The Labor Misleaders

Did the mine workers fare any better at the hands of the leaders of labor? They certainly have the right to expect different treatment from those who lead labor. But did they get it? They did not!

Emil Rieve, president of the Textile Workers Union, CIO, and a member of the CIO Executive Council. speaking at the opening of the convention of that organization in New York on May 10, had this to say in connection with the no-strike pledge given by the labor bureaucrats to Roosevelt: "Nothing has happened which should cause labor to deviate from that pledge one iota. No matter how great the grievances of the miners, and that they are great I would be the first to acknowledge; no matter how much the coal operators had sought to take advantage of the situation in their hope of destroying the solidarity of the miners, there is no justification for the complete stoppage of production."

Here is speaking the complete stooge and traitor. No matter what happens, no matter what attacks they suffer, the workers must go right on producing. No matter if they are hungry; no matter if the cost of living and taxes keep going up; no matter if the coal operators did get a government subsidy and permission to boost the price of coal-what does it all matter? The miners and other workers, according to Rieve, must grin and bear it.

At the recent conference of the AUW in Detroit, while the rank and file delegates were applauding and cheering the miners, the leaders were trying to explain what a fearful man Lewis is. Walter Reuther held that the UAW should back the economic demands of the miners, but 'we ought not to support their strike or Lewis' leadership." Reuther said that Lewis is only interested in fighting the President, and is using the miners in his personal quarrel

just how the matter stands. The miners should know who their friends are and from whom they can expect support. That they cannot get support from the capitalist press is clear. They understand this full well. But it is also true that they cannot get support from the so-called liberal press; these puppets who talk about fighting for the miners after the strike is over, or after the war is over. The leaders of the AFL and the CIO cannot be depended on. They too are against the strike; they stick to the no-strike pledge they gave to Roosevelt without consulting their membership. And the worst, of course, have been the Stalinists and their slander sheet, the Daily Worker, who have waged an all-out fight against the miners. But we'll return to these RATS some other time.

### For or Against Lewis?

It is clear now, however, that the miners have powerful support. This support comes from the millions of organized and unorganized workers in the United States. These workers know what is at stake: they know that the miners are right and they know that the UMWA is doing what every international, union should be doing today.

The delegate to the UAW conference hit the nail on the head when he said that workers should not listen to talk about supporting the miners while being against Lewis. This is the rankest sort of nonsense. Even the reactionary David Lawrence recognizes this when he says: "If, when it is all over, the miners get more payand it appears they will somehow -you can chalk up another sensational victory for John L. Lewis, who serves his union well for that \$25,000 - a - year salary which he earns many times over."

In this particular struggle, to talk about being for the "economic demands" of the miners, but against the strike and against Lewis, is outright betrayal on the part of labor's leaders. Any talk of this kind coming from the rank and file is plain stupidity. We can criticize Lewis: we have criticized Lewis; and we will criticize Lewis: But our general criticisms of Lewis have nothing to do with the present situation. In this situation, we judge Lewis according to how he lives up to his responsibilities as a union leader, according to how he leads the miners in their fight. Lewis is the leader of a union that is waging a battle for all labor -and waging it properly.

The test of a labor leader is very simple. Does he recognize the existence of these conditions and does he attempt to do something effective to improve conditions.

attempted to improve their condi-

tions by negotiations and got no-

where. They got nowhere with the

employers and they got nowhere

with the government. The strike

was forced on the miners by the

employers and the government.

Every other union was faced with

the same situation: strike or go

There was no other, alternative but

to strike. The miners and other

workers have no other weapon. The

daily press knows this. That's why

The miners and other workers



Philip Murray and William Green are threatening to withdraw the labor members from the War Labor Board. They say that since the President's "hold the line" order, the WLB no longer has any authority to remedy "inequities" and all that the board can do now is apply the fifteen per cent Little Steel formula. So'what's the use?

For Murray and Green this threat to withdraw from the WLB is merely a face-saving maneuver forced on them by the anger of the rank and file of organized labor which is sick to death of the pussy-footing of their officials, and is inspired by the miners' stiff fight for a wage increase.

Up to now, Murray and Green have been ardent supporters of the WLB-in spite of the fact that since its inception the WLB has been the bargain basement for selling out labor. All this time the leaders of the CIO and AFL have been behind the counter with the bosses and the so-called representatives of the "public."

### CARRIED TO ITS LOGICAL CONCLUSION

George E. Sokolsky, National Association of Manufacturers' stooge, who writes for the New York Sun, has made the admission that "IF THE WLB IS CARRIED TO ITS LOGICAL CONCLU-SION. THEN THE LABOR UNION BECOMES MERELY A SOCIAL ORGANIZATION FOR KEEPING LABOR IN LINE UNDER GOVERN-MENT SUPERVISION."

Get the full flavor of that sentence, you workers who have fought and bled to build your unions to protect your interests. The WLB is making of your unions-with the knowledge, consent and cooperation of many labor officials-a convenient vehicle for keeping you "IN LINE.' And that is exactly where you've been kept-ABOVE ALL, BY THE LITTLE STEEL FORMULA, WHICH KEEPS WAGES DOWN-WHILE PRICES AND PROFITS HIT THE SKY!

But not even this unjust formula is applied universally. There is one of many instances in the case of the 1.750 employees of Lever Brothers. They were refused an increase in wages, even though they are getting less than the fifteen per cent permitted by the Little Steel formula. Why? Because-on the theory that two wrongs make a right-an increase for these 1,750 workers would mean increases also for the workers in the Cambridge and Edgewater plants of the same company-where the wages are also less than allowed by the aforesaid formula.

Let us look at some other outstanding decisions of the WLB.

There was the case of the General Cable Co. employees, who were denied a raise on the shocking theory that WAGES AS LOW AS SIXTY CENTS AN HOUR ARE NOT SUB-STANDARD!

Again, when the Textile Workers Union demanded that the wage differential between mills in the North and in the South be eliminated, the demand was refused by the WLB on the ground that "A DIFFERENTIAL IS NOT UNUSUAL." Applying this principle, one may say that lynching is right because it too is "NOT UNUSUAL." Though the labor members on the WLB wrote their own opinion in this, case, they CONCURRED with the majority!

The shipyard workers of the Bethlehem Steel Co.-one of the first-rank war profiteers-asked for two weeks' vacation with pay for employees of one or more years' standing because, they thought the gruelling, tortuous labor of the yards entitled them to rest after one year. The WLB decided that ONE week for workers of THREE OR MORE YEARS' standing is good enough. All the workers have to do is pray that they live that long. There is the unforgettable case of the 32,000 New York transit workers, over which the WLB-by unanimous vote-refused to take jurisdiction, thus denying these workers even the dubious privilege of all other workers in the country to have their grievances buried in the files of the WLB. It might be said that in this case the WLB established its own precedent for being by-passed-as was done then by Mayor La Guardia, and as is now being done by John L. Lewis in the miners' case. There are the many instances of WLB voting down wage increases where the bosses themselves -because of the labor market-were willing to grant increases.

Re-entered as second-class matter May 24, 1940, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

methods of a "friend of labor," relying upon his stooges in labor's ranks, to accomplish reactionary ends. He knows enough to be afraid of provoking the indignation of labor. And that is exactly the way labor can lick the Connally Bill in the House, or compel Roosevelt to veto it if passed: show that indignation, show it by the THREAT OF MILITANT ACTION, show it in the pay and thus end the strike by that spirit of the mine workers!

### WORKERS PARTY PLATFORM

Against Both Imperialist War Camps! For the Victory of World Labor and the Colonial Peoples! For the Victory of the Third Camp of Socialism!

### LABOR MUST DEFEND ITSELF!

- 1. Hands off the right to strike! For the defense of civil rights and all workers' rights! Against any wartime dictatorship measures!
- 2. \$1.00-an-hour minimum pay! Time and a half for overtime; double time for Sunday and holiday work.
- 3. Wage increases to meet rising costs. No wage or job freezing! Equal pay for equal work!
- 4. For a greater share of the increasing national income. For a higher standard of living!
- 5. No sales tax on consumer goods! No tax on wages! Against forced savings!
- 6. For control of price fixing and rationing by committees of working class organizations. Freeze rents and consumer goods prices at the 1940 level to stop the rise in the cost of living.
- 7. No government contract without a union contract. The closed shop in all war industries
- 8. Maintain and increase all government social services!

### SOAK THE RICH-LET THEM PAY FOR THEIR WAR!

- 9. A government levy on capital to cover the cost of the imperialist war. Confiscate all war profits!
- 10. Conscript all war industries under workers' control!
- 11. Expropriate the "Sixty Families" the three per cent of the people who own 96 per cent of the national wealth!

### DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS TO THE DRAFTEES!

- 12. The right of free speech, free press and free assembly for the men in the armed forces.
- 13. The right of soldiers to vote in all elections.
- 14. The right of all youth, male or female, to vote at the age of eighteen. Old enough to fight; old enough to work; old enough to vote!
- 15. For adequate dependency allowances paid by the government with NO deductions from the soldier's pay.

### SMASH JIM CROW!

- 16. Down with Jim Crow and anti-Semitism! All discrimination against Negroes in the Army and Navy or by employers in industry must be made a criminal offense!
- 17. For full political, social and economic equality for Negroes!

### **BE PREPARED!**

- 18. For Workers' Defense Guards, trained and controlled by the unions against vigilante and fascist attacks!
- 19. For an Independent Labor Party and a Workers' Government! No political support to the Roosevelt government! 20. For Peace Through Socialism! For the
- independence of all colonies!
- 21. For a World Socialist Federation! Only a socialist world will destroy capitalist. imperialism and fascist barbarism!

with Roosevelt on the strike. This journal very gen-

Richard Frankensteen, who acted as strike-breaker during the North American Aviation strike, is, of course, against the miners' strike. Frankensteen is "for the demands of the United Mine Workers, but I'm against their strike 100 per cent and without reservations."

Despite the tirades of Reuther and Frankensteen, the delegates gave the loudest ovation to a delegate who said that labor should not straddle on the mine strike by "supporting the UMWA in their wage demands and not John Lew-

## **Detroit Rally--**

### (Continued from page 1)

rolling back of prices to the level of May 15, 1942; launching of an adequate food production and allocation program; over-all rationing and price control with labor given full voice on all policy - making bodies; restoration of previous powers of the WLB to grant pay raises on an inequalities and inequities basis; creation of industry-wide stabilization agreements; an end to the manpower freeze, and establishment of a democratic program through voluntary cooperation; and the removal of Paul McNutt as head of the War Manpower Commission

In spite of the effort of the union leaders to promote enthusiasm for the proposal to restore the powers of the WLB to grant pay raises on the basis of inequalities and inequities, references to this proposal were greeted apathetically by the rally, particularly after R. J. Thomas had pointed out that of 2,000 cases before the WLB it had settled less than 300.

In great contrast to this coldness was the enthusiastic response to all mention of limiting the bosses' profits, especially when Martel, pointing out that there was no freeze on profits, proposed to "turn the thermometer upside down and freeze some of the brass

it can only lie and distort the facts. is." Another delegate said: "Lewis Roosevelt knows this. That's why he and the mine workers are fighting tried to be alternately friendly and today the fight that you and I and tough. The AFL and CIO leaders the entire CIO should be making." also know the truth, but they are All of these situations demonstrate cowards floating between the pressure of Roosevelt and the upsurge of their own membership.

hats." The rally also vigorously

applauded and cheered support of

and Martel.

the miners' demands by Thomas

The weakness of the union leaders'

program against the freeze and the

high cost of living was reflected in

the weakness of the preparation for

the meeting, the speeches at the ral-

ly and the general feeling in the

shops that "those guys are just going

The speakers, while making some

positive proposals that the audience

favored, were too busy trying to

conceal that necessarily that was a

demonstration against Roosevelt's

"hold the line" order. They made

constant references to the isolated

"best friend of labor," sitting alone

in the White House, beset by big, bad

wolves on Capitol Hill, in the OPA,

the WMC, and the OES. And so, in-

stead of urging the one program that

could effectuate labor's just demands

-leaving the WLB and rescinding

the no-strike pledge-they confined

themselves to indignant generalities

and pious hopes that somehow, some-

one, by some miracle, would do

A fighting program would have

rallied the Detroit workers, who are

chafing at the bit against wage and

job freezing and soaring prices. With

such a program, the demonstration

of 5,000 might have been one of

something in Washington.

50,000.

to gas and do nothing about it."

### Can't Compromise Here

hungry.

To be "against Lewis" in this fight is to be against the miners and against the interests of the entire labor movement.

### The issue is NOT Lewis; it is the MINERS, the miners' UNION, and the miners' DEMANDS.

There can be no compromise here, no fence-sitting and no straddling. No worker, and especially no miner, should have any doubts about this. If the miners waver for one second they are lost. If they do not get and hold the complete support of all the ranks of labor, their struggle will be immeasurably weakened. This means that weaker unions, less militant unions and those not so well led as the UMWA, regardless of their size, will have no chance whatsoever to improve their wage position.

The bosses want to break the miners because they are the strongest and most militant link in the labor chain. They have called to their aid, THEIR Congress, THEIR government, THEIR press, THEIR pulpit, THEIR radio and THEIR lieutenants in the labor movement. These are all against the miners and their strike.

But, over against these stand the solid and disciplined ranks of the UMWA and the support of millions of workers who wish that they had a union like the miners: unafraid, unbowed and determined. This is something; in fact, it can be decisive and with this the miners can win.

### A GRAVEYARD FOR GRIEVANCES

And, of course, the method most often used to keep the workers "IN LINE" is simply to bury their petitions, demands and grievances. OF 2,119 CASES BROUGHT BEFORE THE BOARD IN TEN MONTHS OF 1942, ONLY 396-OR LESS THAN ONE-SIXTH OF THE TOTAL - WERE SETTLED.

Today there are more than 10,000 pending cases. The President's "hold the line" order has merely deepened the graves in which the WLB buries workers' grievances.

One can go on and on giving instances of how the WLB has employed labor leaders to convert the unions into bodies for keeping the workers "IN LINE." But no purpose will be served in multiplying the evidence.

To save the face of the WLB and of his faithful servitors in the CIO and AFL, Roosevelt may loosen the straight-jacket of his "hold the line" order-and allow the WLB to act on certain "inequities." BUT WILL THAT BE A REASON FOR THE PAID OFFICIALS OF ORGANIZED LA-BOR TO STAY ON THE BOARD?

The crucial point is stated by Mr. Sokolsky in the above quotation, here again quoted: "IF THE WLB IS CARRIED TO ITS LOGICAL CON-CLUSION, THEN THE LABOR UNION BE-COMES MERELY A SOCIAL ORGANIZATION FOR KEEPING LABOR IN LINE UNDER GOV-ERNMENT SUPERVISION."

Fascism and Nazism demolish the unions outright. Capitalist "democracies" seek to accomplish the same purpose through no-strike pledges, War Labor Boards and other devices for pulling the teeth and softening the muscles of the unions.

The workers of several unions have already raised the cry for their leaders to get off the WLB. This cry must become an earth-shaking shout from the throat of all organized labor before the "LOGICAL CONCLUSION" Mr. Sokolsky speaks of becomes a reality-and the unions cease to function as such!