

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

LABOR ACTION

MARCH 28, 1949

A PAPER IN THE INTEREST OF SOCIALISM

FIVE CENTS

AN EDITORIAL

Opening Wedge

The decision of the Loyalty Board of the United States Department of Commerce in dismissing disloyalty charges against an avowed sympathizer of the Workers Party, places the inclusion of the Workers Party in the so-called "subversive list" issued by the Attorney-General's office in an even more absurd light than has shone on it before.

The whole idea of a "subversive list," which has the effect of outlawing organizations by administrative decree, is anti-democratic enough as it is. It becomes even more vicious when it is drawn up in such a way as to bracket together organizations which have little, and in some cases, nothing in common with each other. It is downright outrageous when organizations are listed without being first confronted with the charges levelled against them, or the evidence that presumably exists to sustain these charges, and without providing for any procedure whereby they can have access to these charges and evidence in order to present a refutation of them.

The listing of the Workers Party, alongside of espionage, fascist and Stalinist organizations with which the WP has nothing whatever in common, is the clearest case in point. Up to now, protests and communications from the Workers Party to the office of the Attorney General demanding that at the very least it be informed of just what charges have been made against it and what evidence has been adduced, have been of no avail. The office of the Attorney General in Washington has simply referred to the Executive Order empowering it to issue a "subversive list" but not requiring it to inform the organizations listed of the charges, the evidence, or what, if any, procedure exists for delisting.

BETRAYS ABSURDITY OF "SUBVERSIVE LIST"

Under such circumstances, the countless Loyalty Boards to whom the list is issued, are required to do nothing more than establish whether or not the individual charged with disloyalty is a member of the listed organization, or even in sympathetic association with it. Once it is established (assuming it has really been established!), the Board requires nothing more. The individual in question is forthwith found to be disloyal, and that is the end of his or her job. How monstrously this procedure has already been abused, has already been noted in numerous liberal publications which have cited specific cases. What is worse yet, however, is that the procedure, as prescribed and in and of itself, is a flagrant abuse of the democratic principles which are praised so much in Washington and practiced so little.

With this background, the case of the Department of Commerce employee who was cleared of the charge of disloyalty, as readers of last week's issue of LABOR ACTION saw, is highly important. Its importance lies above all in the fact that from the start, the employee freely acknowledged his sympathy with the Workers Party, the fact that he had openly distributed its literature from time to time, and had even made an occasional financial contribution to it. The members of the Loyalty Board of the Department were further assisted in their deliberations by the fact that the National Chairman of the Workers Party, in testifying before them, just as freely set forth the program and the nature of the activities of that organization.

The decision of the Board is all the more interesting because it was made on the basis of this freely supplied information: Its members knew what the Workers Party stands for and what it does, and they knew that the Department employee was a sympathizer of the Workers Party. They confirmed the employee in his job—in a department of the same government to which the Attorney General's office is attached!

If this decision does not show the outrageous character of the "subversive list" in general, it certainly underlines the absurdity of including the Workers Party on the list. We would like to hope that the Board's decision conveys this absurdity to the office of the Attorney General. Whether it does or not, the Workers Party, together with organizations like the American Civil Liberties Union and the Workers Defense League which have assisted it in the past, will spare no effort, in their drive against the "list," to have the Workers Party removed from it—just as a starter.

Stalinist Government Decree Dissolves Mapam in Rumania

Dissolution of the Mapam movement in Rumania (pro-Stalinist socialist Zionist organization) was decreed last week by the Stalinist government in control of the Rumanian "People's Democracy." Concurrently 106 centers preparing 50,000 young Jews for migration to Israel were shut down by ukase of the government.

This shatters the Mapam illusion that slavish support of Stalinism would save its organizations in the Russian satellite states from the fate of all the other Zionist and non-Stalinist organizations.

The Stalinists, like all totalitarians, never permit any independent organization to exist (if they can help it) no matter how much it grovels and how subservient it is to them. This process takes some time but the "gleichshaltung" of ALL the Jewish organizations was completed by the decree. Prior to this there had been ordered the formation of a so-called "Jewish democratic committee" which was appointed dictator of the Jewish community. This community organization in Rumania was a legal body and for a long time had been officially endowed with powers to regulate many internal Jewish problems such as education and social welfare work. These traditional communal groups were abolished in favor of the state-created committees.

About 350,000 Jews live in Rumania. They are survivors of the Hitler exterminationist policies. This group constitutes the largest Jewish population in any European country outside of Russia. The overwhelming majority of these Jews developed strong nationalist feelings as a reaction to the ghastly fate of the Jews under totalitarian capitalism. "In Rumania," boasted the Zionists with a considerable degree of truth, "every Jew is a Zionist." Most of them wanted to emigrate to Palestine.

STALINISTS TURN ON ZIONISM

For a while the "People's Democracy" allowed the right of emigration but only to Israel. Wasn't Mos-

cow supporting Israel diplomatically? The satellites of Moscow could permit migration.

Then came the reversal of Russian policy. Support to Israel was not to be interpreted as tolerance of Zionism. Ilya Ehrenberg attacked Zionism in Pravda. The Rumanian Stalinists joined the jackal pack. Zionism once again became imperialist, bourgeois, nationalist, blackmarketing, etc. Emigration was made difficult and finally almost impossible. Zionist organizations were hampered, harassed and finally—on December 23, 1948—they dissolved "voluntarily."

The Mapam affiliates in Rumania refused to accept the decision of the central board of Zionist organizations. Blinded by their naive faith in the Stalinist regime and believing the Stalinists to be revolutionary and to have a revolutionary integrity, the Mapam affiliates attempted to continue their organization by convincing the Stalinists that they were not like the others—they were really and TRULY loyal.

The Rumanian Stalinists taught them a lesson in "democracy"—dissolved and proscribed them by decree. Members of a Jewish Agency delegation that arrived to negotiate a migration agreement were immediately arrested, thrown into jail and later deported. Two of the three delegates were members of Mapam.

Such are the facts. In face of these facts it is amazing that the Mapam continues its pro-Stalinist orientation and that it made its pro-Stalinist the central issue in the Israeli Parliament AFTER these events took place.

In face of these facts one wonders what becomes of the Mapam theoretical position that "Zionism is now a recognized ally of [Stalinist] socialism." Another question the Mapam and its various affiliates can profitably consider is: How do these actions fit in with their analysis of the satellites as "people's democracies," or—more accurately—does their analysis of the new States as "democracies" fit the facts?

Landlord Lobby Wins Green Light For Rent-Gouge Bill in Congress

By SUSAN GREEN

The bills in both houses of Congress designed to murder rent control, sharply underline the need for an independent labor party in this country, a party through which the working people can send men and women of their own kind, of their own class, to govern for them. Nobody who experiences in his own life and in his own pocket the effects of the housing shortage and the dire need for rent control, could possibly do to the millions of tenants of this country what Congress is doing. The lawyers, businessmen and hardened politicians legislating to raise rents all along the line and to give the landlords a free hand as soon as possible, are of the same social layer as the landlords and they act that way.

Last week the Senate Banking and Currency Committee—why this committee should have jurisdiction on rent control has still to be explained—completed a bill to take the place of the law expiring on March 31, and submitted it to the Senate with recommendation for passage. The wording of this recommendation

is unbelievable when checked against the provisions of the bill.

"... any increases in rents today would be at the expense of diets, medical care, clothing and other necessities of life of millions of American citizens. . . ." From this you would suppose that the bill wipes out all rent increases and carries out the campaign promises of the Democratic Party, as well as of some campaigning Republicans, to do away with the obnoxious fifteen-percent "voluntary" increase in the existing law. This is what you would suppose, but this is not the case. The proposed bill before the Senate, upon which it will act this week, proposes a down-the-line ten-percent increase and nothing voluntary about it. And those tenants who have already "volunteered" increases of five, seven or ten percent will be penalized by having to pay up to the fifteen percent permitted by the expiring law.

NOTHING . . . TO THEM

There is only one interpretation of the committee's words taken with the provisions of the bill. These politicians do not consider a ten-percent boost an "increase in rents today." To these "servants of the people" with their fancy salaries and their additional expense accounts, four, five or six dollars more or less a month is negligible—to them merely the price of one dinner. When they talk about diet, medical care, clothing and other necessities of life, they are mouthing words without the content of life in them. To the working class family four, five or six dollars a month means eggs, milk, a pair of shoes, a trip to the dentist.

DELAY NOT UNCOMMON

Throughout the proceedings Medina has complained of the lengthy arguments presented by the battery of defense attorneys, even charging "premeditated, willful delay" and the press has picked up the cry. While it is true neither the defendants nor their lawyers have displayed any wish to hurry the case along, two months of preliminaries do not by any means set records in American jurisprudence.

Almost any anti-trust suit instituted by the federal government, for example, can count on at least a decade elapsing before a decision is reached. A large motion picture corporation, Paramount, reached a consent decree recently with the Department of Justice on a charge of monopoly in the exhibition of films. Judges and attorneys for both sides congratulated everybody on the dispatch and cooperation with which the proceedings were carried out.

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Atlantic Pact Terms Bind Europe To U. S. in Sweeping War Alliance

By HENRY JUDD

The North Atlantic Security Pact has been published and the world has been presented with an accomplished fact—a grand and sweeping war alliance. Among the numerous comments heard, surely that of Belgium's Prime Minister Spaak is the most absurd. This ex-socialist proudly announced the public nature of the document which, according to him, was not conceived in "secrecy," unlike previous pacts and alliances. The fact is, of course, that only long after the terms had been agreed to was any publication permitted. It is conceivable that such a document would be announced without a prior understanding, for example, by the American Senate that it would give its almost unanimous approval?

It is true that most of the terms had long since been rumored and bruited about by reports and newspaper commentators. But a reading of the pact as a whole and not piecemeal indicates that (1) this is the most significant document to appear since the end of World War II; (2) it is one of the most significant steps in the history of the United States, and (3) its full implications can only be partly seen today. Just as the Marshall Plan is the overall economic and social strategy of American imperialism, so the North Atlantic Security Pact is a concretization of American military and war-alliance strategy in terms of that same imperialism.

The terms of the pact have been publicized and it is hardly necessary to repeat what is so well known. Above all, little or no attention should be paid to the propaganda barrage intended to calm disturbed nerves by emphasizing the "defensive" character of the pact and its alleged legal justification in terms of the United Nations charter clause permitting "regional agreements." If we stretch the term "regional" to include just about half the world (and the most important part of it, to boot!), then perhaps our new slick Secretary of State Acheson can get away with that one. The already famous Article 5 of the pact signifies that the United States, as well as all other powers involved, will

automatically and assuredly find itself precipitated into war provided the initial action is considered sufficiently important to warrant such steps. The wording which formally retains the Congressional right to declare war has not only that purpose in mind, but also the more important objective of permitting the American government to decide whether this or another concrete move by Russian imperialism warrants the blow-up of a Third World War.

MAJOR IMPLICATIONS OF PACT

Let us try to list some of the broader implications of the new pact which will largely determine American action and policy in its relation to the rest of the world. Here are some of the more striking ones. The others will turn up in practice as we move along to the inevitable war now planned by both American and Russian imperialism.

(1) The world is now launched in a new armaments race which, in its effect, will make all others insignificant both in the sum of moneys to be spent, and the disastrous nature of the weapons to be employed. Greater percentages of national budget will be devoted to armaments. Already Russian expenditures have jumped to 20 per cent of the new budget; American expenditures stand already at 40 per cent and French at one-third of the budget.

The first steps toward European rearmaments, to be concentrated on the organization of new armored divisions in France and the British jet-propelled air force, will cost between \$1 and \$2 billions. It is claimed this will not interfere with the European Recovery Program expenditures (ERP), but this is absurd. Priorities will be disrupted necessarily, and the old adage that a nation (even America) cannot produce both "guns and butter" in equal quantities and indefinitely still holds true. Furthermore, what contribution will billions in guns, tanks and planes make toward the desired goal of European economic recovery? We propose, instead, that the quan-

(Continued in World Politics col., page 3)

"Liberal" Chicago Mayor Boots Civil Rights, And Senator Douglas Goes Him One Better

CHICAGO, Mar. 20—Following hard upon the defeat of the Carey ordinance against discrimination in renting new public housing in the Chicago City Council by the personal intervention of "liberal" Democratic Mayor Kennelly, as related in last week's LABOR ACTION, the labor-liberal-point concerns Douglas' words as they relate to segregation. Mayor Kennelly has "merely" expressed his contempt for an ordinance against segregation in certain Chicago privately owned housing projects aided by public funds; Senator Douglas goes twenty leagues further in stretching out his hand to greet the mounting reactionary rebellion against civil rights in toto!

The Chicago chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People recently denounced Kennelly's stand in the following words: "He broke faith with a large group of his loyal supporters. He struck a dagger into the very heart of democratic principles. He won a place for himself along with the Southern Dixiecrats. He sold Chicago down the river of segregation, discrimination and prejudice. The

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OUTDOES KENNELLY

After replying with regard to the "facts" about Chicago and Republican maneuvering in the Senate, Douglas continued and said: "I want to say to the senator from Georgia that we are not proposing to abolish segregation in the South, and I am glad to make that point clear. We are not proposing to abolish segregation in the South. We are not proposing to abolish it in housing, or in the federal aid for education bill. We are not proposing to abolish it in the schools. Senators from the South are seeing ghosts. We do not want to impose it on the South. I am not insisting that in social relations which men have with each other they must be forced to mingle. That is an indi-

vidual matter and in many cases a matter for local decision." It is not the intent of this news article at this time to go into the ramifications of all the points made either by George or Douglas in this senatorial exchange while the filibuster was occurring. The pertinent point concerns Douglas' words as they relate to segregation. Mayor Kennelly has "merely" expressed his contempt for an ordinance against segregation in certain Chicago privately owned housing projects aided by public funds; Senator Douglas goes twenty leagues further in stretching out his hand to greet the mounting reactionary rebellion against civil rights in toto!

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Who Won the November Elections?

It is now necessary to ask who won the elections last November. The crushing defeats which Truman's proposals have received in Congress have raised this question.

On November 2 a majority of the whole people and an overwhelmingly greater proportion of the working class voted the Democratic ticket. In defiance of a well-heeled barrage by press, polls, and radio, the people voted for what to them was a continuation of the New Deal, for liberalism and against the conservatism so completely identified with the Republican Party. The Dixiecrat racists, the symbols of Jim Crow and the embodiment of reaction, could not even carry the South.

However mistaken, November 3 was a day of popular rejoicing: "We showed them." What has happened to this "victory"?

The spectacle in Washington is one of shambles for the administration program. Precisely those forces which were rejected in the election now hold the initiative.

The 81st Congress is three months old. Its accomplishments are on a par with the notorious 80th. This is a bare listing of what it has done and not done to date:

• The rent bill now being considered complies

with the demands of the real-estate lobbies. The lid on rents is blown sky-high. This is a direct steal out of the pocketbooks of the people.

• The filibuster has wrecked the civil-right, anti-lynching, anti-poll-tax bills. The Dixiecrats were defeated at the polls have won in Congress.

• The weak and partial efforts of the administration to establish majority rule in the Senate in order to undermine the filibuster and limit Senate control by the Dixiecrats have failed. Under the "compromise" one fourth of the Senate can stop any attempt on closure of debate, and on rules the old filibuster technique remains intact.

• If there was one single matter on which labor voted for the Democrats it was for repeal of the Taft-Hartley Act. Seldom has there been such unity of purpose and effort in the labor movement. The Taft-Hartley Act is still law and no one dares predict how soon it will come out of committee. Worse than that, there is widespread fear that the law will be "modified" rather than repealed. Labor is now at the mercy of the reactionary 81st Congress.

• Proposals to raise the minimum wage to 75 cents an hour have been slashed to 60 cents, and even that is stymied in committee. Increase of social security, extension of old-age pension coverage, national health plans, housing programs, price

ceilings—all these hopes of yesterday have a dubious future at best. Thus far they have been virtually ignored inside Congress so far as practical measures are concerned.

The widely heralded "Fair Deal" is beginning to look like a scarecrow—no insides. The administration is apparently unable or unwilling to control even its own majority in Congress. Or to put it in another way, the horse backed by Murray, Green and Reuther as the only possible one to produce any results is hardly in the race.

The coalition of Dixiecrats, Republicans and conservative Northern Democrats rules the roost. The Democratic Party has not proved itself to be the instrument of the ADA or of a liberal-labor coalition, but rather the means for assuring control of the federal government by the conservative-reactionary bloc.

Truman reneged on his threat to purge the Dixiecrats, thus keeping them in the Democratic Party. Just the other day AFTER the defeats he suffered at their hands, he promised that there would be no reprisals. Since the Democrats were given the victory at the polls, and the Dixiecrats have shared the fruits of this victory, they have been able to control positions of power which the

(Continued in Editorial col., page 3)

Gates Presents WP View At Debate on Labor Party

LOS ANGELES—The affirmative side of the question, "Resolved That a Labor Party Will Advance the Interests of the Working Class," was presented by Albert Gates, organizer of the Los Angeles branch of the Workers Party, in a debate with the World Socialist Party, represented by Fred Evans, at a meeting of slightly under 100 held at Vladeck Center, March 13.

Both speakers held as their ultimate goal the abolition of capitalism and the establishment of socialism, and based themselves on the scientific teachings of Marx and Engels. "The American working class is backward politically, even though it is well organized on a trade-union basis," said Gates in arguing for the Labor Party slogan.

The burden of Evans' attack was directed against any kind of reforms or immediate demands, and he condemned the Labor Party slogan on that basis. His organization calls for the "unconditional surrender of capitalism," he said. He quoted from Marx and Engels' Communist Manifesto to the effect that the "emancipation of the working class is the task of the working class itself," and on the basis of that statement his group is against all reform measures, opposed to leaders, has no leaders in its own organization, and does not wish to lead the working class to socialism. He pointed out that his organization, a sister party of the Socialist Party of Great Britain, has had no splits since its inception in 1904.

PRIMITIVE IDEAS ON SOCIALISM

Evans was hard put to answer a query during the question period,

based on the passage from the Communist Manifesto in which Marx and Engels called for support of the immediate demands of the workers.

Gates, in his first rebuttal, found ample material in Marx against the "orthodox Marxists" of the WSP on the nature of sects, which was the characterization he made of the WSP. Their lack of splits, as well as their lack of participation in labor struggles was evidence of their lifeless existence. Their opposition to the demand "A job for every worker" he labeled primitive "jungle" socialism.

In his rebuttal, Evans further demonstrated the naive, inflexible concepts of his organization. He denied the necessity of a transitional period between the end of capitalism and the beginning of socialism. "Either you have capitalism or socialism," he said flatly.

In his final summary, Gates exposed a quotation by Evans of Max Shachtman in The New Internationalist against a Labor Party. It happened to have been written when the movement was opposed to a Labor Party fourteen years ago!

The rout of the WSP view was witnessed by an audience of Socialists, Socialist-Democrats, members of the Hashomer Hatzair and union members and leaders. Its sympathies were overwhelmingly for the Labor Party position. Even members of the WSP had to admit that Gates delivered some crushing arguments.

The meeting was chaired by Anthony Ramuglia, international representative of the Textile Workers Union.

Select Jury in CP Trial

(Continued from page 1)

The original charges were instituted eleven long years ago, in 1938. The only reason for the "early" settlement was that an amicable agreement, satisfactory to all, was reached. Other movie companies under the same charge who wish to continue their cases in court can undoubtedly prolong the situation for a few more years.

DENNIS' OWN LAWYER

Nevertheless, the CP leaders and their defense have displayed more interest in attacking the jury system than in defending their political point of view before the bar. A change in this attitude may become apparent with Eugene Dennis, CP general secretary and second only to William Z. Foster in the public hierarchy of the party, now conducting his own defense.

With the legalities of the jury system challenge over and the final jury selected, Dennis requested permission to excuse his attorney and to take over for himself. This move will put him in a better position to present the political case of the CP during the trial, for he will not be bound as closely by restrictions placed upon a defendant in the witness chair.

During the trial of the Socialist Workers Party members at Minneapolis, the only other time the Smith Act has been invoked, Albert Goldman, one of the defendants, acted as attorney for himself and the others.

If Dennis' assumption of his own defense actually presages an attempt to defend the CP from the point of view of political program and principles, the trial will become worthy of close scrutiny by everyone seri-

ously interested in a study of Stalinism.

CHALLENGES INDICATIVE

For the politically aware, no defense of corrupt and hopelessly compromised Stalinism is possible. The danger lies in the chance that, aided by a crassly reactionary and stupid prosecution, Dennis and his cohorts may emerge in the public mind as stalwarts of socialism and Marxism, giving the CP in America the false appearance of crusading revolutionists still carrying the flag of the betrayed October Revolution.

The present isolation of the CP was strikingly exemplified during the examination of prospective jurors. In searching for bias among the members of the panel, Medina and the prosecution presented a list of names, organizations and publications deemed connected with Stalinism—a sort of FBI Index Librorum Prohibitorum. If any prospective juror had come in contact with this forbidden fruit, he was automatically excused.

The CP defense also prepared its own Index. Highest on the list were the names and works of the opposition to Stalinism within the labor and liberal movement. Least of all wanted on the jury was anyone who knew anything of the labor movement's political history or who had read anything on the actual conditions within Russia.

The same fear was betrayed in the exercise of peremptory challenges by the defense. Aside from a few persons connected with such reactionary bodies as the Holy Name Society and the Tool Owners Union, the defense used its precious right to remove jurors against members of AFL unions and a member of the Liberal Party!

No one knows better than the Stalinists themselves that a juror with any knowledge of the history of the CP in the labor movement would constitute a hazard to the defense. If and when the CP presents a justification of its political role the audience of necessity must be gullible and naive.

In Maryland

The Department of Employment Security reported that some 722,900 were employed in non-agricultural tasks in mid-December 1948. The figure for mid-January 1949 was 700,300. Consequently, Maryland employment fell by 22,600 in January, a sharper drop than the corresponding monthly decline last year. The department disclosed that the corresponding seasonal reduction in 1947-48 was 17,200 or 5,400 less than the present drop. Manufacturing plant workers were hardest hit and contributed the major figure to the December-January decline, the department said. Said reports were compiled in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The total number of checks paid non-veteran jobless by the State Unemployment Board for the week ending February 26, 1948, was: counties 6,943, Baltimore city 14,510. New claims were 1,861. During the same period Uncle Sam paid veterans checks as follows: counties 3,248, Baltimore city 2,928. New claims were 110.

(A subsequent report came too late for publication, which relays the information that in February, unemployment hit 49,000 in Maryland—a post-war high.—Ed.)

Review of Unemployment in Country

Los Angeles: "Out of Line"?

By MARY BELL

LOS ANGELES, Mar. 9—The figures on employment and unemployment for Los Angeles County are always out of line compared with most of the country. This is true because of the constantly abnormal increase of the population in this mecca for the sunshine-seeking and the elderly. However, in recent months, the out-of-line Los Angeles figures are more than usually out of line, to an extent which indicates that more than geography is at work.

The following table is compiled from statistics released by the Research Department of the California State Employment Service in Los Angeles. The figures, which are for Los Angeles County, include Ventura and Santa Barbara. No statistics are prepared for the city of Los Angeles proper. The figures for the civilian labor force include the employable adult population, minus those in the armed services.

	Civilian Labor Force	Unemployed	Percentage
January, 1948	1,735,650	132,000	7.6
March, 1948	1,735,650	147,000	8.4
January, 1949	1,788,050	170,000	9.5
February, 1949	1,788,050	185,000	10.4

Thus current unemployment in the Los Angeles area, which now stands at over 10 per cent of the civilian labor force, is about two per cent higher than last year. In a large population center like Los Angeles County, two per cent is no mean figure, but represents an increase of 35,761 persons out of work, while behind most of these stand families deprived of the earnings of the breadwinner. High unemployment is chronic here, but it is higher now than usual. While not catastrophic, the current figures are a danger signal.

Philadelphia UE Locals Consider Program to Meet Unemployment

PHILADELPHIA, Mar. 20—Unemployment in the last several months has cut deeply into the ranks of the United Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers, CIO, in the Philadelphia area. This weakening of union strength is quite critical, coming as it does on the eve of negotiations for fourth round increases with Westinghouse, General Electric, the Radio Corporation of America and many smaller shops.

In an effort to meet the emergency before it has broken with full force, members of Local 107 at the Westinghouse plant voted today to demand a 30-hour work week with no reduction in take-home pay. The District 1 Council is developing a policy for the area.

According to the UE District No. 1 Bulletin of March 15, the District Executive Board recently set up the following unemployed program:

- 1—To call a meeting of business agents and presidents to discuss the layoffs in their shops and adopt a program of action on the unemployed.
- 2—The district to ask the Philadelphia CIO Council to call a special meeting of the affiliated locals to adopt a progressive unemployed program.
- 3—UE District 1 to contact UE District 6 to work out plans for a coordinated state program for UE members and to interest the State CIO Council in building up a state-wide unemployment program.
- 4—To contact all locals to get a definite figure on layoffs in each local.
- 5—To make an all-out drive to increase unemployment compensation and at the same time to work against unemployment on a constructive and economic basis.

REPORT THE FIGURES

The business agents' and presidents' meeting which was held on March 10,

went on record for an intensive drive to arrange assistance for the unemployed members and to carry out a drive to increase wages and thus maintain consumer purchasing power. At this meeting the following report was made on unemployment figures:

- In a quick survey of shops representing about 30,600 workers in which layoffs have been most severe, approximately 6,800 have been laid off since November. In addition to this, many shops report further expected layoffs in the next few weeks.
- Results of layoffs in some UE shops in this district show the following:
 - 101, Philco—Almost 2,000 out of 7,400 since the first of the year.
 - 102, Philco—(Refrigeration)—600 to 700 layoffs since first of year.
 - 103, RCA, Camden—About 1,000 laid off in past three months.
 - 110, C & D Battery, Conshohocken—About 25 per cent out of 90 people since first of year.
 - 113, Exide Battery—About 250 since January in Crescentville plant.
 - 118, Philadelphia Insulated Wire—53 out of about 250—lowest in Eight years.
 - 123, Globe Battery—Laid off 23 or 25 per cent of working force; rest on three-day week.
 - 136, Proctor Electric—Down to 800 from a peak of 1,600 in 1948.
 - 140, Struthers-Dunn—Lost 120 or 35 per cent since August, 1948.
 - 135, Lykens, Pa.—Down from 280 to 140.
 - 125, GE, Scranton—Shut down plants plant, laying off about 120 people, or 35 per cent of the local.
 - 155, Philadelphia jobbing shops—400 to 500 layoffs in January and February, with 1,200 to 1,500 working short work week.
 - 134, Camden (misc.)—Down from 1,200 to 600.

New York Labor Action Forum:

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Winter-Spring 1949

All lectures begin at 8:00 o'clock

- April 3
GUNTHER REIMANN
"Russian Policies in Germany."
- April 17
ALFRED KAZIN and IRVING HOWE
"Two Novelists and Their Times: Melville and Hawthorne."
- April 24
ISAAC ROSENFELD
"War and the Novelist."
- May 1
MAX SHACHTMAN
"The Growing International Crisis."

TIME: Sunday Evenings at 8:00 o'clock
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Readers of Labor Action Take the Floor...

Protests Protest On "Oliver Twist"

Editor:

LABOR ACTION of February 28 has prominently displayed on its back page an item headed, in bold type, "PROTEST 'OLIVER TWIST'." A glance at the very first line of the article, which refers to "the anti-Semitic film 'Oliver Twist,'" tends to confirm the reader in the belief that LABOR ACTION is not merely reporting the demonstration by DPs in Berlin, but is calling upon its readers to boycott this British film—and perhaps Charles Dickens as well!

I am afraid that this is precisely the impression that many of your readers will get, although I do not believe it is exactly what LABOR ACTION intends to convey. The article actually concerns the new growth of anti-Semitism in England and in Germany, and the suspected anti-Semitic motives of British Labor Party authorities in taking the film to Germany and in suppressing the riot of DPs that resulted.

Speculation as to the motives of the responsible British authorities remains—speculation. It must be pointed out, however, that, in the first place, the current crisis in the British film industry leaves very few first-class films suitable for exhibition in Germany. "Oliver Twist," the film version of a great English novel, is an entirely logical choice for this purpose.

The reaction of the Berlin DPs to the picture (or rather, to the single character of Fagin in the picture), is understandable. But not every outburst of this kind is necessarily to be defended; and I am not sure that the British authorities could be expected to foresee what would happen.

As for the manner in which the riot was suppressed, I do not know the facts, and cannot express an opinion. The presence of Nazi elements on the German police force is to be expected. But it is possible that the provocation of the film was surpassed by the provocation of the riot.

The last paragraph of the LABOR ACTION article contains the belated admission that the film is not definitely known to be anti-Semitic. This admission is curiously phrased: "Whether 'Oliver Twist' is or is not anti-Semitic (we have not seen the picture, of course) is, by this time, not merely an objective question but has become a symbol of this vicious racial disease." It seems to me that LABOR ACTION is going off half-cocked. Such a crude attempt to reduce everything to a matter of ideology is unhappily reminiscent of the "proletarian" criticism of the early thirties.

I have not seen "Oliver Twist," either. But, though LABOR ACTION may not be interested in whether the picture is actually anti-Semitic or not, I AM interested. Reports on the Berlin disturbances did not suggest that there was anything anti-Semitic in the film beyond the supposedly "anti-Semitic" character of Fagin. But I have never heard it seriously maintained that there were no Fagins in the England of Charles Dickens.

In "Oliver Twist," Fagin is overshadowed in evil by Bill Sikes. For

one Jewish scoundrel, there are a hundred Gentile scoundrels in the novels of Dickens. According to Ernest Boyd, Dickens was careful enough of the feelings of his Jewish readers to balance the evil Fagin of "Oliver Twist" with the good Aaron of his later novel "Our Mutual Friend."

It should not be forgotten that the main theme of Charles Dickens was social injustice. He was often bogged down in whimsicality and sentiment; but he always returned to his theme of the grinding poverty of the English working class of his day. He considered himself a social reformer; and his novel "Hard Times" was attacked by Victorian critics as "sullen socialism."

Previous English film versions of Dickens' novels have been, as I remember, faithful to their originals. If this is the case with "Oliver Twist," should the British be criticized for giving the German people the opportunity of seeing a realistic portrayal of the dark side of Victorian England? Or should the character of Fagin have been eliminated in the film version and an acceptable Anglo-Saxon scoundrel substituted, so that the picture could be properly passed by the "established three-power censorship reviewing board" which LABOR ACTION for some reason seems to champion? In that way, the "previous protests in England and in the U. S." which LABOR ACTION appears to endorse, would have been, no doubt, complied with. These "previous protests" could hardly have been concerned with the question of exhibiting the film in Germany. They were demands for the suppression of the film EVERYWHERE—the row raised in Canada being an example. And on the basis of that example, I should say the "previous protests" fully deserved to be ignored.

The English weekly New Statesman and Nation (a magazine of "left" tendency) reviews this film in its issue of July 3, 1948. There is nowhere in the review even a hint that anything anti-Semitic can be found in the picture. The reviewer remarks that the "grim background has been beautifully caught" and that Fagin is "a masterly representation." With reference to the scenes involving Fagin, the reviewer says he "...cannot imagine these scenes being better, or indeed now, otherwise done."

A clear-cut position with respect to what happened in Berlin is hardly possible. But I hope that LABOR ACTION will think better of its dubious endorsement of "previous protests," and will be the first to speak out against any attempt on the part of any group to boycott the film in America and to impose a censorship of the most stupid variety, assuming the film to be an accurate version of the novel.

While in the full flood of criticism, let me suggest another way in which the February 28 issue of LABOR ACTION could have been improved: the installment of Falk and Maxwell's endless diatribe against the leadership of the YPSL should have been cut by two-thirds. This discussion is of intense interest to about a dozen readers of LABOR ACTION. The rest (I hope) find the clumsy sarcasm and nagging tone of this political trivia an entirely incongruous note in LA-

BOR ACTION. This is the sort of polemic that makes a far worse impression than the mere muddle-headedness of the YPSL leadership. If Falk and Maxwell must brood over the way bolshevism has been slandered, do they have to do it publicly?

Fraternally,

H. D. COLEMAN

St. Louis, March 7

In the article to which Comrade Coleman refers we did not call for a boycott of the film when and if it is shown in this country. We did uphold the protest and boycott movement in Germany. It is unlikely, precisely because we understand the evil of censorship in any form, that we would call for a boycott of the film here. It is not, however, excluded that we would participate in a protest movement if, when shown here, the film proves itself to be as described. Certainly, to show the film in Germany, where millions (Jew and non-Jew alike) suffered the savagery of racialism, was a piece of unmitigated gall—to put it mildly.

We share Comrade Coleman's admiration for the classics of literature. But we do not think that they ought to be used to rub salt into the still bleeding wounds of millions to whom anti-Semitic caricatures are a painful memory.

We oppose the censorship of art, and we hold the rights of an artist to be inviolate. But the feelings of a people who have reason to be outraged are equally inviolate, if not more so.

That Comrade Coleman should write: "it is possible that the provocation of the film was surpassed by the provocation of the riot" is truly astounding. It is perhaps testimony to his dispassionate objectivity. We hope few people share it. For even did we object to the protest, we could not possibly equalize the rage of the victims of anti-Semitism with the clubs of cops defending "artistic freedom" (and the property of the movie house owner, and the profits of the film's producers).

We have read "Oliver Twist," and we think it a book people ought to read. We have also read several accounts of the film, notably by Albert Deutsch in the New York Post, from which we gather that the film makers exceeded the requirements of accurate and artistic reproduction. In the book, Fagin is one of a series of tribulations which Oliver Twist encounters on his dismal journey. He is not the main character of the book. It would seem, according to all reports, that he IS the dominant character of the film, if only by the forcefulness of the actor who plays the part. Was it necessary to dress Fagin in the long Jewish "caftan," the round hat, as he is dressed in the film? Was it necessary to out-Streicher an anti-Semitic Streicher caricature, as the film, apparently does, according to Deutsch?

We suggest that Comrade Coleman ponder over the effect of such a caricature (and one so forcefully projected that all those who have seen the film agree it makes the other characters pale in comparison) on those

who not long ago felt the effects of Streicher's work.

There were no doubt Jewish Fagins. There are no doubt Negro criminals. Yet we object (and we are sure that Comrade Coleman does too, along with every enemy of Jim Crow) when the gutter press shrieks that so and so, a NEGRO, committed a crime.

Bill Sykes is as evil as Fagin in "Oliver Twist" (though apparently not played as impressively). But who will say that Sykes proves the British are all crooks? Unfortunately, that has been said about Jews, as it has been said about Negroes—by those susceptible to the irrationality of anti-Semitism, as by those susceptible to the irrationality of Jim Crow. We would thus object as vigorously to a film which portrayed a Negro as a leering, maniacal rapist. We would not object to seeing a white man depicted as a rapist. It is as simple as that.

If the film could not "otherwise (have been) done," then we think the doing (and the showing) should have waited for another, more propitious time—whether boycott and protest are or are not legitimate.

Our final comment is that the British showed, at the very least, extreme stupidity in showing this film in Germany. Linked with other actions of the British government in matters concerning the Jews, it has a lousy smell. Is that mild enough for Comrade Coleman's taste?

With respect to the last point, Comrade Falk received a letter of complaint from Virgil Vogel. Otherwise the reaction has been uniformly laudatory—and effective. We think it a good job.—Ed.

No, Not Abuse, Just Indignation

Editor:

William Mishkin in your issue of March 7 believes he has found a contradiction in my published remarks which indicates "flexibility" on my part. The basis of his belief is the fact that I wrote in the Fall, 1945, issue of Enquiry magazine a statement that Gustav Noske ordered the slaughter of the German Spartacists, whereas in LABOR ACTION I stated that there is no evidence that the Social-Democratic leaders ordered or wanted the specific murder of Liebknecht and Luxemburg.

The source of Mishkin's confusion is readily apparent. He confounds the order for repression of the Spartacist demonstrators with the order for the personal assassination of the two principal leaders. The same error was made in LABOR ACTION's rather scathing reply to me on February 14. Indeed, Noske ordered the Luttwitz detachment to attack the Spartacists and ordered the arrest of the leaders. But I still see no proof that the Social Democrats ordered that they be murdered, or that the leadership as a group wanted it. They must have known that this would do serious injury to their prestige among the workers.

However, I do not state positively that the Social-Democratic leaders did NOT have a connection with the killing, or that Moscow DID have. Whatever the answer is, I am fully

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Editorials

Housing

Last month Walter Reuther, auto workers' president, came out with a proposal for a housing program, submitted by him to President Truman on behalf of the CIO Housing Committee. It is, in brief, a scheme for a large-scale conversion of unused aircraft-production capacity into the production of pre-fabricated housing. We have not yet seen the text of the program itself, but summaries and excerpts published in the *United Automobile Worker* permit a number of provisional comments.

In the first place, the fact that the CIO comes before the people with its own program for abolishing the scandal of the housing situation is itself a valuable thing for the labor movement. It is the recognition of the responsibility of the labor movement, as the leading force for progressive change, to concern itself not only with the wages and working conditions of its members but with the solution of the problems of all the people.

In the second place, the idea of an integrated nation-wide program to produce modern pre-fab houses with the capacity now lying idle strikes us as more than an excellent idea. It is not new, of course—housing experts have put it forward before this—but it helps to underline the fact that this country has the technological capacity to produce plenty for all; and that poverty, like slums and sub-standard homes, exists only because it is not profitable for the capitalist class to produce what can be produced and what the people need.

As we mentioned, the basic idea of combining the need for housing with unused industrial capacity has been proposed before. But it should be the special responsibility of the labor movement (if not of the housing experts) to concern itself with HOW and FOR WHOM this combination is to be made. Is it to be channeled through the real-estate sharks or made available to the people by the government? Is the emphasis to be on low-rent housing developments for low-income rent-payers, or on homes-for-sale to better-paid workers and upper middle-class incomes? And so on.

On these and similar questions which should be the special concern of labor, the summaries and excerpts we have seen shed little light, and judgment on this phase has to be reserved. But a CIO news release about the proposal says flatly:

"At all times the government would stress the participation of private enterprise, which would be encouraged to operate both the manufacturing and distribution ends itself. This would be done through long-range, low-interest federal loans. Where private industry refuses to accept the responsibility, the government would operate the manufacturing facilities."

Why? Why should the government merely limit itself to subsidizing and guaranteeing the risks of "private enterprise" especially in this field? This "private enterprise" to which Reuther assigns the manufacturing and distribution is not anonymous—it is the very same construction and real-estate interests who (the program emphasizes) have so consistently placed profit and rent-gouging above and against the needs of housing and unsheltered people.

We are aware of the fact that the NAM raises the roof at any mention of "socialized housing" (as THEY call it)—that is, at any proposal that the government do the job which "private interest" has shown no interest in doing except as a gouging operation—but since when has Reuther accepted this point of view? Even if he is merely interested in proving that he is not a wild-eyed radical, it strikes us as an unnecessary length for a self-confessed liberal.

There are a number of other questions about the form of the housing program which ought to be raised from labor's point of view, and which it will be easier to discuss with the details of the program before us. But there is another aspect which demands immediate attention.

We have discussed it so far purely as a housing program. We are enthusiastically for a program along those lines, with the improvements indicated. But the fact is that Reuther, the UAW and the CIO do not present it purely as a housing program. With blatant insistence they present it equally as a housing program and as a program for war preparation.

The angle here (in the published material it takes up as much space and emphasis as the housing aspects) is that a pre-fab housing industry using aircraft capacity would build up a plant which could be instantly converted to the production of planes whenever necessary. The program calls for the production of fewer planes now—on the ground that they immediately become obsolete anyway—and concentration on building up maximum capacity for plane production through convertible house-fabrication plant.

This may or may not be smart from the point of view of war preparation—let those responsible for carrying on the "cold war" decide that for themselves. BUT SINCE WHEN IS IT THE JOB OF LABOR TO TIE ITS DEMANDS FOR HOUSING AND A DECENT LIFE TO THE NEEDS OF THE WAR MACHINE?

And that is exactly what the Reuther program does. The excerpts as printed by the *United Automobile Worker* start off as follows:

"Military defense is imperative. Power to resist attack and carry a war, once it is started, to the enemy's homeland, is the only language understood by aggressor nations. Yet democracy must speak another language as well." And this is how the need for housing is introduced.

The excerpts tell us: "Such a program is possible. . . Its elements emerge from an examination of two urgent current needs: America's need for planes, and its need for homes. . ."

"Through such a program, this nation can meet the threat of war without neglecting the continuing imperative of peace [i. e., war preparation—naturally, naturally, to "preserve peace"]. The deepest practicality of the planes-and-homes

plan is that it does not throw peace overboard." And lots more of the same.

Now we don't know when or at what convention either the UAW or the CIO came out in favor of a bigger and better armaments program, such as is boasted here, or when either organization or its membership were asked to express themselves on it. But let us try to overlook (just for the sake of argument) the echoes of jingoism which run rampant in this "planes-and-homes plan" which started out in life as a housing program. Let us also grant Reuther's right as a free American citizen to whip up a military-preparedness spirit and even (if he so desires) yell for a quadrupled atom-bomb capacity through manufacturing radium-dial watches at Oak Ridge and Hanford.

But, from the point of view of labor, we deny his right as a trade-union leader to make the satisfaction of the working people's housing needs dependent on the effectuation of a war program. Dependent on it! That is the point we are interested in here.

For that is just what Reuther's program does. It argues—not incidentally, not in passing, but as its major point—that the program is a good one and should be acceptable to the powers-that-be because it does not get in the way of war preparation. He tells his members that they can fight for housing with a free conscience because it does not interfere with war preparation.

Maybe that's so in this case and right now. But what happens in some other case, or two years or four years from now, if a desperate need of the people cannot be fulfilled by this social system in order to grease the wheels of war? The U. S. is wealthy, but its wealth is decidedly limited. Any well-intentioned liberal who thinks there is no possibility of conflict between the needs of global war and war preparation (including the arming of the rest of the world) and the domestic interests of the people, is simply living in a fool's paradise.

Reuther is telling his members: We must indeed, no doubt, fight for what we need and want and must have, but this fight has to be subordinated to the ever-hungrier needs of the cold war. And along these lines the labor movement heads for suicide.

All this doesn't affect our opinion of the housing program as such. That's a separate question. But the jingoistic wrapper in which it comes packaged is bad business—for labor.

Who Won? - -

(Continued from page 1)

Republicans alone would not have had. Through the seniority system they are in actual control of most of the major committees in both houses. This places them in a position to sabotage and delay legislation.

By contrast the liberal group of the Democratic Party is in disarray. It feels frustrated and futile, unable to assert itself. Reports from Washington indicate considerable dismay among the ADAs. They are the juniors in the hierarchical machinery. Their electoral majorities mean nothing inside the Democratic Party, where tradition and seniority and connections are decisive.

The liberals complain bitterly that they are not being given leadership. Senator Humphries complains that Scott Lucas seems unable to marshal his forces and that the White House does not provide sufficient initiative on which to act. Truman goes off to Florida to sunbathe and fish. He does nothing to undermine his supposed enemies at the very moment they are tearing up his election program.

There is a reason for this administration weakness. This weakness is not only that the control of congressional machinery remains in the hands of the conservative elements of the Democratic Party and its Dixiecrat wing. It is not only that the Democratic Party is not a vehicle for liberal action. For while Truman won the election on his domestic program, the chief interest of his administration is in foreign affairs. No matter what defeats he takes on his domestic proposals, Truman must maintain bipartisan unity with the Republicans and the entire conservative wing in order to put through the crucial international program—the North Atlantic Pact, arming of Western Europe, new appropriations for the second year of ERP and the Truman Doctrine.

This is the main reason for the ineffectuality of the administration. It is committed to an aggressive imperialist program. It is busy building an American fortress in Europe. The needs of this program undermine and conflict with the domestic promise of pre-election days.

The liberals may chafe at the bit, but Truman knows he has nothing to fear from that quarter. For the moment his imperialist policies come to the foreground they will, with regret and sadness to be sure, fall into line together with their congressional enemies of yesterday.

From the congressional disasters of last week, one fact emerges with glaring clarity. The Democratic Party is not and CANNOT be an effective means for the satisfaction of labor's most pressing needs. All the energies of PAC, the AFL and the railroad brotherhoods can elect representatives. But so long as they remain committed to the Democratic Party, they also remain beyond labor's control. Their primary function is to carry out the program of the American ruling class.

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WORLD POLITICS

(Continued from page 1)

ity and quality of the essential raw materials, food and machinery still needed by Europe shall be added to this billion dollars. We will oppose the forthcoming presidential bill for European rearmament and support instead, any move to divert it into non-military, economic aid.

(2) Secondly, American policy is no longer that of an external force which intervenes in European affairs at moments chosen by it. America now becomes an organic and integral part of Western Europe as a whole; the most important member of the Western European community, in fact! Just as the economic consequences of the Marshall program meant the intermingling of European and American responsibility and leadership for rearmament, military organization and leadership of this area. Who doubts that America will determine strategy, the importance of Russian counter-American actions, etc.? It is not merely the fact that traditional isolationism is dead and buried (that has long since occurred). The fact is that even so-called "neutrality" doctrine is cast aside and a most openly interventionist and, in fact, decisive role is deliberately undertaken. When and if World War III comes, is it not obvious that America will be involved in it, in a leading capacity, from the very first day—no, from the first minute!

LEGAL COVER FOR "COLD WAR"

(3) The European rearmament program about to be undertaken does not mean that millions of men are about to be drafted, organized, trained and equipped for an all-out attack on Stalinist Russia tomorrow. Such a program would take about ten years' time and would still be greatly handicapped by the weakness of the European economies. A more limited objective is in mind—the internal strengthening of the nations involved by a bolstering of their home forces and divisions against any possible Stalinist actions. There is

no real fear that Russian troops will march today or next year. The central governments of France and Italy must first be strengthened to crush any Stalinist adventures within those countries.

(4) In this respect, it is significant that Acheson has laid down the principle, in his interpretation of the pact, that "a revolutionary activity inspired, armed, directed from the outside" (and this holds true of all Stalinist actions) would be considered an armed attack on a nation and therefore, under the pact, terms, intervention would be permissible. The current civil war in Greece, of course, is an example of what he had in mind. In other words, America considers itself justified and ready to intervene in any civil strife involving Western Europe under the pretext (alleged or real) of "outside direction." Quite a different principle from the FDR "non-intervention" policy in the Spanish civil war, and indicative of how far American imperialism has gone in recent years.

In summary, then, the North Atlantic Pact must be considered as a kind of constitutional and legal document covering the terms and formalities of the present "cold war" between the two great world power blocs. It defines the arena of conflict, the opponents and their allies involved, the terms under which today's "peace" will remain "peaceful" (that is, a line has been drawn beyond which Russian imperialism is advised not to advance—the Berlin airlift is that line), and the circumstances under which war will come.

In this respect, all of us now know all facts we ever need know. Antagonists, motivations, intentions—all are clearly before us. The trend is clear and its meaning is obvious: war on an international scale between Russia and America within five to ten years. Let us hope that the reaction of people everywhere will be more intelligent and not half as scurrilous as the shameful endorsement given to the pact by the top council of the American CIO.

Congress Rent-Gouge Bill - -

(Continued from page 1)

merly with several workers now have only one, family take-home pay is in too many cases greatly reduced. But the Senate Banking and Currency Committee, perhaps because it is used to dealing with large figures unknown to working people, considers a ten-percent boost not "any increase" at all.

This Senate committee wants credit for taking better care of the tenants than the House did. The House passed a bill, a couple of weeks ago, eliminating the fifteen-percent "voluntary" boosts but allowing landlords "a reasonable return on reasonable property values." This provision in the House bill would undoubtedly put tenants in the landlords' frying pan. However, to be put definitely into the fire by the Senate bill's ten-percent rent raise is no remedy.

TIME TO ACT

It is up to the people who cast their votes for the Democratic Party because it promised a two-year rent control extension, the elimination of the fifteen-percent "voluntary" increase, stronger eviction control and criminal penalties for landlords violating the controls, it is up to these people to demand now—without loss of time because there is no time to lose—that the politicians make good their promises. The Senate as a body this week acts on the bill submitted to it. Then Senate and House joint committee will meet to compromise their differences. Right now is when the unions, tenant and consumer groups, still have a chance to influence the outcome by mass demonstrations and protest.

Up to this point the three-million-dollar real estate and landlord lobby has, in effect, been writing the bills. Senator Sparkman, Democrat of Alabama, chairman of the subcommittee that worked on the bill, without batting an eyelash, stated that the committee adopted the ten-percent increase clause because "of a general feeling that landlords were entitled to a greater return to meet the increasing costs of living and operation." His committee claimed that it had been unable to obtain accurate information on landlords' "net operating position"—although it called this information the key to whether raises were justified. But "owing to the many complaints of real hardship on the part of landlords," the ten-percent boosts are to be imposed on tenants.

Why didn't the committee get information on the "net operating position" of landlords, another way of saying profits? At the end of 1946 it was known that the gross operating income of large and small apartment house owners averaged over thirty-five percent over 1939. It is also known that while costs rose for landlords as for everyone else, they cut down their expenses drastically by giving less service of every kind, less heat, less elevator service, less porter service, less painting and repairing. So that, as Senator Paul Douglas who opposed the Senate committee bill pointed out: "The net income position of landlords has been improved to a much greater degree than you would think from the figures on gross rents."

DECONTROL, TOO

Today, the landlords as a group benefit from the price recession much more than do the tenants as a group. For example, fuel oil, a big item, is down considerably in price, and other items can be mentioned. The trumpeted-up "hardships" of the landlords weigh heavier in the scale of values of the capitalist politicians than do the real

battle of the working people to maintain a decent standard of living.

While the clauses in the proposed laws to raise rent arouse the greatest indignation, these are not the only features that must be defeated. While the House bill provides for a fifteen-month extension of so-called rent control and the bill before the Senate calls for twelve months with a three-month period of grace to prepare for de-control, there are other sections in both bills that spell the earlier end of federal control.

The House bill, which would immediately take one hundred rental areas out of control, also would permit any city, county or state to take itself out of federal control. The bill before the Senate would empower any State legislature to do likewise. If either of these bills is permitted to become law, the landlords would have a field day. Their local lobbies would get busy; local governments would begin to see good reasons for getting out from under federal rent control.

Drew Pearson reported over the air that he attempted to find out from mayors and governors throughout the country their opinion on the need of federal control. Unanimously, from California, Michigan, Massachusetts, Maryland and elsewhere, word came back to him that chaos would follow the lifting of federal control, that the housing and rent situation is almost as bad as three years ago, that it is a matter for federal, not local handling.

This same Senate Banking Committee, which wrote a clause for the chaotic end of federal control by local action, though you may not believe it, said that the removal of rent controls now would increase rents twenty-five to one hundred per cent and "perhaps touch off strikes and a new wage-price spiral." Apparently, the committee was addressing itself to those staunchest supporters of the real estate lobby in the Senate, who

Douglas - -

(Continued from page 1)

viety may swing back as a boomerang."

GREAT DILEMMA

To this LABOR ACTION says "Amen." But the second editorial describes the "Great Dilemma" of the Negro people: "It is clear that neither the Democratic nor Republican Party can be trusted to enact federal legislation for the benefit and protection of Negroes."

After expanding on this theme, the editorial concludes: "In national elections Negroes are orphans of the political storm raging about them, and neither the Democratic nor Republican Party is a safe haven. There is talk of Walter Reuther and other labor chiefs establishing a Labor Party which would eventually break up the Democratic solidarity of the South. Maybe this will, in time, offer an alternative from the 'great dilemma' now facing the Negro people."

We see in these brief quotations the essence of a growing correct appraisal of the way out for Negroes, labor and progressive people in general. "No illusions" plus "Labor Party." We of LABOR ACTION will continue to put forward our ideas and exert our energies consistently along this line. We are wondering what next steps those militant labor forces behind UAW-CIO President Walter Reuther, who in January himself became a member of the National Board of Directors of the NAACP, will take to meet the civil rights crisis.

want rent control to end immediately without any camouflage. Does the committee really think that the workers will take everything less than a twenty-five percent rent increase lying down? Does the committee think that the workers will accept a ten-percent boost in this major item of living expenses—and turn the other cheek?

ALL-TIME LESSON

Another thing the people should know is that the bill before the Senate retains the clauses of the existing law which permit landlords to claim "hardship" and "comparability" increases. How many tenants have been victims of these landlord-loving provisions! The CIO reports that by virtue of the "comparability" clause rents in company houses in localities in Massachusetts have been boosted up to one hundred forty percent, and in Alabama, up to three hundred twenty percent. It also reports that often in collective bargaining, companies owning their workers' homes have, at the bargaining table, threatened to raise rents.

These are the things the workers thought would be ended if they voted for Truman, the Democratic Party and its vaunted program. There is still time for the workers to remind the majority party of its campaign promises, by intervening to prevent the passage of these tenant-squeezing laws.

And for an all-time lesson, let the working people learn from what the Democratic and Republican politicians are doing that the formation of an independent class party, a class party of their own, can no longer be deferred.

Why Waste Tears On the Landlords?

Editor:

There is little need to shed too many tears for the poor landlords and their mounting costs. As nearly everyone knows, landlords' costs are pretty stationary, being chiefly interest and amortization, which are fixed as a rule by long-term mortgages. Taxes have not risen very much and services and repairs as everyone knows are at a minimum.

Following is a duplication of a real estate ad taken from a Sunday New York Times issue of last November:

BUILDER MUST SELL AT ONCE NEEDS CASH!
JUST COMPLETED 16 unit building. Beautifully landscaped. MASONRY CONSTRUCTION; large plot of ground. BEAUTIFULLY FURNISHED. In finest section, two blocks to main street. Estimated yearly rents \$36,000; cash required \$45,000; price \$97,500; approximately \$30,000 profit. Less than three times the estimated rent. Good terms to RESPONSIBLE BUYER!

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Sidney Hook: HIS NEW FRIENDS IN THE VATICAN?

By R. FAHAN

About four years ago, the present writer was a silent bystander at an informal discussion between Sidney Hook and Max Shachtman. The subject under discussion was the war question. At the time Hook was expressing himself very strongly on the subject of the threat to intellectual liberties represented by the Catholic Church; he had acquired a considerable reputation as a polemist against Catholic spokesmen.

In a turn of the conversation that seemed at the time an almost deliberate attempt to shock, Shachtman said that, despite Hook's many polemics against the Thomists and other reactionary Catholic philosophers, Hook would before the end of a decade find himself a political partner of the Catholics. Hook laughed away the remark, saying it was a typical Trotskyist exaggeration—how could anyone conceive of him, an ex-Trotskyist, a pragmatist, a violent opponent of all forms of mysticism and irrationalism, making a political alignment with the Vatican? Impossible.

But Shachtman persisted. Hook, he said, had abandoned a primary concept of independent revolutionary socialism: the concept that socialists could not become apologists for or defenders of an imperialist government, in either peace or war. He had further abandoned the idea, at least in practice, that a working-class socialist movement alone could bring peace to the world. Having aligned himself with Western capitalism against the Stalinist world, Hook would soon realize—continued Shachtman—that he had few reliable allies. The bourgeois governments would show themselves notoriously inept in political strategy against the Stalinists; the Social Democrats could not be taken seriously except when it came to handing out cabinet posts; and what did that leave? Only the Catholic Church; the church would continue, from its point of view, opposition to Stalinism in Europe—even after politicians made their peace.

Consequently, concluded Shachtman, Hook and the others like him, having abandoned the perspective of independent socialism, would soon be forced to ally themselves, however regretfully, with the church.

Shachtman erred, as Marxists are prone to err, in his timing. He gave Hook ten years. He could have cut his estimate in half.

HOOK'S NEW REVELATION

For while his prediction has not been fully proved—not, at least, as yet—there is already enough evidence to show that he knew whereof he spoke.

In an article in the *March Partisan Review*, Sidney Hook reports on a philosophers' congress in Europe, which he attended. The article is interesting for Hook's usual lucid and intelligent presentation of the behavior of Stalinist intellectuals, in this case philosophers. A struggle broke out at this conference between philosophers of the East and West. The latter introduced a resolution in defense of freedom of thought.

Writes Hook: "One of the most dramatic moments in the discussion was the impassioned speech of the Catholic philosopher and logician, Father Bochenski of Switzerland, in support of the resolution. It followed hard upon the eloquent remarks of Professor Frontzini, the philosophical exile from Argentina, who urged the meeting to adopt the resolution because in his country no philosopher could hold a university post who did not subscribe to the Thomist philosophy. To my surprise I discovered that some of the clerical philosophers at the Congress, deriving from orders not conspicuous for their defense of philosophical freedom in previous centuries, were among the strongest advocates of the resolution. Indeed, throughout the Congress, on every issue which involved intellectual and political freedom, these philosophical priests lined up solidly with the democratic forces. One sensed that their experience in the various resistance movements combined with their defensive position on the Continent, so different from their position in the United States, had produced a new awareness of the dangers of authoritarian institutional controls to the integrity of the philosophical life."

(My emphasis—R. F.)

On this quotation, a few remarks:

(1) The italicized phrase "in previous centuries" is precious. It can only imply that while the Catholic orders were not conspicuous for their defense of freedom for the first 19 centuries of Christendom, something different has been the case for the 20th century. Please specify, Professor Hook, not merely with evidence that Catholics voted for certain resolutions but with evidence of how they behave in the countries where they have either state or educational power.

(2) Were there, perhaps, any Spanish "philosophical priests" voting together with Hook's "democratic forces"? Has the "new awareness of the danger of authoritarian institutional controls" spread south of the Pyrenees? Why not? Or is Hook forming an intellectual bloc only with the Swiss Catholics?

(3) Does this, then, mean that Hook has discovered a break in the totalitarian structure of Catholicism? Has he discovered what might be called Swiss exceptionalism?

(4) What consequences in practice—what, if you please, operational consequences—will follow from the "new awareness" which he haills? Will the Catholics permit free secular education in Italy and France? Will they tell their dictator friends in Spain and Portugal to restore political freedom? Or will they merely read Hook's article and have themselves a few laughs?

To show that this is no temporary aberration, Hook has simultaneously published the article in the *N. Y. Times* which I discussed in these columns two weeks ago. That article is about the firing of the professors from the University of Washington. In it, he rejects the argument that Catholicism can be compared with Stalinism with regard to intellectual freedom on the campus.

Now we are quite aware of the differences between Catholicism and Stalinism. It is also true, as Hook says, that the Catholic Church does not exert the kind of organizational control over its followers that the CP does over its members. But the intellectual discipline of the church is at least as rigid as that of the CP. A teacher who belongs to the church with genuine fervor will be as firm about birth control, say, as a teacher who belongs to the CP will be firm about Russian foreign policy. It may be argued that the former is not as important a subject as the latter; perhaps. But Hook's exonerating of the Catholic discipline is something else again.

One of these articles might be passed by as an accident. But two of them? Where are you going, Sidney Hook? Why such haste in fulfilling Shachtman's prediction?

Shadow of Unemployment Looms Across Nation

Chicago: The "Small Pool of Labor" Makes Bosses Happy

By JACK RANGER

CHICAGO, Mar. 10—In the two-month period from November 15, 1948, to January 15, 1949, unemployment in Illinois leaped sharply upward, from 101,000 to 175,000, Samuel C. Bernstein, Illinois commissioner of unemployment compensation, announced. Unemployment has continued to rise each week since, by an estimated 5,000 weekly.

Young war veterans and Negroes have been particularly hard hit. Of the 137,337 claimants for unemployment compensation in Illinois the week of February 5, there were 32,262 veterans of the recent war. Of those filing in December in the Chicago-Calumet area, 37 per cent were "non-white," the governmental lingo for Negro. By March 1, according to one colored spokesman, more than 48,000 colored workers had registered for unemployment benefits at the office on South Parkway, heart of the Chicago black belt.

"For the first time in more than three years, machinists, engine lathe operators, tool and die makers, auto mechanics and other highly skilled workers were laid off in significant numbers and were not immediately able to locate new employment," Frank Anunzio, state director of labor, announced.

Future Looks Dim

The growing boom in unemployment in Illinois is further complicated by the entry of an estimated 20,000 high school and college graduates into the labor market in February, these, not having been hitherto employed, are not counted in the jobs totals.

The Anunzio report for the Chicago area asserted that "reductions

in consumer demand were principally responsible for the 20,000 decline (in jobs) in manufacturing plants. Hardest hit by the slight business recession were four light metal industries which experienced losses totalling 11,000—electrical machinery, fabricated metal products, non-electrical machinery," etc.

Government officials do not assert, as do some columnists, that the unemployment situation here is "seasonal." "Unexpected employment declines were noted which went beyond the normal seasonal volume, resulting in sharper reductions than anticipated," they said.

The total increase in unemployment in Illinois is about evenly divided between Chicago and downstate. State officials say that the drastic drop in jobs here "points to the fact that employers either have reached or are rapidly approaching peak employment and that future hiring will largely serve to replace diminishing turnover."

"Schedules of future employment requirements submitted by employers to the Illinois and Indiana employment services reveal that only a fraction of the workers laid off during November 15-January 15 will be rehired before May 15," Anunzio reports.

He said that a spot check of the employment situation indicated that many large employers were "holding off" on production and cutting down on hiring while waiting to see what would happen on the national and international scenes. Smaller employers, without the flexibility of big industry, were decreasing their employment because of a drop in orders, he said.

Parallel with the growth of unemployment has gone a drop in retail sales. A few days ago, both Sears, Roebuck and Montgomery Ward disclosed that national sales in February were substantially lower than in February, 1948. It was the second consecutive month in which both big mail order houses reported sales decreases. Sears' February sales were down 8.3 per cent from a year ago and Ward's sales were down 9.7 per cent. Retail sales nationally are reported running \$100,000,000 a month behind last year's volume.

More Begging

But the unemployment situation in Chicago is only faintly reflected in these bureaucratic statistics. To the average person, the picture reveals itself in more intimate ways. There has been a sharp increase in the number of beggars in the Chicago loop. For eight years now, begging has seldom been observed east of the river in the Loop. It has been confined to the "skid rows" of West Madison and State Street south of Van Buren. Now, every day, one is approached by beggars right in the Loop.

Employers and "liberals" with penetrating eyes can judge to a nicety that those begging are not hungry and are "just too lazy to work." The fact is, most of them look and sound desperate and plenty hungry and disgusted, too.

The bosses are licking their lips over the present situation. According to Austin Kiplinger, writing in the March 9 Chicago Journal of Commerce, "employers everywhere are using the business slack as a time for pruning out some deadwood, incompetents and 'floaters' in their labor forces."

Translated, this means, in a large number of cases, that the best union militants are being given the gate. "Employers are reporting that for the first time since before the war, they can be a little selective in their hiring," said Kiplinger. "It is not a case of taking anybody who offers himself for a job. With 3,221,000 unemployed in February . . . a small pool of labor exists."

There is nothing calculated to make an employer feel so smug and serene as "a small pool of labor" at the employment office.

Cleveland: 45? Too Old!

By JOE CLARK

CLEVELAND, Mar. 6—Cleveland industries have laid off more than 1200 workers during the past week. The Apex Electrical Mfg. Co. accounts for 200 of them (in addition to 800 others laid off there since last December). The Standard Tool Co. has laid off a total of 700, of which 550 were shop workers and 150 office employees. About 200 have been laid off at Eaton Mfg. Co. and Precision Castings Co. (which makes parts for Apex and other household appliance manufacturers) announced a layoff of 135.

State unemployment compensation claims in Cleveland totalled 17,120 during February; 3,231 more than in January, and 6,500 more than a year ago. The State Employment Service office now has 19,720 job applications on file and 1,100 positions waiting to

Danger—Capitalism at Work!

We present on this page, and on page 2, a series of reports in the unemployment situation in various sections of the country. Taken together, they give, we think, an accurate picture of what is generally true for the country as a whole. There is everywhere a rise in the number of unemployed, as measured by unemployment benefit claims, job statistics and other relevant data. More than that, they indicate a nationwide concern with the problem of joblessness which in many ways is more important, and more revealing, than the figures themselves.

Though the reports were for the most part deliberately limited to a presentation of the facts, they nevertheless reveal, in direct statement or implication, a developing FEAR of joblessness among workers which exceeds the actual unemployment statistics. Like war, the frightful consequences of unemployment are a permanent endowment of capitalism. The memory of its fearfulness was momentarily quashed during the lush war years. But it is now returning, despite the fact that employment is still near an all-time high, despite the fact that the lines of jobseekers are nowhere near resembling the desperate columns of the 1930s. However they generalize the idea in their thinking, those who must work for a living in order to live are AFRAID—afraid of capitalism, afraid of what it brings them in insecurity, afraid too of the high payment exacted for such "security" as is obtainable under capitalism.

Unemployment is incontestably a problem of growing severity in the country. Does it mean that we are on the eve of another crisis, paralleling the bitter years following the 1929 crash? No, we do not think so. Overall, the period ahead still promises to be one of relatively intense production, and high employment. But even that carries with it the direst implications, for it is a productive activity that is intimately related to the requirements of a war economy. Subtract the requirements of the war economy, and what remains? Only the dismal facts of our outdated economic system which cannot order production on a sane and rational basis.

What it boils down to is that capitalism can avoid the terrors of crisis only to the extent that it prepares for the greater terrors of war. Not a very cheering prospect.

The fissures that are already showing in the economic system (with the exhaustion of post-war consumer demands, etc.)—let us say through the greater number of claims for unemployment benefits—should indeed give one pause. That they do not yet mean utter collapse is small comfort. Three-four million in the economy of today does not mean economic disaster. It is even true that with the increase in unemployment there is, in some sectors, a simultaneous increase in employment, as is indicated in the report from St. Louis. But behind the cold figures stand so many individuals—"only three million"—to whom the issue is not a statistical one! How live on the unemployment benefits? And when these benefits are exhausted, will there be another job, and for how long? For the employed worker the figures also mean something considerably more than a statistical breakdown. Will he be next? Will it be like 1932 again?

The very fact that employment can be high while unemployment mounts illustrates the gravity of the problem. The labor force is growing. How will capitalism absorb these workers? Its productive capacity is enormous. Because it is motivated primarily by the drive for profits, and not to satisfy the needs of the people (for which an ever expanding productive machine would be necessary), it cannot order its work to accommodate all who are employable. Production is sustained in many essential ways by the demands of the cold war. What happens if these demands decline (productively) for a while, remain stationary? Very little to the well-heeled industrialist. Tragedy for millions—if "only" a few millions.

The situation we think clearly calls for serious thought. For one thing it raises such urgent matters as framing union demands that will cushion the tragedy of unemployment—a 30-hour week at 40 hours pay, higher unemployment benefits, and so forth. Beyond that necessity, it throws into sharp outline the miserable incompetence of a rotting capitalism which can stave off one disaster only by another (war). It poses the urgency of SOCIALISM which can order production and the utilization of labor according to the needs of humanity, not the greed of a handful of parasites.

New York City: "No Help Wanted"

NEW YORK, Mar. 7—The number of unemployed workers in this city has increased steadily for four months. The same trend is apparent in the metropolitan area of the city, which includes the industrial periphery of Jersey City, Newark, Yonkers. There are now about 250,000 people out of work in New York, and another 150,000 unemployed upstate.

These bare figures indicate the main trend. Layoffs which began before Christmas have continued and workers have not been rehired. One of the new characteristics of current unemployment is, for example, that from the reconversion layoffs of the immediate post-war period is the length of unemployment. Tens of thousands have drawn their full twenty-six weeks of benefits without getting new jobs. The state agencies do not have any to give and their pressure on workers to take jobs is not very great at this time for that reason. Even very poor jobs are scarce. Anyone who gets laid off must look forward to a long period out of work.

Wages Decline

One feature of employment itself is also becoming more marked and that is that workers who lose jobs find great difficulty getting new jobs at equivalent rates of pay. To change usually means a wage cut today. This is a kind of silent wage cutting process which affects unrecorded thousands but is evident from want ads and the many stories that are current. Wages are, definitely declining. In New York this is particularly easy because the vast white collar field, which is a basic form of employment here, is largely unorganized and job rates are therefore unprotected.

Lines at State Unemployment Benefit Offices have become intolerably long. These are the best barometer of the state of affairs. And for every job listing in the help wanted columns—hundreds of workers apply so that there too the lines have become enormous. While these are the more obvious features of current unemployment there are other less visible trends

which are equally ominous. The largest industry in the city is the garment trades. Very large numbers of these workers are on short work weeks—two- and three days a week. Since piecework predominates, shortage of work in the shops even on work days has severely cut workers' incomes.

The extremely conservative administrations in the ILGWU and the Amalgamated, two schools for "labor statesmen," have long established policies of "employer cooperation." They will do nothing to "endanger the position of the industry." This "statesmanship" has kept piecework rates and hourly rates at abysmal levels; 78 and 80 cents an hour are common. Since overtime is non-existent and, on the contrary, part-time work is becoming common, workers' incomes have plummeted downward.

Overshadowing these actual trends is the growing fear—the memory of past depressions, of insecurity and hunger. Since no one seems to know whether this unemployment forebodes a crisis, the fears are aggravated. One senses this everywhere. Union officials are becoming wary of working demands. Instead of calling for shorter work weeks and otherwise defending threatened standards, they look for excuses to avoid what is clearly necessary.

What the prospects are no one knows. One of the dangerous aspects of the idea that the government must accept responsibility for providing jobs—and this is unreservedly accepted—is the willingness to accept a war economy as an answer. Many people look back to the full employment of the war years with nostalgia. This can have very serious implications.

Mines: Overproduction

By G. McDERMOTT

WEST VIRGINIA, Mar. 5—Ghosts of 1933 are stalking the coal camps—ghosts in the form of miners with their buckets, "going down the road" looking for work. The old curse of coal mining is back—"overproduction."

Production figures, perhaps, best show what is happening. In 1947, the coal industry produced 630 million tons. Last year, production dropped 100 million tons. This year, every indication is that production will sink still further.

Naturally, when production drops off, employment drops off. However, there are other factors in addition to the drop in production which are cutting into employment for the miner. Chief among these is modernization, mechanization and rationalization. All during the war, the coal operators had to postpone plans for new machines, better machines and various automatic processes, such as conveyor belts and better tipples. Now that materials have again become available, the process of "Fordizing" coal mining is proceeding with a vengeance.

In some mines the installation of new conveyors has thrown entire shifts out of work. In others the consolidation of several mines so as to use one tipple, has thrown entire tipple crews out of work. Two years ago anyone could go to the mines the same day they applied for a job. Today it is the old story for most—you can't be hired unless you have experience, and you can't get experience unless you're hired.

The start of the United Mine Workers Pension Fund has temporarily helped out. With many miners in their sixties retiring, younger miners thrown out of work by technological changes have found jobs to take their places. However, retirement now will be a mere trickle. In the meantime, machines continue to replace men. With the perfection of the continuous mining machine already a fact, it only remains for these machines to get into production for jobs to drop even more.

In addition, the price of coal is dropping. Not only is coal being "overproduced," but the same is true of residual fuel oil, a competitor of coal. The price of this oil is being ruthlessly cut and the demand for coal continues to decline.

As a result, the smaller mines are being forced out of business, one by one. Smaller mines cannot even stay in business by cutting prices, because they do not have the processing plant to wash and grade their coal. Today, their coal is unsalable. The closing of small mines is particularly hard on miners because small "hand loading" mines are the only place that older men or the workers crippled by a greedy industry can get jobs. When these mines shut down, the older or crippled worker becomes permanently unemployed.

In the big mines the condition today is one of partial unemployment. Almost no mines have worked a single full week in many months. Three and four day weeks are the rule, and sometimes even less.

Because of the location of most coal camps, there are no other jobs available. With unemployment mounting in the cities, the miner is tied more than ever to his life underground. Recently, the scale convention of District 4 of the United Mine Workers, covering the Uniontown area, has come out for the six-hour day. District 31, in Northern West Virginia, is expected to do the same. Thus this year's battle over contract is shaping up. The six-hour day will be a vital necessity.

San Francisco: Not Explained By Usual Seasonal Factors

By B. ARNOLD

SAN FRANCISCO — Reaching the highest level since early 1940, unemployment in the San Francisco Bay area topped the 100,000 mark at the end of February, according to the latest available figures. Included in this total were the number of claimants registered with the State Department of Employment, plus an estimate of those ineligible to file claims such as migrant farm laborers, workers who have exhausted their claims, etc. This marked an increase of 14,000 over the previous month and was some 40,000 over the figure of one year ago.

This area, which includes the cities of San Francisco, Oakland, Alameda, Berkeley and Richmond, now has at least one jobless worker for every nine employed. However, even the official statistics do not reveal the actual story, for besides being late and incomplete, they are so hedged in double talk as to make accurate analysis difficult. Greatly embarrassed that California's much vaunted and highly publicized boom should show such definite signs of faltering, the state officials and local Chambers of Commerce surround the release of unemployment figures with a secrecy comparable to wartime military news.

Despite the official reticence and the tendency to gloss over the facts, it is obvious to everyone that unemployment has become a major problem confronting the workers of the Bay area. The lines of jobs at the State Employment Offices stretch for blocks and are becoming strikingly reminiscent of the 1930's.

Not Seasonal

Seasonal and weather conditions have been blamed, but it is very significant that unemployment keeps cropping up in new places. Official data now reveals that unemployment in both heavy and light manufacturing industries is well below a year ago.

Widespread layoffs have occurred in a broad range of industries, including furniture, garment, ship repair, breweries, trucking, retail trade, culinary services, warehousing and food processing. The latter two are among the most important in San Francisco. Even the home construction industry, which was supposed to be depression proof for a long time to come because of the housing shortage, has an unusually large number of unemployed.

While the unskilled and so-called "marginal workers" are the first to be laid off, it is significant that increasing numbers of skilled workers have become unemployed in the last few weeks. Experienced machinists, tool and die makers, garage mechanics, building craftsmen, railroad workers and other crafts have fallen victim to Truman's "disinflation."

In addition to the layoffs mentioned above, many plants and shops have cut working hours. The white-collar field, of unusual importance here, since San Francisco is the leading commercial and financial city west of Chicago, also shows definite symptoms of leveling off. All sources indicate that the labor shortage in this field has ended and that office and clerical jobs have become more difficult to obtain.

Retail Trade Down

Because of the powerful trade union movement in the Bay area, wage cuts and seniority violations in the major industries are not yet in evidence. However, in the white collar field and the less organized trades, numerous instances of downgrading and intimidation of workers due to the growing reserve army of unemployed have been reported.

It is apparent that seasonal and weather factors no longer suffice for an explanation of the general increase in unemployment. A definite slowing down of business activity has occurred. This is substantiated, in addition to the large number of jobless, by other important and revealing facts. Retail trade in the area is 11 per cent below that of a year ago. Bank loans and bank clearings have slumped considerably. Real estate circles report increasing numbers of unsold new houses on the market. The rate of business failures is on the increase. Similar trends are revealed by other financial statistics. Both state and private relief agencies report a considerable increase in the number of applicants for assistance.

While it would be highly exaggerated and very premature at this time to state that the long-expected post-war depression is under way here, the situation is potentially extremely serious. Most "experts," including the local labor leaders, expect some improvement next month. It remains to be seen how many of the now jobless will be rehired this spring. Reassuring statements fill the newspapers. However, the more reliable analysts believe that the amount of building construction will prove to be the key for the coming months. If it slumps, then previous calculations may have to be discarded.

Detroit

By M. FINCH

DETROIT, Mar. 9—More than 23,000 Chrysler workers in five Detroit plants were temporarily laid off this week because of parts shortages, to swell the rising tide of unemployment which is already at an all-time high in Michigan since reconversion.

Official estimates for February show 175,000 unemployed and for January 141,000 as compared to 120,000 for the first quarter of 1948. March promises to be even higher.

Since the first of the year cutbacks have sent 5,000 Kaiser-Frazier, 2,000 Lincoln-Mercury and 4,000 Hudson workers looking for new jobs, as well as an undetermined number at Ford Rouge and Highland Park plants and the many smaller suppliers.

During 1948 employment in Michigan increased 5.7 per cent, although in some areas it decreased, as in Pontiac, where the number of unemployed doubled.

St. Louis

By H. D. COLEMAN

ST. LOUIS, Mar. 4—The monthly report of the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, issued today, calls attention to a "sharp increase" in the number of unemployed persons between December and January, throughout the district. The Eighth (St. Louis) Reserve District includes half of Missouri, all of Arkansas and parts of Indiana, Kentucky, Mississippi, Illinois and Tennessee.

According to the report, this increase in unemployment is larger than can be accounted for by normal seasonal factors. "A drop in nonagricultural employment between December and January," says the report, "was about twice as large as would be expected normally." Retail trade in the Federal Reserve District also dropped during January more than can be accounted for by seasonal factors and dropped below the level of January, 1948.

The report states, however, that in spite of a "slight decline in aggregate wage and salary receipts between November and December," employe income and total personal income remain at a high level. As is the case nationally, employment increased along with unemployment: "In St. Louis, employment this January was 5,000 more than in January, 1948. In St. Louis manufacturing industries, about 1,000 more people were employed. The increase in manufacturing was due primarily to an exceptionally large increase in the transportation equipment industry. The only other industry with a sizable increase was the primary metals industry. The major declines from a year ago were in the leather, fabricated metals and non-electrical and electrical machinery industries."

In a box which appears alongside are the figures just released by the Missouri state director of employment security, showing total number of persons receiving unemployment compensation and veterans' readjustment allowances at various periods, in the city of St. Louis, St. Louis County and in the entire state.

Initial claims for unemployment compensation have declined steadily in recent weeks, however. This decline, the state director says, "indicates a drop in the midyear unemployment trend, while the increase in those claiming and receiving compensation and allowances indicates reemployment of unemployed is slowing down. . . . Increase in the overall figure—from 63,707 to 66,972—reflects the fact that recipients of compensation and allowances are remaining on the rolls longer."

Unemployment, Vet Claims in Missouri

	Missouri	St. Louis
Week ending February 26	66,972	24,001
Week ending February 19	63,707	22,761
Week ending February 12	68,985	25,855
Week comparable to that ending February 26, 1949:		
1948	54,818	17,393
1947	80,627	25,162
1946	134,214	51,571