

L.P.A. Poses Questions to Nation's Labor Leaders

"What do you regard as the most pressing task for the labor movement in the year ahead?"

And, then, "How is your union going to tackle its share of the tasks?"

HERE ARE THE REPLIES WE RECEIVED:

TREND TOWARD "CREEPING FASCISM" MUST BE HALTED

BY EMIL RIEVE, President Textile Workers Union of America, CIO.

Big business control of big government, coupled with the ugly menace of McCarthyism, has created a condition in the United States today which I call "creeping fascism." Arresting this trend—turning our country once again in the direction of liberal enlightenment and restoring its moral courage—is the most pressing task for the labor movement in the year ahead.

In saying this I do not charge that the average Republican or the average businessman is deliberately promoting fascism. I do say that a government primarily devoted to the interests of big business tends to be authoritarian by definition. Meanwhile the critical sense of the daily press has been dulled by pro-business bias; McCarthy and his imitators do their utmost to make life miserable for those dissenters who remain.

We in the labor movement cannot bring about a change single-

handed, but we bear the major share of the task. We must hammer away at the facts. We must reach our own members and their families more effectively than ever before; we must be the rallying point for other liberal forces in the community.

The job is big but the stakes are bigger. I do not believe "creeping fascism" is at all likely to become fascism in fact, for I have boundless confidence in the sense of the American people. However, while we are handing huge chunks of the national domain to private profiteers, glaring at our friends abroad like surly apes and toying with our first venture in book-burning, we are losing precious time and ground in the world-wide struggle for men's minds.

To lead the world away from the false promises of communism, our people and our government must be brave in heart, generous in spirit and free in mind. This should be our greatest goal—in the year ahead and every year until it is won.

Having set such a broad task for the labor movement as a whole, I must set what may seem a much



"I say, dear, someone sure gave you the wrong idea about Labor Day."

narrower one for the Textile Workers Union of America, CIO—namely, to organize the unorganized.

Textile is the least organized of any basic industry. Barely one-third of the workers are covered by TWUA-CIO contract; perhaps another 10 per cent are scattered among smaller unions. Most of the unorganized workers are in the southeastern states.

The changes in political thinking necessary to fulfill my definition of "labor's most pressing task" are most badly needed in this southeastern area. Such changes can be brought about only when the workers are organized. Thus what appears to be a narrow aim is actually an essential part of the broader one.

BAKERS PLAN ORGANIZATION, MEMBERSHIP EDUCATION, LABEL DRIVE

By JAMES G. GROSS, President, Bakery and Confectionery Workers International Union, AFL.

The basic problem that faces the organized labor movement today is how to grow and prosper in an unfavorable climate. All those things that we had come to accept as labor's inalienable rights are presently being challenged from every side by those who would destroy the union labor movement of this country.

Under the administrations of Franklin D. Roosevelt, labor organizations enjoyed a phenomenal growth. In some ways, this growth resembled the hot house variety where large memberships were built only to wither on the vine when transplanted into the fields of adversity. This was due in a large part to the lack of membership education.

International and local unions were not even geared to cope with the mechanics of processing membership in the late 30's and early 40's. For the sake of expediency, the education of the prospective member was neglected. This neglect has risen up to haunt many an organization with an avalanche of unfavorable labor legislation in recent years.

Due to lack of knowledge, some members and those hosts who were once members of organized labor express little or no concern over the fate of the union that secured for them what we have come to know as the American Standard of Living. This problem we propose to combat with every means at our disposal.

We plan to follow a bold course. For a labor organization to consolidate its gains and stand still is to invite attack. To retreat from previously established positions insures disaster. The Bakery and Confectionery Workers International Union is presently mapping an intensive organizing drive in all branches of its jurisdiction. It is our intent to sell the prospective member on the benefits he will enjoy when he joins our organization. The struggles that went into the creation of our International Union will be vividly portrayed to him.

To bolster this program, our public relations and Union Label Department is coordinating its efforts with the Department of Organization in the promotion of our Union Label and the development of motion picture films and special material to educate the new member. This is in addition to carrying the message to the general public of how important labor unions are to the welfare and economy of our nation.

Our research department is making available to our department of organization and our public relations and Union Label department the resources and statistics so necessary to translate their program into action. Everyone is on the team at International Headquarters with but one thought in mind—progress. Our entire program may be summed up in six words,

"There is no retreat to success."

GIVE-AWAYS PRECEDE ATTACK ON LABOR, HARTUNG BELIEVES

BY A. F. HARTUNG, President, International Woodworkers of America, CIO.

"It is my opinion that political action is the most pressing problem that confronts the labor movement for the year that lies ahead.

In viewing the actions of the present administration we are shocked to find the hard-money and give-away programs that are being practiced. Labor has struggled valiantly and has come a long way in the last fifteen years. We now find ourselves confronted with, because of the present administration, the employers using the vicious Taft-Hartley Act in the form of injunctions, refusing to bargain, refusing to live up to contracts, all because they feel they have the government on their side.

Should we be unsuccessful in upsetting the majority of the House and Senate in 1954 and the reactionaries, who are calling the shots for the Eisenhower administration, remain in office, by the time 1956 rolls around there will be little, if anything, left of the social and economic gains that labor has made by its valiant struggle over the past years. All of our vast national resources are being threatened and the give-away boys in Congress will have completed their job unless we are successful in stopping their forward march at the polls in 1954.

We, in the woodworking industry, have done everything we could to stop the give-away of our tidelands oil. We are aware that the same group who gave away the tidelands oil have bills prepared to start giving away the vast national forests that still remain in the hands of the people, as well as the power dams and other improvements that have been made possible through the efforts of our federal government.

The give-away program they are carrying on will have the same effect upon destroying the effectiveness of the labor movement. I am sure that once they complete their give-away program they will intensify their efforts to destroy the labor movement, if they possibly can. Not that I am fearful they will ever succeed, but it may take the sacrificing of many vigilant labor representatives in order to stop their mad desire for power.

STRONG LABOR MOVEMENT ESSENTIAL TO FREE ENTERPRISE SYSTEM

BY T. C. CARROLL, President, Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees.

The most pressing task confronting the Labor Movement in the year ahead, and for that matter, a number of years to come, is that of pointing out to the American people that the preservation of our complex and highly industrialized society, including the free enterprise system, is dependent upon a strong, organized Labor Movement.

Responsible representatives of management have individually and generally recognized the many contributions which Labor has made to the economic well-being of our country. Unfortunately, however, collective groups representing the interests of big business, such as the National Association of Manufacturers and the United States Chamber of Commerce, have consistently attempted to relegate organized Labor to a position wherein its role in shaping the destiny of our nation would be little more than that of a social group banded together for the purpose of sponsoring week-end luncheons or picnics.

These reactionary organizations, who, in reality, speak for less than ten percent of our country's people, are continually dreaming of the so-called "good old days" when they could pay those who actually produced their wealth a mere subsistence wage for any number of

hours' work that they felt the individual could physically endure. The time is long since past when the interests of a few selfish individuals can be considered paramount to the national good. In this modern day and age, we need a more statesman-like approach to the Labor Relations problem. There must be less concern with selfish immediate gains and more concern with long range objectives in which all of our people share.

Capital and Labor are indispensable to one another. The whole-hearted participation of both is essential to the development of our way of life. In a democratic society, we must have both the investor and the producer, and we must maintain an environment in which both can prosper. The fruits of these efforts must be fairly divided among both Management and Labor.

The vast majority of people in this country are laborers of one kind or another. They do not want to place their destinies and future well-being in the hands of those who would impose upon them and their families a sub-standard way of life. This basic difference in the philosophies advocated by certain big business interests and organized Labor must be intelligently and forthrightly brought home to the American people.

The best procedure to follow in presenting organized Labor's point of view to the American people is a matter of personal opinion. Various mediums of information, such as the Labor Press, the radio and television should, of course, be utilized to the fullest extent possible. It is my belief, however, that the true facts can best be presented to the average citizen at the community level by the rank and file union members and local officers.

In this connection the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees are fortunate, in that our membership resides in practically every city and hamlet, regardless of size or geographic location, across the nation. The opportunity for our people to participate in the political and social life of their community is a very valuable asset, and it will be our policy in the year ahead, as it has been in the past, to encourage and assist our members to the end that they will seek elective and appointive offices in their respective cities and towns and on their local school boards in order that a true balance of public thinking will be the basis for decisions reached at the community level.

Successful political undertakings in the past have shown the absolute necessity for concentration at the "grass roots level." In my opinion, the same method of operation is essential if the Labor Movement is to achieve its legitimate economic goals.

ORGANIZE AND EDUCATE, GUILD PROGRAM

BY HARRY MARTIN, President, American Newspaper Guild, CIO.

The most vital task confronting Labor in 1953-4 is that of mustering all its forces in a new drive to enroll the millions of workers still unorganized, simultaneously with the launching of rejuvenated political action campaign to restore the direction of public affairs to the people of the United States.

These twin chores are complementary. The hordes of non-union workers, especially in the white collar field, represent not only a threat to collective bargaining and union security, but are likewise the one great area wherein recent elections have disclosed the crucial need for political education. Hence, it is imperative that union organization and political enlightenment take priority in all Labor planning and programs for the near future. We are losing through adverse legislation and administration the hard-earned economic gains won at the bargaining table; this is the dangerous trend of the day. It must be halted.

The American Newspaper Guild, having made during the past year the greatest advances of its entire history in acquiring new members and improving contracts, has charted a new program calculated to maintain the pace of that progress despite entrenched opposition. With new contract goals calling for a top minimum of \$150 per week for experienced newspaper men and women, the 35-hour week, general improvements in working conditions, the Guild will concentrate heavily this year on the "free riders" and on the unorganized pockets still existing in areas otherwise well-organized. A serious attempt at educating both the new and the old members as to the importance and the technique of political action is being undertaken.

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