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The Post-War Speechmaking of Walter P. Reuther

Ronald Reid

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SPEECHMAKING

OF

WALTER P.
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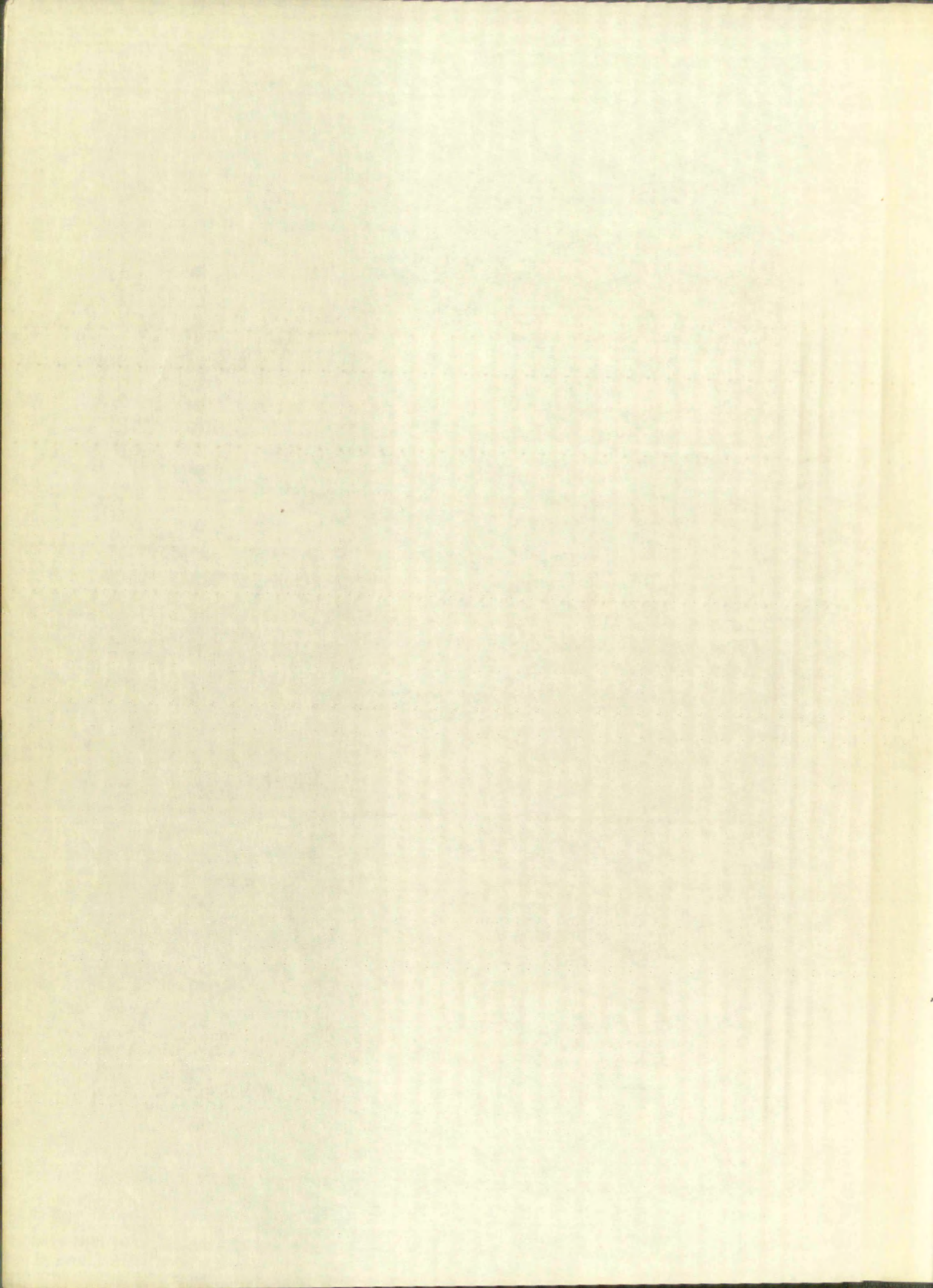
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THE POST WAR SPEECHMAKING
OF
WALTER P. REUTHER

By

Ronald F. Reid

A Thesis

In partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Speech

The University of New Mexico
1951

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OF
WALTER P. REUTHER

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Although the writer's debts of gratitude are many, he wishes to express special appreciation to Walter P. Reuther and the U.A.W.-C.I.O. Public Relations Department for making available necessary source materials for this study. More than to any other, however, he wishes to acknowledge his indebtedness to Professor James H. McBath who graciously gave of his scholarship and time in directing this thesis to its conclusion.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I. THE PROBLEM

Significance of Walter Reuther. One of the largest labor unions in the world today is the International Union, United Automobile, Aircraft and Agricultural Implement Workers of America, affiliated with the Congress of Industrial Organizations.¹ Its president is short, barrel chested, red-haired Walter P. Reuther. Reuther also occupies other posts within the union including the directorship of the General Motors Department, in which capacity he is chief negotiator in discussions with the General Motors Corporation. In addition to these positions, he serves as a vice-president of the Congress of Industrial Organizations.²

The future well might hold even more important union offices for Reuther. He often has been suggested as a probable successor to Philip Murray should the latter resign as C.I.O. president. One writer, Sidney Lens, went even further by pointing out:

The former editor of the AFL Teamster magazine has predicted that eventually two men will fight each other for control of the whole American labor movement, Walter

¹ Hereafter cited as the U.A.W.-C.I.O.

² Hereafter cited as the C.I.O.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I. THE PROBLEM

Classification of Labor Unions One of the largest labor unions in the world today is the International Union of Marine and Shipbuilding Workers of America, affiliated with the Congress of Industrial Organizations. Its president is now, Harold W. Miller, who has also occupied other posts within the union including the directorship of the General Motors Corporation, in which capacity he is chief negotiator in discussions with the General Motors Corporation. In addition to these positions, he serves as a vice-president of the Congress of Industrial Organizations. The future will doubtless see more important union officers for Miller. He often has been suggested as a possible successor to Philip Murray should the latter resign as C.I.O. president. The writer, Sidney Hillman, went even further by pointing out:

The former editor of the Wall Street Journal has indicated that eventually two men will fight each other for control of the whole American labor movement, Walter

1. Harold W. Miller, cited as the U.A.W.-C.I.O.

2. Harold W. Miller, cited as the C.I.O.

Reuther, of the CIO auto workers, and Dave Beck, of the AFL teamsters. This is certainly well within the realm of possibility. The stars of both Reuther and Beck are rising more rapidly than that of anyone else in the labor movement today.³

Serving in important labor union positions inevitably makes Reuther a figure of public attention. His significance, however, transcends mere occupancy of important posts. He is noteworthy also because of distinctive ideas and policies which he advocates in the dual fields of labor-management and political economy, principles which have led him to be called "a new model union leader, whose great weapon is ideas."⁴

Walter Reuther has contributed more to the labor cause than mere negotiation on matters of wages, hours, and working conditions, as long had been the custom of union chiefs. When discussing the U.A.W.-C.I.O. president, Foster Dulles observed that "his ideas are broad and comprehensive, carrying him far beyond the immediate problems of business unionism."⁵ The role which Reuther played in mobilization during World War II has attracted comment. The late Harold

³ Sidney Lens, Left, Right and Center (Hinsdale: Henry Regney Company, 1949), pp. 416-417.

⁴ "Reuther: F.O.B. Detroit," Fortune, 32:148, December, 1945.

⁵ Foster Rhea Dulles, Labor in America (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1949), p. 359.

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Laski, when viewing labor relations in the American democracy, was impressed with Reuther's recommendations.

The proposals put forward by Walter Reuther for American industry in the war effort are merely an example, though a remarkable example, of the scale on which the new trade unionist is beginning to conceive his problems.⁶

In his eagerness to grapple with problems long considered outside the scope of labor's concern, Reuther has not neglected the more traditional matters of wages, hours, and working conditions. A number of the more progressive wage policy proposals, such as, for example, the guaranteed annual wage, although not original with Reuther, have become significant in the eyes of business, labor, and the public today largely because of his demand for such items in the automotive industry.

There is, moreover, a difference in the degree of public responsibility which Reuther accepts as compared with the traditional type union leader. Considerable disagreement, however, prevails among careful observers of contemporary unionism concerning Reuther's attitude toward public responsibility. On the one hand, Charles Linblom stated:

Walter Reuther's methods are not those of John L. Lewis. One talks the language of industrial statesmanship, the other that of the special pleader. One accepts a public

⁶ Harold J. Laski, The American Democracy (New York: The Viking Press, 1948), p. 225.

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... health, which is the most important factor in the world today...

... way, was the most important factor in the world today...

The importance of health is being realized by the people of the world...

... industry in the world today is the most important factor in the world...

... a new era of health is being realized by the people of the world...

... in his own way, the most important factor in the world today...

... should be the most important factor in the world today...

... and working conditions, the most important factor in the world today...

... were better organized, the most important factor in the world today...

... annual income, the most important factor in the world today...

... efficiency in the world today, the most important factor in the world...

... today largely because of the most important factor in the world today...

... extensive industry, the most important factor in the world today...

... parts of the world, the most important factor in the world today...

... public responsibility, the most important factor in the world today...

... the traditional type of industry, the most important factor in the world...

... and, however, the most important factor in the world today...

... very much as the most important factor in the world today...

... responsibility, the most important factor in the world today...

... other than the most important factor in the world today...

The United States, the most important factor in the world today...

responsibility which the other denies.⁷

On the other hand, Peter F. Drucker insisted that men like John L. Lewis sacrifice the interests of society to the welfare of the nation while men like Sidney Hillman frequently sacrifice the interests of the union to the good of society. Then, in considering Walter Reuther, Drucker commented:

He [the union leader] may try to sidestep the issue by asserting a pre-established harmony between the interests of society and the interests of the laboring man. This attitude, which is today widely acclaimed in the person of Walter Reuther, is however, an evasion rather than an answer.⁸

Regardless of the attitude which one might take of Reuther's ideas on labor-management relations there can be little question that the U.A.W.-C.I.O. chief is, as Fortune magazine averred, ". . . the perfect example of that species of power politician that the industrial age has developed. . ."⁹

Concerning the significance of Reuther's ideas on national political policies, it should be remembered that organized labor today constitutes one of the most potent pressure groups in Washington, and that Reuther is a pivotal

⁷ Charles E. Linblom, Unions and Capitalism (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1949), p. 203.

⁸ Peter F. Drucker, The New Society (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949), p. 136.

⁹ "Reuther: F.O.B. Detroit," op. cit., pp. 149-150.

labor spokesman in the United States. An indication of how powerful he might become politically is contained in a statement by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.:

Walter Reuther, the extraordinarily able and intelligent leader of the United Auto Workers, may well become in another decade the most powerful man in American politics.¹⁰

Precisely what Walter Reuther's political philosophy entails was well summarized by James Wechsler:

He is neither a doctrinaire Socialist nor a devoted Democrat. His thinking is a merger of two great streams: the humanism of European social democracy and the pragmatism of indigenous American progressives reflected in the heyday of the La Follette movement. These are qualities that most professional liberal and labor leaders of the past two decades have conspicuously lacked. Jennie Lee, the British Socialist M.P., remarked that Reuther's victory in the UAW battle was probably the most significant event in American liberal-labor politics since the early New Deal era.¹¹

Recognizing Reuther's stature in the fields of labor-management relations and politics, it is well to review previous efforts to ascertain the nature of his ideas and to discover possible forces influential in his life.

Significant Literature about Walter Reuther. There have been few attempts to sketch a biography of Walter Reuther, and in none of this literature is there more than pas-

¹⁰ Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., The Vital Center (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1949), p. 187.

¹¹ James A. Wechsler, "Labor's Bright Young Man," Harper's Magazine, 196:265, March, 1948.

Labor relations in the United States have been characterized by a

series of strikes and lockouts, and the Government has been called upon

to intervene in order to settle these disputes.

Under the National Labor Relations Act, the National Labor Relations Board

has been established to administer the law and to settle disputes

between employers and employees.

The Board has the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter

of the 10th instant, and to advise you that the Board is currently

concerned with the processing of a large number of cases.

It is regrettable that the Board is unable to give you the attention

and the expedience which you deserve, but the Board is confident

that the Board will be able to give you the attention which you

deserve as soon as the Board's workload is reduced.

Very truly yours,
National Labor Relations Board

Enclosed for you are two copies of the Board's report on the

dispute between you and your employees, dated and captioned as

above.

Very truly yours,
National Labor Relations Board

Enclosed for you are two copies of the Board's report on the

dispute between you and your employees, dated and captioned as

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Very truly yours,
National Labor Relations Board

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National Labor Relations Board

sing comment on his speechmaking. Probably the most ambitious attempt at biography was The UAW and Walter Reuther, written by Irving Howe and B. J. Widick.¹² Although primarily a history of unionism in the automotive industry, the book inevitably included a great deal of material about Reuther. One chapter entitled, "Walter Reuther, a Portrait," was, as the title would indicate, a short biography of the man. This work, however, touched upon Reuther's speechmaking very lightly. Rarely were speeches cited as sources of information, and only in a single sentence does one find reference to characteristics of Reuther's speaking.¹³

A second biographical attempt was a chapter contained in Charles Madison's American Labor Leaders, a survey of union chiefs from the Noble Order of Knights of Labor to the present.¹⁴ This work, too, included little mention of Reuther's speechmaking. Although his speechmaking was recognized as important, and a few quotations from addresses were used, there was no systematic attempt to describe the charac-

¹² Irving Howe and B. J. Widick, The UAW and Walter Reuther (New York: Random House, 1949).

¹³ Ibid., p. 257.

¹⁴ Charles A. Madison, American Labor Leaders (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950). For a condensed version of this chapter, see Charles A. Madison, "Walter Reuther and the New Unionism," The Yale Review, 39:275-293, Winter quarter, 1950.

teristics of his speaking nor to discover the nature of his ideas.

There are several articles of recent origin in leading periodicals which describe Reuther's ideas and supply some information about his career. The most informative is James Wechsler's article which appeared in the March, 1948 issue of Harper's Magazine under the heading "Labor's Bright Young Man." This work, again, contains only casual mention of Reuther's public speaking.

Also worthy of mention are such sources as the editorial in the December, 1945 issue of Fortune entitled, "Reuther: F.O.B. Detroit;" the biography in Current Biography, 1941;¹⁵ and the revision in Current Biography, 1949.¹⁶

Many pertinent questions concerning Walter Reuther's speechmaking were suggested, but left unanswered, by existing literature about the man. What forces were influential in his life and career, his attitudes and ideas? What issues has he dealt with in his speeches? How important does he consider speechmaking, and what role has it played in his career? What are the chief characteristics of his public

¹⁵ Maxine Block, editor, "Reuther, Walter (Philip)," Current Biography, 1941 (New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1941), pp. 704-705.

¹⁶ Anna Rothe, editor, "Reuther, Walter (Philip)," Current Biography, 1949 (New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1949), pp. 513-516.

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speaking? How effective has he been adjudged by contemporary observers? And, ultimately, what place will his speechmaking occupy in the history of American public address?

II. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Aside from brief comments in the aforementioned works, little has been written of Walter Reuther's public speaking. There has been no attempt to analyze systematically Reuther's speechmaking either from the point of view of ascertaining ideas advanced in his speeches or from the standpoint of determining outstanding characteristics of his public speaking. It is the purpose of this study, therefore, to report upon selected speeches of Walter Reuther in an effort (1) to discover what ideas he has expressed in his speeches and, incidental with this, to attempt to trace sources of those ideas; and (2) to analyze his speechmaking to discover the outstanding characteristics of his composition and delivery. The first of this duo of purposes will receive primary emphasis because it is felt by the writer that through comprehension of a speaker's ideas can one best understand the import of his public address in the flow of history.

The major focus of this study was dictated by certain basic considerations. Initially, of course, the importance of public address as related to history was recognized. Not only does a speech reflect the speaker but it also mirrors

the listeners, for speeches are usually given with the audience in mind. The historian, William Lang, summarized well this point:

It becomes clear as one searches the records for influences from the speaker that not always speech alone, but speech in harmony, or at least not out of harmony with prevailing moods and passions, is that which is the most effective. If public address is outside the "climate of opinion," to use Carl Becker's fortunate phrase, it may do very little.¹⁷

This is not meant, of course, to suggest that a speech only reflects public opinion. On the contrary, it both reflects and directs. "The speaker, then, acclaimed and often unacclaimed," continued Lang, "is a force in history. Partially dependent upon the mood of the day, he may direct and mold his times."¹⁸

Public address, furthermore, is important to the social and intellectual historian as a source of information often overlooked by the historian of ideas. This thesis has been developed by Merle Curti:

Historians of ideas in America have too largely based their conclusions on the study of formal treatises. But formal treatises do not tell the whole story. In fact, they sometimes give a quite false impression, for such writings are only a fraction of the records of intellectual history.¹⁹

¹⁷ William C. Lang, "Public Address as a Force in History," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 37:34, February, 1951.

¹⁸ Loc. cit.

¹⁹ Merle Curti, "The Great Mr. Locke, America's Philosopher, 1783-1861," The Huntington Library Bulletin, 11:108, April, 1937.

the historian, for...
was in mind...
this point:

It becomes clear...
fluency...
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most...
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it may be very...

This is not...
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local history...

- IV William C. ...
History, ...
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Elliott ...
11:00, April, 1901.

A second consideration concerned the value of study of contemporary public address. A major contribution of this type study is that an understanding of a contemporary's past and present ideas often serves as a guide with which to predict his future actions.

Another value of contemporary public address pertains to sources. Although certain sources, such as, for example, personal letters and diaries, are unavailable to the student of contemporary public address, some sources disappear with the passage of time and are thus available only to the student of contemporary public address. For instance, the observations of contemporaries often would not be recorded were it not for studies of this type.²⁰

III. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Limitation of Person. This study is limited by three factors. First, as is obvious by the title, it is limited to a single individual. There will be no attempt to report upon the addresses of other speakers unless they relate directly to the speaking of Reuther, as will a few delivered by others in such situations as, for example, Town Meeting

²⁰ Many of the advantages and limitations of the type study presented here are seen more clearly by consulting Wayne N. Thompson, "Contemporary Public Address as a Research Area," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 33:274-283, October, 1947.

A second experiment was conducted in which the effect of temperature on the rate of reaction was studied. This type study is one of the most common in physical chemistry and is usually carried out by measuring the rate of reaction at several different temperatures. The results are then plotted as a function of the reciprocal of the absolute temperature.

Another value of importance in this study is the activation energy. Although this is a somewhat abstract concept, it is a measure of the energy barrier that must be overcome for a reaction to take place. The activation energy can be determined from the slope of the line obtained in the Arrhenius plot. The purpose of this study is to determine the activation energy for the reaction of hydrogen peroxide with potassium permanganate. The results of this study will be compared with those obtained in the previous experiment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Rate of Reaction. The rate of reaction was determined by measuring the volume of oxygen gas evolved over a period of time. The results are shown in Table I. It is seen that the rate of reaction increases with increasing temperature. This is to be expected since the rate of reaction is a function of the activation energy. The activation energy can be determined from the slope of the line obtained in the Arrhenius plot. The purpose of this study is to determine the activation energy for the reaction of hydrogen peroxide with potassium permanganate. The results of this study will be compared with those obtained in the previous experiment.

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The purpose of this study is to determine the activation energy for the reaction of hydrogen peroxide with potassium permanganate. The results of this study will be compared with those obtained in the previous experiment.

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Limitation of Time. Second, this work is limited by the time factor. Although it might be said that Reuther's public speaking career began as early as 1925 when he attempted to organize Wheeling Steel Corporation workers, the period immediately following the close of World War II has been selected as the period to be emphasized in this study.

Reasons for the choice of this period are threefold. First, it was an era of critical public issues. The problem of economic reconversion from war to peace confronted the nation, and accompanying that problem came such issues as readjustment of prices and wages frozen during the war and the providing of new employment for thousands of former war workers. International problems, too, were agitating the domestic labor scene. Shortly after VJ-day the question of United States' relations with the Soviet Union became an increasingly important issue; and to labor, the problem of communist infiltration became a matter of mounting concern. Indeed, the immediate post-war era was one of stimulating public issues.

A second reason for emphasizing the immediate post-war era was that, to Walter Reuther's career, it represented the period of most marked ascendancy; it was the time in which he caught the public eye. He was elected president of

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the U.A.W.-C.I.O. and vice-president of the C.I.O. His intra-union battles with "communist sympathizers" made headlines, but even more spectacular were his relations with management. The four years following the end of the war saw Reuther lead the auto workers in a 113 day strike against General Motors, issue a dramatic call for that corporation to open its books for public inspection, and demand medical health insurance and pension clauses in his contracts with management.

Third, the study is necessarily limited to this period because of the unavailability of texts of speeches delivered in previous years. Prior to World War II Reuther had not yet attained sufficient public stature to warrant the reporting of the majority of his speeches. The same is true, although to a lesser extent, of the war era.

At the present time, a period of military mobilization, most of his speeches are reported. This current period will not be emphasized, however, because the issues raised by mobilization are still in the process of public discussion and debate, thus making a comparative analysis of Reuther's arguments premature.

Limitation of Speech Types. The third limitation to this study is that of speech types. Only those addresses dealing with critical labor and public issues will be stud-

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ied, and such speeches, as for example, speeches of stimulation delivered to strikers seldom will be considered.

The reasons for this limitation are twofold. First, texts of other types are largely unavailable inasmuch as they usually are impromptu and rarely are reported by the newspapers. Second, it is upon this type of speech that Reuther's stature as a public speaker largely rests. If people generally ever judge his speaking, it is not speeches which he delivers on relatively minor intra-union problems which impress them, but those in which he addresses the nation on issues of an important, public nature.

IV. SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

The initial step in this study was to obtain the necessary background materials which included information concerning Reuther's training and early life; Reuther's early career in, and the history of, the U.A.W.-C.I.O.; and the auto union's wartime policies.

Some of this information was supplied by the biographies and articles which have been cited previously. In addition, two brief unpublished biographies in the files of the union's Public Relations Department proved useful. The first, dated April 26, 1943, was prepared by the late Edward Levinson, then Public Relations Director. The second, dated July, 1949, was written by the present Public Relations

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Director, Frank Winn. Primary materials pertaining to Reuther's training and early life included his high school and college transcripts and letters to the writer.

There is an abundance of sources providing information on the U.A.W.-C.I.O.'s history. Of the labor histories consulted Benjamin Stolberg's The Story of the C.I.O.,²¹ J. Raymond Walsh's C.I.O., Industrial Unionism in Action,²² Herbert Harris' American Labor,²³ and Labor on the March, by Edward Levinson were most helpful.²⁴

Harbison and Dubin's Patterns of Union-Management Relations,²⁵ Edward Levinson's Rise of the Auto Workers,²⁶ A. J. Muste's The Automobile Industry and Organized Labor,²⁷

²¹ Benjamin Stolberg, The Story of the C.I.O. (New York: The Viking Press, 1938).

²² J. Raymond Walsh, C.I.O., Industrial Unionism in Action (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1947).

²³ Herbert Harris, American Labor (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1938).

²⁴ Edward Levinson, Labor on the March (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1938).

²⁵ Frederick H. Harbison and Robert Dubin, Patterns of Union-Management Relations (Chicago: Science Research Associates, 1947). This work confines itself to a study of relations between the U.A.W.-C.I.O. and the General Motors and Studebaker corporations.

²⁶ Edward Levinson, Rise of the Auto Workers (Detroit: U.A.W.-C.I.O. Education Department, 1948).

²⁷ A. J. Muste, The Automobile Industry and Organized Labor (Baltimore: The Christian Social Justice Fund, n. d.).

and Labor Relations in the Automobile Industry, by William McPherson²⁸ provided a closer insight into contemporary automotive unionism. Of special interest was Union Guy, the autobiography of Clayton W. Fountain, presently of the U.A.W.-C.I.O. Public Relations Department. In this book Fountain recalled numerous eye-witness accounts of events in the history of the U.A.W.-C.I.O.²⁹ Outstanding in providing information about the wartime policies of the union were George R. Clark's "The Strange Story of the Reuther Plan"³⁰ and portions of Bruce Catton's The War Lords of Washington.³¹

The second step in developing this study was to obtain speech texts. This proved somewhat difficult in view of Reuther's method of speech preparation. He usually makes a brief outline containing statistics which are too lengthy to remember, and, from this, speaks extemporaneously. Even radio speeches seldom are written out beforehand due to the fact that his usual radio appearance is participation on dis-

²⁸ William Heston McPherson, Labor Relations in the Automobile Industry (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1940).

²⁹ Clayton W. Fountain, Union Guy (New York: The Viking Press, 1949).

³⁰ George R. Clark, "The Strange Story of the Reuther Plan," Harper's Magazine, 184:645-654, May, 1942.

³¹ Bruce Catton, The War Lords of Washington (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1948).

cussion programs.

Speeches are written out fully only for important occasions. For such events Reuther outlines the points which he wishes to make, and the Public Relations staff submits a rough draft which he then revises thoroughly. When a suitable draft is achieved it is duplicated for release to the press. These press releases are few in number; and, although Reuther occasionally alters his wording from that of the printed text, they are indicative of his ideas and represent substantially what was said.

Some of Reuther's speeches have been transcribed by the U.A.W.-C.I.O. and a few other agencies such as, for example, the union-owned radio station WDET-FM, in Detroit. Careful notes were taken when listening to transcriptions.

In addition to the above sources, several newspaper reports of various speeches have been used. These reports, although not verbatim texts, usually contain numerous quotations from the speeches.

The third step was to read or hear and analyze the speeches. These were simultaneous operations, followed by, however, a comparative analysis of the addresses. The ideas of each speech were compressed into a precis, and representative passages were underlined in the text. Notes on Reuther's speaking characteristics also were made at this time.

The final step in the development of the study was to

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interpret the speeches individually and collectively against the larger sweep of the history of the period. There were two aspects of this interpretation. The first involved projection of speeches against the background of theories of labor compensation. An understanding of various theories was enhanced by consulting such works as Chernick and Hellickson's Guaranteed Annual Wages,³² Thompson's Profit Sharing,³³ O'Neill's explanation of Modern Pension Plans,³⁴ and The Guarantee of Annual Wages, by Kaplan.³⁵

The second aspect of the interpretation of speeches was made in light of the history of the times. An attempt was made to gain representative points of view on the occurrences of the era by consulting both liberal periodicals such as, for instance, New Republic, and conservative magazines such as, for example, Time magazine and Business Week, as well as the more objective New York Times.

The data gathered and analyzed in the steps outlined

³² Jack C. Chernick and George C. Hellickson, Guaranteed Annual Wages (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1945).

³³ Kenneth M. Thompson, Profit Sharing (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949).

³⁴ Hugh O'Neill, Modern Pension Plans (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1947).

³⁵ A. D. H. Kaplan, The Guarantee of Annual Wages (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1947).

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furnished a serviceable foundation for the projected study. From this information it was possible to compile a descriptive and interpretative account of the post-war speechmaking of Walter P. Reuther.

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CHAPTER II

EARLY LIFE AND TRAINING

I. EARLY INFLUENCES

Family Influence. Social consciousness is an old tradition in the Reuther family. Its roots can be traced back three generations to Walter Reuther's grandfather, an immigrant from Germany. The story of his arrival in the New World has been told in the following manner:

Fifty-four years ago [1892] a ship moved slowly towards the Statue of Liberty carrying immigrants.

At the rail was Jacob Reuther, fleeing from Bismarck's Germany. He placed a firm hand on the shoulder of his wide-eyed, eleven-year-old son, Valentine, and said:

"Mann must immer für Freiheit und Brüderlichkeit kaeftem [sic]."

Those words -- "One should always fight for Freedom and Brotherhood" -- became the heritage of a family of labor leaders.

Valentine passed them down to his four sons, Ted, Walter, Victor, and Roy, the latter three of whom are leaders in the powerful United Automobile Workers Union.¹

Valentine Reuther left school in the eighth grade and worked for several years in the steel mills of Wheeling, West Virginia. Later he worked in a brewery, and, when not on duty, spent much of his time studying correspondence courses. He also engaged in union and political activities, including many years service as an international organizer of the United Brewery Workers. At the age of twenty-three he was

¹ Article in the Detroit Free Press, April 7, 1946.

elected president of the Ohio Valley Trades and Labor Assembly, an affiliate of the American Federation of Labor.² In 1914, when West Virginia adopted prohibition, the union disbanded and Valentine Reuther became an insurance salesman.

Despite his membership in the A.F.L., an organization whose president, Samuel Gompers, was a bitter enemy of the Socialist Party, Valentine Reuther was a socialist and once ran for Congress on the party ticket. W. W. Keylor, principal of Wheeling High School, made the following statement regarding Walter Reuther's father:

Mr. Reuther's father is quite a fluent speaker, and has been a labor leader and a liberal. This home background is perhaps partly responsible for the liberal ideas of Mr. Walter Reuther and his brothers. . . .³

Thus it can be seen that when Walter Reuther was born, prophetically enough, on Labor Day eve, September 1, 1907, he came into a home atmosphere which was, as Frank Winn, U.A.W.-C.I.O. Public Relations Director, put it, ". . . one of intense interests in unions and labor problems."⁴ Widick and Howe pointed out that "even the Reuther family's recreation was often tied in with the labor movement: union picnics on

² Hereafter cited as the A.F.L.

³ Letter from W. W. Keylor to the writer, November 15, 1950.

⁴ Frank Winn, "Biographical Sketch of Walter P. Reuther," (unpublished paper; U.A.W.-C.I.O. Public Relations Department, Detroit, July, 1949), p. 1.

Wheeling Island and socials at the union hall."⁵ Thus young Walter, along with his three brothers, was exposed to labor's problems at an early age. John Cort made the picturesque observation that ". . . the infant Walter began taking in his father's trade unionism with his mother's milk."⁶

Not only did Valentine Reuther teach the sons his views on unionism; he also taught them to express those, and opposing, opinions in the speaking situation. Few writings on Walter Reuther's early background have failed to mention the home debates in which he engaged. Of these weekly affairs Lena Conner, one of Reuther's teachers, commented:

His parents were very ambitious for the boys. I heard from neighbors that their father taught the boys the Art of Public Speaking by having debates on Sunday afternoons when he and they were all at home. This was verified to me by their Mother in a telephone conversation after receiving your [the writer's] letter.⁷

One writer provided an informative description of these family forensic activities:

Valentine mapped a detailed plan for his four sons. Following Sunday services at the Zion Lutheran Church, Valentine called them into regular labor debating sessions, where they learned the gospel of organized labor. Torrid issues of the twenties -- child labor, prohi-

⁵ Irving Howe and B. J. Widick, The UAW and Walter Reuther (New York: Random House, 1949), pp. 188-189.

⁶ John C. Cort, "Reuther and the Auto Workers," Commonweal, 44:6, April 19, 1946.

⁷ Letter from Lena Conner to the writer, January 1, 1951.

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bition, world peace and most of all, unionism -- were topics for loud and long debates.

The boys were split into teams and their interest in current issues was excited by a never-ending flow of magazines, books and newspapers which came into the Reuther home.

Ted and Roy employed loud and showman tactics, Victor compensated by becoming exasperatingly precise, and Walter presented his arguments with a change of pace combination ranging from lightheartedness to scorn.⁸

Walter Reuther's chief biographers, Irving Howe and B. J. Widick, have concluded about family influence on his concepts:

The strongest influence on Walter Reuther's personality and thought has undoubtedly been his father, Valentine, a man who devoted most of his life to the rising American labor movement. From his father . . . Valentine Reuther inherited a strong strain of Lutheran feeling: a binding sense of duty and a belief that life had to be guided by strong moral pointers. (Valentine's father is said to have remarked once that churches try to do too much for God and not enough for men.) Valentine Reuther's political thought was shaped by a blend of influences: the German Social Democratic tradition and the American movements of rebellion in the early 1900's, populism and Debsian socialism.⁹

School Influence. Walter Reuther does not seem to have made a great impression, either favorable or unfavorable, upon the records of Ritchie Grade School or Wheeling High School. When asked for information concerning Reuther's records, J. P. McHenry, Ohio County School Superintendent, re-

⁸ Article in the Detroit Free Press, April 7, 1946.

⁹ Howe and Widick, op. cit., pp. 187-188.

marked simply:

Our records show that Walter Reuther attended Ritchie Grade School. On checking with the present principal of this school we find that Walter was athletically inclined, very studious, and a good student.¹⁰

This statement is not at variance with the testimony of Lena Conner.

They [the Reuther children] were all courteous, loyal to family and to school, obedient, studious, and helpful. While Walter was not a brilliant pupil, he always succeeded because of tenacious application. He was fond of athletics, always practicing fair play. His personal appearance was always pleasing because of a natural tendency to be immaculate.¹¹

Reuther began high school in 1922, and attended classes for two years. His grades during this time were approximately average; that is, a "C," with his best work, judging by his grades, in machine shop, biology, and literature.

II. THE LABOR MARKET BECKONS

In his third year of high school young Walter Reuther withdrew, presumably because of a need for more income in the household, and became an apprentice tool-and-die maker at the Wheeling Steel Corporation. It was not long, however, before he joined the ranks of the unemployed, a result of his effort

¹⁰ Letter from J. P. McHenry to the writer, November 15, 1950.

¹¹ Letter from Lena Conner to the writer, January 1, 1951.

to organize the company workers in protest against Sunday and holiday work.

In February, 1926, Reuther went to Detroit.¹² He was employed, for short periods of time, by the Briggs Manufacturing Company where he worked a thirteen hour night shift for eighty-five cents per hour, by the General Motors Corporation, and by the Coleman Tool-and-Die plant. It was with the Ford Motor Company, however, that he worked the longest. Employed at the Highland Park and, later, the River Rouge plants as a tool-and-die worker, Reuther advanced to the pay rate of \$1.10 per hour. At the time of his dismissal in the fall of 1932, presumably for union agitation, he was foreman over approximately forty men in a tool-and-die room.¹³

Reuther, the Student. While working at Ford's, Reuther continued his high school education by attending night school for a short time at the Highland Park High School in Highland, Michigan, and, later, at the Fordson High School in Dearborn, Michigan. His grades averaged well above a "B."

In September, 1930, young Walter Reuther was admitted

¹² The date generally accepted for Reuther's going to Detroit is 1926. Current Biography, 1941, p. 704, however, gives 1927.

¹³ Current Biography, 1949, p. 514. However, Howe and Widick, op. cit., p. 191 believe that Reuther was dismissed in 1933.

to organize the company's work on a regular basis and holiday work.

In February, 1937, the company was reorganized and the employees were reclassified. The company was reorganized into two divisions, the Ford Motor Division and the Ford Truck Division. The Ford Motor Division was organized to handle the production of automobiles and the Ford Truck Division was organized to handle the production of trucks. The company was reorganized to meet the needs of the market and to improve its efficiency.

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to Wayne University in Detroit. While attending college by day he worked at Ford's on the night shift. During his first semester, the only one, incidentally, in which he made a grade as low as a "C," he obtained credit for eleven semester hours and for seventeen grade points. Considering the fact that Reuther had obtained credit for forty-three semester hours and ninety-five grade points by June, 1932, one well might conclude that his career as a part-time student was successful.

Upon his discharge from Ford's, Reuther enrolled as a full-time student at Wayne University for the fall semester in 1932. The end of that semester saw the conclusion of his college work. He had accumulated sixty semester hours and 131 grade points.

In briefly analyzing his course of study, as recorded on his transcript, it was found that Reuther was classified as a pre-law student, and obtained credit for thirty-nine hours in the social sciences. Fourteen of these hours were listed in economics and included principles, applied, trends in labor administration, and population. Among the other social sciences, Reuther took seven hours of sociology, ten hours of government, and eight hours of history. His program, then, appears to have been designed for a career in labor leadership. Although Reuther made above average grades

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in one speech course, interpretative reading, and two courses in freshman composition, he did not take any other work designed to improve his public speaking.¹⁴

Reuther's out-of-class campus activities apparently attracted little attention. The most probable explanation for this is that his obligations at Ford's made it impossible for him to find much time for other enterprises. When approached for information, Elizabeth Platt, Registrar at Wayne University, wrote:

As for extracurricular activities I can find very little. . . . His conduct was such that he did not come much to the attention of the administration and our alumni office has just the facts which have appeared in the public press since he left the University.¹⁵

Worthy of mention, however, is the Social Problems Club which Reuther organized and of which he became president. One of the activities of this organization was to visit picket lines to observe strikes in actual operation. The group also led a campaign against an attempt to install an ROTC unit at the university.

¹⁴ A sample survey of C.I.O. leaders showed that thirty-two per cent of the group have received at least some college training. C. Wright Mills and Mildred Atkinson, "The Trade Union Leader: A Collective Portrait," Public Opinion Quarterly, 9:166, Summer quarter, 1945.

¹⁵ Letter from Elizabeth A. Platt to the writer, March 9, 1951.

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General Secretary, the author's work in the

15 Letter from the author to the author
March 8, 1931.

Unions and Politics. Walter Reuther's interest in the social sciences during this period of his life, however, was not limited to the college campus. In the 1932 election, having joined the Socialist Party, he campaigned for Norman Thomas by giving street-corner speeches.

He also participated in attempts to organize a union at Ford's. In an era when the automotive industry was an open shop industry and there was no legislation to prevent dismissal of union organizers, it is not surprising that Reuther was discharged in the fall of 1932.

III. WORLD TRAVELER

At the end of the 1932 fall semester Walter Reuther and his younger brother, Victor, embarked on a venture which probably provided them with more interesting experiences than any other three-year period in their lives. It was a trip around the world, conducted primarily on bicycles and financed principally by savings and work performed en route.

Leaving Detroit in February, 1933, they journeyed first to England and then to Germany where they remained for eleven and a half months. When visiting relatives in their mother's home town, they witnessed an incident in which an anti-Nazi worker was cruelly beaten by members of Hitler's party. The Reuther brothers arrived in Berlin the day the

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Reichstag burned.¹⁶ There they lived with some anti-nazi students, and even helped smuggle some of them into Switzerland. These facts have led many to believe that Reuther opposed Hitler's nazism almost from the first moment he saw it in action.

It was the next stop on the agenda, however, which attracted the most comment in writings about Reuther. Leaving Germany in December, 1933, the Reuther brothers went to Russia. Near the city of Gorki stood a large automobile plant built by the Ford Motor Company for the Soviet government. Here the youthful travelers found employment. The plant employed approximately 18,000 workers, many of whom were peasants recently arrived from rural areas. Walter Reuther was assigned to lead a brigade of sixteen workers and to instruct in the skill of tool-and-die making. Both he and his brother were given the status of technicians.

There has been, virtually ever since Walter Reuther attracted public attention in this country, a controversy over his attitudes toward the Soviet Union while there, and how these attitudes have influenced his union policies. This dispute sometimes appears rather futile because, not only is there a sparsity of evidence on the matter, but also it does

¹⁶ Several of Reuther's biographers state that he arrived the day before the fire. Reuther himself stated in a speech before the Detroit High School International Clubs, November 13, 1950, that it was the same day.

not necessarily follow that Reuther's opinions toward American communists were influenced significantly by what he previously believed about the Soviet Union. As will be indicated later in this study, he worked with communists in the U.A.W.-C.I.O. when it was general C.I.O. policy to do so, but later was among the first to oppose communist elements within the union.

In light of the importance frequently attached to the matter, and inasmuch as little evidence has been presented in previous writings about Reuther, some comments might be in order. First, the oft-mentioned fact that Reuther was, during the early 'thirties, a member of the Socialist Party in the United States means little for, at that time, there were socialists who looked with favor upon "the Russian experiment" and those who did not. Second, the fact that Reuther spent considerable time in Russia also may signify little for he also spent a long period of time in Hitler's Germany.

Additional points were advanced by Howe and Widick to support their conclusion on Reuther's attitudes, an assertion which was unmistakably clear: "It can hardly be doubted that the Reuthers were then extremely sympathetic to the Russian regime, as were also a great many non-communist radicals and liberals."¹⁷ In support of their position they cited two

¹⁷ Howe and Widick, op. cit., p. 192.

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arguments. First, they referred to a letter dated January 21, 1934, written by the brothers, which highly praised the Soviet regime. Victor Reuther charged, however, that certain portions of the letter had been forged. Secondly, Howe and Widick pointed out that the city of Gorki was not victimized by the purges then taking place in many parts of Russia, and, therefore, it was only natural for the Reuthers to be comparatively uninformed of the true state of affairs in that country.

Although admittedly a public figure who ever had communist sympathies -- no matter how mild and ancient they might be -- would try to keep those once-held sympathies quiet, it seem pertinent, nonetheless, to consider testimony by Reuther concerning the matter.

In an interview concerning his stay in Russia which appeared in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Reuther stated that when he entered Russia "he was not pro-Communist but was not actively opposed to Communism. He entered Russia, he said, with an open mind."¹⁸ The article telling of the interview continued with a summation of his reactions to labor conditions at the Gorki plant:

"My first impression was fine," Reuther said, "because the workers in the plant had tremendous enthusiasm for

¹⁸ Article in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, February 15, 1947.

the industrial program, especially the younger workers. They were kids with mechanical toys and enjoying a sense of great creative satisfaction. Many of them were sons of peasants, coming from cabins where mechanical devices were unknown, to making autos and airplanes.

"But disillusionment set in above that level of the workers. I found that the worker was up against a stone wall if he began to think about anything beyond the mechanics of his production job."¹⁹

Considering, then, the nature of Reuther's initial appraisal, it is not surprising that he and his brother should have written to friends in the United States conveying that favorable impression. It should be noted that on January 21, 1934, the brothers, having left Germany in December of the preceding year, had been in Russia only a few days.

Regarding the contention that Reuther probably was ignorant of the true state of affairs in Russia, certain facts, taken from his comments on the trip, would indicate that he was well aware of the situation there. Turning again to his interview with the Post-Dispatch reporter:

Reuther said that because they had workers' visas they were able to travel about unmolested. They went by boat down the Volga to the Caspian Sea, he related, often getting off and going back to inland villages, where they found hunger and destitution.²⁰

In a speech delivered November 13, 1950, before the Detroit High School International Clubs, Reuther estimated

¹⁹ Loc. cit.

²⁰ Loc. cit.

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that he had traveled approximately 45,000 miles in Russia.²¹ It would seem unlikely that the two brothers could have covered that much distance without obtaining some idea of the true state of affairs in that country.

Walter Reuther's considered judgment of the Soviet experiment is highly illuminating, especially in light of the importance attached by the American public to his views on communism:

When they [the Russian governmental officials] make a decision, that decision is carried out with ruthless, machine-like precision without regard for the cost in human values and human lives.

.....
Whenever people stood in the way of the implementation of decisions of the Politburo, they were simply destroyed, like the outcome of a military decision. If there wasn't enough food both to feed the people and export, the export quota was met at the expense of human beings, especially in the southern Volga.

.....
I came away from Russia, as I had previously come away from Germany, with the same basic feeling. I felt that Communism, like Fascism, not only means a complete deprivation of civil rights, but it offers a promise to the masses of economic security at the price of spiritual and political enslavement.²²

After visiting Central Asia, the brothers arrived in China in time to see the rampaging Yellow and Yangtze rivers overflow their banks. The floods, together with poverty and misery which they observed, later served as illustrative

²¹ Speech recorded on tape by station WDET-FM, Detroit, Michigan.

²² Article in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, February 15, 1947.

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material in Reuther's speeches. In speaking of his stay in North China, the labor spokesman declared:

You can read in your textbooks and your history books about poverty. But you've got to see it; you've got to see poverty in its ugly, naked form to really appreciate how hungry people are in the world.²³

Leaving China, the brothers departed for Japan where they spent two months before returning to the United States in 1935. Thus, fortified by training, practical experience, and world travel, Walter Reuther was prepared to launch his career as a labor leader.

²³ Walter P. Reuther, Speech before the Detroit High School International Clubs, November 13, 1950. Tape recording by station WDET-FM, Detroit, Michigan.

CHAPTER III

RISE OF THE UNION LEADER

I. EARLY DAYS OF AUTOMOTIVE UNIONISM

Workmen's Complaints. A brief survey of wages, hours, and working conditions in the automotive industry of the early 1930's indicated that much was to be desired in corporate labor policies of the period.

Hourly wage rates, in the first three years of that decade, were moving downward. William McPherson estimated that ". . . average hourly earnings apparently declined more than 25 per cent from 1929 to 1933. . . ."1 This estimate was made despite Henry Ford's announcement on November 22, 1929 of a new wage rate for his company. It was a seven dollar per day basic wage for employees of the second largest producer of automobiles in the United States. This new wage was an increase of one dollar over the reported daily minimum, and it was Ford's contribution to the war against depression.2 Keith Sward's analysis of this gesture, however, was scathing:

Put to the test, however, this laudable undertaking soon proved to be more illusory than real. The \$7 basic wage did remain in force at the Rouge for the next two

1 William Heston McPherson, Labor Relations in the Automobile Industry (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1940), p. 79.

2 See Edsel Ford's comments in the New York Times, December 4, 1929.

years, but serving all this while as a shield behind which the Ford management succeeded in cutting its labor costs to the bone. . . .

First of all, while maintaining the \$7 pay for unskilled labor, the company pared down the wages of those of its employes who had been more highly paid. . . .

Secondly, to all of Ford's surviving workmen the concession of a \$7 scale came as a storm signal and an omen of greater speed-up. . . .

But neither of the foregoing economies could compare with a third -- one which enabled Ford to pose as a champion of high wages and, at the same time, to force a good number of the men who had a hand in making his car to accept something less than subsistence pay. The manufacturer simply farmed out a large faction of his work to the sweatshops of the industry.³

One such Ford supplier was the Briggs Manufacturing Company which, in January, 1933, was faced with a major strike. Sward considered this event also:

As the Briggs strike wore on, competent observers began a study of its origins. Justice Frank Murphy, then mayor of Detroit, sent a fact-finding committee into the field. One group of investigators soon came up with the discovery that, in contrast to the much-publicized basic wage of \$4, certain Briggs men had been working a 14-hour day, when the work was there, for 10 cents an hour.⁴

On November 18, 1933, the N.R.A. code for the automotive parts and equipment manufacturing industry went into effect. It provided for a minimum hourly wage of thirty-five cents for females and forty cents for males.⁵ As the nation

³ Keith Sward, The Legend of Henry Ford (New York: Rinehart and Company, Inc., 1948), pp. 219-220.

⁴ Ibid., p. 221.

⁵ United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Tabular Analysis of Labor Provisions In Codes Adopted under National Industrial Recovery Act during March, 1934," Monthly Labor Review, 58:1074, May, 1934.

made some progress in improving its economy, hourly wage rates in the automobile industry rose steadily.⁶

Compared with the hourly wage rates of most other manufacturing industries, those of the automotive industry were rather high. For example, in 1934, the average per hour wage rate in the automotive industry varied from sixty-five and one tenth cents in March to seventy-three and two tenths in October while the average for all listed manufacturing industries varied from fifty-three and one tenth cents in March to fifty-six cents in December.⁷

A mere discussion of hourly wage rates, however, would be insufficient to give a clear view of the wage picture. In the first place, there was a wide variety of rates due to many existing differentials. A chief differential concerned jobs held, enabling William McPherson, as late as 1940, to report that "the highest wage rate paid by a single company is often about 75 per cent more than its lowest rate."⁸ McPherson also indicated that "sex differentials are

⁶ A table showing the average hourly earnings in the auto industry for each month from January, 1932 to December, 1939, may be found in McPherson, op. cit., pp. 168-169.

⁷ United States Department of Labor, Division of Employment Statistics, Trend of Employment, March, 1934, through December, 1934.

⁸ McPherson, op. cit., p. 80.

made some progress in the first few months of 1940, but the
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A table showing the rate in the second half of the year
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may be found in the report, pp. 11-12.

United States Department of Labor
Employment Division, Bureau of Economic Analysis
Washington, D. C., 1940

8 Employment, pp. 11-12.

firmly established in the industry," and that such differentials on minimum hourly rates usually amount to ten cents which ". . . is less than was typical before union recognition."⁹

A second reason why one must look beyond hourly wage rates to see the wage situation fully is made obvious by the following story:

President Roosevelt put himself on record as favoring the annual wage as long ago as 1934 after a conference with a delegation of automobile workers from Detroit. He inquired of one of the men what his hourly wage was. The reply was a dollar and a quarter an hour.

"It seems to me that is a pretty good wage," said the President. The worker answered, "That is a good wage, Mr. President, but last year I only worked 65 days. My total gross was \$650."

The story, the President later told a press conference, emphasized to him "the reason for thinking in terms of how much a fellow gets by December 31st instead of how much he gets per hour."¹⁰

An indication of how much the auto workers were getting by December thirty-first was given by A. J. Muste:

The Henderson report to the National Recovery Administration revealed, for example, that the tool and design

⁹ Ibid., p. 83. For a more complete discussion of the role of these, and other types, of wage differentials in the auto industry, see pp. 79-94. An interesting book which sheds light on the position of women in the industry was written by a former woman staff member of the U.A.W.-C.I.O. Education Department; Elizabeth Hawes, Hurry Up Please Its Time (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1946).

¹⁰ Jack Chernick and George C. Hellickson, Guaranteed Annual Wages (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1945), p. 1.

engineers, a very highly skilled group, had median annual earnings in 1929 of \$2,717 which dropped in 1933 to \$1,300 and in 1934 were only a little over \$1,900; in other words, still 33 percent below the 1929 level and less than \$40 per week.¹¹

Herbert Harris reported that the "annual earnings of auto workers averaged less than \$1,300 in the prosperity year of 1926 and less than \$1,000 in the depression year of 1935."¹²

The low incomes of auto workers were due, in large part, to the instability of employment, both of a cyclical and a seasonal character.¹³ These two types of unemployment were manifested in the short work week and the layoff.

Concerning cyclical fluctuations and the resulting unemployment, Frederick Harbison and Robert Dubin wrote:

The automotive industry has always been susceptible to cyclical fluctuations in market demand. During depressions old cars are "made to last longer" and few new buyers appear on the market. Both the demand for replacements and the demand from new buyers on which auto production schedules depend fall off rapidly and the curtailed production is reflected in unemployment and competition among workers for the few remaining jobs. Employment in the automotive industry fell 75

¹¹ A. J. Muste, The Automobile Industry and Organized Labor (Baltimore: The Christian Social Justice Fund, n. d.), p. 13.

¹² Herbert Harris, American Labor (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1938), p. 267.

¹³ For an excellent technical differentiation between cyclical and seasonal unemployment, see Elmer Clark Bratt, Business Cycles and Forecasting (third edition; Chicago: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1948), pp. 1-2.

per cent from 1929 to 1932, a larger decrease than the average for the national economy as a whole.¹⁴

James Estey, as late as 1950, listed the demand for automobiles as seasonal and pointed out that seasonal demand usually results in seasonal production.¹⁵ These seasonal fluctuations, too, have had a definite effect on employment. In 1935, the employment index for the auto industry, using the three years 1923-1925 as the base period, fluctuated from a high of 119.9 in April to a low of eighty-four in September, a variation of thirty-five and nine tenths. The average for all listed manufacturing industries varied a comparatively low six and five tenths, from eighty-five and two tenths in October to seventy-eight and seven tenths in January.¹⁶

A. D. H. Kaplan has described this seasonal pattern:

As a consumer product, with year-to-year changes in model, it [the auto industry] follows a year-round pattern in which production is concentrated from October to April and tapers off during the late spring and summer. After the adoption in 1935 of the policy of introducing the new models in the late fall, peak demand was divided. The peak demand within the year, coupled with an industrial policy for the advance building of sub-assemblies, has had a moderating effect on the ups and

¹⁴ Frederick H. Harbison and Robert Dubin, Patterns of Union-Management Relations (Chicago: Science Research Associates, 1947), p. 18.

¹⁵ James Arthur Estey, Business Cycles (second edition; New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1950), p. 9.

¹⁶ United States Department of Labor, Division of Employment Statistics, Trend of Employment, January, 1935, through December, 1935.

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downs in employment. The industry is still amenable, however, to the marked preference of the public for purchasing cars in the spring.¹⁷

A final aspect of the wage picture in the early 'thirties pertains to the incentive wage system.¹⁸ Although popular with management,¹⁹ incentive wages were generally unpopular with the workers. When writing of his employment on an assembly line making automobile seat cushions at the Briggs Manufacturing Company, Clayton Fountain denounced this wage system:

Our major gripe was the piecework system. . . . According to the theory of incentive pay, the harder and faster you worked, and the more cushions you turned out,

¹⁷ A. D. H. Kaplan, The Guarantee of Annual Wages (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1947), p. 120.

¹⁸ An incentive wage system is simply one in which workers receive more pay for more production. For example, there is the piece rate method, which seems to be most common in the auto industry; the bonus; the commission; the standard of production, sometimes described as the differential rate; and profit sharing. For full discussions of these various methods, see Sumner H. Slichter, Modern Economic Society (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1928), pp. 596ff., Carroll R. Daughtery, Labor Problems in American Industry (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1941), pp. 572ff., and Van Dusen Kennedy, Union Policy and Incentive Wage Methods (New York: Columbia University Press, 1945), pp. 34ff.

¹⁹ There were, of course, a few exceptions. Some managers, and there is evidence that their numbers are increasing, feel that incentive pay not only injures their labor relations, but that quality of production is sacrificed for quantity. Another interesting point was raised by Slichter, op. cit., p. 602, when he contended that, although "piecework tends to make workmen efficient, it tends to make management inefficient."

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the more pay you received. The employer, however, reserved the right to change the rules. We would start out with a new rate, arbitrarily set by the company time-study man, and work like hell for a couple of weeks, boosting our pay a little each day. Then, bingo, the timekeeper would come along one morning and tell us that we had another new rate, a penny or two less than it had been the day before.²⁰

The arguments which unions have since used against incentive systems have been summarized well by Carroll Daugherty in his discussion of the straight piece-rate system:

At all events, whatever the cause, rate-cutting aroused a keen sense of injustice among laborers [note Fountain's comments].

In addition to rate-cutting, labor found other faults in straight piece rates. It was believed that employers used the system to speed up the workers, with resulting cumulative overstrain, fatigue, and ill-health. There was no guaranteed minimum daily wage for cases of work stoppage beyond the control of the employee, such as breakdown of machinery or shortage of materials, or for new employees not yet proficient on their jobs.²¹

Although many later plans included provisions for minimum daily wages, unions still usually object to any type of incentive pay, largely because it fosters the speed-up.

Just as income constituted a problem for the average auto worker in the early 1930's, so did hours of work per day create labor antagonism toward management. Under the N.R.A. code, forty-eight hours per week was the maximum, with

²⁰ Clayton W. Fountain, Union Guy (New York: The Viking Press, 1949), p. 28.

²¹ Daugherty, op. cit., p. 575.

no provision for overtime.²² Regarding the 1933 Briggs strike, Mayor Murphy's committee found, according to Sward, that the Briggs concern was:

. . . evading the state's 10-hour law for women by making women workers check out at the end of a 10-hour shift and then return to their posts immediately, their second shift being recorded on a separate set of time cards.²³

However undesirable wages and hours were in automotive plants of the early 'thirties, most observers agree that those shortcomings were overshadowed by the evils of the working conditions, particularly the speed-up. One of the most eloquent condemnations of working conditions came, not from an auto worker, but from a Yale economist. After discussing the wage problems involved in the General Motors strike of 1936, Herbert Harris maintained:

However, it was not the size of the pay envelope, per se, that General Motors workers staged a series of sit-downs at the end of 1936. The cause for this spectacular strike . . . went deeper into the secret places of the psyche than the question of so much cash return for so much work done.

It expressed the pent-up resentments of men in revolt against being de-humanized, against being only a badge, a number, a robot in thrall to a vast and intricate succubus of machinery, draining them of energy. . . .²⁴

²² United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Tabular Analysis of Labor Provisions In Codes Adopted under National Industrial Recovery Act During March, 1934," Monthly Labor Review, 38:1074, May, 1934.

²³ Sward, op. cit., p. 221.

²⁴ Harris, op. cit., pp. 268-269.

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The speed-up was highly injurious to workers' health and left little room along the assembly line for men beyond middle age. Workers complained that the pace was so rapid that they were "has-beens at forty,"²⁵ and Briggs workers, in 1933, called their plant the "butcher shop."²⁶

If, however, one is disinclined to accept the criticism of auto workers, there is the testimony of management. Sward, citing the Wall Street Journal, quoted the employment manager of Ford Motor Company to the effect that ". . . after 50 most of them can't stand the pace."²⁷ Supporting this opinion is the fact that, as late as 1940, only eight and one tenth per cent of the male auto workers were fifty-five or over. Only twenty-seven and six tenths per cent were forty-five or over.²⁸

Another complaint in regard to working conditions stemmed from the lack of seniority rules. Although one might argue that this encourages advancement on the basis of skill, there was unquestionably some truth in the complaints of

²⁵ Edward Levinson, Rise of the Auto Workers (third edition; Detroit: U.A.W.-C.I.O. Education Department, 1948), p. 4.

²⁶ Sward, op. cit., p. 221.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 18.

²⁸ Statistics gathered from table showing the "Age of Male Workers in the Automobile and Equipment Industry, 1940," Harbison and Dubin, op. cit., p. 121.

labor. Edward Levinson contended that when layoffs were scheduled, the foremen's "pets" were given preference.

There was no job security. If you were laid off at the end of a production season you had no idea whether you would ever be called back. Kowtowing to the foreman, and willingness to translate this subserviance into concrete items -- like an occasional pint of whisky, Christmas and birthday presents, cutting the foreman's lawn or painting his garage on a Sunday -- these sometimes helped to insure re-employment when the plant started up again.²⁹

Harbison and Dubin, also, indicated that "job tenure too often depended upon nepotism and favoritism."³⁰

These, then, were the conditions in automotive plants of the early 'thirties. Although hourly wage rates were fairly high when compared with other manufacturing industries, they declined during the period 1929 to 1933, and yearly incomes were quite low, due largely to both cyclical and seasonal unemployment. Wide prevalence of incentive wage systems, occurrences of illegal overtime, frequent speed-up, and general lack of seniority rules were additional grounds for labor dissatisfaction. Seeking a more articulate voice for their complaints, many workers embarked upon the long, hard road which eventually led to union organization.

The American Federation of Labor and the Federal Locals. The first attempt to organize auto workers occurred

²⁹ Levinson, op. cit., p. 4.

³⁰ Harbison and Dubin, op. cit., p. 121.

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The American Federation of Labor and the I.W.O.
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when the industry was in its infancy and when more skilled labor was required than has been necessary since the inauguration of mass-production techniques. In 1891, the International Union of Carriage and Wagon Workers³¹ obtained a charter from the A.F.L. It is significant that the union was organized on an industrial basis rather than the craft basis, although the latter was virtually the only type affiliated with the A.F.L.³² A frequent craft union practice of claiming jurisdiction over members of their respective crafts within the auto plants soon led to many jurisdictional disputes between these craft unions and the I.U.C.W.W. Settled by the A.F.L. Executive Council, these disagreements usually culminated in defeats for the industrial union. In 1918, the I.U.C.W.W. was expelled from the Federation for refusing to surrender jurisdiction of certain of its members.

³¹ Hereafter cited as the I.U.C.W.W.

³² "An industrial form of organization is the organization of all men employed in an industry into one compact union. Craft unionism means the organization of men employed in their respective crafts resulting in numerous organizations within a particular industry." David J. Saposs, "Industrial Unionism," Journal of Political Economy, 43:69-70, February, 1945, quoting William Green, "The Case for the Industrial Form of Labor Organization," American Labor Year Book, 1917-18, pp. 98-99. The only major industrial union within the A.F.L. is the United Mine Workers. Proponents of industrial organization argue that it is the most feasible method of organizing unskilled workers, improves labor's bargaining position by making strikes more effective, and lessens the likelihood of jurisdictional disputes.

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Its officers, however, formed a new union which they christened the United Automobile, Aircraft and Vehicle Workers. This union enrolled approximately 39,000 members within the next two years and became fairly strong, particularly in the body plants. In 1921, it conducted a strike which was unsuccessful, this defeat virtually ruining the organization.³³ During the 'twenties, as Muste asserted ". . . the banner of unionism dragged in the mud and only sporadic departmental walkouts kept the flame alive."³⁴

In 1926, the American Federation of Labor held its convention in Detroit. The delegates accepted a proposal that attempt be made to organize the auto industry, and that jurisdictional matters be waived until the end of the organizing campaign. Affairs did not go so smoothly, however, when heads of the seventeen craft unions who claimed jurisdiction over various groups of auto workers met with President Green on December 2, 1926. Maintaining that certain manufacturers were amenable to unionization if they could be protected from jurisdictional disputes, Green proposed that workers of each plant be organized into one local union under control of a joint committee. Only two of the craft unions

³³ The union apparently fell to the communists who were not able to do much with their prize.

³⁴ Muste, op. cit., p. 28.

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agreed to this proposal, and the meeting adjourned without any plan having been adopted.

In January, 1927, Green told the Executive Council that General Motors would accept unionization providing there were no jurisdictional disputes. In May, nine of the seventeen interested craft unions agreed to Green's proposal that the workers of each plant be organized into a "federal local union," each local to be directly affiliated with the A.F.L., and that, upon the completion of organization, the workers be transferred to their respective craft unions. Writers dealing with the period frequently condemn this arrangement in much the same way as did Norman Ware:

The plan is a bad compromise in that it deceives the automobile workers into believing that they are going to be organized into federal labor unions when in fact they are going to be turned over to the national [craft] unions as soon as possible.³⁵

The program of organization proved somewhat unrealistic. The policy was to obtain the manufacturers' consent to unionization and then enlist the workers en masse. Thus, until June, 1933, ". . . there was not a single union of auto workers," said Muste, "except for an occasional old and also weak craft union affiliated with the Federation."³⁶

³⁵ Norman J. Ware, Labor in Modern Industrial Society (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1935), p. 503.

³⁶ Muste, op. cit., p. 28.

The year 1933 saw a flurry of strikes in the industry. They constituted, as Muste indicated, ". . . a chaotic and many-sided surge of revolt."³⁷ Many small, independent unions then in existence represented a multiplicity of ideologies.

Almost all radical tendencies, Wobblies, Socialists, Stalinists, Lovestoneites, were involved in the 1933 and 1934 strikes in the auto industry. Briggs, Motor Products, Hudson and others hit the picket lines, often under I.W.W. leadership.³⁸

One such radical group was The Trade Union Unity League, largely under the influence of the Communist Party, which included in its membership an Automobile Workers Union. Many left wing, non-communist groups also were active among the auto workers -- the Industrial Workers of the World, the League for Industrial Democracy, the American Industrial Association, and the Conference for Progressive Labor Action under the leadership of A. J. Muste, to mention but a few.

Encouraged probably by section 7-a of the National Industrial Recovery Act, guaranteeing the right of collective bargaining, and no doubt fearing that other unions would capture the lion's share of workers, the A.F.L., in July, 1933, began an organizing campaign. Sidney Lens emphasized the

³⁷ Ibid., p. 29.

³⁸ Sidney Lens, Left, Right and Center (Hinsdale: Henry Regnery Company, 1949), p. 280.

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keenness of competition for members:

The two fateful years 1933 and 1934 were years of the "big race." Who was to gain control of the new millions who were about to enter the ranks of organized labor? Every political party of the working class had its finger in the great pie.³⁹

The A.F.L.'s automotive campaign met with encouraging success. After only three months, Business Week reported:

It has been impossible to ascertain with any degree of accuracy what progress the American Federation of Labor has made in its Detroit drive, but it is privately reported in Detroit that the campaign has been more successful than automobile magnates like to believe.⁴⁰

By early 1934, "it was claimed that well over 60,000 were enrolled in the A.F.L. in the Detroit area and an additional 150,000 elsewhere."⁴¹

March, 1934, was set as the month for a nation-wide automotive workers strike to gain union recognition. Fearing that such a strike would affect adversely the progress toward national economic recovery, the government urged creation of a mediation board, which the A.F.L. accepted. On March 25, President Roosevelt appointed a National Automobile Labor Board. In the midst of these negotiations, Business Week commented:

When General Johnson, and later President Roosevelt,

³⁹ Loc. cit.

⁴⁰ "Automobile Unions," Business Week, September 16, 1933, p. 14.

⁴¹ Muste, op. cit., p. 34.

Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C.

The following information was furnished to the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C., on July 1, 1954, by Mr. J. H. ...

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stepped into the picture, neutral observers close to union headquarters claim that they heard something suspiciously like a sigh of relief. Many not so neutral are persuaded that the Federation faced the prospect of a strike with deep distaste; was ready to welcome an 'out' that would leave it with something -- a mediation board for instance -- to prove to the rank and file that dues paid dividends. The unionization campaign had reached a point where that had to be demonstrated.⁴²

Although A.F.L. leaders claimed a victory for the workers, at least three significant developments soon became apparent. First, the board accomplished little for the workers, among whom the expression became popular that a person "could starve to death while the board prepared to hold a hearing,"⁴³ and the initials, N.R.A., were taken to mean, "National Run Around."⁴⁴ Herbert Harris, with many other labor historians, condemned the board's inactivity:

With the impassivity of a brass Buddha, the Board for nine months listened to a recital of workers' woes but did little or nothing toward action of any ameliorative kind.⁴⁵

The second significant development was increased corporate anti-union activity. Management employed various techniques, of which a major one was establishment of elaborate espionage systems. Chrysler Corporation is reported to

⁴² "Labor Showdown," Business Week, March 24, 1934, pp. 7-8.

⁴³ Howe and Widick, op. cit., p. 49.

⁴⁴ Lens, op. cit., p. 281.

⁴⁵ Harris, op. cit., p. 282.

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have paid to Corporations Auxiliary, a private detective agency, for "industrial service," in 1933, \$61,627.48; in 1934, \$76,411.81; and in 1935, \$72,611.89.⁴⁶ From January 1, 1934 to July 31, 1936, General Motors paid \$839,764 to the Pinkerton Detective Agency.⁴⁷

Additional corporate anti-union activity was felt by the workers when confronted with company unions which were almost always dominated by management.⁴⁸

The third significant development was a lessening of confidence in the A.F.L. on the part of auto workers. This

⁴⁶ Leo Huberman, The Labor Spy Racket (New York: Modern Age Books, Inc., 1937), p. 76. For an interesting account of espionage in auto plants, see especially pp. 76-83. This study was based primarily upon the findings of the La Follette Civil Liberties Committee.

⁴⁷ Aleine Austin, The Labor Story (New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1949), p. 201. The Ford Motor Company maintained its own Service Department, originally under the leadership of Harry Bennett. See John McCarten, "The Little Man in Henry Ford's Basement," American Mercury, part 1, 50:7-15, May, 1940, part 2, 50:200-208, June, 1940. See also Sward, op. cit., pp. 291-342.

⁴⁸ A company union is one in which the organization is sponsored by management. Meetings are held on company time, and expenses are paid by the corporation. Almost invariably dominated by management, company unions were declared illegal by the National Labor Relations Act of 1935. For an excellent discussion, see Harry A. Millis and Royal E. Montgomery, Organized Labor (vol. 3, The Economics of Labor, 3 vols.; New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1945), pp. 830ff. See also, United States Department of Labor, Division of Industrial Relations, Characteristics of Company Unions, 1935 (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics Bulletin #634; Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1938)

was illustrated by a growing demand for a national convention of federal locals which was finally satisfied in June, 1934, when delegates from seventy-seven locals met in Detroit. Anger ran so high that the delegates voted to keep all A.F.L. organizers off the floor. Green, however, managed to prevent the conference from insisting on an industrial union charter by promising a more vigorous organizing drive and future creation of an advisory national council of auto workers.

Disillusionment of the workers, nevertheless, continued to mount. Business Week soon told of a labor rebellion:

Long smoldering trouble with the ranks of the United Automobile Federal Workers, affiliate of the American Federation of Labor, has burst into flame with the withdrawal of the leaders of the Oldsmobile and Hudson locals and formation by them of an independent national union to be known as the Associated Automobile Workers of America.⁴⁹

Another independent union, the Automobile Industrial Workers Association, sponsored by Father Coughlin, also achieved some importance during this period. The most striking evidence of discontent with the A.F.L. was the result of the National Automobile Labor Board poll in the spring of 1935. Out of 154,780 ballots cast, 111,878 voted for "unaffiliated representation," 7,071 for various independents, 21,774 for company unions, and a mere 14,057 for the A.F.L.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ "Labor Rebellion," Business Week, August 18, 1934, p. 16.

⁵⁰ Harris, op. cit., pp. 282-283.

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Levinson estimated that, "by February, 1935, the 100,000 auto workers organized in the A.F.L. Federal locals had dwindled to 20,000.⁵¹

Then, in April, 1935, the A.F.L. was presented an opportunity to redeem itself with the workers. A strike at the Chevrolet plant in Toledo had spread to other General Motors plants, and with 30,000 workers out, it seemed that the entire General Motors system could be immobilized. What was the A.F.L.'s action? It declared the strike unauthorized, and ordered the men back to work!

Having failed to gain even union recognition from management, the delegates, at the 1935 convention, agitated for their own national organization. Green would agree to their demand only with the provisions that claims of the craft unions be recognized and that the A.F.L. appoint the new union officers. Although the convention refused these terms, Green, in August, 1935, presented them a limited charter and appointed as president, Francis J. Dillon, regarded as a traditional craft unionist. The workers protested against Dillon, and even sent the A.F.L. Executive Council an appeal charging Dillon with unfitness for his position. Thus, the International Union, United Automobile Workers of America, with great labor pains, was born.

⁵¹ Levinson, op. cit., p. 8.

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²¹ Levinson, p. 112.

Meanwhile, agitation by several A.F.L. leaders for industrial unionism in the mass-production industries was increasing. At the October, 1935 convention of the A.F.L., a resolution was read which, if passed, would have given auto workers, along with steel workers, rubber workers, and others, an industrial union. Debate became so heated that when William L. Hutcheson, chief of the carpenters, attacked the resolution, John L. Lewis floored him with a "right to the chin." The resolution, despite Lewis' "persuasive ability," failed to pass, and on November 9, 1935, the presidents of eight A.F.L. international unions met to form the Committee for Industrial Organization, of which the leader of the United Mine Workers was named chairman.

Encouraged by these events, delegates to the May, 1936 auto workers convention virtually rejected the A.F.L. by applauding speeches of C.I.O. representatives and by electing, for the first time, officers of their own.⁵²

Elected president was Homer Martin, a former Baptist minister and factory worker. Herbert Harris has given an interesting description of the man:

Boyish and wholesome-looking, Martin resembles in appear-

⁵² Fountain, *op. cit.*, p. 48 made the observation that the official union publication, the United Automobile Worker, carried a small line below the title, stating "Affiliated with the American Federation of Labor," as late as the October, 1936 issue. The November issue carried a small line stating, "Member of the Committee for Industrial Organization."

rance and manner the beau ideal of a Y.M.C.A. secretary, radiating good will and go-getting pep. His talents are primarily evangelical and he transformed open-air rallies and assembly-hall meetings of the union into something pretty close to good old-fashioned "revivals."⁵³

Other officers elected included, as vice-president, Wyndham Mortimer, who was charged with being a communist; George Addes, who was made secretary-treasurer; and among those elected to the International Executive Board was a red-head from the West Side of Detroit, Walter P. Reuther.

These, then, were some of the events shaping the destiny of auto workers when Walter Reuther returned from his global travels. To see the influence of these conditions on Reuther's later policies, it is well to examine what role he played in the drama just described.

II. REUTHER'S EMERGENCE AS A UNION LEADER

Reuther, the Organizer. Returning to Detroit in 1935, Walter Reuther obtained employment at the General Motors Ternstedt plant and devoted the bulk of his off-hours to union activity. At that time Francis Dillon was president of the weak A.F.L. affiliate and union members at Ternstedt, or in the entire Detroit West Side for that matter, were few. Reuther undertook the task of combining the Ternstedt Local with several other struggling unions to form West Side Local

⁵³ Harris, op. cit., p. 285.

#174, of which he was made president. Few workers at that time were willing to risk their jobs by joining a union; hence, when Reuther left for South Bend, Indiana to attend the 1936 convention, he represented only seventy-eight workers.

Precisely why Reuther was elected to the U.A.W.-C.I.O International Executive Board is rather difficult to explain. His local, obviously, was not a giant of the industry. Nevertheless, his record of consolidating several locals into one potentially strong organization at a time when many locals were disbanding probably impressed the delegates.⁵⁴ Charles Madison's observation on Reuther's election was that ". . . he so impressed the delegates with his obvious ability that they elected him to the executive board."⁵⁵ This explanation seems plausible in that the convention was comparatively small, thus enabling Reuther to stand out in the group.

The summer and autumn of 1936 were used by the U.A.W.-C.I.O. to enroll members. Reuther's local grew within a year from a membership of seventy-eight to 30,000.

With the coming of November, 1936, the nation wit-

⁵⁴ It was estimated by Benjamin Stolberg, The Story of the CIO (New York: The Viking Press, 1938), p. 159 that fifty-two locals died under Dillon's administration.

⁵⁵ Charles A. Madison, American Labor Leaders (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950), p. 389.

nessed one of the most remarkable periods in labor history, the era of the sit-down strike. The first such disturbance in the auto industry occurred at the Bendix plant in South Bend. Shortly thereafter, the Reuther brothers planned the first major sit-down in Detroit, at the Kelsey-Hayes Wheel factory. Taken by surprise, the plant's management, eager to maintain their production schedule, allowed the Reuthers to enroll several hundred workers into the union and to negotiate a contract.

On December 28, 1936, workers at the Fisher Body plant in Cleveland, Ohio, without taking a formal strike vote or without receiving a union directive, spontaneously sat-down after William Knudsen, a General Motors vice-president, had told Homer Martin to settle grievances on the local plant level. Demanding that contracts be negotiated on a company-wide basis, workers spread the strike to seventeen General Motors plants. The major conflict was centered at Flint, Michigan, where 50,000 people worked in auto plants, most of whom were employed by General Motors.⁵⁶

The Reuther brothers played their part in the struggle. Roy, the last of the trio to come to Detroit, was one of two full-time organizers sent by the U.A.W.-C.I.O. to

⁵⁶ For detailed accounts of the General Motors sitdown strike, see Herbert Harris, op. cit., pp. 297ff. and Howe and Widick, op. cit., pp. 55ff.

organize Flint in 1936. He also devised the plan whereby unionists were able to seize the strategic Chrevolet plant #4. When, on January 12, 1937, police attempted to evict the strikers from Fisher Body plant #2, it was Victor Reuther who manned the union sound truck's microphone. When water from the plant fire hoses and a shower of automobile door hinges had forced police to retreat, the attempted eviction was promptly named by the victorious and jubilent workers the "Battle of the Running Bulls." After a court injunction had ordered the plants evacuated, with February 3 set as the deadline for compliance, it appeared that the strikers would face defeat, and possible massacre, at the hands of police and National Guard. That morning, however, thousands of unionists and union sympathizers from nearby Michigan and Ohio cities swarmed into town. Walter Reuther personally led a "flying squadron" from Detroit's West Side.⁵⁷

On March 8, 1937, sixty thousand Chrysler Corporation workers struck, and on April 6, the corporation signed a contract with the U.A.W.-C.I.O. When a strike took place at Cadillac, it was accompanied with violence between police and strikers. Charging that police had started the trouble, the union, to emphasize its popular support, sponsored a

⁵⁷ A "flying squadron" is a group of workers who are both organized and equipped with baseball bats, pipes, etc., for battle. In other words, it is a miniature army.

demonstration, appropriately enough, in Detroit's Cadillac Square, which 150,000 people attended.

The mushrooming union then turned its organizing attention to the Ford Motor Company. Already having signed up a number of Ford employees, the union announced that it would distribute leaflets at the Rouge plant. On May 26, 1937, after securing a city permit, several union organizers and officials, including Walter Reuther, stood on a street overpass used by workers on their way home from the plant. They chatted with a number of newspaper reporters and posed for pictures. Suddenly they were told by Ford servicemen that the overpass was Ford property and to "get the hell off."

What happened next has best been described by the National Labor Relations Board:⁵⁸

The uncontradicted testimony of several witnesses indicates clearly that . . . the union group, without making any response or objection whatsoever, turned quietly around and began walking toward the stairway. They had taken only a few steps, however, when they were surrounded and attacked by the men who had been closing in on them.

The story of the attack is almost unbelievably brutal. Reuther and Frankenstein were singled out for particular attention and given a terrific beating. Each of them was knocked down and viciously pounded and kicked in all parts of the body. They were raised in the air several times and thrown upon their backs on the concrete. Reuther was then kicked down the north stairway and beaten and chased down Miller Road.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Hereafter cited as the N.L.R.B.

⁵⁹ "In the Matter of Ford Motor Company and International Union, United Automobile Workers of America," Decisions and Orders of the National Labor Relations Board, vol. 4 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1938), p. 627.

Women who were alighting from street cars to distribute union leaflets were beaten;⁶⁰ newspaper photographers had their films taken from them;⁶¹ and, while these events were taking place, several policemen stood by and did virtually nothing, except give some aid to the servicemen.⁶²

Although the Ford Motor Company attempted to create the impression that the fight was begun spontaneously by company production workers who favored Ford's labor policies, findings of the N.L.R.B. show just the opposite.

The careful preparations made for weeks in advance by the respondent to prevent any attempt of the U.A.W. to distribute literature at the plant; the great increase in the size of its service department; the presence at the scene of professional fighters and of individuals with known criminal records employed by the respondent; the experienced professional manner in which the attacks were carried out and the brutality with which they were marked; the playing of the most prominent parts in the riot by members of the Service Department and not by production workers; the payment of the respondent of the men who conducted the attacks; and the direct participation of Everett Moore, head of the Service Department, -- all lead inescapably to the conclusion that the assaults . . . were part of a carefully designed plan. . .

. . .⁶³

Known even today as the "Battle of the Overpass," this event serves as striking evidence to support the conclusion

⁶⁰ Ibid., pp. 630-631.

⁶¹ Ibid., pp. 632-633, p. 637.

⁶² Ibid., pp. 631, p. 638.

⁶³ Ibid., pp. 644-645.

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of Howe and Widick concerning this period of Walter Reuther's life:

The prevalent image of Reuther in recent years has been that of a brainy young fellow, quick-witted and quick-tongued, who wins his fights in debates and meetings. But it must be remembered that before having reached this relatively luxurious status, Reuther had to spend a good many years doing the dangerous dirty work that goes into building a union. The "red-head" was as ready as the next man, perhaps more so, to go out and risk his neck -- and in the mid-thirties you did risk your neck in union work.⁶⁴

In view of the severe beating that Reuther and his fellow unionists received, it is not surprising that Harbison and Dubin reported:

Walter Reuther has stated . . . that the UAW was built up against great opposition from the auto companies who resorted to "the most vicious brutality, with the employment of underworld thugs and gangsters and spies and the expenditures of millions of dollars in the most vicious anti-American campaign conceivable."⁶⁵

In August, 1937, U.A.W.-C.I.O. organizers returned to distribute union literature. This time, with approximately 1,000 union men waiting for the servicemen to start a fight, there was no violence. The Ford Motor Company, however, was not to be organized immediately. Although the corporation was powerful, it is very likely that its workers could have been organized had it not been for factions and fractions in

⁶⁴ Howe and Widick, op. cit., p. 194.

⁶⁵ Harbison and Dubin, op. cit., p. 20.

union politics.⁶⁶

Union Politics. Even as early as 1937 there had been rumblings of discontent against the Homer Martin administration. Many of the more militant unionists felt that C.I.O. president John L. Lewis, who had been labor's chief negotiator both in the General Motors and Chrysler strikes, had given management too many concessions. When the strikers' delegates met to discuss the agreement with General Motors which ended the sit-down strike, many of the contract provisions were objected to, and ratification came only after fourteen hours of bitter debate. Likewise, during the Chrysler strike there was opposition to Lewis' bargaining concessions.⁶⁷

A number of problems soon arose as workers and management attempted to adjust to the new contracts in the General Motors and Chrysler plants. Both groups were inexperienced at collective bargaining; and workers, flushed with victory, frequently were "cocky," while management often by-passed the

⁶⁶ A group of unionists working together to advocate adoption of some particular program or to present a slate of candidates is considered a "faction" in union terminology, while a well-disciplined group of unionists working as a team, such as, for example, the Communist Party members, is considered a "fraction."

⁶⁷ For a more detailed account of the controversy over Lewis' agreements with management, see Lens, op. cit., pp. 309-310.

Union Bulletin - The following is a list of the names of the delegates to the annual convention of the International Union of Marine Engineers, which was held at the Hotel Commodore, New York, on the 15th, 16th and 17th of December, 1914. The convention was held in the afternoon of each day, and the delegates were given the opportunity to discuss the various matters which came before them. The convention was held in the afternoon of each day, and the delegates were given the opportunity to discuss the various matters which came before them. The convention was held in the afternoon of each day, and the delegates were given the opportunity to discuss the various matters which came before them.

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RESOLUTIONS

A number of resolutions were adopted at the convention, and the delegates were given the opportunity to discuss the various matters which came before them. The convention was held in the afternoon of each day, and the delegates were given the opportunity to discuss the various matters which came before them. The convention was held in the afternoon of each day, and the delegates were given the opportunity to discuss the various matters which came before them.

shop-steward system.⁶⁸ The result was numerous wildcat strikes which were small, spontaneous, short, and started without formal strike votes. Usually referred to as "quickies," these strikes soon caused an intr-union dispute. The question was largely one of militancy. Whereas Homer Martin offered to concede General Motors the right to fire wildcat strikers in return for certain concessions, more militant union leaders, such as Walter Reuther, warned that unless the corporation showed greater respect for the shop-steward system, large-scale sit-downs might be resumed.

The issue of wildcat strikes was soon joined by another, that of centralization of authority. Opponents of Martin charged him with attempting to construct an undemocratic machine to preserve his own power by taking progressively more authority from the locals and placing it in the hands of the international office. Clayton Fountain, himself active in the anti-Martin coalition, summarized the Reuther brothers' reasons for opposing Martin:

Their reason for opposing Homer Martin's policies was that they felt he was sliding back toward the conservative philosophy of the AFL. They disapproved strongly

⁶⁸ The shop-steward system is a method whereby workers' grievances are handled by the union which is represented, on the lower levels of a case, by a shop steward. Although it is common for people to think in terms of a union bargaining for wages, hours, and working conditions, a union, if it is to maintain the respect of its members, must maintain efficient machinery for negotiation of grievances.

of Martin's tendency to have contracts negotiated with employers by top union officers alone, with little or no participation by the rank-and-file representatives of the local unions. They were fearful of a concentration of control and power in the hands of a few top union executives. Moreover, they believed that Martin was a poor bargainer and a worse administrator.⁶⁹

Eventually two factions were formed, the Unity Caucus, which opposed Martin, and the Progressive Caucus, which supported him. During the summer of 1937, caucuses were held, and both sides presented their point of view to the rank-and-file members by writing in union papers and speaking at local meetings.

The Unity Caucus contained, among other groups, both socialist and communist elements. Benjamin Stolberg, strongly pro-Martin, charged that ". . . the Unity caucus was completely tied to the Communist Party line which controlled it. . . ." ⁷⁰ Although communists assuredly were in the group, there seems to be no evidence beyond Stolberg's testimony that they dominated the group. Reuther, it is known, was then a member of the Socialist Party, and available evidence indicates clearly that he was not under communist control. During the year 1937, he was asked to join the Communist Party. This was revealed by a former editor

⁶⁹ Fountain, op. cit., p. 69.

⁷⁰ Stolberg, op. cit., p. 180.

of building a program to have control exercised upon
employers by the labor union, with little or no
participation by the management. The organization
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of control and power in the hands of a few labor
activists. However, they believed that building a
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Essentially the factors were found, the labor union
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and both sides presented their point of view to the work-
file members by visiting in union houses and speaking at local
meetings.

The latter groups contained, among other things, both
socialist and communist elements. Benjamin Schwartz,
strongly pro-union, directed these. The latter groups
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the Communist Party. This was revealed by a former editor

99 Remains on file, p. 62.
70 Schwartz, on file, p. 130.

of the Daily Worker, Louis Budenz:

Budenz testified yesterday that the party sent him to Detroit several years ago to try to get Reuther to "become a Communist or a Communist sympathizer."

"I did, but I failed," said Budenz, a former ranking Red who renounced the party three years ago and returned to Catholicism.

Reuther, president of the UAW-CIO, confirmed the story last night and said he told Budenz "You and your Red friends can go to hell."⁷¹

At the August, 1937, U.A.W.-C.I.O. convention, the Unity Caucus did not attempt to unseat Martin, but differed over the vice-presidential candidates. The Progressive Caucus, however, was victorious in this first round of battle.

After the convention, a number of anti-Martin U.A.W.-C.I.O. organizers were discharged, including Victor and Roy Reuther. With the help of Ora Gassaway, from the national C.I.O. office, Martin drafted several constitutional amendments which would have given him greater authority. The Progressive Caucus was riding the crest of victory, and it even appeared that its opposition was becoming disunited. The breakup of the Unity Caucus occurred at the first Michigan State C.I.O. convention, held in April, 1938. At this meeting it was agreed that the new organization would direct a staff of organizers and serve as the C.I.O.'s political arm on the state level. A compromise candidate, Adelp Germer, C.I.O. Regional Director, was elected president, but

⁷¹ News item in the Detroit Times, September 2, 1948.

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the two factions split over the vice-presidency. Victor Reuther was the Unity Caucus candidate, but then, suddenly, the communists withdrew their support and backed the Progressive Caucus candidate. Although unable to adjust himself to Communist Party practices so that he later withdrew from the party, Clayton Fountain was then a "CPer." After describing the party's "double-cross" in which he participated, he analyzed the party leaders' motives:

The reasoning behind this switch arose from the developing trend toward abandonment of the United Front program formulated by the 1935 meeting of the Communist International. Party bosses were becoming more and more troubled by the devotion of the Reuther brothers and of other influential non-Communists in the anti-Martin coalition to democracy for democracy's sake. Unable to control the anti-Martin coalition and run it strictly in the interests of Russia -- because the Reuthers and others insisted on plugging away in the interests of the workers and the American people -- the Commies decided to break up the caucus.⁷²

Exactly when Reuther left the Socialist Party is not clear. Seemingly, the event occurred in 1938 and was based largely on his belief that it was preferable to support certain New Deal candidates when socialist candidates served only to split the liberal vote.⁷³

In June, 1938, Martin suspended five U.A.W.-C.I.O. officials, including the Secretary-treasurer, George Addes,

⁷² Fountain, op. cit., p. 85.

⁷³ Howe and Widick, op. cit., p. 195.

and Richard Frankenstein. These men had been regarded highly enough that both caucuses had endorsed them in the 1937 convention. In August, the suspended officers appealed their case to the national C.I.O. Lewis appointed Philip Murray and Sidney Hillman "receivers" of the U.A.W.-C.I.O., and they were given the necessary powers to restore order in the auto workers' union. The suspended officers were reinstated, and a number of Martin's supporters were discharged.

In October, 1938, Martin met in private negotiation with Harry Bennett, founder of the Ford Service Department, to discuss the possibility of organizing Ford workers. It probably will never be known precisely what concessions Martin offered to make, but in January, 1939, R. J. Thomas, a leading U.A.W.-C.I.O. official, charged that he had been present at a meeting in which Martin agreed to withdraw the union from the C.I.O. That same month the International Executive Board, in light of Thomas' charge, voted to call a special union convention. Martin then suspended fifteen of the twenty-four board members and called a convention of his own.

Thus, in March, 1939, two conventions were held. In Detroit, Martin was re-elected president, and the group there later received a charter from the A.F.L.⁷⁴ In Cleveland,

⁷⁴ Hereafter cited as the U.A.W.-A.F.L.

however, events did not run so smoothly. The possibility that communists would "capture" the union apparently was quite strong. Murray and Hillman again reappeared on the scene, and, in convention caucuses, persuaded union leaders to select R. J. Thomas as a compromise candidate. A few years later, Business Week made this striking observation on Reuther's role in the factional troubles of the U.A.W.-C.I.O.:

When he returned to Detroit to become a leading figure in auto unionism, Reuther's anti-Communism deepened and he became the recognized leader of the right-wing faction in the U.A.W. That factional identification is the main reason why, despite his rank as an orator, negotiator and union strategist, he isn't president of U.A.W. Since its experience with Homer Martin, U.A.W. always elects a "compromise candidate" to its highest office.⁷⁵

A New Fight for Collective Bargaining. In the spring of 1939, the General Motors Corporation announced that it was suspending collective bargaining. It will be recalled from the discussion of seasonal unemployment in the auto industry, that summer was the slack season. Needing few workers except those engaged in the summer retooling, General Motors, very likely, did not fear serious trouble from the union. Having just attained the position of Director of the General Motors Department, Walter Reuther devised the "strategy strike," which called for a strike at the peak of the

⁷⁵ "Reuther of the Reuther Plan," Business Week, January 17, 1942, p. 60.

However, events did not run as smoothly. The possibility that communists would "capture" the union apparently was quite remote. Murray and Wilkins again resorted to the usual tactics, and in conversation with various persons, and in conversation with various persons, to select H. W. Brown as a compromise candidate. A few years later, Business Week took this striking observation on Neuberger's role in the National Program of the U.A.W.-C.I.O.

When he returned to Detroit to become a leading figure in anti-unionism, Neuberger's anti-Communist activities and he became the recognized leader of the fighting faction in the U.A.W. The National Industrial Relations Board, the main reason for his return as an expert negotiator and union strategist, he had been president of U.A.W. Since his experience with former leaders, U.A.W. always elects a "conservative candidate" to its highest office.

A New Fight for Collective Bargaining. In the spring

of 1939, the General Motors Corporation announced that it was suspending collective bargaining. It will be recalled from the discussion of economic development in the auto industry, that earlier was the black market, leading the work-ers except those engaged in the auto's production, thereby Neuberger, very likely, did not feel that his trouble was the same. Having just obtained the position of Director of the General Motors Department, Walter Neuberger devised the "Buckley studies," which called for a strike at the peak of the

78 "Frontier of the New Deal," Business Week, January 17, 1943, p. 50.

retooling job in order to delay the new models, the shutdown to be accomplished by merely calling out the tool-and-die men. Thus, the bulk of the workers were able to draw unemployment insurance.

General Motors, meanwhile, was demanding, probably with some justification, that the N.L.R.B. hold elections to determine whether workers preferred the U.A.W.-C.I.O. or the U.A.W.-A.F.L. Such elections were soon held throughout the industry, and although able to gain victory in a few small plants, Martin was decisively defeated in the larger plants.

The U.A.W.-C.I.O. was then free once more to attempt organization of employees of the Ford Motor Company. With aid from the national C.I.O. office, together with the help of volunteer organizing committees from other C.I.O. unions in the Detroit area, the U.A.W.-C.I.O. was able to enroll a few members. Then, on April 1, 1940, the Ford Motor Company refused to meet with any union committees, and discharged a number of U.A.W.-C.I.O. committeemen. Like the early Flint sit-downs, what happened next reads like a novel:

No one gave any orders; no directives came from the union. On April 1 the men just quit working and waited for the company to rehire the committeemen it had discharged. . . .

The strike spread from building to building, until the huge Rouge plant was uncannily still. Begun late in the afternoon, the shut-down was completed in the evening. UAW officials didn't know what had happened, for the strike had not been planned and they had no way of communicating with the plant. But the report, which

Detroit still thought was unbelievable and impossible, spread through the city like a licking flame: Ford is shut down!⁷⁶

The night of April 1, is interesting from the standpoint of public address. An all-night meeting of the strikers was held with virtually every important union leader, including Reuther, delivering speeches. Speeches of stimulation, such as those delivered that night, are frequently used by labor leaders to bolster the striker's morale.

Although the Ford Motor Company attempted to operate some of its plants with Negro labor, an N.L.R.B. election was held in May, 1940, and an agreement was negotiated.

Having established itself as a major power in the auto industry, in the C.I.O., and in the nation, the U.A.W.-C.I.O. now was confronted with problems which were the outgrowth of war in Europe, and difficulties in Asia.

III. REUTHER, THE "INTERNATIONALIST"

The Reuther Plan. The year 1940 was a crucial period for organized labor, as well as for the nation. At that time, Germany had not yet invaded the Soviet Union. Communists within the U.A.W.-C.I.O., along with George Addes and other non-communists, urged that labor endorse isolationist sentiments. Many averred that it was non-interventionist

⁷⁶ Howe and Widick, op. cit., pp. 100-101.

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EFFICIENCY
ERASE ROW

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... sentiment.

feeling that impelled Lewis to endorse Willkie in the 1940 presidential campaign.

On the other side of the political fence was Walter Reuther, who supported the interventionist policies of Roosevelt's administration. What forces were operating on Reuther cannot be determined exactly, but, very likely, impressions of Nazism received during his eleven-month stay in Germany were of importance. Another factor, the influence of Sidney Hillman, also has been suggested:

In June, 1940, Walter Reuther reached a turning point in his career. His friend Sidney Hillman, who regards him almost as a son, became a key figure in the new national defense program and, thereupon, induced the Detroitier to turn his attention to broader vistas.⁷⁷

Whatever were the influences upon Walter Reuther, his position was clear, and he himself summarized it well when he maintained that, "even the most casual observer of nazism and fascism must know that the first victims of these satanic twins have been the working people and their organizations."⁷⁸

In line with his internationalist views, Walter Reuther devised the so-called Reuther Plan to utilize idle automobile industrial capacity in the production of airplanes. In 500 Planes a Day, a pamphlet designed to publicize the

⁷⁷ "Reuther of the Reuther Plan," Business Week, January 17, 1942, p. 60.

⁷⁸ Walter P. Reuther, "Labor's Place in the War Pattern," The New York Times Magazine, December 13, 1942, p. 13.

proposal, he argued that fifty per cent of automotive plant capacity was idle and could be adapted to making airplane motors, wings, and fuselages. Such conversion, he asserted, would be faster than construction of new airplane factories and would permit the year-around use of skilled tool-and-die makers who, as a result of the automotive industry's seasonal tooling pattern, were often unemployed. Having developed these points, Reuther made his recommendations:

We propose that the President of the United States appoint an aviation production board of nine members, three representing the government, three representing management and three representing labor. We propose that this board be given full authority to organize and supervise the mass production of airplanes in the automobile and automotive parts industry.⁷⁹

After Reuther and assistants worked out the plan, it was presented to President Roosevelt by Philip Murray and R. J. Thomas on December 22, 1940. Roosevelt passed it on to the Office of Production Management.⁸⁰ Not until March 1, 1941, did William Knudsen, former president of the General Motors Corporation and then Director of the O.P.M., call in Walter Reuther and R. J. Thomas to discuss the proposal. Sharp disagreement soon arose over the practicality of tooling idle machinery for production of airplane motors. Reu-

⁷⁹ Walter P. Reuther, 500 Planes a Day (Washington: American Council on Public Affairs, n. d.), p. 9.

⁸⁰ Hereafter cited as the O.P.M.

ther later gave the following account of the meeting:

. . . we differed on one essential of the program -- the extent to which existing automobile-plant which stands idle was adaptable to defense production. Mr. Knudsen insisted that less than five per-cent was adaptable. I strongly disagreed. . . . He then suggested that they would make available a blueprint of a standard airplane motor so that we might have an opportunity to break down the job and evaluate what existing machines might be put to use in turning out such a motor. Nine months have passed and we are still waiting to see those blueprints.⁸¹

The latter part of Reuther's testimony contradicted that of Knudsen who stated that Reuther would furnish the blue-prints.⁸² Regardless of who was right, it is clear that the O.P.M. was not particularly interested in converting the automotive industry to defense production. That point was demonstrated graphically by testimony of W. H. Harrison, O.P.M. Director of Production, presented to the House Committee Investigating National Defense Migration. Harrison gave a reply of "no, sir" when asked:

If you had been able in August to forsee the curtailment order of the week following December 7, reducing auto production almost to zero, I presume that in order to maximize output you would have called in the auto manufacturers and given them larger contracts and asked them to undertake a bigger amount of defense work than you did at the time; is that correct?⁸³

⁸¹ Michael Straight, "The Automobile Conference," New Republic, 106:72-73, January 19, 1942.

⁸² George R. Clark, "The Strange Story of the Reuther Plan," Harper's Magazine, 184:650, May, 1942.

⁸³ Bruce Catton, The War Lords of Washington (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1948), p. 94.

The policy of the O.P.M. seemed to favor construction of new plants which the auto industry would operate, and the Reuther Plan was relegated to gathering dust.

The Automobile Conference, in January, 1942, heard a version of the Reuther Plan, revised to meet changing conditions. The program, however, was not adopted, although the O.P.M. promised to establish a joint labor-management committee which, unlike Reuther's proposal for industry-wide councils with final authority, could only give advice. After the O.P.M. was abolished and Donald Nelson made chairman of the War Production Board, the joint labor-management committee idea was dismissed.

When one attempts to discover why the Reuther Plan was not adopted, he is confronted with a multiplicity of possible answers. Charles Madison stated flatly that "the plan was impractical and unrealistic. . . ." ⁸⁴ Yet, since the auto industry was later able to accomplish large scale conversion to defense production, the explanation seems to lie elsewhere. The idea of pooling facilities was opposed by the auto industry, and the proposal for industry-wide councils representing labor, management, and the government was dismissed by Nelson, who purportedly remarked in pri-

⁸⁴ Madison, op. cit., p. 391.

vate that

. . . whenever you set up a joint committee of government, industry, and labor to handle something, the first thing you know industry and labor representatives get together to see how they can screw the public.⁸⁵

But, most likely, the main difficulty with the Reuther Plan was that as far as Washington's dollar-a-year men were concerned, it came, as Henry Morgenthau averred, ". . . from the 'wrong' source."⁸⁶ Objections to labor interference were many, and the idea of direct labor participation in managerial decisions inevitably was opposed by corporation spokesmen. Throughout the war, affirmed Bruce Catton, labor was confronted with this attitude:

. . . a president of a corporation, taking leave of absence (with full pay) from his desk and being sworn as a government official, immediately ceased to be a "representative of industry" and became . . . a government official, fit to be entrusted with the exercise of government authorities; a union man, similarly taking leave from his job and being sworn in as a government official, remained a "representative of labor" from start to finish.⁸⁷

But whatever the merits and demerits of the proposal, it serves to illustrate Reuther's "international" outlook, and many believe it constituted a challenge to management's long-cherished prerogatives. The significance of labor

⁸⁵ Catton, op. cit., p. 108.

⁸⁶ Clark, op. cit., p. 649.

⁸⁷ Catton, op. cit., p. 97.

... However, for the purpose of this study, it is necessary to consider the possibility that the observed differences may be due to differences in the way that the data were collected or analyzed.

It is also possible that the observed differences are due to differences in the way that the data were collected or analyzed. For example, it is possible that the data were collected in a way that was biased in favor of one of the groups.

The 'wrong' answer, of course, is that the data were collected in a way that was biased in favor of one of the groups. This is a possibility that should be considered in any analysis of the data.

Therefore, it is important to consider the possibility that the data were collected in a way that was biased in favor of one of the groups. This is a possibility that should be considered in any analysis of the data.

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85 (bottom) pp. 101-102

86 (top) pp. 101-102

87 (bottom) pp. 101-102

participation in industrial policy making was emphasized by Frank Tannenbaum:

The prospect of an escape from the evils of irresponsibility of unions is to be found in the trade-union's challenge to managerial prerogatives. . . . Management is a responsible function. It is, under present conditions, more responsible than ownership. When the unions press to share the managerial functions, they are asking to be allowed to assume the responsibility that goes with management. They are doing that even if they are not aware of the commitment they are making, and even if they deny they are making it.⁸⁸

Incentive Pay and the No-Strike Pledge. Although there was considerable isolationist sentiment before the outbreak of war, harmony soon prevailed between union factions after Pearl Harbor. At the 1942 convention of the U.A.W.-C.I.O., Reuther, along with Frankenstein, was elected a vice-president of the union, by voice vote, while Thomas and Addes were re-elected without opposition. Early in the war, the U.A.W.-C.I.O. unionized many aircraft plants, adopted a no-strike pledge, and seemed to have achieved harmony among the union factions.

This pleasant situation, unfortunately, was not to remain for long. After Germany invaded the Soviet Union, American communists reversed their previous isolationist stand, and were prepared to go "all out" to win the war. Going further than Reuther, they proposed a return to in-

⁸⁸ Frank Tannenbaum, A Philosophy of Labor (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951), pp. 160-161.

participation in industrial policy which was explained by

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making and even if they do not share in the

Industrial Policy and the Labor Union

There was considerable legislative activity during the
outbreak of war, namely some legislation between 1940 and
1945 after World War II. At the 1945 convention of the
U.A.W.-I.O.O.F. Lodge, which was the first time
a vice-president of the union, by voice vote, and
and added were re-elected without opposition. Early in the
war, the U.A.W.-I.O.O.F. authorized many internal groups, and
led a re-education drive, and seemed to have followed
among the union factions.

This present situation, unfortunately, was not to
remain for long. When Germany invaded the Soviet Union
American communists reported their previous legislative
stand, and were prepared to go "all out" to win the war.
Going further than that, they announced a return to the

82
Frank Ransohoff, A History of Labor (New York
Alfred A. Knopf, 1951), p. 150-151.

centive pay systems in order to increase production.⁸⁹ It will be remembered that incentive pay was one of the workers' major complaints; and Reuther, although willing to risk antagonizing the rank-and-file by the no-strike pledge, disfavored a return to incentive pay.

At the 1943 U.A.W.-C.I.O. convention, Reuther's point of view prevailed. Delegates supported the no-strike pledge and defeated a resolution for incentive pay which was supported by Frankenstein and Addes.

Gradually, however, many workers became dissatisfied with the no-strike promise. In July, 1944, a Rank and File Caucus was formed, the major plank of which was repeal of the pledge. At the convention in September, three proposals concerning the pledge were placed before the delegates. The Rank and File Caucus demanded outright repeal; the communist faction favored retention; and Reuther walked the "precarious middle" by favoring retention in war plants and repeal in plants not engaged in war production. Although the Rank and File Caucus resolution received a plurality of votes, none of the proposals could gain a majority. After a Rank and File spokesman asked if this meant the U.A.W.-C.I.O. was not to have any policy concerning wartime strikes, a vote was taken simply to reaffirm the union's no-strike pledge.

⁸⁹ It is noteworthy that incentive wages are a part of certain socialist and communist theories. See Burnham P. Beckwith, The Economic Theory of a Socialist Economy (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1949), pp. 309ff.

cently pay systems in order to increase production. It will be recognized that incentive pay was one of the major complaints and features, although willing to recognize the fact that the no-strike pledge, this favored a return to incentive pay.

At the 1945 U.S.A.-U.S.S.R. conference, ... of view prevailed. This was accepted as the basis and detailed a resolution on incentive pay which was reported by Frankfurter and others.

Generally, however, many workers have been satisfied with the no-strike pledge. In July, 1945, a plan ... Gannett was formed, the major plank of which was respect for the pledge. At the same time, the no-strike pledge was proposed concerning the pledge were placed before the subject. The rank and file Gannett demanded explicit support for the no-strike pledge favored by the rank and file. Although the rank and file was not engaged in war production, although the rank and file Gannett received a quantity of votes none of the proposals were gain a majority. The rank and file Gannett asked it that the U.S.A.-U.S.S.R. conference not to have any policy concerning working strikes, a vote was taken simply to reaffirm the no-strike pledge.

39 It is noteworthy that the above were also part of certain socialist and communist theories. See ... The Russian Theory of a Socialist Economy, Stanford University Press, 1941, pp. 202-203.

Although this resolution, backed by Reuther, carried, only two months later a referendum revealed that thirty-five per cent of the workers still favored an end to the no-strike pledge.

Elizabeth Hawes, present at the convention, reported an interesting observation about Reuther's convention tactics:

Walter . . . took upon himself the task of speaking personally to every delegate upon whom he could lay hand. He was not discussing policy with them. For hours on end, the Red-head would come grimly down-stairs, take up his stand near the UAW bookstore display, and harangue little groups of delegates.⁹⁰

Although bitterly condemning Reuther in general, and his attitude toward the no-strike pledge in particular, Hawes asserted that much of Reuther's success was a result of his public speaking:

Walter Reuther was seen and heard as often as possible in the locals. The great man himself spoke to the delegates personally. And it is ridiculous to think people are not affected by personal attention. The actual fact that Reuther spoke to delegates, even in groups, certainly made them feel that he was working for them -- true or false.⁹¹

With the war's end, the Rank and File Caucus, with its major proposal having evaporated, ceased to be a faction within the union. There remained but two factions, the Reuther

⁹⁰ Hawes, op. cit., p. 118.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 119.

group, which opposed the communists, and another group composed of communists and many non-communists who were not opposed to the "CP's."

group, which covers the territory, and which is
post of central and western Texas and the
post to the "D.P."

WEST
E BOARD
TEXAS

CHAPTER IV

SPEECHMAKING ON POST WAR LABOR PROBLEMS

I. "A LOOK AT THE BOOKS," THE 1945-1946 GENERAL MOTORS STRIKE

The Case for Wage Increases. It should be of interest to the student of public opinion, whether his primary concern be persuasion through the written or spoken word, to observe Reuther's efforts in mobilizing public support for his wage demands. On July 6, 1945, before negotiations with General Motors were even underway, U.A.W.-C.I.O. local #12's official publication, the Toledo Union Journal, reported:

. . . the General Motors Department of the United Automobile Workers, CIO, today forwarded to Federal reconversion, economic and labor Agencies a documented brief pointing out how wages can be increased without raising prices.¹

At a press conference on September 15, Reuther emphasized that loss of overtime pay was lowering auto workers' income and necessary wage increases could be granted without increase in the price of automobiles. He forecast the probable result of failure to keep purchasing power high:

Unless we maintain take-home pay, and thus bolster our fast-shrinking ability to absorb the goods which we have the capacity to produce, we shall be forced into an economic crash that will make 1929-32 look like a minor recession.²

¹ News item in the Toledo Union Journal, July 6, 1945.

² News item in the New York Times, September 16, 1945.

In October, 1945, the General Motors Department argued that, primarily because of loss of overtime pay and downgrading, General Motors workers, if they were to maintain their wartime "take-home pay," must receive a thirty per cent wage rate increase.³ It asserted further that General Motors could augment wages without increasing prices because (1) predicted capacity peacetime production would probably be more profitable than wartime production, (2) Congress was preparing corporate tax reductions, and (3) wartime taxes would be rebated if income should fall.

These central themes running through Reuther's case for wage increases -- that it was necessary to maintain take-home pay and that General Motors could grant the increases without raising prices -- were expressed through written media by Reuther. They also were echoed from the speaker's platform:

Our 30 per cent demand is not a wage demand in the ordinary sense. We are fighting to restore the purchasing power of workers whose take-home pay has already been cut 30 per cent or more.

The challenge this country faces in peace is how are we to put purchasing power into the hands of the people so they can consume in abundance the things we know how

³ Purchasing Power for Prosperity (Detroit: U.A.W.-C.I.O. General Motors Department, 1945).

⁴ See Walter P. Reuther, "GM v. the Rest of Us," New Republic, 114:41-42, January 14, 1946. See also Walter P. Reuther, "This is Your Fight," The Nation, 162:35-36, January 12, 1946.

The General Board of Health, created by the
Act of March 3, 1879, has the honor to
acknowledge the receipt of your letter of
the 10th inst., and in reply to inform you
that the same has been forwarded to the
proper authorities for their consideration.

Very respectfully,
J. H. HARRIS, Secretary.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
WASHINGTON, D. C., May 10, 1880.

Enclosed for you are the following
copies of the report of the
Commissioner of Health, for the
year ending December 31, 1879,
together with a copy of the
report of the Board of Health,
for the same period.

Very respectfully,
J. H. HARRIS, Secretary.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
WASHINGTON, D. C., May 10, 1880.

to produce.

Our fight for greater purchasing power requires that prices must not be increased. To get increased wages out of higher prices is robbing Peter to pay Paul.

We have told General Motors that the facts prove that they can pay us 30 per cent higher wages without increasing prices one cent. It is on the basis of these facts that we make our demand.⁵

Despite the obvious planning that went into preparing the auto workers' case for wage adjustments, Charles Wilson, president of General Motors, simply dismissed the demands as "unreasonable." He did, however, proffer a counterproposal that union and company together urge Congress to set a forty-five hour work week. The result was a 113 day strike.

A 113 Day Strike. When the first negotiating conference between the union and General Motors was held, company spokesmen walked into a room filled with reporters. Surprised, they refused to begin discussion until Reuther withdrew the invitation he had extended the press. The union, however, later released transcripts of the negotiations, thus virtually making the debates public.

Eleven sessions, beginning on October 19 and ending November 19, proved futile. Debate often was comprised of bitter personal attacks, irrelevant issues, and vulgarity.

⁵ A. Craig Baird, editor, Representative American Speeches: 1945-1946 (vol. 19, no. 4, The Reference Shelf; New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1946), p. 168. Reprint of Bulletin of America's Town Hall Meeting of the Air, vol. 11, no. 24, October 11, 1945.

On November 21, the plants were struck, and that night, according to Time magazine, the customary strikers' rally was held:

In Detroit, red-haired Walter Reuther, scorning a hat but bundled up in overcoat and muffler, mounted a sound truck and went out to hearten the strikers. He did not try to paint a rosy picture. He reminded them that no strike benefits would be paid by the union, but in time there would be soup kitchens and the union would send a doctor to any member who needed him.

"We will travel the road to the bitter end," cried Walter Reuther, "because we know we are right and are willing to fight for what is right."⁶

Reuther continued his attempt to mold favorable public opinion by inviting prominent religious, political, and educational leaders to study the transcript of negotiations.

President Truman, after once requesting that the workers return to work, soon appointed a fact-finding board to investigate the wage demands. The audience at the public hearings was small. It was composed largely of the board members, chairman Lloyd Garrison of the University of Washington, Milton Eisenhower of Kansas State College, and Justice Walter Lacey of the North Carolina Supreme Court, together with negotiators and reporters. Nevertheless, speakers at the hearings reached through the newspapers a large audience. Walter Gordon Merritt, a special attorney employed by the corporation as its chief spokesman in the hearings,

⁶ "Finish Fight?" Time, 20:37-38, December 3, 1945.

was not to be heard long.

In the General Motors case, the company participated in informal conferences with the board and in the proceedings of the first day of the public hearings, but withdrew on the second day in protest against the board's decision to consider the question of ability to pay.⁷

On December 28, 1945, after Merritt finished reading a statement announcing the corporation's withdrawal from the proceedings, Reuther quickly arose to give rebuttal:

It would take some time to analyze carefully the corporation's stand as stated in the document just read. I would like to comment on just one or two of the high points.

The corporation has raised the question that the union demands are a broad attack on American industry and free enterprise. I would like to say, Mr. chairman, that if free enterprise in America is to survive it has got to work; it has got to demonstrate an ability not only to create earnings for the investors but it has got to create an ability and a willingness to give millions of Americans economic security.

It has got to demonstrate the capacity to meet the challenge of unemployment; it has got to demonstrate a willingness to fit itself into national policies on the basis of acceptance of those policies and not the basis of obstruction and arrogance and unwillingness to cooperate but on the basis of good-will, so that we can solve the basic problems that face this nation, namely, achieving an economy of full production and full consumption and full employment.⁸

Reuther continued by staunchly defending the ability-to-pay principle being applied by the U.A.W.-C.I.O. through

⁷ H. M. Douty, "Wage Policy, and the Role of Fact-Finding Boards," Monthly Labor Review, 62:545, January, 1946.

⁸ Text of speech as reported in the New York Times, December 29, 1945.

was not to be heard long.

In the General debate, the speaker, Mr. [Name],
introduced a motion for the adjournment of the
House on the second day in protest against the
decision to consider the question of [Name].

On October 22, 1935, after having finished reading

a statement concerning the corporation's financial

proceedings, [Name] publicly stated to give [Name]

It would have been like to analyze especially the
corporation's record as stated in the document just read.
I would like to comment on just one or two of the main
points.

The corporation has raised the question of the
union demands for a broad plan of expansion, and
has been unsuccessful. I would like to say, however,
that it has been able to handle it to a certain extent
and that it has not been completely unskillful.
Only the [Name] [Name] for the [Name] but it has not
to [Name] as [Name] [Name] to give [Name]
of [Name] [Name] [Name].

It has got to [Name] and [Name] to meet the
challenge of [Name] it has got to [Name] [Name]
willingness to [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name]
basis of [Name] of [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name]
of [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name]
ate but on the basis of [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name]
the basic program was [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name]
for an [Name] of [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name]
and full [Name].

Further evidence of [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name]

to pay principal being [Name] by the [Name] [Name] [Name]

Y. L. [Name], [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name]
[Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name] [Name]

Text of [Name] as reported in [Name] [Name] [Name]
December 22, 1935.

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its request that wages be raised without price increases:

We say that we want to make progress with the community and not at the expense of the community. If that is attacking free enterprise certainly the company is kidding itself.

We are saying that prices and wages and ability to pay must be tied together if you are going to do this thing in terms of the community's need and the national need.⁹

Later in the speech, Reuther turned to the company's proposal that the work week be lengthened. Although aware that a longer work week would help maintain workers' take-home pay, Reuther bitterly criticized the plan:

The company raises the question of maintaining take-home pay on the basis of a 45-48-hour work week. That is in keeping with their proposal to turn the clock back, to abolish the 40-hour week in America and go back to a longer work week; and we say frankly that we will be no party to robbing millions of returning veterans and unemployed workers of job opportunities in post-war America, and that we are not going to solve our particular problem by making the unemployment lines longer in America's cities.¹⁰

As Reuther proceeded to refute various contentions in General Motors' statement, he seized upon two, managerial prerogatives and the union's right to examine corporate books, which were particularly significant. The former he dismissed as an assertion which has been used indiscriminately against many progressive proposals and pointedly asked wherein

⁹ Loc. cit.

¹⁰ Loc. cit.

the union had raised any challenge to management's rights:

If you go back into history, to the dark history of industrial England, you will find that when the coal miners in the coal pits around Newcastle said that there should be a law in England to abolish the sixteen-hour day for children and women, it was said that that was an attack upon the prerogatives of management. These are the old slogans that have been thrown in the way of social progress ever since man has organized to advance himself.

We have never said in these negotiations -- and I challenge Mr. Merritt or any company spokesman to point to one place in the 1,200 pages of the transcript of our months of negotiation or any public statement of any officer of this union in this case where we at any time have raised the question of usurping managerial prerogatives or selecting management's personnel. Mr. Merritt knows better than that. . . .

We have not at any time challenged management's right to manage the plants.

We have at no time raised the question of sharing managerial functions.¹¹

When discussing the matter of looking at the corporation's books, Reuther clarified his stand upon that issue:

On page 9, Mr. Merritt says, "it is not a question of examining books and records." We have made the fight, Mr. chairman, to get to the company's books and records not because we wanted to indulge in the pleasure of going through their books. I can assure you that is not our motive.

.
We don't care whether we see the books or not. We raised that question because we had no other way to meet their unwillingness to talk about arithmetic, and the only reason they haven't opened it up is not because they have become the knight in shining armor or because they are defending free enterprise.

We asked for the books because they would not talk about the arithmetic and there was no other way for us to get the facts excepting to insist upon the books being opened and being bound what we found in the books.¹²

¹¹ Loc. cit.

¹² Loc. cit.

Despite General Motors' withdrawal from the hearings, the fact-finding board recommended that wages be increased nineteen and five tenths cents an hour, an increase of approximately seventeen and a half per cent. The company had proposed about a twelve per cent raise of thirteen and five tenths cents.¹³ The union agreed to accept the board's recommendation, but warned that it would revert to its original demand if the company refused the compromise.

Meanwhile, Reuther's efforts to gain favorable publicity were being rewarded. Such prominent citizens as Eleanor Roosevelt, Henry Morgenthau, Henry Luce, Harold Ickes, and Senator Wayne Morse, announced their support of the union's position by forming a National Committee to Aid the Families of GM Strikers, which helped raise contributions for the strike fund.

The General Motors strike, however, was not the only one receiving attention. Many other industries were closed by industrial disputes, but wage increases of eighteen and a half cents soon became the prevailing pattern. Then, after the steel strike was settled, the Office of Price Administration permitted the steel industry to raise the price of steel five dollars a ton. This, of course, resulted in general

¹³ Douty, op. cit., p. 547.

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price increases throughout the entire national economy.

On February 12, 1946, General Motors offered an increase of eighteen and a half cents to the U.A.W.-C.I.O., and the union negotiators responded by walking out of the conference. The following month, however, both Reuther and General Motors seemed eager to sign an agreement, and, on March 13, the union received eighteen and a half cents, plus, according to Fountain, ". . . other concessions which the union calculated to be equal to the additional penny recommended by the fact-finding board."¹⁴

Exactly why the desire for industrial peace was great enough to result in "round-the-clock" negotiations in the final days of the strike is difficult to determine. One probable factor, though, included a guarantee which the corporation received from the government on March 10, that the new price policy would apply to the auto industry. On the other hand, the U.A.W.-C.I.O. convention was approaching and Reuther probably was eager for settlement.

The first major post-war strike was finally concluded. First to begin, it was last to end. Its significance, however, goes beyond the final settlement into the criteria for arriving at wage rates.

A "New" Wage Criteria? Probably the most contentious

¹⁴ Clayton W. Fountain, Union Guy (New York: The Viking Press, 1949), p. 185.

price increases throughout the entire period...
On February 12, 1958, General Electric...
of eighteen and a half cents...
when production expanded...
The following table shows...
based upon an...
received sixteen and a half cents...
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be equal to the additional...
the board.

Specifically...
enough to...
final days of the...
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then received from...
price policy would apply to the...
hand, the U.S. Government...
probably has...
The...
First to begin...
over, goes beyond...
reviving at...
A "Yes" vote...
is...
Viking Press, 1958, p. 102.

CONFIDENTIAL
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CONTENT

issue in the strike was the relevancy of a company's ability to pay in wage determination. Reuther outlined his position in negotiations with General Motors:

We are prepared to settle this demand for less than 30 percent, providing you can disprove our contention that wages can be increased 30 percent without increasing prices and you can still make a profit. If you can prove we can't get 30 percent, hold prices, and still make a nice profit, we will settle for less than 30 percent. . . .¹⁵

Reuther, however, went even further in demanding that General Motors produce its records so that ability to pay could be determined. Reiterations of this demand were made publicly on America's Town Meeting of the Air in a debate with George Romney, general manager of the Automobile Manufacturers Association. After Romney attacked Reuther's statistical treatment of General Motors' profits, Reuther suggested:

We think our figures are correct. Mr. Romney says his figures are correct. Why should we argue about it. Let's have a public hearing. We'll lay our figures on the table. Let General Motors bring in their books and open up their books. Let's find out what it costs to make an automobile, and how much profit there is in this business and then we'll see this arithmetic.¹⁶

General Motor's attitude, on the other hand, was equally clear. When withdrawing from the fact-finding board's

¹⁵ Irving Howe and B. J. Widick, The UAW and Walter Reuther (New York: Random House, 1949), p. 133.

¹⁶ Baird, op. cit., p. 178.

hearings, Merritt maintained:

The company does not and will not plead inability to pay as a reason for rejecting any wage recommendation. . . . Ability to pay or inability to pay is a defense which employers have often advanced to keep down wage increases and a defense which unions have consistently opposed as not a proper factor for consideration. . . . we believe that ability to pay should not be considered.¹⁷

President Truman, instructing the board to consider the company's ability, indicated that "ability to pay is always one of the facts relevant to the issue of an increase in wages."¹⁸ The United States Department of Labor submitted evidence to show that it was, and always had been, a valid factor to consider.¹⁹

There were those, of course, besides General Motors, who disagreed with that point of view. The New York Times disclosed that the dissenting group included a number of prominent labor leaders:

In effect, according to some observers, the President's stand on fact-finding subordinated to Mr. Reuther's viewpoint the policies of leaders like William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor; Philip Murray, president of the Congress of Industrial Organizations; John L. Lewis of the United Mine Workers of America and

¹⁷ Text of statement as reported in the New York Times, December 29, 1945.

¹⁸ News item in the New York Times, December 21, 1945.

¹⁹ United States Department of Labor, "Ability to Pay Always a Factor in Wage Negotiation," Labor Information Bulletin, 13:2,4-5, May-June, 1946.

THE CONTENT

EFFICIENCY

EFFICIENCY

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Sidney Hillman, head of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America.²⁰

It is very likely that the difference between Reuther and other labor chiefs was one of emphasis, for even John L. Lewis has made significant efforts to keep the coal industry "in the black."²¹ This would suggest that few union heads would risk, through extremely high wage demands, the financial stability of a company upon which workers were dependent for employment. Yet, even if the difference is only relative, Reuther created heated controversy with his concern over ability to pay.

A second significant issue arising from the General Motors strike was whether labor had a right to couple wage demands with prices. This, together with "a look at the books," raised the question of managerial prerogatives. Although Reuther denied any desire to challenge managements' rights, there were many, especially in managerial circles, skeptical of his avowed disinterest.

The correlation of wages and prices also served to underscore the responsibility of both labor and management to the consumer. Reuther, at the opening hearings of the fact-finding board, not too modestly insisted that the U.A.W.-

²⁰ Article in the New York Times, December 29, 1945.

²¹ For a discussion of some of these efforts, see Herbert Harris, American Labor (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1938), p. 38.

Stacy Wilson, head of the American Cleaning Workers
 of America.⁸²

It is very likely that the differences between
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⁸² Article in the New York Times, December 22, 1967.

⁸³ For a discussion of some of these factors, see
 Harold Brown, Industrial Unionism, New York, Basic Books,
 Press, 1968, p. 11.

C.I.O. ". . . refused to make progress at the expense of the community."²²

Ability to pay and effect on prices, then, were two important "new" and contentious criteria for wage adjustments stressed during the strike. Thus, this industrial dispute, through Reuther's written and spoken statements, forced a re-evaluation of certain basic standards in labor-management relations. The strike, however, also had important repercussions on the union political situation.

More Union Politics. Probably one of the most widely held fallacies in the United States is that labor leaders and organizations are agreed upon objectives. As seen in the controversy in the A.F.L. and the resulting formation of the C.I.O. and by the bitter wartime debates in the U.A.W.-C.I.O. over incentive pay, such is not the case.

One of the most faction-ridden unions in America for many years was the U.A.W.-C.I.O. Reuther was the leader of one faction, and, after the war, he made his bid for the presidency. The issues at stake in the March, 1946, and November, 1947 conventions have been widely discussed. Some observers agree with Charles Givens who stated flatly:

The factional fight inside the UAW . . . is a political and not an ideological struggle. Its front is Com-

²² News item in the New York Times, December 21, 1945.

munism versus Democracy. Actually it is simply a power fight among young, militant unionists grown up into ambitious career men.²³

To dismiss factional fights within the U.A.W.-C.I.O. as being based simply on personal ambition, however, is to generalize hastily. Although undoubtedly this has been a cause of factionalism, there are at least two other factors which have been of significance.²⁴ First, there is, potentially at least, within every union, the somewhat theoretical question of a union's function. R. J. Thomas, generally considered by observers of contemporary unionism as an honest, sincere, but not overly brilliant man, was satisfied with the so-called traditional "business unionism."²⁵ Reuther, as can be seen by his plan for wartime conversion of the auto industry and by his conduct of the General Motors

²³ Charles G. Givens, "Asleep at the Ringside," New Republic, 117:21, November 10, 1947.

²⁴ Although sometimes implied that personal ambition for union office is undesirable, this is not necessarily the case, although, of course, it can be detrimental to the organization. Personal ambition often keeps democratic discussion in a union alive where, otherwise, it might turn into a "one-man" organization. For a series of condensed writings on the problem of preserving democracy in a union, see E. Wight Bakke and Clark Kerr, Unions, Management and the Public (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1948), pp. 178ff.

²⁵ This theory can be summarized, without much danger of oversimplification, as a belief that unions should work merely for more wages, shorter hours, and better working conditions through collective bargaining and endorsement of political candidates.

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strike, is not an adherent of this philosophy. In his speeches, Reuther has made that point clear, as a report of an address which he delivered to U.A.W.-C.I.O. members in St. Louis reveals:

"Pure and simple trade unionism won't solve our problems," he said. "We must mobilize workers and citizens in the economic and political fields to work out practical economic and social programs."²⁶

A second factor involved in the U.A.W.-C.I.O.'s factionalism undoubtedly has been communist influence. Communist Party members broke up the anti-Martin coalition by "double-crossing" Reuther when unable to dominate the Unity Caucus, and they fought with Reuther over the wartime incentive pay question. When the post-war era arrived, both Reuther and the communists were eager to undermine the other's influence. While Thomas and George Addes, secretary-treasurer, were not Communist Party members, they had followed the "CP" line on several occasions, and were not actively opposed to the "reds." The acceptance of communists within the union provoked Reuther to charge Thomas and Addes as being their tools.

From an ideological point of view, then, Reuther's enemies were primarily communists and "pure and simple trade unionists" who were content to tolerate and cooperate with the "reds."

²⁶ News item in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, February 15, 1947.

When the General Motors strike was underway the publicity which Reuther was receiving evidently began to worry his opponents. It is widely held that the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers-C.I.O.,²⁷ largely under communist control, carried on secret negotiations with General Motors and accepted an eighteen and a half cents offer in order to place Reuther in an unfavorable light.

When the 1946 convention opened in March, both sides were girded with arguments for battle. Philip Murray had been invited to speak, and both factions realized that his words would have a marked effect on many delegates if he chose to involve himself in the dispute. Murray, who disapproved Reuther's conduct of the General Motors strike, took sides, much to Reuther's dismay, as Time magazine reported:

. . . Phil Murray, sensing a challenge to his control of C.I.O., made a speech to his loyal auto workers, deliberately brushed off the shocked and furious Reuther while he saluted the beaming Thomas as "this great big guy for whom I have a distinct fondness." Then Murray got out of town.²⁸

Had Murray remained, he could have witnessed a verbal free-for-all. "Reuther's broad strategy," one observer averred, "was to attack Thomas as a tool of the Communists."²⁹

²⁷ Hereafter cited as the U.E.-C.I.O.

²⁸ "Little Redhead," Time, 47:20, April 8, 1946.

²⁹ "Labor: Slugging it out for President of UAW," Newsweek, 27:66, April 1, 1946.

Several arguments were presented in opposition to Reuther. Chief among them was an attack upon his "one-at-a-time strategy," which was simply a belief that the auto industry, being highly competitive, could best be defeated by striking one company at a time. As Reuther was quick to point out, the U.A.W.-C.I.O. International Executive Board had endorsed the General Motors strike, thus committing itself to the same strategy now under attack. Reuther defended his strategy on the grounds that the union was not in a position to finance more than one walkout and that Ford, Chrysler, and others had been forced to give raises by the General Motors strike. He also asserted that the union's position had been weakened by the U.E.-C.I.O.'s agreement with the company.

Other arguments centered around the theme that Reuther's conduct of the strike had been motivated primarily by personal ambition. A similar view was shared by many not in the union, such as Peter F. Drucker:

Walter Reuther . . . used the strike in 1945 to re-establish the contact with the General Motors workers that he had lost because of his strict enforcement of the no-strike pledge during the War. United Automobile Workers leaders themselves admit today that the strike served little purpose other than to re-establish Reuther's leadership. It certainly was prolonged for three months for that reason, as it could have been settled in December, 1945, on the same terms on which it was finally settled the following March [the company offer in December was thirteen and a half cents, and the strike was settled at eighteen and a half cents, plus other conces-

sions], when the union convention was about to begin.³⁰

Reuther's defense was based largely on the fact that the International Executive Board had endorsed his conduct of the strike until four weeks before settlement when, Reuther countercharged, Thomas ". . . wanted to settle it on company terms."³¹

Another accusation against Reuther was that he wanted to return the union to the A.F.L. Time magazine made a picturesque observation of Thomas' presentation of this point:

The attacks on Reuther had come from all sides. Cried Thomas, in between chaws of Mail Pouch: "If Reuther is elected president I think he will try to lead the U.A.W. into the American Federation of Labor." . . . Reuther dismissed this as "the rantings of a desperate man."³²

Had this point been established, it undoubtedly would have ruined Reuther in U.A.W.-C.I.O. politics. Most auto workers, to this day, are intensely loyal to the C.I.O. and still remember the A.F.L.'s futile efforts to organize the industry's workers. Thomas based his charge on the fact that David Dubinsky's International Ladies Garment Workers-A.F.L. had contributed to the General Motors strike fund. Reuther replied that it would be virtually impossible for anyone to succeed in such an undertaking: ". . . all the king's horses

³⁰ Peter F. Drucker, The New Society (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949), pp. 139-140.

³¹ News item in the New York Times, March 24, 1946.

³² "Little Redhead," Time, 47:20, April 8, 1946.

and all the king's men couldn't lead the UAW into the AFL."³³

A final argument against Reuther concerned what Thomas termed his "fancy economics." The ability-to-pay principle, as Clyde Dankert averred, came in for particular abuse:

At the convention of the U.A.W. in March, 1946, shortly after the settlement of the strike, R. J. Thomas . . . harshly criticized the principle saying that it had gotten the U.A.W. "into quite serious difficulties with other unions," and that if the principle had been used in negotiations with Ford, Studebaker, and certain other companies the union would have had to accept wage cuts. "Our traditional theory is like pay for like work," said Mr. Thomas. Reuther's "theory would have knocked that into a cocked hat." It would seem that Mr. Reuther himself did not really adhere closely to the ability-to-pay theory, for he admitted that the union demanded that General Motors open its books so that its ability to pay could be determined "was just a maneuver to win public support and to get the company over a barrel."³⁴

Thus, Reuther appeared to contradict himself on the ability-to-pay theory, for, after defending the principle in negotiations with General Motors, he now virtually called it a "publicity stunt." Concerning his "fancy economics," Reuther proposed that he and Thomas stage a debate with the press and all other non-delegates excluded from the convention hall. "Thomas," tersely commented Howe and Widick, "had enough sense to refuse."³⁵

³³ News item in the New York Times, March 24, 1946.

³⁴ Clyde E. Dankert, Contemporary Unionism (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1948), p. 302. Howe and Widick, op. cit., p. 145 stated that Reuther denied having made the statement.

³⁵ Howe and Widick, op. cit., p. 160.

AT THE OFFICE OF THE
CLERK OF THE SUPREME COURT
OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF
SANTA BARBARA

That the undersigned Clerk of the Court, do hereby certify that the within and foregoing is a true and correct copy of the original as the same appears in the files of the Court.

Given under my hand and the seal of the Court, at Santa Barbara, California, this _____ day of _____, 19____.

Clerk of the Court

A more fascinating intra-union debate probably had never taken place in the history of American labor. Yet, the most striking feature of the debate was the manner in which it was conducted, for few of the many charges, replies, and countercharges were made on the convention floor.³⁶ Instead, they were made at press conferences, caucus meetings, and through rumors and leaflets. Complained Clayton Fountain, a member of the Reuther faction:

Oddly enough, an open discussion of the merits of the General Motors strike never came up on the convention floor. This hurt Reuther's candidacy. We [the Reuther faction] would have welcomed a free-for-all debate expressing the views of the top officers and the delegates with respect to the strategy and conduct of the strike. The Addes-Thomas-Leonard strategists and the Communists were afraid to risk the outcome of such a democratic discussion. . . . Reuther's powerful oratorical ability was his ace in the hole -- and they knew it. So they steered clear of a showdown. Reuther was thus prevented from speaking on any important issue, let alone defending himself against the charges of lousing up the strike.³⁷

This statement, though from a Reuther follower, is a striking tribute to the "red-head's" ability as a speaker. Despite his lack of opportunity to debate Thomas, Reuther was able to win the election, although by a slim margin of

³⁶ The major exception to this generalization was the argument, made by Thomas in his keynote address, that Reuther was planning to take the U.A.W.-C.I.O. into the A.F.L.

³⁷ Fountain, op. cit., p. 190.

less than 150 in over 8,500 votes cast.³⁸ Then, after Reuther's acceptance speech, the delegates, strangely enough, elected Thomas, and another anti-Reuther candidate to the two vice-presidential posts, re-elected Addes secretary-treasurer, and gave the left wing faction a majority on the International Executive Board.

This, then, was the setting of Reuther's first address as president of the U.A.W.-C.I.O. Although no verbatim text of the speech seems to exist, observers agree that it was an appeal for unity, and lengthy quotations in the New York Times illustrate that theme vividly:

His red locks flecked with red, blue, yellow and green confetti, his face sparkling with good humor and an ear-to-ear grin, the new president stepped to the dais to acknowledge his election. . . .

"We had a bitter contest here today, but the captains of industry realize and the auto labor forces realize that we can disagree and still leave as a united organization to fight the common enemy," Mr. Reuther shouted.

At this, a great roar went up, one in which Thomas supporters appeared to join with as much enthusiasm as those who had backed the winner from the outset.

Noting the rumors regarding his relations with Mr. Murray, Mr. Reuther said that "as long as I am president this union will be a source of strength for Phil Murray and the CIO.

"I want to take my place at the side of Phil Murray and help him to carry the heavy burden, and I can assure you that I shall give the closest kind of cooperation

³⁸ Writers appear to disagree slightly over the actual results. Fountain, op. cit., p. 197 indicated that Reuther won by a margin of 124 votes out of 8,765 votes cast. Howe and Widick, op. cit., p. 162 cite the figure of 104, while Charles Madison, American Labor Leaders (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950), p. 395 gives the results of 4,444 to 4,320.

between your union and the CIO.

"There is something else I think should be done. Between now and September a year, when we shall meet again in convention, I am going to try sincerely to fit together our factions so as to have a solidified organization.

"I have left these conventions too many times feeling that I represented only half of the organization. I want to extend my hand to George Addes, who will probably be your secretary-treasurer, and tell him that together we can unite this organization.³⁹

The new U.A.W.-C.I.O. chief also clarified his stand on the old ability to pay question, for, according to the New York Times' summary:

The new president declared that he would work toward the development of an industry-wide agreement providing for equal pay for equal work, and would try to bring the industry around to a point where it would give a guaranteed annual wage.

.....
 Mr. Reuther said that he had not dropped his "ability to pay" theory, but argued now that it was only one of the factors to be taken in consideration in negotiating new contracts.⁴⁰

Despite Reuther's unity appeal at the convention, the first Executive Board meeting saw sharp disagreement between the two factions, with Reuther being outvoted on numerous proposals. Within two months after the convention, reported The Commonwealth, "the country's largest union is more torn with strife and dissension than at any time since the Homer Martin fracas in 1938-1939."⁴¹

³⁹ News item in the New York Times, March 28, 1946.

⁴⁰ Loc. cit.

⁴¹ "Reuther Faces Trouble," The Commonwealth, 44:84, May 10, 1946.

II. DEFEATING THE COMMUNISTS

Maneuvering for Position. Between the March, 1946, and the November, 1947, conventions, factionalism was rampant in the U.A.W.-C.I.O. Reuther spoke before locals to clarify issues between the two factions and to show how Communist Party members within the union follow the party "line" which, in turn, reflects Soviet foreign policy. The speeches, largely extemporaneous and unreported, undoubtedly helped rank-and-file members understand the factional issues more clearly.

Two events of special interest to the student of public address occurred during this period. First, the importance which Reuther attached to public relations and education of U.A.W.-C.I.O. members, both of which are carried on largely through public speaking, was illustrated by a compromise which he made with Thomas. According to the arrangement, Thomas was made Director of the Competitive Shops Department whose task was to organize workers in unorganized plants. This strategic post involved formation of new locals which, very likely, could be controlled by the faction which organized them. Yet Reuther gave this position to his enemies in return for control of the directorships of the Education and Public Relations Departments. Victor Reuther was named head of education, and Frank Winn became Public Relations Director.

The following January 24, Reuther addressed approximately 1,000 delegates to the International Educational Conference, held to give training courses to U.A.W.-C.I.O. members in public relations, negotiating, membership recruiting, and union administration.

Reuther called the education conclave the "most significant conference the labor movement ever has had." He said education ranked high on the agenda because "to educate the people to help themselves" would bring about changes in the economic setup.⁴²

The second event of significance to the student of public address was a proposal advanced by the anti-Reuther faction to merge the Farm Equipment Workers-C.I.O.⁴³ into the U.A.W.-C.I.O. By the time the plan was drafted, in the spring of 1947, factionalism had reached its peak. In August of the previous year, the Daily Worker carried headlines asking, "Is Reuther Planning Deal with GOP?" and an article underneath which answered affirmatively. This charge had been reiterated by communists in the U.A.W.-C.I.O., and rumors told of a political arrangement whereby Senator Robert Taft would run for the Presidency with Reuther his vice-presidential candidate.⁴⁴ When a September "victory ball" was held to acclaim Reuther's union victory, the Detroit

⁴² News item in the Detroit Free Press, January 25, 1947.

⁴³ Hereafter cited as F.E.-C.I.O.

⁴⁴ Article in the Daily Worker, August 10, 1946.

The following information was obtained from the records of the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, on the subject of the land in question.

The land in question is situated in the County of _____, State of _____.

The land in question is situated in the _____ Section, _____ Township, _____ Range, _____ Meridian, _____ and _____.

The land in question is situated in the _____ and _____

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Free Press reported that factionalism had entered even the union's social life:

So personal has the bitterness become that none of the other three international officers of the UAW attended the fete. These were George F. Addes, secretary-treasurer, and R. J. Thomas and Richard T. Leonard, vice-presidents.⁴⁵

The merger proposal, based on a "unity" appeal, could easily reach a large favorable audience since both unions claimed jurisdiction over workers in agricultural implement factories. Thomas and Addes probably had more than a desire for unity in mind since the communist dominated F.E.-C.I.O. undoubtedly would vote anti-Reuther in the next convention, if admitted to the U.A.W.-C.I.O. Reuther attacked the merger proposal, not on the principle of merger, but on the specific plan submitted to the locals. Reuther later explained his reason for selecting such a line of attack:

We knew that the FE merger maneuver was Communist inspired. But to base our opposition to it on that ground would have confused the membership by involving them in a vague debate on the merits of Communism.

The Communists would have cried, "red-baiting," and they would have succeeded in pushing the plan through on the basis of their general appeal to unity.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ News item in the Detroit Free Press, September 30, 1946. It is interesting to note, although perhaps not significant, that Reuther's speech dealt with the topic of world peace, and that none of the speakers even mentioned factionalism in the union.

⁴⁶ Walter P. Reuther, "How to Beat the Communists," reprint from Collier's, February 28, 1948.

Free Press reported that...

Union's social list:

So personal has the... the other three... headed the list... President, and... also-president.

The merger proposal, based on a... easily reach a large...

obtained jurisdiction over... factories, Thomas and...

for unity in mind since... undoubtedly would vote...

it admitted to the U.S.W... for proposal, not on...

specific plan admitted to... obtained his reason for...

We know that the... would have continued... a vague debate on... they would have succeeded... the basis of their...

48 News item in the Detroit Free Press, September 20, 1946. It is interesting to note... allies, that... peace, and that... am in the union.

49 Walter S. Reuther, 'How to Lead the Congress', reprint from Collier's, February 22, 1948.

The New Republic presented a summary of provisions to which Reuther objected:

The merger would provide for the establishment of a separate division for agricultural-machinery workers within the UAW, blanketing both the UAW's present 30,000 members in farm-equipment factories and the FE's 45,000 members. . . . Reuther argues that, in defiance of UAW policy, the division would select its own director, who would have control of his subordinate personnel. At present all UAW division directors are appointed by the president with approval of the IEB International Executive Board.

The farm-equipment director, furthermore, would be given an ex-officio seat on the IEB. Here again, Reuther argues, established UAW practice would be violated; at present all IEB members are chosen to represent geographical regions.⁴⁷

Debate on this plan was widespread, many locals hearing Reuther engage in verbal battle with opponents. Reuther evidently was effective for the proposal which, in principle sounded appealing, was voted down approximately two to one.

Concerning one debate, New Republic reported:

. . . before Local 200 voted on the merger proposal, Reuther and Thomas personally appeared to debate the merits of the plan before the rank and file. The local, largest UAW unit in Canada and traditionally pro-Addes, voted to support Reuther and reject the merger plan.⁴⁸

Finally, after over a year of maneuvering for position, the two factions met in Atlantic City for the November, 1947 U.A.W.-C.I.O. convention.

⁴⁷ Willare Shelton, "Merger Politics," New Republic, 117:32, July 21, 1947.

⁴⁸ Loc. cit.

Routing the Communists, the 1947 U.A.W.-C.I.O. Convention. Observers of contemporary unionism watched the Atlantic City convention with special interest, for the problem of communism within the C.I.O. was attracting considerable public attention. Many predicted, along with Charles Givens, that a communist defeat in the U.A.W.-C.I.O. would have repercussions throughout the entire labor movement:

Not only management but the entire labor movement is watching the UAW convention, hopefully and a bit apprehensively. If the great union goes solidly Right, labor leaders predict that soon, perhaps not immediately, the CIO will pressure its internationals to fall into line -- or else. If Reuther decides to compromise with his enemies, labor leftists everywhere will be encouraged.⁴⁹

Such was the setting when Reuther arose on November 9, 1947, to address the opening session on "The Job Ahead." Unlike Thomas' initial speech of the previous year, Reuther did not launch a direct attack on his opponents, although he made several obvious references to the union's internal situation:

The UAW-CIO reaffirms the CIO policy of representing and rejecting the interference of the Communist party or any other outside political party.

One of the cornerstones of democratic freedom is the right of all to believe in any religious or political belief they may want to embrace. We don't claim any right to interfere with that basic principle. What we assert, and we say it out loud, is that the guys back home who pay the buck and a half a month into this union and who punch time cards every day can run their affairs without anybody sticking their noses in from the outside.

⁴⁹ Givens, op. cit., p. 24.

. . . But while we are fighting in America, in the United States and Canada against the vicious evils and injustices that exist, I think it should be known to everyone that we will fight with equal determination anyone in this union or anyone in this country who attempts to sell the membership, the union, or our country down the river to any foreign power in the world.⁵⁰

The closing paragraph of the speech made it clear that Reuther was determined to end the bitter factionalism which had long haunted the union:

The strength of our Union is the men and women in the ranks. With teamwork in the leadership and solidarity in the ranks there is no power in the world that can stop the kind of movement that we have. The irresistible power that we will have can overcome all obstacles. Let us demonstrate the power, the good sense, to pound out a program and put our house in order. I am confident that together we can work and fight and make our contribution in America and in the world toward the building of a better tomorrow, a new world based upon peace, plenty, freedom, and the brotherhood of man.⁵¹

The convention was not the bitter affair of the previous year. Howe and Widick commented that "debate on the floor was desultory, routine."⁵² Reuther had constructed a formidable machine which, after defeating opponents on numerous measures, so frightened Thomas that he did not even contest the presidency. All four international officers elected were members of the Reuther faction, and the Inter-

⁵⁰ Walter P. Reuther, The Job Ahead (pamphlet of the speech; Detroit: International Union, United Automobile, Aircraft and Agricultural Implement Workers of America, Public Relations Department, n. d.), pp. 15.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 16.

⁵² Howe and Widick, op. cit., p. 169.

national Executive Board was dominated by the so-called right wing. After the elections, reported Fountain:

At a party thrown to celebrate our victory, Walter, who does not smoke or drink, fulfilled one of his campaign promises: he puffed on a cigar and tossed off a shot of whisky -- to the delight of the happy delegates.⁵³

The significance of the sweeping victory, however, went beyond mere inducement of Reuther's "moral degeneration." Life magazine called it ". . . the biggest setback of all time to the Communists in the U. S. labor movement."⁵⁴ There were many who predicted that the entire C.I.O. would follow the pattern set at Atlantic City.

C.I.O. Follows the Pattern. After Reuther's victory, the entire right wing of the C.I.O. was encouraged to begin battle with communists by "raiding" left wing unions of members. The U.A.W.-C.I.O. led in this development, and, on March 27, 1948, Business Week reported that all members of U.E.-C.I.O. had been offered the opportunity to transfer to the U.A.W.-C.I.O.⁵⁵ By October of the same year, New Republic indicated that the "raids," from the U.A.W.-C.I.O.'s point of

⁵³ Fountain, op. cit., p. 215.

⁵⁴ "Reuther Wins," Life, 23:40, November 24, 1947.

⁵⁵ "U.A.W. Moves In," Business Week, March 27, 1948, pp. 104-105.

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view, were highly successful:

In the past year, the Farm Equipment Workers' Union has lost 40 percent of its membership to the UAW. . . . The United Electrical Workers have dropped 24,000 to the UAW and are hard-pressed in locals holding thousands more.⁵⁶

The issue debated most in local meetings, when the question of transferring unions arose, was the matter of compliance with the provision of the Taft-Hartley Law which called for union officers signing non-communist affidavits. Left wing unions refused to sign affidavits, thus denying themselves access to the N.L.R.B. Although thoroughly disliking the Taft-Hartley Law, right wing unions decided it best to comply, but, as New Republic pointed out, the issue went deeper than mere compliance.

No matter how you look at it, this is raiding, and raiding has always been a hated word in the CIO. The readiness of responsible CIO unions to take advantage of their fellow unions' plight and conduct these raids leaves them open to the ugly charge of opportunism. But the very fact of this readiness, and particularly of the workers' willingness to be raided, indicates that there is something deeper involved than the simple issue of non compliance. . . . The only victims have been unions dominated by the Left. Behind the issue of compliance is the fight between Left and Right for control of the CIO.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ "Cannibalism in the CIO," New Republic, 119:10, October 11, 1948.

⁵⁷ Loc. cit. For an interesting article concerning a typical U.A.W.-C.I.O. "raid" on the U.E.-C.I.O., see Claire Neiking, "Taft-Hartley's Havoc in Hartford," New Republic, 119:11-13, October 11, 1948.

Although Philip Murray had invited Secretary of State George Marshall to address the 1947 C.I.O. convention with the obvious idea of influencing delegates to endorse the Marshall Plan, Murray generally had remained neutral in C.I.O. politics. He used this approach, not because he favored communist policies, but because he prized organizational unity. Murray originally opposed Reuther because of the way in which he handled the General Motors strike, and, at the 1946 U.A.W.-C.I.O. convention, had endorsed Thomas. Relations between the two leaders improved, however, and evidently feeling that the right wing held a majority, Murray scathingly denounced communists in his opening speech. Joe Miller recounted the effect of the speech:

The dike of unity, which had been cracking since the Atlantic City conclave of 1946, burst wide open here during the CIO's tenth annual convention. Hopes that agreement might be reached between right and left wings were blasted with Philip Murray's opening words, for the former apostle of unity went gunning for the left wing with unprecedented violence.

When Murray demanded that "Communists stand up and be counted like men on the floor of this convention," excited grins came to the faces of Walter Reuther, James Carey and Emil Rieve, sitting behind him on the stage of the Masonic Temple auditorium. Most of the delegates cheered, and Reuther cried, "Give 'em hell, Phil."⁵⁸

Other speakers, including Walter Reuther, took up the

⁵⁸ Joe Miller, "The Broad Middle Way," New Republic, 119: 7-8, December 6, 1948.

attack:

Mr. Reuther demanded that the left-wingers decide whether they were "going to be loyal to the CIO or the Communist Party -- to the United States or Russia."

"They are not trade unionists," he went on, "but colonial agents of a foreign government using the United States as an operating base."⁵⁹

An interesting report of the convention came from Richard Neuberger:

Although the party-liners had their say, some protests rose from the floor over the fact that various presiding officers, particularly Walter Reuther and Emil Rieve, clocked the speeches of the minority much more severely than those of the men who spoke for the right wing.⁶⁰

Thus, although the communists were not expelled from the C.I.O. at the 1948 convention, they received a stinging rebuke as their proposals consistently were defeated.

Reuther's outspoken opposition to communism undoubtedly improved his standing in the eyes of those adhering either to middle-of-the-road or to conservative political philosophies. United States News, however, felt compelled to warn its readers not to be deceived by the term "right wing:"

A right-wing label has been tied to Mr. Reuther in the factional rows within his own union, because of his fight against Communist influences. Actually, his views

⁵⁹ News item in the New York Times, November 23, 1948.

⁶⁰ Richard L. Neuberger, "The C.I.O. Convention," The Nation, 167:624, December 4, 1948.

are anything but rightist. He was once a Socialist, but left the party years ago. Employers, however, will find some of his views to be socialistic by their own standards.⁶¹

This prediction proved true as management was confronted with certain proposals not advanced prior to Reuther's elevation to the U.A.W.-C.I.O.'s presidency.

III. A SECOND ROUND, A THIRD ROUND, AND MORE TO COME

The greater number of Walter Reuther's post-war public speeches did not deal, as have most of the speeches studied thus far, with but one or two issues. Usually appearing before meetings of unionists or delegates to non-labor conventions, Reuther generally outlined numerous post-war problems which faced labor and/or the nation, and recommended ameliorative policies. Inasmuch as he dealt with a given issue repeatedly it would be repetitious to study each speech individually. Hence, the problems and proposals with which Reuther dealt will be presented under issue headings together with evidence, reasoning, and emotional appeal typically used on that issue. Whenever an address or debate was devoted to a single proposal, that fact will be noted under the issue then being considered.

Reuther, the "Underconsumptionist." Walter Reuther

⁶¹ "Meaning of Reuther Victory," United States News, 22:26, November 21, 1947.

when making wage demands on industry in the post-war era, always was careful to construct a reasonable sounding case for the demand. Many times since the General Motors strike, he made it clear that wage adjustments must be made on the basis of the "arithmetic." One such instance was the 1949 U.A.W.-C.I.O. convention:

We talk a great deal in our union about economic facts, and every time I get a chance to talk to you fellows I talk economic facts, because the complex problems we have to solve cannot be solved just by table pounding or by picket line marching, no matter how militant you may be. Table pounding and picket line marching is part of the problem but you have to base your demands and struggles on sound economic facts.⁶²

The case which Reuther established for the General Motors strike has already been considered, and, during succeeding "rounds" of wage increases similar arguments were used. Two points which Reuther consistently tried to establish in speeches defending his wage proposals were (1) that an increase was necessary to maintain the workers' purchasing power which, in turn, was necessary to maintain a prosperous economy, and (2) that the company concerned had the ability to pay the increase.

In this first argument one can see Reuther's adherence to an economic underconsumption theory which holds that pros-

⁶² Walter P. Reuther, Opening Speech at the Twelfth U.A.W.-C.I.O. Convention, July 10, 1949. Press release now in files of U.A.W.-C.I.O. Public Relations Department, Detroit, Michigan, p. 7.

when making wage demands on industry in the post-war era, always was careful to counteract a wage-spiral tendency... for the record, they think that the general labor market... in such a way that wage adjustments would be made on the basis of the "availability" of such resources as the 1950

U.A.W.-C.I.O. convention

to talk a great deal in our union about economic factors and every time I get a chance to talk to you... talk economic factors, because the economic conditions we have to solve cannot be solved just by talking... placed like anything, no matter how difficult you may be... Table pointing out that the economy is not... problem but you have to face your economic and... on such economic factors.

The case which I have established for the general labor union has already been established, and... existing "rights" of wage increases which... used. Two points which I have established... list in question demanding the wage proposals... as industry was necessary to maintain the... power, which, in turn, was necessary to maintain a program... economy, and (2) that the company concerned had the ability to pay the increase.

In this case argument one can see that the... to an economic under-employment which will...

Dr. Walter R. Reuther, General Secretary of the U.A.W.-C.I.O. Convention, July 10, 1950. Press Release in files of U.A.W.-C.I.O. Public Relations Department, Detroit, Michigan, p. 7.

perity depends, not upon production alone, but upon purchasing power available to take produced goods from the market. This point was reiterated countless times in Reuther's post-war speechmaking, but perhaps never so graphically as when he predicted a depression caused by insufficient purchasing power:

Every day you read in the paper we are hell bent for another depression. The economists in America are not arguing about whether there is going to be a depression, there is universal agreement we are on the high road to the next depression; the only thing they are still debating is when is it going to happen and how bad is it going to be. And why is this? It is because the relationship between purchasing power and productive power in America is so much out of balance, and no amount of wishing or pious [sic] Republican Party declarations will change those tragic basic economic facts, that unless the American workers and American people can get increased wages and increased purchasing power we are going to get into another depression.⁶³

An interesting contrast of two points of view on how best to maintain national prosperity emerged in a debate between Reuther and Senator Robert Taft on the People's Platform of April 11, 1948. Answering the question, "The American Standard of Living: How Can it Best be Improved?" Taft presented four methods of keeping the level of prosperity high, emphasizing technological advancement to increase pro-

⁶³ Walter P. Reuther, Remarks on Wage Resolution at C.I.O. Convention, November 21, 1946. Manuscript now in files of U.A.W.-C.I.O. Public Relations Department, Detroit, Michigan.

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duction. When Taft finished, Reuther declared:

Well, we've got to do more than just expand production. Our basic job in America is to achieve a balance between purchasing power and productive power. We've got to get the purchasing power in the hands of the American people, the workers in the city and the farmers on the farm, so that they can buy back the goods that we turn out in the factories and on the farms. . . . This production part of the problem is only half of the problem. The other half and the more important half at the moment is distribution, purchasing power.⁶⁴

After developing the thesis that more buying power was essential to the national economy, Reuther's usual procedure in defense of wage demands was to insist that prices had mounted; therefore, wages must be increased to maintain purchasing power. On February 14, 1947, for example, according to the St. Louis Star-Times, Reuther defended the second round wage demands:

"What counts is not how many dollars a worker takes home, but how much he can buy with those dollars," Reuther said. "At present a dollar buys 20 per cent less than it did in January, 1946."

Wage increases, he added, can be granted without price increases. "If General Motors manufactures as many cars this year as it did in 1941 it will make a profit of \$600,000,000, or \$100,000,000 more than in 1941," Reuther asserted.⁶⁵

Thus, by arguing, first, the necessity of maintaining

⁶⁴ A. Craig Baird, editor, Representative American Speeches: 1947-1948 (vol. 20, no. 4, The Reference Shelf; New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1948), pp. 105-106. Reprint of text furnished by the Columbia Broadcasting System.

⁶⁵ News item in the St. Louis Star-Times, February 15, 1947.

question. When that finished, Reuther declared:

Well, we've got to do more than just expand production. Our basic job in America is to achieve a balance between purchasing power and productive power. We've got to get the purchasing power in the hands of the American people, the workers in the city and the farmers on the farm, so that they can buy the goods that we turn out in the factories and on the farms. . . . This production part of the problem is only half of the problem. The other half is the more important half at the moment is distribution, purchasing power. 64

After developing the thesis that wage-buying power was essential to the national economy, Reuther's usual procedure in matters of wage demands was to insist that prices had to be held steady; therefore, wages must be increased to maintain purchasing power. On February 14, 1947, for example, according to the St. Louis Star-Times, Reuther demanded the second

round wage demands:

"That number is not how many dollars a worker takes home, but how much he can buy with those dollars," Reuther said. "The present dollar buys 80 per cent less than it did in January, 1946." Wage increases, he added, can be granted without price increases. "If General Motors manufactures as many cars this year as it did in 1941 it will make a profit of \$300,000,000, or \$100,000,000 more than in 1941," Reuther asserted. 65

Thus, by arguing that the necessity of maintaining

64 A. G. S. L. editor, Representative Speeches, 1947-1948 (vol. 20, no. 4, The National Labor Relations Board, New York: The R. W. Wilson Company, 1948), pp. 133-134. Reprints of text furnished by the Columbia Broadcasting System.

65 News item in the St. Louis Star-Times, February 15, 1947.

purchasing power, and, second, the ability of the auto industry to pay wage increases, Reuther developed the case for his demands. Wages, however, were not the only problems which concerned Reuther in the post-war era. In fact, they virtually were subordinated in emphasis to other forms of labor compensation.

"New" Theories of Labor Compensation. One of the most common methods of compensating labor through means other than wages is by pensions. Although not the first to negotiate pension plans into post-war contracts, Reuther led in this endeavor. In his speeches the need for pensions often was emphasized. The insecurity of those of retirement age was stressed, and the phrase, "too old to work, and too young to die," was used widely. It was in 1949 that Reuther began negotiations for pension plans, and, at the 1949 U.A.W.-C.I.O. convention, he spoke of this effort at length in his opening address:

When we drafted the economic demands of our union in January of this year we said that the workers in our industry needed a pension plan, that every day they were getting older and every day insecurity was clouding their future. We said that when a worker had worked 25 years and reached the age of sixty he was entitled to a minimum of \$100 on top of the Federal social security payments in order to be able to retire with a semblance of security and human dignity in his old age. We said that industry had to pay the bill because the workers have created the wealth that makes possible these great industries.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Walter P. Reuther, Opening Speech at the Twelfth U.A.W.-C.I.O. Convention, Press release, p. 6.

...and, second, the ability of the industry to pay more...
...his demand... however, were not the only...
...which concerned... in fact, every...
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"New" Features of Labor Organization

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One of the favorite devices used by Reuther in developing his case for pension plans was to compare workers' wages with salaries of corporate executives, and then describe pensions which executives had been voted by the corporations:

C. E. Wilson in 1948 got \$516,000 in salary and bonus. He made, on the basis of a 40-hour week and 50 weeks a year, \$258 an hour. Yet the Board of Directors of General Motors when they met in Wilmington said, "Poor old C. E., he is having a rough time of it, he can't get along on \$516,000 a year, General Motors will give him \$25,000 a year when he is too old to work but too young to die."

If you make \$258 an hour they give it to you; if you make \$1.65 an hour they say you don't need it, you are not entitled to it, and "We are not going to give it to you."⁶⁷

Reuther, although not stressing the point before public audiences, developed another argument for pensions when testifying before the Senate Finance Committee on extension of federal social security. This argument was based largely upon his underconsumption beliefs:

The question of providing adequate security for old people in America is, we believe, one of the most pressing problems on democracy's agenda of unfinished business. The question of security is not only a matter of justice to the old people themselves; it is a matter of, we think, economic necessity, if we are going to achieve the kind of economic balance we need in our economy.

.....
As long as millions of American families who are well along in life are denied the purchasing power to sustain a decent standard of living, the money that they lack is not being pumped into the American economy. Therefore,

⁶⁷ Loc. cit.

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giving old people in America a decent, adequate income to provide security and dignity in their old age is an important economic factor, if we are going to try to achieve and maintain a full employment, full production and full distribution economy.⁶⁸

The oral testimony Reuther delivered to the committee is most revealing in that it disclosed his preference for federal social security to private pension plans:

We take the position that the federal approach is the sound approach. It covers everyone, and it will cost less in the long run, and it also gives workers mobility. A private plan freezes workers to their jobs, and we in America are proud of the fact that we consider America a land of opportunity, and we think a worker should not be compelled to sacrifice security in his old age, if somewhere in his middle age or his youth he has a chance to shift to a better job. That shift should not penalize him in terms of loss of security in his old age. Only a federal plan can provide security and maximum mobility, and therefore maximum job opportunity.⁶⁹

A novel feature of pension plans which Reuther and the auto industry wrote into contracts was that of the companies paying not a specified amount, but a sum which, together with a worker's social security benefits, would total \$100. Continuing his testimony, Reuther explained this plan and the reasoning behind it:

Mr. Reuther: . . . we are asking [General Motors] for the establishment of the pension plan integrated with

⁶⁸ Walter P. Reuther, Testimony before United States Senate Finance Committee, March 15, 1950. Security and Dignity in an Expanding Economy (pamphlet edition of the testimony; Detroit: U.A.W.-C.I.O. Public Relations Department, n. d.), pp. 1-2.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 7.

Having the same in mind, it is to be noted that the
invention is not intended to be limited to the
particular details shown in the drawings, and it is
to be understood that various modifications may be
made without departing from the scope of the
invention.

The invention is particularly adapted for use in
the manufacture of paper and other fibrous
materials, and is especially adapted for use in
the manufacture of paper and other fibrous
materials.

In the drawings, the numeral 1 indicates a
sheet of paper or other fibrous material, and
the numeral 2 indicates a layer of material
applied to one surface of the sheet. The layer
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A novel feature of the invention is the
use of a material which is applied to the
sheet in a manner such that it covers the
entire surface of the sheet.

EFFICIENCY ERASE BOND

HAS COME

Mr. [Name] of [Address] has been
the inventor of the [Invention]

It is to be understood that the invention is not
intended to be limited to the particular details
shown in the drawings, and it is to be
understood that various modifications may be
made without departing from the scope of the
invention.

federal security. And we tie in with federal social security because that gives the company an incentive to come down here and fight for increased federal social security for all of the people of America, since the two plans are tied together.

Senator Myers: Will that be one of the basic fundamental issues?

Mr. Reuther: That is correct. . . . In the Ford plan, for example, the Ford Motor Company will pay approximately from \$68 to \$70 in order to make the \$100 monthly pension, and the balance will come out of federal social security of from \$30 to \$32, that the average Ford worker will be getting. When federal social security goes up, it means the company will have to make a smaller payment towards the \$100.

That is why the Ford Motor Company is interested in seeing that federal social security is increased.⁷⁰

Reuther's pension plans appear to be temporary expedients providing old-age security until the federal social security program is expanded to benefits of \$100 a month, and were designed to encourage the extension of social security.

A second method of compensating labor is through medical insurance. This proposal did not receive as much attention in Reuther's post-war public address as did the pension plan, although it ranked high on his priority list of demands. In the previously mentioned speech before U.A.W.-C.I.O. members in St. Louis, Reuther declared, "if industry can charge up the cost of keeping machinery in repair, it should charge up the cost of keeping workers in good health."⁷¹

⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 7-8.

⁷¹ News item in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, February 15, 1947.

However, it was before delegates to the 1949 U.A.W.-C.I.O. convention that Reuther emphasized the proposal:

We want a hospital and medical plan. We want to remove the economic barriers which block good health to the average family in America. I don't speak with simply academic knowledge on this problem. I lay in four different hospitals over a period of months, and I tell you, you have to be a millionaire to afford medical care in America.⁷²

Just as Reuther argued for pension plans by pointing to difference in worker and executive old-age security, so he indicated the difference between the type of medical care each could afford. After telling of a young man who began to show improvement after nine years of paralysis only to be discharged from the hospital for lack of money, Reuther declared:

What made this thing so ironic -- and you begin to see what is wrong in America -- the same week this happened the Free Press came out with a story about C. E. Wilson's bull. C. E. Wilson had a bull and the bull had a bad back. . . . But what happened to C. E. Wilson's bull compared to this boy who was paralyzed for nine years? In the case of C. E. Wilson's bull the General Electric Company sent a special 140,000 volt X-ray machine into Detroit on a special chartered airplane. It was picked up by a General Motors truck and taken out to C. E. Wilson's farm. The bull didn't even have to leave home to get medical care. Then when they got the 140,000 volt machine there they couldn't operate it because they didn't have enough power, so the Detroit Edison Company ran a special power line out to C. E. Wilson's farm.

Then medical specialists flew in from all over the country and they gave this bull the best medical care

⁷² Walter P. Reuther, Opening Speech at the Twelfth U.A.W.-C.I.O. Convention. Press release, p. 11.

However, it was before delegates to the 1960 U.A.C.I.C.

convention that further emphasized the proposals:

We want a hospital and medical plan. We want to re-
have the economic pattern which makes good health so
the economic family in America. I don't speak with
already national knowledge on this problem. I feel it
that different hospitals over a period of months, and
I tell you, you have to be a millionaire to afford out-
last one in America.

That as further support for certain plans by patients

to difference in worker and executive class stability, as
he indicated the difference between the type of medical care
each could afford. After calling of a year ago was shown
to show improvement after nine years of paralysis only to be
discharged from the hospital for lack of money, health de-

clared:

What made this thing so ironic -- and you know it --
and what is wrong in America -- the same work that had
gored the two horses was with a heavy hand of U.S.
Wilson's bill. G. E. Wilson had a bill and the bill had
a bad back. . . . But what happened to G. E. Wilson's
bill compared to this boy who was paralyzed for nine
years? In the case of G. E. Wilson's bill the general
Electric Company sent a check for \$100,000 -- say --
child into hospital for a great extended time. It
was picked up by a General Electric truck and taken out
to G. E. Wilson's farm. The bill didn't even have to
have gone to get medical care. Then what was the
140,000 volt machine that they couldn't operate it --
cause they didn't have enough power, so the doctor
Edison Company was a special power line and to G. E.
Wilson's farm.
Then medical specialists flew in from all over the
country and they gave this bill the best medical care

that modern medicine and science knows how to deliver. Now why? Why? I ask that simple, honest question. Why did C. E. Wilson's bull get the best of medical care while millions of these kids all over America are not getting that kind of care?⁷³

Although evidently ranking lower than pensions and medical care on Reuther's priority scale, the guaranteed annual wage was mentioned in numerous post-war public speeches. The U.A.W.-C.I.O. chief did not build an elaborate case for the annual wage in comparison to what he did for pensions and wage demands. Undoubtedly mindful of the automotive industry's susceptibility to seasonal unemployment, he made it clear that a guaranteed annual wage was a long-range objective of the union:

Take the annual wage. There you get the double standard again. If you make \$300,000 they pay you by the year, and you eat by the day, but if you make a buck forty an hour they pay you by the hour and you eat by the year.⁷⁴

By 1950, planning to demand the annual wage in future negotiations, Reuther began to devote more time to the proposal in his addresses. It is interesting to note the similarity of arguments used to defend the guaranteed annual wage and pension plans:

They think that when we talk about the annual wage we are having another pipe dream. But just between you and me, someday American industry and American labor

⁷³ Loc. cit.

⁷⁴ Walter P. Reuther, The Job Ahead, p. 12.

are going to have to meet the problem of the annual wage. It is not only a matter of economic justice for the worker, but a matter of economic necessity to the nation's economy. How can we maintain a full production economy unless the people have an annual wage that will enable them to consume the products of a full production economy?⁷⁵

An oft-used point was that, since workers eat by the year, they should be paid by the year just as executives are. This contention is strikingly similar to his comparison of executives and workers in regard to incomes and pensions:

When the Good Lord made us he made us all alike, and we thank him for that. He made the children of the people who live on one side of the railroad track just as he made the children on the other side of the railroad track. He made them all that they might grow up in God's image, strong and useful, rich in spiritual values. But the people who live on one side of the railroad track, like the \$516,000 a year corporation executive, get paid by the year. They and their children eat by the year -- and that is as it should be. But the people on the other side of the railroad track get paid by the hour but have to live by the year, and that creates the problem.⁷⁶

Here, then, were three forms of labor compensation that Reuther discussed frequently in his post-war speech-making. They were more than mere topics for discussion,

⁷⁵ Walter Reuther, "From the Viewpoint of Labor, C.I.O.," Symposium on Cooperation of Industry and Social Work. Reprint from The Social Welfare Forum: Official Proceedings, 76th Annual Meeting, National Conference of Social Work, June 12-17, 1949.

⁷⁶ Walter P. Reuther, The Challenge to Democracy (pamphlet edition of the speech; Detroit: U.A.W.-C.I.O. Public Relations Department, n. d.), p. 5.

however, for they vitally affected labor-management relations in the automotive industry.

Relations With Management. In late 1947, Reuther started negotiations with General Motors for the "second round" wage increase. A brief summary of new contract provisions which he gained was given by New Republic:

. . . workers will get 11 cents an hour more right away, and one cent for every rise of 1.14 points in the BLS [Bureau of Labor Statistics] cost-of-living index, adjusted quarterly. This escalator provision can boost wages with no ceiling, but it can depress them only five cents during the life of the contract.

The victory, of course, was not total. The union had sought 25 cents from GM, on the theory that it takes at least \$1.75 an hour for the average urban worker to meet the BLS minimum-standard-of-living budget. Wages at GM averaged \$1.50 an hour before the settlement.⁷⁷

In spring, 1948, Reuther began negotiations with Chrysler Corporation for the "third round" increase. One evening, during the negotiations, Reuther adjourned a meeting of the U.A.W.-C.I.O. International Executive Board and drove home to a late dinner. Standing in front of the refrigerator, Reuther turned just as someone fired a blast from a twelve-gauge shotgun which caught him in the shoulder. Reported Newsweek concerning this episode:

Still Tough: Before a police ambulance had moved the redhead, tough-bodied Reuther to New Grace Hospital, he told friends: "It was either management, Communists, or

⁷⁷ "Peace Pattern in GM," New Republic, 118:6, June 7, 1948.

However, for every article published in the magazine, there is a corresponding article in the magazine's history.

History of the Magazine

started by publishing a list of names of people who were "born" with a purpose. A list of names of people who were "born" with a purpose.

... and the list of names of people who were "born" with a purpose. A list of names of people who were "born" with a purpose.

In 1930, the magazine was published in the United States. It was published in the United States.

... and the list of names of people who were "born" with a purpose. A list of names of people who were "born" with a purpose.

or screwballs, in no particular order." . . . But Reuther, who had survived more than one brutal beating in his rise to the presidency of the million-man CIO union, never lost consciousness.⁷⁸

Despite their efforts, police never were able to apprehend the assailant, and the shooting remains an unsolved crime. Emil Mazey, U.A.W.-C.I.O. Secretary-treasurer, continued negotiations, and won a thirteen cent an hour increase.

In January, 1949, Reuther demanded a wage increase, a pension plan, and a medical insurance plan from the Ford Motor Company. In the steel industry, Philip Murray demanded the same items, but a fact-finding board recommended that the industry pay ten cents an hour to a fund which would finance both pensions and medical insurance. Using this plan as a guide, Ford proposed that it pay ten cents to a pension fund, and five per cent of the payroll to a medical insurance fund. Reuther demonstrated what one would suspect from his speeches, that pensions were first priority, and withdrew the medical insurance scheme to get the pension plan which he described to the Senate Finance Committee.

These, then, in brief outline, were Reuther's relations with management up to the half-century mark. The union was making progress; it was a growing union.

⁷⁸ "The Shot in the Night," Newsweek, 31:21, May 3, 1948.

IV. A GROWING UNION

Old Issues. After discussing such progressive items as the guaranteed annual wage, one is tempted to overlook old problems, such as the speed-up, which plagued auto workers in the 'thirties. These problems, however, remained in the post-war era, and a glance at Reuther's speeches opening the U.A.W.-C.I.O. post-war conventions provide vivid evidence for that point. Concerning the speed-up, Reuther vigorously asserted:

Our union was born out of the struggle against speed-up; that more than any single factor brought about the birth of our union. I say the struggle against the speed-up must be the very cornerstone of our basic union policy.⁷⁹

At the 1949 convention, Reuther reported:

We have authorized 409 strikes since the last convention, the largest number in the history of this union; and almost 50 percent of them involved the question of speed-up. We take the position we will mobilize our union to fight against speed-up wherever it raises its ugly head, whether it be in the small plant or Ford Motor Company or General Motors or Chrysler, or any other company.⁸⁰

Organizing the unorganized is a recurring problem which still concerned the U.A.W.-C.I.O. in the post-war era:

We have to organize the unorganized. That means effective, well-coordinated campaigns, where we work out specific organizational targets, and concentrate on those

⁷⁹ Reuther, The Job Ahead, p. 13.

⁸⁰ Walter P. Reuther, Opening Speech at the Twelfth U.A.W.-C.I.O. Convention. Press release, p. 8.

targets until they are finished. And then we move on to the next target.⁸¹

In 1949, Reuther stated that "since the last convention we have organized 366 new shops, with more than 200,000 new members, the biggest peace time increase in our membership in the history of our union."⁸²

These were familiar issues which still remained in labor's post-war world, and Reuther did not ignore them in his speeches to unionists.

Labor-Management Responsibility, and the Taft-Hartley Act. When speaking before non-labor audiences, Reuther frequently emphasized the responsibility of both labor and management to the community. He advocated carrying out this responsibility on the basis of "economic facts, not economic power," which was, in reality, the basic principle on which his 1945-1946 demands for public negotiations, and a "look at the books," were based. On February 16, 1950, Reuther, with speakers representing the A.F.L., the National Grange, and the National Association of Manufacturers, addressed the National Study Conference on the Church and Economic Life sponsored by the Federal Council of Churches. This speech is typical of those he delivered before non-labor audiences

⁸¹ Reuther, The Job Ahead, p. 14.

⁸² Walter P. Reuther, Opening Speech at the Twelfth U.A.W.-C.I.O. Convention. Press release, p. 17.

...and then we went on to the next stage.

In 1942, however, things were not so simple.

...we have discussed the various aspects of the problem.

...the various aspects of the problem.

...the various aspects of the problem.

...the various aspects of the problem.

...the various aspects of the problem.

...the various aspects of the problem.

Labour-Management Relationships and the 1942-1945 Period

...the various aspects of the problem.

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87 ...

88 ...

U.A.W.-C.I.O. Government Press Release, p. 17.

in its treatment of labor-management responsibility and the Taft-Hartley Act:

We take the position that labor and management have a tremendous responsibility, a responsibility that transcends the responsibility that they have to each of their special economic roots. . . . We have said repeatedly that economic decisions must be based upon economic facts and not based upon economic power.

.
 The Taft-Hartley Act is an example of what we call the negative approach to the problems that require positive solution. . . . In a police state you can achieve industrial stability without economic or social justice, but in a society of free men industrial stability is possible only as a by-product of economic and social justice. You cannot get stability on a basis of injustice -- you can only get it when people are beginning to get the things to which they are entitled. And so, instead of talking about the welfare state, raising phony issues that cloud up the horizon, we ought to be trying to come to grips with the basic problems that bother men -- to find democratic, Christian solutions to those problems. Too often we work on the negative aspects of these problems instead of the positive.⁸³

At Western Reserve University, on January 18, 1950, Reuther devoted his entire speech to the union shop provision of the Taft-Hartley Act. He first defended the union shop as democratic:

. . . if every worker in that plant gets the benefits of collective bargaining, in wages and working conditions, in having his grievances appealed through the procedure to the umpire, then every worker must pay a share of the cost. This is simply an application of the principle

⁸³ Walter P. Reuther, "Men Can be Both Secure and Free," National Leaders Speak on Economic Issues (pamphlet edition of the symposium; New York: The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, The Department of the Church and Economic Life, 1950), p. 15.

in the treatment of labor-management responsibility and the

Walt-Hawley Act

to have the position that labor and management are
interdependent responsibilities, a responsibility for
each the responsibility that they have to each other
special economic needs. . . . It is not possible
that economic conditions may be based upon economic
facts and not based upon economic power.

The Walt-Hawley Act is an example of what is called
the negative approach to the problem of labor-management
relations. . . . To a certain extent, the negative
industrial relations approach is a reaction to what has
been in a number of times and industrial relations
possible only as a by-product of general economic
factors. You cannot get stability on a basis of
this -- you can only get it when people are willing to
get the things to which they are entitled. . . .
Instead of talking about the welfare state, which is
issues that often go to the heart of the matter, we
to come to grips with the basic problems of labor
man -- the democratic, industrial relations approach
programs. The effect is work on the welfare state
of these programs instead of the positive.

It is necessary to distinguish between the
Hawley Act and the entire approach to the labor-management
side of the Walt-Hawley Act. It is this latter approach
that is democratic.

. . . If every worker in that plant has the facilities
of collective bargaining, in wages and working conditions,
in having the maximum possible freedom of movement
to the market, then every worker would have a share of the
cost. This is simply an application of the principle

55 Walter H. Hawley, "Can We Be Both Democrats and
Trade?" National Industrial Relations Review, 1937, p. 10.
Editor of the National Industrial Relations Review, 1937, p. 10.
the Congress of Industrial Organizations, The Department of
Church and Economic Life, 1937, p. 10.

that every citizen in the general community who derives benefits and services through the efforts of the total community must carry his proportionate share of the duties and obligations and the cost of that community service.⁸⁴

After explaining that under the new law unions must hold an N.L.R.B. election before requesting a union shop, Reuther attacked the election procedure as unfair:

Now how did they rig that vote? Well, when you elect a Senator in Ohio, if he gets a majority of the votes cast, he's elected. . . . But when you have a Taft-Hartley union shop election, you've got to get a majority of all the eligible workers who work in the plant, not a majority of those voting. . . .

Now I say that Senator Taft couldn't have been elected if he had applied that principle to his own election. In 1938, Mr. Taft was elected by 36.6 per cent of the eligible voters in the state of Ohio. In '44 he was elected by 29.2 per cent of the eligible voters and your other contribution to the U. S. Senate, Mr. Bricker, received 24.6 per cent of the eligible vote in 1948. I say that neither Mr. Taft nor Mr. Bricker can be elected to a dog-catchers position under their own principles in the state of Ohio.⁸⁵

Old problems of speed-up and organizing the unorganized, together with fulfilling its responsibility to the community, were questions confronting the growing U.A.W.-C.I.O.

Mobilizing Public Opinion. Returning to speeches which Reuther delivered at the U.A.W.-C.I.O. conventions, it is possible to learn of the instruments by which he felt

⁸⁴ Walter P. Reuther, Speech to Western Reserve University, January 18, 1950. Manuscript now in files of U.A.W.-C.I.O. Public Relations Department, Detroit, Michigan.

⁸⁵ Loc. cit.

that over a period of several years, the defendant
has been engaged in a systematic and deliberate
campaign to defame and discredit the plaintiff
and to bring about the destruction of the plaintiff's
reputation.

It is further stated that the defendant has
been guilty of various acts of defamation and
has caused the plaintiff to suffer great
mental anguish and distress.

It is the prayer of the plaintiff that the
court should grant the relief requested and
award the plaintiff the sum of \$10,000 as
damages.

Very truly yours,
[Signature]

Witness my hand and seal this 1st day of
January, 1922.

[Signature]

Notary Public for the State of New York

My commission expires on the 1st day of
January, 1923.

[Signature]

Notary Public for the State of New York

My commission expires on the 1st day of
January, 1923.

[Signature]

Notary Public for the State of New York

My commission expires on the 1st day of
January, 1923.

[Signature]

Notary Public for the State of New York

My commission expires on the 1st day of
January, 1923.

[Signature]

Notary Public for the State of New York

My commission expires on the 1st day of
January, 1923.

[Signature]

Notary Public for the State of New York

My commission expires on the 1st day of
January, 1923.

[Signature]

Notary Public for the State of New York

My commission expires on the 1st day of
January, 1923.

[Signature]

public opinion could be influenced. Radio ranked highest on the list, for, in 1949, he reported:

Since the last convention we have taken a step forward in our radio program. Some months ago we dedicated the second UAW-CIO radio station, WCUO in Cleveland. We ought to urge at this convention that every labor union that can get the money, every farm group, every co-op group that can get the money, do so and build a radio station, so that we can tie together a national labor-farm-co-op hookup covering the whole country. We have to get the tools to fight this battle with, because we are up against powerful opposition. We have to work with the farm groups; we have to support their basic program to get security in our economy, and we have got to build the Co-ops.⁸⁶

Reuther also called for "a national labor daily newspaper with regional supplements in every community in America."⁸⁷

Thus in coordination with farm organizations and cooperatives, Reuther hopes to marshal popular support for his liberal policies.

Building the Co-ops. The U.A.W.-C.I.O. chief, especially in his more recent speeches referred to mutual problems of the farmer and the urban worker. Since, of course, the cooperative movement in the United States today appeals chiefly to the farmer, one is not surprised to find Reuther sympathetic to the movement. His attitude, however, goes

⁸⁶ Walter P. Reuther, Opening Speech at the Twelfth U.A.W.-C.I.O. Convention. Press release, pp. 17-18.

⁸⁷ Loc. cit.

public opinion could be influenced. Radio would be used

on the last day, in 1945, he suggested:

Since the last convention we have taken a step toward
and in our radio program. Some months ago we distributed
the second 250-010 radio station, 1945 in Cleveland, OH
ought to work at this convention. Let every radio station
that can get the money, every radio station, every radio
group that can get the money, do so and build a radio
station, so that we can do together a national radio
fair-00-00 program covering the whole country. It will
to get the radio to this point with radio stations
and an against powerful opposition. It will be a
with the last program we have to build a radio station
program to get security in our country, and we have to
to build the radio.

Heather also called for a national radio station

paper with national supplements in every country in every

for, 1945

There is a possibility of a radio station and a

objective, Heather hopes to receive similar support for his

national radio.

Building the Go-ops. The U.A.W.-I.O.O.F. plan, 1945

only in his more recent speeches referred to national radio

form of the party and the urban system. It is, of course,

the cooperative movement in the United States today, because

chiefly to the farmer, one is not surprised to find Heather

sympathetic to the movement. His attitude, however, goes

55 Walter P. Reuther, Opening Speech at the U.A.W.-I.O.O.F. Convention, June 1945, pp. 12-13.

beyond sympathy to active participation, for, in 1946, he told the delegates:

We should intensify our work to build Co-ops. We are doing a good job in that we have made a good start. Some of the locals in Detroit have gone into the grocery business temporarily, as a beginning. Saturday after Saturday they are dishing out around \$60,000 worth of groceries in local union halls in Detroit, selling the stuff to the workers at cost. That is only a beginning.⁸⁸

Reuther frequently mentioned, although without elaboration, in his post-war speeches that cooperatives should be encouraged by labor unions. This recommendation, coupled with his views on the expanded functions of a union in modern industrial society, suggests that Reuther foresees an economy based on private enterprise, cooperatives, and public enterprise. To see more clearly his concept of the so-called "mixed economy," it is necessary to examine Reuther's speech-making on public issues and thus determine what he considers the role of government in national economic life.

⁸⁸

Reuther, The Job Ahead, p. 14.

CHAPTER V

SPEECHMAKING ON POST WAR PUBLIC ISSUES

I. POST WAR RECONVERSION

Industrial Reconversion. On January 29, 1945, Walter Reuther spoke at a dinner honoring Henry Wallace sponsored jointly by the Union for Democratic Action and the New Republic. Although the war was still in progress, the theme of Reuther's address was an appeal for government planning of post-war reconversion:

Already there is dangerous talk among certain individuals high in government and industry, to the effect that postwar planning in general, and advance reconversion engineering -- and tooling -- in particular, must be put in cold storage until the end of the war. This mistaken and tragic point of view is based upon the assumption that postwar planning is a luxury which can be enjoyed [sic] only at the expense of the war effort. A continuation of this attitude will spell "too little and too late" in our fight for sixty million jobs.¹

Reuther, however, did more than merely appeal for a plan. He advocated establishment of a reconversion agency which should work for a full employment economy by creating

. . . industry councils in all basic industries, as proposed by President Murray of the C.I.O., and should immediately convene industry conferences with representatives of government, labor and industry, to discuss concrete plans for increasing war production and, as well, to develop specific plans for postwar employment.²

¹ Text of speech as reported in The New Leader, February 3, 1945.

² Loc. cit.

REPORT ON THE PROGRESS OF THE WORK

I. THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

Industrial Development - January 21, 1944, Dallas

During the past few months, the Committee has been engaged in a study of the various factors which enter into the industrial development of the country. Although the work has still in progress, the progress of the work has been such as to enable the Committee to submit to the Board of Directors a preliminary report on the progress of the work.

Already there is a growing realization that the industrial development of the country is a task which cannot be accomplished by the Government alone. It is a task which requires the cooperation of the Government, the business community, and the labor community. The Committee has endeavored to bring about a closer cooperation between these three groups, and to develop a plan which will be acceptable to all of them.

However, the work of the Committee is not yet finished. There are still many questions which need to be answered, and many more studies which need to be made. The Committee will continue its work, and will submit to the Board of Directors a final report on the progress of the work.

The Committee is composed of representatives of the Government, the business community, and the labor community. It is a representative body, and its work is done in a representative manner. The Committee is proud of the progress it has made, and it is confident that it will continue to make progress in the future.

1 Year of work as reported in the report
February 5, 1944

2
1944

The then U.A.W.-C.I.O. vice-president seemed particularly concerned over the disposition of government-owned war plants, and formulated a program to settle the question:

1 -- The Government should operate as a yardstick government-owned plants in monopolistic or semi-monopolistic industries, or, in industries strategic to national welfare and defense. This will help to destroy the stranglehold of monopolies with their cartel agreements which imperiled our nation's defense program.

2 -- The Government shall make available for lease to private industry, government-owned machinery and facilities for use in civilian production on the basis of guarantees that they will protect the interests of government, labor and consumer.

3 -- Special provisions must be developed to rehabilitate and protect small business during the conversion period.

The Government should also create a central research clearing house, to make certain that patents, technical and scientific knowledge are universally applied for the public welfare, instead of being restricted to enrich and strengthen monopolies.³

After calling for a national housing authority, a public works program and "human rehabilitation" through ". . . adequate social security, health and educational standards," Reuther concluded:

From now on, and into the future of America, we must see to it that our tremendous technological progress works for democracy and jobs . . . not for reaction and unemployment.⁴

Later, Reuther made public a plan to convert the huge Willow Run plant into a central assembly plant for mass-pro-

³ Loc. cit.

⁴ Loc. cit.

duced houses and railroad rolling stock. On July 15, 1945, he explained and defended his proposal over the radio:

The question boils down to this: have the American people got sixteen billion dollars to burn? That is the value of our government-built war-plants and machinery.

A spokesman for the Defense Plants Corporation says that the hundred million dollar Willow Run plant and the huge basic magnesium plant are "likely to be white elephants for some time to come."

Labor challenges these defeatist views. We say that these facilities, representing one-fifth of our total productive capacity, can be used to create national well-being and to help supply jobs to every man and woman who needs a job.⁵

Reuther was impatient with opposition to reconversion planning, comparing it to that expressed against the 1940 Reuther Plan:

Let no short-sighted or selfish monopolistic influences say these war plants cannot be converted to peacetime production. Before Pearl Harbor, the auto industry insisted it could not convert to war production. Now they admit that better than 85 per cent of the automotive machinery was converted. We can reconvert to peace production just as easily and more quickly.⁶

Reuther, in the same speech, maintained that railroad rolling stock and pre-fabricated homes could be massproduced. This, he asserted, would reduce freight rates, improve travel service, produce a nine thousand dollar home for one-third

⁵ Walter P. Reuther, Remarks on N.B.C., July 15, 1945. Manuscript now in files of the U.A.W.-C.I.O. Public Relations Department.

⁶ Loc. cit.

dated August 15, 1954, at New York, New York.

He explained and detailed his proposal over the radio.

The question being asked is how the workers
people get along with their jobs. The
the value of the government-built war plants and
the
A spokesman for the Defense Labor Union
that the United States is doing the right thing
large basic investment program and that it is
grants for some time to come.
Labor officials stress that the program
these facilities, manufacturing equipment, and
promotive program, can be used to create
being and to help workers find a way out
needs a job.

He also was acquainted with questions of

planning, covering it to that program against

Reuther Plans

Let us start with the question of
since we think that the program is
then production. Before that, the
trained it could not be used to
they admit that better than 50 per cent of the
machinery has been used. We are
dusties just as easily and more

Reuther, in the case of the program, stated that

volving stock and pre-arranged plans could be

This, he asserted, would reduce the risk of

service, produce a nice thousand dollar

Manuscript now in files of the U.S. Labor
Department.

100-515

that amount, help clear huge slum areas, and provide employment for six million people. Thus, "instead of rotting monuments to a selfish, monopolistic policy of scarcity and high profits, these plants," concluded Reuther, "can make a more prosperous and happier America than we have ever known."⁷

One paragraph of the speech sheds great light on Reuther's concept of a "mixed economy:"

We propose that the government immediately create two public authorities, similar to the Tennessee Valley Authority. One would be a Housing Production Authority; the other, a Railroad Equipment Production Authority. Each would be empowered to lease former war plants for operation by private industry, by the government itself, or by workers' producer cooperatives. Each plant would manufacture items to go into the finished products -- modern rolling stock or modern, low-cost homes.⁸

Reuther publicized his proposals widely,⁹ but the government sold the plants at a large loss. Reuther's ideas seemingly had little effect in Washington. Yet the plan vividly illustrates Reuther's belief in the necessity of, and faith in, public enterprise. Albert Lepawsky underscored that belief, holding that there ". . . is a difference . . . between Murray's fear of 'benevolent' government regulation

⁷ Loc. cit.

⁸ Loc. cit.

⁹ See Walter P. Reuther, "The Challenge of Peace," International Postwar Problems, 2:143-164, April, 1945. See also Walter P. Reuther, "Our Fear of Abundance," The New York Times Magazine, September 16, 1945.

and Reuther's bold program of public enterprises."¹⁰

"The Steel Monopoly and Your Job." One of the major bottlenecks in post-war reconversion was the steel shortage. This, of course, directly affected the automotive industry, and numerous auto workers were laid off temporarily. On July 21, 1947, Reuther, before the Steel Subcommittee of the Senate Small Business Committee, outlined steps he believed necessary to increase steel production. These measures were reviewed in an address before the U.A.W.-C.I.O. General Motors Council four days later. Although the steel shortage was bitterly condemned in many of his speeches, this was the only major address devoted entirely to the subject. Obviously indignant, Reuther first demonstrated the effect of the steel shortage on the auto industry's unemployment.

The Chrysler plants were down for two weeks the last part of June and the first part of July. The Briggs plants were down. There were forty some thousand workers laid off for a period of two weeks and that happened several times. Then last week we got notice that the General Motors plants were going down, that 115,000 workers were being laid off for one week, and I suppose in some plants that layoff may repeat itself.¹¹

The U.A.W.-C.I.O. chief maintained that the steel industry was not abiding by promises it had made when persuad-

¹⁰ Albert Lepawsky, Administration (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1949), p. 146.

¹¹ Walter P. Reuther, The Steel Monopoly and Your Job (pamphlet edition of the speech; Detroit: U.A.W.-C.I.O. Public Relations Department, 1947), pp. 5-6.

and Hatcher's bid program of public intervention.

"The Steel Industry and War Production"

in post-war reconstruction was the steel industry. This, of course, directly affected the economy in that it and others who were left in the hands of the U.S. Steel, Hatcher, before the Steel Corporation of the Senate Small Business Committee, outlined steps to be taken necessary to increase steel production. These measures were reviewed in an address before the U.S. House of Representatives before Hatcher four days later. Although the steel industry was directly concerned in any of the measures, it was the only major address devoted entirely to the subject. Only Hatcher, Hatcher first emphasized the effect of the steel shortage on the war industry's production.

The Hatcher plan was based on two main points: first, to keep the steel industry from being taken over by the government, and second, to keep the steel industry from being taken over by the government. Hatcher's plan was based on two main points: first, to keep the steel industry from being taken over by the government, and second, to keep the steel industry from being taken over by the government.

The U.S. House of Representatives also maintained that the steel industry was not adding by production to the war effort.

10 Albert Legrosky, Administrative Law (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1948), p. 142.
11 Walter F. Hatcher, The Steel Industry and War Production (pamphlet edition of the annual report of the U.S. House of Representatives, 1947), pp. 2-3.

ing the War Production Board to abolish material controls:

First, that it would see to it that every one of its old customers would get the same ratio of total steel production in 1946 and 1947 that they got in the years of 1940 and 1941;

And second, that it would expand the total capacity of the steel industry sufficiently to permit the building up of an additional ten per cent to be allocated to new customers.

.....
 We find now that instead of the auto industry receiving its historic quota of sheet steel, the steel industry is giving to the auto industry 31 per cent of the total sheet steel rolled as compared to 44 per cent that we got in 1940 and 1941.¹²

Reuther then summarized two problems which he thought fundamental in the steel industry:

We are faced with two fundamental problems in the steel industry. We are faced, first of all with a very serious maldistribution of the current steel supply.

.....
 The other phase grows out of the fact that the steel industry itself has committed the American people and the American economy to a deliberative program of planned scarcity. They are deliberately holding down production to protect scandalous profits and to strengthen their monopoly control of this basic industry.¹³

Having dealt with the first point, Reuther proceeded to demonstrate the second by citing various studies on the amount of steel production needed to maintain full employment in 1950. He said that five independent studies arrived at approximately the same conclusions which

..... indicate beyond reasonable challenge that the figure of 100 million ingot tons or 75 million rolled

¹² Ibid., pp. 6-7.

¹³ Ibid., pp. 7-8.

ing the first time in the history of the world

first, and in the second place, the
old country, and in the third place, the
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country of the past.

THE FUTURE

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tonnage, represents a fairly accurate figure with respect to the steel needs of a full employment economy in America in 1950.¹⁴

After showing the steel industry's unwillingness to expand capacity to meet these estimates, he reviewed proposals which he had submitted to the Senate subcommittee. These included a government-sponsored scrap drive both to bring back from overseas, and to collect domestic scrap. But even more significant was his recommendation for more direct government action:

If private industry is unwilling to expand to meet the needs of a full employment economy, then the government must of necessity take action to meet the deficit which private industry is unwilling to meet.

.....
 The Government put $1\frac{1}{2}$ billion dollars in steel making facilities during the war. Seven hundred million dollars of that property has been disposed of at a rate of 35 cents on the dollar. There are still 500 million dollars worth of steel making facilities in the hands of the Government. We say the Government must see that these facilities are got into production at once.¹⁵

Thus, Reuther again revealed through his speechmaking, his belief in public enterprise. Production, however, was not the only aspect of the reconversion problem.

Price Control. As has been seen, Reuther based wage

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 12. The five studies were conducted, he said, by the U.A.W.-C.I.O., the Twentieth Century Fund, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Department of Commerce, and by the government economist, Louis Bean. The steel industry also made a study which arrived at lesser figures.

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 20-22.

business, representing a fairly sound financial position with respect to the needs of a full employment program, as indicated in 1953.

Under the new program, the Government will be required to expand capacity to meet these needs, as indicated in the plan which is being prepared by the Government. This plan includes a government-owned steel plant, which will be built back from overseas, and will be able to produce steel in more efficient and less expensive ways than the present steel

industry.

It is believed that the Government will be able to meet the needs of a full employment program, and that the Government will be able to meet the needs of a full employment program, and that the Government will be able to meet the needs of a full employment program.

The Government will be able to meet the needs of a full employment program, and that the Government will be able to meet the needs of a full employment program, and that the Government will be able to meet the needs of a full employment program.

That, however, would be a major step in the development of the steel industry, and that the Government will be able to meet the needs of a full employment program, and that the Government will be able to meet the needs of a full employment program.

It is believed that the Government will be able to meet the needs of a full employment program, and that the Government will be able to meet the needs of a full employment program.

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It is believed that the Government will be able to meet the needs of a full employment program, and that the Government will be able to meet the needs of a full employment program.

demands on the necessity of maintaining purchasing power. There was, of course, another way of retaining the level of buying power through price control. Frequently in speeches, Reuther said he preferred that prices be lowered rather than have wages increased, but, since labor had no control over prices, higher wages was its only recourse. On June 1, 1946, over the American Broadcasting System, Reuther urged the nation to protest congressional attempts to eliminate price controls:

Corporation stock prices have been going up. There is joy in the hearts of Wall Street speculators and financial manipulators. The sad news from Washington has cheered the man in Wall Street. Price control is about to be destroyed. The sky is the limit on prices for the consumer and profits for the speculators.¹⁶

After outlining measures which Congress was about to pass regarding price control, and demonstrating the profits and tax rebates which corporations were enjoying, Reuther predicted that depression would follow inflation:

If the income of the people cannot rise without being cut down again by rising prices and profits, we shall lose the peace.

We shall be headed for the same economic disaster that hit us in 1921 and hit us again much harder in 1929, and will hit us again a year or two from now. This time it may hit us so hard we won't get up again.

.....
That is the issue before the American people. If

¹⁶ Walter P. Reuther, "Labor and the O.P.A.," June 1, 1946. Manuscript now in files of the U.A.W.-C.I.O. Public Relations Department, Detroit, Michigan.

Congress decides that profits shall have priority over people, we shall have lost the peace.¹⁷

Reuther continued his case against elimination of price control insisting that its abolition would affect adversely the entire world's food supply:

There is another way we can lose the peace. It is world-wide starvation. That is what millions across the world are facing today. They need our wheat -- all we can spare them. . . . In proposing to take all price controls off meats, poultry and dairy products one month from today, these Senators know that the result will be to feed millions of bushels of grain to livestock. These Senators know that they are encouraging the waste of these life-saving calories, and they are going [sic] it in order to promote unrestricted sales and unlimited profits on luxury foods. . . .¹⁸

Having completed his case for preservation of price control, Reuther urged that the public protest these attempts to eliminate it:

The people of this country, not Wall Street, won the war. The people of this country, not Wall Street, must make the peace.

We can win it. Congress must be made to hear our voices. Congress must be made to act for the people; not for the profiteers.

The time is short. I urge you to raise your voice. We must be heard. We must be heard now.¹⁹

On April 11, 1948, after price control had been abolished, Reuther and Senator Taft debated on the People's Platform. Discussing how the American standard of living could

¹⁷ Loc. cit.

¹⁸ Loc. cit.

¹⁹ Loc. cit.

Senators decided that price control is the only way to help people, we shall have to do it.

Neither continued his case against elimination of price control insisting that the abolition would affect adversely the entire world's food supply.

There is another way we can save the people from anti-wide speculation. First is what I call "control" the world are facing today. They need the price of all we can spare them. It is impossible to have all price controls and market parity and price controls and market parity today. There is no way to have all and will be to lead millions of people to starvation. These Senators know that they are making the waste of some life-saving supplies, and they are also [redacted] in order to prevent uncontrolled and unlimited profits on luxury goods.

Having completed his case for preservation of price control, Senator Wagner then turned to the people's right to

control the price of this country, not Wall Street, was the war. The people of this country, not Wall Street, will make the price. We can win it. Congress has the right to take the voice of Congress and to take it out of the people's hands for the marketplace. The time is right. I urge you to take this vote. We must be united. We must be united now.

On April 12, 1945, after three days of debate, Senator Wagner and Senator Taft debated on the people's right to control the price of this country, not Wall Street, was the war. The people of this country, not Wall Street, will make the price. We can win it. Congress has the right to take the voice of Congress and to take it out of the people's hands for the marketplace. The time is right. I urge you to take this vote. We must be united. We must be united now.

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best be improved, there were numerous disagreements, including one on the price control issue. After the moderator asked: "How about the whole area of price controls in this situation, Senator Taft?," he answered:

Well, price controls, in my opinion -- nobody can do it right. The thing is bound to break down in time of peace. If it is successful in holding prices down, it discourages people from going ahead with new plants and new investment and more production.²⁰

Reuther was quick to reply:

You see, that's the whole point! Senator Taft keeps talking about price control discouraging production. In the shoe industry -- let's talk about specific industries -- shoes are things that all the people need. After Senator Taft and Congress destroyed price control, the shoe industry had its highest monthly production in July of 1946. Now assuming that Senator Taft is correct -- having gotten finally rid of price control, production should go soaring and ultimately prices have to come dropping down. What happened? Since July '46, the shoe industry has averaged 16 per cent less production per month and prices have gone up 50 per cent. . . . Now why? Because here you've got monopoly control where these monopoly groups arbitrarily decide at what level of production there [sic] going to operate. . . .²¹

Subsequent discussion revealed that while Taft thought wages had forced prices up, Reuther maintained the reverse had taken place; and while Taft felt prices and profits should come down, they would do so in a reasonable length of time, but Reuther was not satisfied to wait. The U.A.W.-C.I.O.

²⁰ A. Craig Baird, editor, Representative American Speeches: 1947-1948 (vol. 20, no. 4, The Reference Shelf; New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1948), pp. 112-113. Reprint of text furnished by the Columbia Broadcasting System.

²¹ Ibid., p. 113.

best as possible, and it is a matter of course that
the one on the other side, and it is a matter of course
which has nothing to do with the other side.

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leader, however, was not content merely to voice his opposition to many of the policies which had been adopted in governmental circles. During the election year, 1948, he took an active part in the political campaign.

II. 1948, ELECTION YEAR

The first observation concerning Reuther's political attitudes which emerges from a study of his post-war public address is the importance which he attaches to labor's participation in politics. For example, at the 1947 U.A.W.-C.I.O. convention, he declared:

We have the job of making our people realize, as I have said many times over, the relationship between the bread box and the ballot box. We have to make our people realize that in the kind of complex economy in which we live, the surest way to guarantee that your ice box will be filled with good food is to see that the ballot box is filled with good votes on election day.²²

In the same speech, Reuther humorously clarified his position on the legislative record of the Eightieth Congress:

The 80th Congress has betrayed the American people and the ideals for which we fought the war. I told Martin Wagner of the CIO Gas Coke and Chemical Workers Union, "Martin you have a big gas plant down there in Washington. Why don't you organize it? The biggest gas plant in America is completely unorganized."²³

After Henry Wallace left the Truman cabinet and became

²² Walter P. Reuther, The Job Ahead (pamphlet edition of the speech; Detroit: U.A.W.-C.I.O. Public Relations Department, n. d.), p. 9.

²³ Loc. cit.

leader, however, was not content merely to remain in the
position to many of the political parties and to
express his views. He was also active in the
national movement.

THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT

The first step was to organize the national
movement which started in 1914 and was
addressed to the Government with a view to
bringing it to a halt.

6.1.2. National Movement

In the early days of the national movement, the
people were not united. The national movement
was not a single movement but a collection of
movements. The national movement was not a
single movement but a collection of movements.

6.1.3. National Movement

The national movement was not a single movement
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movement was not a single movement but a
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The national movement was not a single movement
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movements.

the Progressive Party's presidential candidate, there was widespread speculation over whether labor would support the Democratic candidate or Wallace. Some left wing unions endorsed Wallace, but official C.I.O. policy was to support Truman. Reuther made known his attitude on Wallace's candidacy in late 1947, before a National Press Club audience:

Answering a question "what happened to Wallace?" the man who busted Communist power in the world's biggest union replied:

"Wallace has become a lost soul. He has been a great disappointment, for he might have been a great help and a major contribution to solving the problems the nation now faces.

"People are using Henry Wallace. The Communists are doing for him what they do for any other important figure they can bring under their wing.

"They furnish a complete political valet service.

"They will write your speeches.

"They will do your thinking for you.

"They will arrange and take you to meetings.

"They will supply the audiences and lead the cheering.

"And when necessary, to keep you in camp, they will inflate your ego."²⁴

On February 22, 1948, the U.A.W.-C.I.O. president spoke at the Americans for Democratic Action convention. The theme of this speech was the need for a strong political force to stand between the extreme right and extreme left. A study of the address aids admirably in understanding Reuther's broad political philosophy. His opening words were pessimistic, which is not surprising since most pollsters and political forecasters were, even then, predicting a

²⁴ News item in the Detroit News, December 19, 1947.

The first part of the paper discusses the general situation of the world economy and the role of the United States in it. It then goes on to discuss the specific policies of the United States government and the impact of these policies on the world economy. The paper concludes with a discussion of the future of the world economy and the role of the United States in it.

The second part of the paper discusses the specific policies of the United States government and the impact of these policies on the world economy. It then goes on to discuss the future of the world economy and the role of the United States in it.

Republican landslide:

We who call ourselves liberals and who cling to liberal values amid the continuing crisis of democracy have no cause for complacency as we assemble here today. The eminence we enjoyed for a brief historical moment in the last decade has crumbled. The middle, which is our proper ground, is being blasted out from under our brothers in Europe in the bitter crossfire of totalitarian extremes. Here at home, the New Deal is little more than a wistful memory.²⁵

Reuther, early in the speech, began to develop his theme by showing the need for a "third force" between extreme right and extreme left, and by assailing communist philosophy:

We agree that our general intention is to create a positive alternative to totalitarianism. We are opposed to the police state, whether it seeks to grind us down from left or right. We have witnessed the fatal collusion of the Communist Party and the Right in Europe and America. We know that Communists and Fascists, conspiring cynically in its last hour, together brought on the downfall of the Weimar Republic in Germany.

We remember the days of the Nazi-Soviet pact, when our domestic Stalinists, together with the America Firsters, sought to cripple the preparedness program and to block the lend-lease pipeline to Britain. Again today, we see Communists and isolationists together in opposition to the Marshall Plan. At the same time, we witness the struggle of Europe's non-Communist left to create a Third Force independent of both extremes and strong enough to play the role of mediator between Russia and the United States. We know that this Third Force will fail in Europe if we in America fail to steer this nation on a consistently progressive course at home and abroad.²⁶

After attacking the "united front" psychology which

²⁵ Walter P. Reuther, Speech to 1948 Americans for Democratic Action Convention, February 22, 1948. Press release now in the files of the U.A.W.-C.I.O. Public Relations Department, p. 1.

²⁶ Ibid., pp. 1-2.

Respectfully,
[Signature]

We will

[Faint, illegible text]

[Faint, illegible text]

[Faint, illegible text]

THE BOARD

[Faint, illegible text]

By _____

[Faint, illegible text]

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communists were then advocating to gain support for Henry Wallace, Reuther insisted that communism is not a type of liberal philosophy:

The Communists are not lower case democrats-in-a-hurry. Democracy to the Stalinists is a provisional creed, a valuable strategem on the road to conquest. To us democracy is fundamental and enduring; to them it is expendable.²⁷

The labor spokesman then urged that liberalism be more than an attitude; that it be an actual moving force in American politics:

But what is our course? I do not propose that we waste our substance in sterile argument. I do not propose that we fight against something, but that we must fight harder for something. I do not propose that we try to win debaters' points against the Communists. I purpose [sic] that we take away their weapons by making democracy work, and that we crush them under us in our forward drive to a society of both abundance and freedom.

That's what we mean by the creative alternative, the third force.

.....
 What I mean is that liberalism has too often been merely a way of looking at things. . . . But now we need something more than the right attitudes. America has inherited world leadership. We must prepare ourselves to fulfill world responsibilities. We must think in terms of policy, organization, action.²⁸

Although Reuther did not speak widely during the campaign, he introduced President Truman at a large Detroit Labor Day rally, and the union cooperated with the C.I.O. Political Action Committee in its efforts to re-elect the president.

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 1-2.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 3.

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27 July, p. 1-2

28 July, p. 3

Reuther, however, did not support the entire Democratic ticket. At the closing session of the Michigan Citizens Committee's political action school, he declared, "with a hodge-podge of incompatible elements in each party, we must think in terms of issues rather than party labels."²⁹ This statement also provides a clue to Reuther's reasons for introducing a resolution to the U.A.W.-C.I.O. International Executive Board that the union adopt as its ". . . official political objective the formation after the 1948 elections of a genuine progressive political party. . . ."³⁰ The proposed party was to include not only labor; but also farmers, professional people, businessmen, and others adhering to liberal ideas.³¹ After the Truman victory in 1948, Reuther, at least temporarily, seemed to postpone third party plans.

At a conference between Reuther and Truman following the election, the U.A.W.-C.I.O. spokesman promised the "complete and wholehearted co-operation" of the union to Truman's legislative proposals.³² In view of this pledge, it is en-

²⁹ News item in the Detroit Free Press, September 23, 1948.

³⁰ "President's Column" in the United Automobile Worker, August, 1948.

³¹ It is interesting that Reuther sent, on October 7, 1948, letters to "Farm Leaders in Defense of Farm Price Supports."

³² News item in the Detroit News, December 12, 1948.

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- 39 New Year in the ... 1948
- 38 "Washington's ..." in the ...
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- 37 It is interesting ...
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- 36 New Year in the ... 1948

lightening to turn to Reuther's speaking on several of the more important "Fair Deal" programs.

III. THE FAIR DEAL

Fair Deal Reforms. Reuther appeared favorably impressed with most items on Truman's agenda of needed reform measures. Such issues included increasing the minimum wage to seventy-five cents, and Reuther spoke several times of a long-range objective of one dollar per hour. He called for public housing, and occasionally reiterated the feasibility of mass-produced, pre-fabricated houses. Reuther sought social security extension and measures providing for full employment.

Although not elaborating on the type program he favored, Reuther stated clearly that he approved a federal health measure. The need for such a proposal, as presented in his speech appearances, invariably centered around the excessive cost of medical care. The phrase, "you have to be a millionaire" to afford medical care, which he used at U.A.W.-C.I.O. meetings when demanding company-financed health insurance, was repeated before non-labor audiences when supporting a federal health program.

Federal aid to education also was endorsed by Reuther:

We entrust the youth of America, our most valuable asset, to an educational system that is broken down and overcrowded. We abolished all the swing shifts in our factories when the war was over but we still have swing

shifts in the Detroit schools, crowded school-houses, fire-traps, underpaid schoolteachers. I suppose that the schoolteachers are the most underpaid group in America outside social workers. We must begin to do something about the school system.³³

Developing the Case for Reform. The arguments utilized in supporting the need for such proposals centered around first, ideas of justice to those helped, and second, stability to society. Reuther usually minimized the factor of expense by comparing it to the cost of war:

The trouble in America is that people are willing to do things in support of negative values. We have to find a way to get people aroused and fighting and working hard for positive values. The same kind of Congressional mentality voted \$400,000,000,000 for war, for the negative end of war, for the destruction of life, but when they are called upon to spend a few billion dollars to make life better in peace, they say: "We can't afford it."³⁴

A favorite device in developing the same argument was to contrast the cost of a proposal with America's daily war-time expenditures. Citing Paul Hoffman's testimony that the United States had spent 958 million dollars a day during the war to fight the enemy, he continued:

The 300 million dollars being asked as a Federal Grant to education, represents less than one-third of the cost

³³ Walter Reuther, "From the Viewpoint of Labor, C.I.O.," Symposium on Cooperation of Industry and Social Work. Reprint from The Social Welfare Forum: Official Proceedings, 76th Annual Meeting, National Conference of Social Work, June 12-17, 1949.

³⁴ Loc. cit.

of one day of waging the war.

There is something morally wrong with a nation that can spend billions to train and equip the flower of its youth to die in war, and then fail to do as much to educate its youth to live in peace.³⁵

Civil Rights. Reuther is outspoken in his support of racial and religious tolerance:

America can not stand before the world and give the kind of moral leadership that's required to lead the free people of the world as long as we have double standards of citizenship at home, as long as we permit discrimination because of race, color or creed.³⁶

Reuther believed not only in civil rights as an attitude, but in civil rights legislation. This is shown by his testimony on the National Act against Discrimination in Employment. Just as the U.A.W.-C.I.O. chief, concerning social security, emphasized the aspect of justice to public audiences, and justice plus economic necessity to the Senators, so the technique was repeated:

Passage of the bill before your committee, S. 984, is not only a matter of social justice to the individual, it is a matter of grave economic concern to the whole nation. When we deprive millions of people of the opportunity to make their maximum productive contribution,

³⁵ Walter P. Reuther, The Challenge to Democracy (pamphlet edition of the speech; Detroit: U.A.W.-C.I.O. Public Relations Department, n. d.), p. 5.

³⁶ Walter P. Reuther, Speech Before the Detroit High School International Clubs, November 13, 1950. Tape recording by station WDET-FM, Detroit, Michigan.

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it means we are robbing the American economy of the tremendous wealth that such people could produce.³⁷

The testimony revealed that Reuther favored strong legislation. When Senator Ellender suggested that tolerance ". . . will require in the future, a lot of education. You can not go there and do it overnight," Reuther replied, "I am for all the education in the world, Senator. But education is not enough."³⁸ Later, when the committee was discussing whether a federal fair employment commission should force the employment of minorities or simply try conciliation, Reuther insisted ". . . if you do not retain legal sanctions in the law you are taking the teeth out of the law, and I think the law must have teeth."³⁹

Reuther stressed, in his testimony, the success which the U.A.W.-C.I.O. had met in destroying prejudice through education, conciliation, and force. In his public address, Reuther did not speak in detail of the union's racial prob-

³⁷ Walter P. Reuther, Testimony Before Subcommittee on Anti-Discrimination Legislation of the United States Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, March 27 (Legislative day, March 24), 1947. Justice on the Job Front (pamphlet edition of the testimony; Detroit: U.A.W.-C.I.O. Fair Practices and Anti-Discrimination Department and Public Relations Department, n. d.), pp. 3-4.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 9.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 15.

It seems to me that the purpose of the law is to provide a means of...
to the extent that the law is concerned with...

The contrary view is that the law is intended to...
legislation. When Senator [Name] suggested that...

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can not be determined to be...

as far as the constitution is concerned, the...
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owing to the fact that the law is intended to...
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Senator [Name]... in the law...

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lems, but frequently reiterated that the union must not tolerate discrimination.⁴⁰

IV. REACTIONARIES AND COMMUNISTS

Throughout his speeches concerning national and international politics, Reuther attacked with equal fervor both "reactionaries" and communists.

Fighting International Communism. Before the fight against communism entered the stage of actual military operations, the United States was engaging in a so-called "cold war" with the Soviet Union. Two major ideas can be distilled from Reuther's speechmaking on this problem; first, that the United States' economy must be stabilized to enable the nation to withstand the communist threat, and second, that the nation must combat communism through "positive," not "negative," action.

The first idea was contained in many of Reuther's addresses, particularly those defending wage demands:

The advance of U.S. inflation is giving "the men in the Kremlin the ace in the hole they are counting on," President Walter P. Reuther of the United Automobile

⁴⁰ For an excellent discussion of Negro labor in the auto industry, see Robert C. Weaver, Negro Labor (New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1946), chapters 5 and 7. See also Lloyd H. Bailer, "The Negro Automobile Worker," Journal of Political Economy, 41:415-423, October, 1943.

form, but possibly the same as the one in the
collected documents.

IV. Political and Social
The purpose of this document is to provide
national political, social and economic
"information" and analysis.

Political and Social
The document contains information on the
political and social conditions in the
country. It also includes information on
the government's policies and actions.
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also about the political and social
situation in the country.

Workers-CIO, warned the National Press Club December 18, . . . Reuther said that "free men and free institutions" now face economic and political crises which are "equally deadly and destructive as those confronted under Hitler."⁴¹

The second idea also was found in numerous speeches, and was developed usually by pointing to communism's expansion through filling political vacuums created by economic instability and poverty. Several times Reuther maintained that that was what happened in China:

China is a classical example of a negative approach. The communists did not succeed in China -- we failed in China. We made the tragic mistake of believing that democracy's fight in China could be won on a battlefield, when all the time we should have known that the fight had to be won in the rice field. When millions of people are hungry, when they are struggling to get the very bare necessities to keep body and soul together, you cannot fill empty bellies with pious slogans about the virtues of democracy. You've got to give them food. And so the communists have not succeeded -- they have merely filled the vacuum created by our failure in China.⁴²

Thus, large-scale economic aid is an integral part of Reuther's suggested program for combating international communism.⁴³ Endorsing the Marshall Plan, Reuther, on February

⁴¹ News item in the Alabama News Digest, December 24, 1947.

⁴² Walter P. Reuther, "Men Can be Both Secure and Free," National Leaders Speak on Economic Issues (pamphlet edition of the symposium; New York: The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, The Department of the Church and Economic Life, 1950), pp. 19-20.

⁴³ For his detailed program of economic aid, see Walter Reuther, "A Total Offensive for Peace," The Progressive, 14:5-8, September, 1950.

5, 1948, testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Concerning the amount of aid to be given, the U.A.W.-C.I.O. chief suggested that ". . . it is better to provide for too much than to be caught short with too little."⁴⁴ Then, after quoting from the Harriman Report on the amount of aid needed for Europe, he insisted:

In other words, if trade between Western and Eastern Europe picks up substantially, if prices of European imports fall by the percentages given in the footnote, and if prices of European exports do not fall, then and then only will the amounts proposed be enough.

.....
 It would be wise to raise our sights, just in case East-West trade does not increase as assumed, and in case prices do not behave as assumed in Footnote No. 4. In planning Operation Survival, we should act as we did in war. We should plan for the worst and hope and work for the best possible breaks. That's the surest way to get the breaks coming our way and may be the cheapest in the end.⁴⁵

Just as Reuther had proposed labor representation in his plan for defense industrial conversion in 1940, so he supported it in administration of the Marshall Plan:

Pressure to pack the ERP with businessmen is stronger and more brazen now and has not been challenged or rebuked. The UAW-CIO challenges it; we insist that men and women from the ranks of labor should be included in the ERP administration from top to bottom. This will be no favor to labor; it will be a help to ERP. How else

⁴⁴ Walter P. Reuther, Testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, February 5, 1948. Press release now in the files of the U.A.W.-C.I.O. Public Relations Department, p. 7.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 8.

can ERP establish mutual confidence and cooperation with the working people of the 16 participating nations?⁴⁶

Reuther also stated explicitly that he did not favor aid to any totalitarian nation, and proposed that, in the legislative bill, "this stipulation might well be made:"

ERP aid will go to governments electing to participate in the European Recovery Program, including the 16 present members, but with the provision that suppression of democratic rights, such as free political elections, membership in free trade unions and collective bargaining, will be deemed a violation of the purpose of the Bill and will be the cause for ceasing such aid to any country so abrogating such rights.⁴⁷

A stable American economy and international economic aid, then, were the methods of checking communism's expansion most stressed in Reuther's post-war public speaking.

1950, Election Year. The U.A.W.-C.I.O. president, however, did not content himself with heaping oratorical abuse upon communism. He also attacked what he termed "reactionaries" by campaigning vigorously in the 1950 elections for labor-endorsed candidates.

One central theme ran through this phase of Reuther's speechmaking. He contended that liberalism, not reaction, was the best answer to communism. On September 7, 1950, for example, addressing a labor rally at Springfield, Ohio, he

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 16.

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 16-17.

declared "reaction from the extreme right and extreme left are ganging up on a democratic world."⁴⁸ He averred that the voting records of Senator Taft and Congressman Clarence J. Brown were ". . . the same as the record of Vito Marcantonio," the communist, "at every twist and turn" on matters of foreign policy.⁴⁹

Two days later, Brown termed Reuther's assertion "smear tactics." Reuther then issued a letter to the press explaining that his point was not that Brown was a communist but that ". . . reaction from the extreme right and reaction left are ganging up on a democratic world."⁵⁰ He then cited a detailed comparison of Brown's voting record with Marcantonio's:

On Sept. 19, 1940, during the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact, Communist liner Marcantonio voted against establishment of a Selective Service System.

So did Brown.

On Feb. 6, 1941, Communist liner Marcantonio voted against lend-lease.

So did Brown.

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On May 9, 1947, Marcantonio voted against the Greek-Turkish loan.

So did Brown.

On Sept. 28, 1949, Marcantonio voted against an adequate ECA fund.

So did Brown.

⁴⁸ News item in the Dayton News, September 8, 1950.

⁴⁹ Loc. cit.

⁵⁰ News item in the Springfield Daily News, October 11, 1950.

On Jan. 19, 1950, Marcantonio voted against the \$60,000,000 aid program to Korea.

So did Brown.

.....
On March 31, 1950, Marcantonio voted against authorization of Point 4 aid to underdeveloped countries.

So did Clarence Brown.⁵¹

Later in September, Reuther addressed 300 delegates to the Wisconsin Industrial Union Council's convention. He singled out Wisconsin's Senator Joseph McCarthy, who had created a major controversy with his investigation of communism in the State Department. Reuther revealed, once again, his concept that liberalism is the best answer to communism when, "'organized labor,' he shouted, 'has done more to fight communism than all the Wileys and Tafts and McCarthys put together.'"⁵²

A few days later, on October 16, Reuther reasserted this contention before an audience of 750 union members in Connecticut:

Communism, he asserted, is weak in those countries where strong labor unions fight for social justice.

Sighting in on his favorite target of the evening, he asserted that the free labor unions of the world have forgotten more about fighting communism than Mr. Taft and the "reactionary Republicans" in Washington will ever know.⁵³

⁵¹ Loc. cit.

⁵² News item in the St. Paul Pioneer Press, September 30, 1950.

⁵³ News item in the Weatherbury Republican, October 17, 1950.

Reuther pleaded with his audience, in the Connecticut address, to get out to vote, support Governor Chester Bowles, and expect a "smear campaign" against Bowles financed by the heaviest spending Republican campaign in history.

In this connection, Mr. Reuther drew a word picture of Pierre duPont, aged 18 months, breaking his piggy bank to make a \$5,000 contribution to the Republican campaign fund that had the audience howling. Mr. Reuther explained that the law allowed no more than \$5,000 contribution from any individual to a political campaign fund and Pierre had to do his bit so that the DuPont family's total contribution would be legal.⁵⁴

Thus, with considerable invective, Reuther attacked the record of the Eightieth Congress. One speech, however, included a point which might well hold significance in the future American political scene. It was a reassertion that the farmer's interests coincide with those of labor. It was delivered, significantly enough, in the agricultural state of Minnesota, September, 1950.⁵⁵ The Minneapolis Star made several interesting observations on ". . . his invasion of Representative August H. Andresen's southeast Minnesota congressional district, and a trio of Wisconsin districts."⁵⁶

. . . the invasion of predominantly agricultural congressmen's districts by industrial unionism's most

⁵⁴ Loc. cit.

⁵⁵ News item in the St. Paul Pioneer Press, September 30, 1950.

⁵⁶ Editorial in the Minneapolis Star, October 2, 1950.

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effective advocate is something worth watching.

It fits in neatly with the CIO's consistent support of the Brannan plan for American agriculture, and with a fresh and yeasty vision of possible political alliances in the country's national politics.

Suppose that some political party succeeded in getting industrial workers and farmers into the same political camp! Where could an opposing party look for a majority with any hope of finding one?

This isn't, of course, a new dream in American politics. . . .

For a few years much the same alliance worked passably -- from a political point of view -- in Minnesota.⁵⁷

The editorial concluded by asking two pointed questions:

Has Walter Reuther seen this vision of political power and been captivated by it? With time on his hands is Reuther setting out to forge a new, national nexus of political power?

The answer is not made clear by his invasion of August Andresen's district. But it gives to think as the Pennsylvania Dutch used to say.⁵⁸

Whatever the correct answers, Reuther has revealed, through speechmaking on such topics as post-war industrial reconversion, price control, communism, and election campaigns, a lively interest in politics. His ideas on expanded union functions, cooperatives, and public enterprise strongly suggest that Reuther, along with such men as Senator Hubert Humphrey and Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., envisions a "mixed economy" for the United States.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Loc. cit.

⁵⁸ Loc. cit.

⁵⁹ For a discussion of the "mixed economy" concept, see Irwin Ross, Strategy for Liberals (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949).

CHAPTER VI

SPEAKING CHARACTERISTICS

I. THE SPEAKER

Personal Appearance. Walter Reuther is a short, well-built man with a barrel chest. With clean-cut, youthful features; red hair that is only slightly receded from the forehead; and facial expressions that reflect his emotions readily, he gives an impression of boyish enthusiasm. James Wechsler remarked that "he always seems ebullient and fresh, as if he had just emerged from a cold shower."¹ Another reporter commented upon Reuther's appearance at the fact-finding board's hearings in 1945: "Your first impression is of youth. He has brownish-red hair, almost pitch-black eyes. His voice is high and loud, he is speaking easily and excitedly."²

Reuther's dress is very neat, eliciting such comment as that of James Wechsler:

In appearance and manner Reuther could easily be taken for a prosperous young industrialist with a new gadget to sell. He dresses fastidiously and rarely loosens his collar or rolls up his sleeves in front of company.³

¹ James A. Wechsler, "Labor's Bright Young Man," Harper's Magazine, 196:265, March, 1948.

² T. R. B., "Reuther v. GM," New Republic, 114:22, January 7, 1946.

³ Wechsler, op. cit., p. 265.

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Character and Personality Traits. In developing this section, it has been remembered that a restriction of ethical proof to a speaker's character as revealed during a speech is

. . . an artificial restriction, since the attitude of the audience toward the speaker -- based upon previous knowledge of the latter's activities and reputation -- cannot accurately be separated from the reaction the speaker induces through the medium of the speech.⁴

It is the purpose here, therefore, to present a fairly comprehensive description of Reuther's character and personality traits before showing his use of ethical proof in the speeches themselves.

Reuther's moral habits are generally regarded as above reproach. His family life is extremely happy, and he spends as much time at home as his work allows.⁵ He neither smokes nor drinks.⁶ While this undoubtedly improves his standing with many non-labor audiences, it often has the opposite effect with unionists. Edwin Lahey, in a lengthy discussion

⁴ Lester Thonssen and A. Craig Baird, Speech Criticism (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1948), p. 385.

⁵ Reuther was married in 1936 to his secretary, an ex-schoolteacher. They have two young daughters.

⁶ Reuther is known to have smoked on three occasions. During the 1945 General Motors negotiations, corporation president Charles E. Wilson became ill. Reuther said, "Wilson's gone to the hospital so I guess I'll go to hell," and lit up a cigarette. During the hectic 1946 U.A.W.-C.I.O. convention, he became excited enough to smoke a cigarette. After the 1947 convention he celebrated with whiskey and a cigar.

General and Personal History
The speaker, it has been pointed out, is not a specialist in the field of general history, but a specialist in the field of personal history.

... an excellent general history of the United States, the speaker has written a book on the history of the United States. The book is written in a style which is both clear and concise, and it is a book which is well worth reading.

It is the speaker's intention to write a book on the history of the United States. The book is written in a style which is both clear and concise, and it is a book which is well worth reading.

The speaker's main aim is to give a general history of the United States. The book is written in a style which is both clear and concise, and it is a book which is well worth reading.

During the 1960s General History was a very popular subject. The speaker has written a book on the history of the United States. The book is written in a style which is both clear and concise, and it is a book which is well worth reading.

of Reuther's personality, commented:

Most labor men are pretty good drinkers, and make friends and keep them in bar-rooms during convention time. If Reuther was ever in a gin mill, the incident has been overlooked in recorded history [he had a drink after the 1947 U.A.W.-C.I.O. convention]. Union politicians -- even the supposed "highbrows" in the clothing unions in New York -- play poker and shoot craps. If Reuther even knows that the opposite side of the dice total seven, he must have picked up the information in a study of permutations and combinations. Reuther has none of the charm of fallible men who go through life committing indiscretions and deviating from the path of moral righteousness. He lacks human warmth.⁷

The U.A.W.-C.I.O. leader unquestionably is ambitious. Some observers claim that he considers himself a "man of destiny" and criticize him for being ruthless and inhuman. Lahey, for example, called his 1946 election to the union presidency ". . . a victory of sheer competence and ruthless political ambition and sagacity."⁸ Whether or not such adverse criticism is justified is difficult to say, but the mere fact that some people hold these views creates an obstacle for Reuther in his speechmaking.

Another trait of Reuther's character is devotion to work. He spends long hours at the office, and even family conversation often turns to union affairs. Thus, Reuther seems to have attained Robert Frost's goal of combining his vocation and avocation. This aspect of Reuther's character

⁷ Edwin A. Lahey, "Reuther Takes Over," New Republic, 114:469, April 8, 1946.

⁸ Loc. cit.

of Southern's responsibility, commencing:

That labor has the greater responsibility in the matter of the strike. It is pointed out that the strike was called by the union and that the employer was forced to close down his plant. It is further stated that the employer was not at all responsible for the strike and that the union was the one who was responsible for the strike. It is also stated that the employer was not at all responsible for the strike and that the union was the one who was responsible for the strike.

The U.S. Supreme Court in its decision in the case of *Beck v. International Brotherhood of Teamsters*, 389 U.S. 69 (1967), held that the National Labor Relations Board's decision in *Beck* was correct. The Court stated that the Board's decision was based on the fact that the union had a duty to represent all employees, not just those who were members of the union. The Court also stated that the Board's decision was based on the fact that the union had a duty to represent all employees, not just those who were members of the union.

Another well-known case is *Beck v. International Brotherhood of Teamsters*, 389 U.S. 69 (1967). In this case, the Supreme Court held that the National Labor Relations Board's decision in *Beck* was correct. The Court stated that the Board's decision was based on the fact that the union had a duty to represent all employees, not just those who were members of the union. The Court also stated that the Board's decision was based on the fact that the union had a duty to represent all employees, not just those who were members of the union.

Beck v. International Brotherhood of Teamsters, 389 U.S. 69 (1967).
National Labor Relations Board, *Beck*, 170 NLR 458 (1967).
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is closely related to his competence. He has demonstrated skill as a strike leader and union administrator, and has displayed, through his speeches and writings, familiarity with complex economic problems. Howe and Widick spoke of his ". . . almost frightening emphasis on efficiency. . . ."9 Even Reuther's severest critics admit that he is brilliant and competent.

These three traits -- "high" moral habits, ambition, and competence -- have both helped and hindered the progress of Reuther's career. Although these appear to be admirable traits, some observers feel that he has gone to an extreme and has become, like the younger William Pitt, an "icicle statesman." The Commonwealth, for instance, stated in 1946 that ". . . most observers seem agreed that the main obstacle in the way of Walter Reuther's emergence as a first-rate labor leader is the combination of coldness and arrogance in his own manner."10 Glenn Engle, Detroit labor reporter, when asked to comment on Reuther's speechmaking, replied:

If Reuther has a failing as a public speaker, I would say it is a lack of warmth. For instance, though one of his speeches at a CIO convention usually is more logical and more forcefully delivered, somebody like president

⁹ Irving Howe and B. J. Widick, The UAW and Walter Reuther (New York: Random House, 1949), p. 200.

¹⁰ "Reuther Faces Trouble," The Commonwealth, 44:84, May 10, 1946.

is closely related to his conduct. He has been
skill as a writer, leader and organizer, and
displayed, through his speeches and writings, a
with complete accuracy and insight. He has
His "The Government" is a masterpiece of
Every sentence is a gem, and every word is
and complete.

These three traits -- "The Government", "The
and complete -- have both helped and hindered
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when asked to comment on his own work, he said

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Lester Kohn and E. J. Dill, "The Government"
Lester Kohn and E. J. Dill, "The Government"
is a masterpiece of "The Government"
May 10, 1932.

Joe Curran of the NMU [National Maritime Union] often brings the house down with a more folksy approach.¹¹

Another labor reporter, when contrasting Reuther with George Merritt before the fact-finding board in 1945, took an antithetical point of view:

This is no lawyer working for a fee, his voice has fervor and emotion; his answers to panel questions are needle-sharp, "Our boys are walking the streets in zero weather," he is saying. "For they know that everything that's good and decent, somebody had to fight for."¹²

From the speeches heard by this writer, Reuther appears unusually sincere when delivering a speech. There are four major reasons for this. First, Reuther has a voice which inspires confidence. Although highly pitched, it is warm, resonant, and vibrant.

Second, Reuther's feelings often "show through." This is not to suggest that he, like the poet Keats, "wears his heart on his sleeve," but, rather, that his voice is a responsive one, mirroring his emotions.

A third factor in Reuther's apparent sincerity is modesty when speaking. For example, at a local union meeting, he is careful to thank its leaders for the help and cooperation they have given him. In a speech delivered at a banquet on November 30, 1950, honoring the first Chrysler

¹¹ Letter from Glenn Engle to the writer, December 28, 1950.

¹² T. R. B., "Reuther v. GM," New Republic, 114:22, January 7, 1946.

pensioners, he recounted the union's fight for pensions, and very noticeably kept saying that "we," and not "I," fought the various battles in the struggle. Before U.A.W.-C.I.O. conventions, he reports what "we" unionists have done since the last convention and what "we" must do in the future. Thus, Reuther identifies himself with his audience whenever possible. Another interesting aspect of Reuther's appearance of modesty is his attitude toward career unionists, or so-called "porkchoppers."¹³ The salaries of top officials are larger than those of most factory workers. Reuther, however, feels that "porkchoppers" should not flaunt their comparatively high income. His own salary is \$10,000, and once he stated publicly, "I would be opposed to an increase in salary if they tried to give me one, because I don't think in the kind of union we're building the leadership should be paid more."¹⁴ He is purported to have reprimanded severely a union organizer for purchasing a luxurious Lincoln automobile. The U.A.W.-C.I.O. International Executive

¹³ The term "porkchopper" seems originally to have had a connotation of disrespect and to have applied only to career men who flouted their authority or who appeared to be disinterested in the workers. It is now generally applied to all career unionists whether popular or unpopular with the rank-and-file members.

¹⁴ Walter P. Reuther, Speech before the Detroit High School International Clubs, November 13, 1950. Tape recording by radio station WDET-FM, Detroit, Michigan.

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13 Walter P. Reuther, General Secretary of the United
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Board offered Reuther an expensive bullet-proof car after the shooting which almost took his life, but he declined, saying that he preferred his old Chevrolet.

A final factor which gives Reuther's audiences the impression of sincerity is that he frequently identifies union proposals with that which is virtuous and just. It has been seen how Reuther answers objections of cost against Fair Deal measures by citing the expense of war. Frequently he speaks of union demands in terms of social justice and human values. Both to labor and non-labor audiences, he insists that the labor movement benefits society as a whole, not just the working class. At the Chrysler pensioners' banquet he showed how early English unions petitioned for legislation declaring illegal a sixteen-hour day for children under twelve years of age. He went on to demonstrate how American labor had fought for free public education, social security, and unemployment compensation, declaring:

It's more than nickel-in-the-pay envelope. It's more than just fighting against speed-up in the shops and for better working conditions. We are a part of a great historic march forward in the world. . . .¹⁵

A final item in regard to Reuther's ethical proof concerns his good taste. He consistently makes the approp-

¹⁵ Walter P. Reuther, Speech at Banquet Honoring First Chrysler Pensioners, November 30, 1950. Tape recording by station WDET-FM, Detroit, Michigan.

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riate remark. An interesting example pertains to profanity. His speeches before Senate and other non-labor audiences are virtually without oaths. Throughout his speeches to unionists, however, is a sprinkling of "hell's," "damn's," and "by God's." During labor-management negotiations, when the union wants to appear firm in its demands, Reuther has uttered words best left unrecorded. Thus, although Reuther may lack personal warmth, he establishes excellent ethos on a speaker's platform.

II. DEVELOPMENT OF ARGUMENTS

Use of Logic. The facts indicate that Reuther uses logical proof as his chief mode of persuasion. His speeches contain an abundance of evidence. It will be remembered that when he developed his cases for wage increases, he cited statistics on the drop in workers' purchasing power and the increase of the cost of living. He showed corporate ability to pay by citing automotive profits and by predicting future profits through the use of statistics and managerial testimony. Reuther demonstrated the need for more steel production by referring to five various studies on the matter. After price control was abolished, he quoted figures to show that since consumers' cost of living had increased, price control should be reinstated. These are but a few examples which show that Reuther uses a great amount of evidence, re-

SECRET
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lying heavily upon statistics.

Forms of support, other than evidence, are not used widely. One exception, however, is an oft-repeated analogy:

Production is not our problem. Our problem in this country is consumption. In 1929, we got into trouble because we had a 12-cylinder Cadillac production economy, with a Model-T distribution system.

.....
 Now we have a B-20 production machine backed up by all the potential power of atomic research. If we got into trouble in '29 because the old Model-T wouldn't keep up with the Cadillac, it is just A-B-C economics to know that we are heading for more serious trouble unless we develop a B-29 distribution system to keep up with our B-29 production machine.¹⁶

Reuther is expert at explanation. His ability to clarify complex issues is widely recognized and undoubtedly aids the union membership to understand his "fancy economics."

The chief factors which make Reuther's evidence hold attention are first, use of the familiar, and second, use of novelty and contrast. By virtue of speaking about the average person's problems, Reuther inevitably presents familiar material. Witness his use of well-known statistics on the cost of living, and the cost of medical care. That which is

¹⁶ A. Craig Baird, editor, Representative American Speeches: 1945-1946 (vol. 19, no. 4, The Reference Shelf; New York: The H.W. Wilson Company, 1946), p. 168. Reprint of Bulletin of America's Town Hall Meeting of the Air, vol. 11, no. 24, October 11, 1945. Hereafter cited as Baird, American Speeches: 1945-1946.

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not so readily comprehended, such as, for example, statistics on company profits, is usually submitted in a novel fashion, often involving contrast. His technique of reducing the total cost of World War II to cost per hour and then comparing the expense of Fair Deal measures is an outstanding example. Another instance is his contrasting incomes and pensions of workers with those of executives:

Now look at the Nash-Kelvinator Corporation. This is one of the little independents that is having a hard time getting along in the world. Mr. G. W. Mason, of the Nash-Kelvinator Company, last year got \$300,925 -- \$150 per hour, yet he got a pension plan.¹⁷

In line with his attempts to simplify issues, Reuther does not often engage in complicated chains of reasoning. Rather, causal relationships and generalizations are used chiefly. In presaging, for example, the effects of not maintaining purchasing power, of abolishing price control, and not expanding steel capacity, cause and effect relationships were demonstrated.

Using the three methods of determining integrity of ideas presented by Thonssen and Baird,¹⁸ it has thus far been shown (1) that Reuther's intellectual resources are

¹⁷ Walter P. Reuther, Opening Speech at the Twelfth U.A.W.-C.I.O. convention, July 10, 1949. Press release now in files of U.A.W.-C.I.O. Public Relations Department, Detroit, Michigan, p. 11.

¹⁸ Thonssen and Baird, op. cit., pp. 344ff.

very adequate as a result of his excellent home training, formal education, global travels, and obvious familiarity with national and international affairs; and (2) that his cogent argumentative development results from plentiful use of relevant evidence and clear, logical reasoning. The final test, concerning the "truth" of his ideas, is difficult to make since Reuther is a contemporary figure, and, thus, the broad span of history is unavailable for final assessment of his ideas. Yet, certain comments are in order. First, Reuther's prediction that the auto industry could convert to war production proved correct. Although not necessarily following that it resulted from abolition of price control, Reuther's fear that the cost of living would rise during the post-war era did materialize. Second, much of Reuther's political and economic philosophy is acceptable to many economists and political scientists. For example, his views on the necessity of maintaining purchasing power and planning public works programs are consistent with Keynesian theory now widely accepted by professional economists.

Emotional Proof. As one would suspect from Reuther's use of logical proof, he follows the counsel of ancient rhetoricians by presenting emotional appeals as supplements to, not substitutes for, evidence and reasoning. To four major human motivations Reuther makes his strongest appeals:

(1) desire for security, (2) pride and self-respect, (3)

sympathy and justice, and (4) the combative drive. These motives are appealed to in speeches before all types of audiences, with the exception of combativeness which is generally confined to union audiences.

Under the topic of security, Reuther appeals to both personal and group safety. A speech which illustrates well both appeals is the testimony that he delivered to the Senate Finance Committee on extension of social security benefits:

The question of [social] security is not only a matter of justice to the old people themselves [individual security]; it is a matter of, we think, economic necessity [group security]. . . .¹⁹

When defending wage demands, Reuther also stressed individual security, pointing out:

I'd like to talk about two people who work for General Motors. The first person is a veteran. His name is Oliver Ostrom. . . . Before V-J Day he made \$1.14 per hour and because he worked long hours his take home was \$59.28.

After V-J Day because of cut-backs, his hours were reduced to 40 hours and he was downgraded to a \$1.05 an hour job. He now gets \$42.00 a week. If he gets the 30 per cent wage increase we're asking for, his wages would be increased to \$1.36 $\frac{1}{2}$ per hour. In 40 hours he would get \$54.²⁰

Pension demands, health insurance, and guaranteed an-

¹⁹ Walter P. Reuther, Testimony before United States Senate Finance Committee, March 15, 1950. Security and Dignity in an Expanding Economy (pamphlet edition of the testimony; Detroit: U.A.W.-C.I.O. Public Relations Department, n. d.), p. 1.

²⁰ Baird, American Speeches: 1945-1946, p. 177.

nual wages are based largely on the desire for security. Although Reuther develops the need for such measures primarily through statistics, there is not only inherent emotional appeal, but also deliberate mention of the "wife and kids."

Pension plans inevitably appeal to pride and self-respect:

When a fellow retires, when he gets too old to work, too young to die, he should not suddenly have his standard of living drop down 25 or 30 per cent. He ought to go on and he ought to enjoy those last years of his life in sunshine and dignity and security.²¹

Sympathy and justice are stressed when Reuther speaks of the "double economic standard." Here he demonstrates that executives get pensions and have an annual wage, so why, he asks, should workers not have both. Implicit in this argument is an appeal to the audience's sense of justice.

Appeal to combative drives is used in speeches to unionists. Willard Shelton reported that "no other UAW leader can 'pour it on' the 'bosses' more scathingly. . . ." than Reuther. Although he occasionally employs invective against management, Reuther emphasizes the use of sarcasm, irony, and asides. For example, he frequently utilizes name-calling by speaking of the "boys on Wall Street" as "coupon clippers" or economic "high priests" sitting on their "fat

²¹ Security and Dignity in an Expanding Economy, p. 9.

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money bags." Irony was especially noticeable when Reuther derided executives' pensions:

. . . the Board of Directors of General Motors when they met in Wilmington said, "Poor old C. E., he is having a rough time of it, he can't get along on \$516,000 a year, General Motors will give him \$25,000 a year when he is too old to work but too young to die."²²

Thus, by supplementing his logical appeals with emotional appeals, Reuther has established himself as a speaker whose invention of argument is commendable.

III. COMPOSITIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Speech Preparation. Walter Reuther usually speaks extemporaneously. He customarily makes a few notes which contain a brief outline of the points he wishes to make and statistics too involved to remember accurately. He sometimes speaks without notes, but, for major addresses, he uses a verbatim manuscript. When speeches are to be written verbatim, Reuther makes an outline which the Public Relations Department uses in preparing a rough draft which he revises thoroughly.

Organization. Although there are assuredly a few exceptions, Reuther's typical speech deals with several issues. An underlying theme, however, shows the relationship

²² Walter P. Reuther, Opening Speech at the Twelfth U.A.W.-C.I.O. convention, July 10, 1949. Press release, p. 9.

money bags." They are especially noticeable when they

border executives' positions.

The Board of Directors of General Motors when they met in Washington said, "For old G. M. to be having a rough time of it, we can't get along as well as we used to. General Motors will give him \$25,000 a year, but he is too old to work and too young to die."

There, by emphasizing the logical aspects of the case, the speaker has established himself as a speaker whose investment of argument is commendable.

III. CONVENTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Speech Preparation

After further study, speakers expontaneously. He expontaneously makes a few remarks contain a brief outline of the points he wishes to make and statistics are involved to remember something. He sometimes speaks without notes, but for major addresses, he uses a brief outline manuscript. When speeches are to be written verbally,

he often takes an outline which the Public Relations Council made use in preparing a rough draft which he revised later.

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Organization

Although there are usually a few exceptions, Herber's typical speech deals with several points. As underlying theme, however, there is the

32 Walter E. Herber, Opening Speech at the U.A.W.-C.I.O. convention, July 10, 1942. Speech reprinted in

of those topics and is usually made clear early in the speech. Typical themes are how to "stop communism," how to "stabilize the economy," how to "divide up abundance," or some other broad statement under which his various proposals can be logically arranged. Portions of several speech introductions illustrate these themes:

Democracy's most challenging problem is to find a way to translate technical progress into human progress and prove that men can enjoy economic security without sacrificing political freedom.

The tragedy of the world situation is the growing crystalization of extremes. More and more, men are being asked to choose between the extreme on the left and the extreme on the right, neither of which offers the moral answer to men's present-day dilemma. Communism, Fascism, and all forms of totalitarianism, offer mankind the promise of economic security at the price of spiritual and political enslavement.²³

As the banner says, we can drift to depression and war and disaster. But we have to plan and work and fight for peace and security and freedom and abundance.²⁴

. . . the world will judge America, and we in America must judge ourselves, not by our technology, even though it's the best in the world -- we must judge ourselves as other people will judge us -- by our ability to translate technical progress into human progress -- into human hap-

²³ Walter P. Reuther, The Challenge to Democracy (pamphlet edition of the speech; Detroit: U.A.W.-C.I.O. Public Relations Department, n. d.), p. 1.

²⁴ Walter P. Reuther, Opening Speech at the Twelfth U.A.W.-C.I.O. convention, July 10, 1949. Press release, p. 2.

piness -- into human dignity -- because that is the real touchstone by which you have to evaluate things based upon Christian values.²⁵

After the theme is established, Reuther considers each issue individually. The bulk of his time is devoted to demonstrating need, although he sometimes explains and defends the solution and refutes "stock" objections.

Thus, Reuther's speeches, with several issues standing out clearly but integrated with a theme that emerges early in the address, are organizationally sound. There is, however, one noticeable flaw in the structure of Reuther's speeches -- they lack summaries. He seldom employs any of the three standard summaries -- initial, internal, or final.

Style. Reuther's style is simple, direct, and clear. There are virtually no ornate, embellished sentences or phrases. With the exception of irony, Reuther does not employ tropes to any appreciable extent. His choice of words is apt, employing commonly used words which are clear and appropriate.

A noticeable characteristic of Reuther's style is his

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Walter P. Reuther, "Men Can be Both Secure and Free," National Leaders Speak on Economic Issues (pamphlet edition of the symposium; New York: The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, The Department of the Church and Economic Life, 1950), p. 15.

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repetition of words and phrases. Note, for example, his repetition of "eight-hour day:"

When we fought for the 8-hour day back in American history, they said the standard of living would come down if we abolished the 12-hour day, but we got an 8-hour day, and along with that 8-hour day we got the highest living standard in the world.²⁶

Other cases of word repetition:

In the coal mines -- and there are a lot of coal diggers in this convention -- they used to lay the coal miners off and they went hungry, but they always fed the mine mules because they owned the mine mules. They had to buy them but they didn't have to buy the coal miners.²⁷

Labor has a right to make progress. Management has a right to make progress. But they have a right to make progress only when their progress is a part of the total progress of the whole community.²⁸

In some cases Reuther's repetition is probably desirable inasmuch as he speaks on complex issues which must be simplified for purposes of clarity and effect. In other cases, however, the overuse of a word undoubtedly distracts

²⁶ Walter P. Reuther, Remarks on Wage Resolution at the C.I.O. convention, November 21, 1946. Manuscript now in files of the U.A.W.-C.I.O. Public Relations Department, Detroit, Michigan.

²⁷ Walter P. Reuther, Opening Speech at the Twelfth U.A.W.-C.I.O. convention, July 10, 1949. Press release, p. 13.

²⁸ Walter P. Reuther, "From the Viewpoint of Labor, C.I.O.," Cooperation of Industry and Social Work (Reprint from The Social Welfare Forum: Official Proceedings, 76th Annual Meeting, National Conference of Social Work, June 12-16, 1949.

listeners from the idea being expressed to the word itself.

Compositionally, Reuther usually has a good balance of long and short sentences. Thus, he passes commendably the tests of correctness, clearness, and appropriateness.

A final characteristic of style concerns Reuther's penchant for slogan-making. Although not a Winston Churchill in this respect, Reuther's ability is outstanding. His slogans are not ornate, but clever and novel. The following are typical: concerning pension plans, "too old to work but too young to die;" concerning his plan to convert government-owned plants into public enterprises, "sixteen billion to burn;" in regard to arguments of expense levelled at Fair Deal proposals, "billions for war, pennies for people;" defending his theories of labor compensation, "the double economic standard;" attacking "reactionary" legislation, "negative approach to problems that require positive solutions;" and in intra-union politics, "teamwork in the leadership, and solidarity in the ranks."

IV. DELIVERY

Reuther possesses a well-modulated tenor voice which is warm and vibrant. It is very clear, and his articulation is distinct and crisp. His pronunciation is "general American," having no noticeable regional patterns.

At the beginning of an extemporaneous speech, Reuther

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frequently speaks haltingly, obviously seeking the apt word. As the speech progresses, however, he frequently becomes excited and speaks loudly and fluently. Wechsler remarked:

Lacking either Lewis' angry roar or Murray's homespun intimacy, he relies far more heavily upon fact than fire, but he can get fighting mad and the result is often effective. He can hold an audience of almost any composition.²⁹

Abundant variety in all three voice elements -- pitch, rate, and force -- is evident in Reuther's speeches. Although not overdramatic he employs enough variation to command the attention of an audience. Thus, his speaking characteristics identify Reuther as a speaker who falls in the general category of those practicing the conversational style.

Reuther's facial expressions and bodily actions are in harmony with his emotions. His frequent gestures are firm, and he often raps the table for emphasis. Glenn Engle, Detroit labor reporter for the Associated Press, having frequently heard Reuther speak, maintains that bodily action is largely responsible for Reuther's success as a speaker:

I'd say his effectiveness stems from several factors, the most notable of which is the determination or seriousness with which he speaks -- the firm setting of his jaw, the rigidity of his gestures, etc.³⁰

²⁹ Wechsler, op. cit., pp. 265-266.

³⁰ Letter from Glenn Engle to the writer, December 28, 1950.

...and speaker loudly and fluently. ...
As the speech progresses, however, it is clearly ...
...and speaker loudly and fluently. ...

Lacking other levels, any sense of ...
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V. MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS

Although it is recognized that the measures of effectiveness are debatable, the standards which will be applied are readability of the texts, immediate audience response, effect of the speeches, and evaluations of contemporary critics. The matter of long-range social effects cannot be considered, since, as Lecky observed, the wisdom of a policy unfolds "very gradually."

Readability of Texts. This test of effectiveness has frequently been questioned as to its validity. Inasmuch as Reuther publishes many of his major speeches, it seems a legitimate test. Reuther's published speeches seem to fall into two categories, those delivered extemporaneously and published without revision and those written out verbatim before delivery. The prepared speeches, as do his written articles, read well. The extemporaneous and impromptu speeches, however, often contain many overly long sentences. Although such sentences often present a pleasing effect in delivery, because of pauses and vocal variety, they may appear on a printed page to be loose and rambling. The Steel Monopoly and Your Job, for example, contains numerous sentences of this sort:

We went down to Washington and I met with a number of important people in the Senate and in the executive branch of the Government, and after a great deal of work,

we succeeded in getting this subcommittee to expand its agenda to go into the overall steel question, both with respect to the current maldistribution problem, and also with respect to the question of the long range needs of our economy and what the steel industry was doing about meeting those long range needs.³¹

Immediate Audience Response. Many of Reuther's critics claim that his speeches are overly intellectual for his labor audiences. Even Glenn Engle, who ranks Reuther ". . . among the best speakers in the country," thinks that he is more impressive with non-labor audiences:

He unquestionably is more effective . . . with a forum group than at a local union meeting. He particularly shines at such an event as one of the meetings of civic religious and educational leaders he frequently calls to air the merits of a labor dispute.³²

Reuther does, however, gain favorable response from his labor audiences. Although his speeches are not the "rabble-rousing" type which move groups to near-hysteria, Reuther's sarcasm and irony are particularly well received. The addresses usually hold attention, are frequently punctuated by spontaneous applause, and generally receive long ovations at their conclusion.

Effect of the Speeches. Although this test cannot be

³¹ Walter P. Reuther, The Steel Monopoly and Your Job (pamphlet edition of the speech; Detroit: U.A.W.-C.I.O. Public Relations Department, n. d.), pp. 12-13.

³² Letter from Glenn Engle to the writer, December 28, 1950.

made on all of Reuther's proposals, since many of them are still in the process of public discussion, his success is noticeable. In intra-union battles, particularly, his policies have been widely adopted. His fight against wartime incentive pay and in defense of the no-strike pledge; his battles both in the U.A.W.-C.I.O. and the C.I.O. against communists; his war against the F.E.-C.I.O. merger plan; and his campaign to expand the union's functions -- all ended in victory. His demands on management have not all been accomplished, but he has been remarkably successful. However, on the national scene Reuther's ideas on post-war reconversion met with little favor.

Contemporary Evaluations. From the recorded observations of contemporary speech critics, there can be little question that Reuther is highly regarded as a speaker. As early as 1946, shortly after Reuther's elevation to the U.A.W.-C.I.O. presidency, A. Craig Baird maintained:

His ability to grapple with his opponents both through pamphlets and on the platform, together with his enunciation of policies within the councils of his union, stamps him as one of the outstanding speakers for labor.³³

In 1950, Baird again praised Reuther's forensic ability: "Reuther is a vigorous debater, intelligent in his analysis of a problem, of marshalling of facts and in quick

³³ Baird, American Speeches: 1945-1946, p. 166.

made on all of Lincoln's proposals, along with the
 still in the process of public circulation, his success in
 notices. In these notices, Lincoln's proposals, the
 notes have been widely adopted. The first notice was
 incentive pay and in defense of the no-strings plan.
 notes both in the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. Lincoln
 community; his was against the U.S.S.R. and
 his campaign to extend the union's influence -- all ended in
 victory. His demands on newspapers have not all been
 fulfilled, but he has been remarkably successful. However, in
 the national union's efforts to secure the government's
 not with little favor.

Temporary Evaluations. From the records of
 signs of independent success, there was no little
 question that Lincoln is highly regarded as a leader.
 early as 1946, shortly after Lincoln's election to the
 U.S.A.-U.S.S.R. presidency, A. Lincoln had no misgivings
 the ability to handle with his associates. With Lincoln
 partners and at the present, together with the
 tion of policies within the context of his work. There
 him as one of the outstanding figures for 1946.

In 1950, Lincoln again proposed Lincoln's proposals. This
 type "Lincoln is a vigorous debater, intelligent in his
 analysis of a problem, of surprising of Lincoln's proposals.

reply.³⁴

In the same year, Lester Thonssen, when conversing with this writer, commented favorably upon Reuther's speaking ability and remarked to the effect that he is a speaker ". . . with a sound theory of rhetoric."

Jean Bordeaux, developing the thesis that public leaders must speak effectively, cited Reuther's career as an example of advancement through competent public speaking. "Winning words," he said, "helped shop worker Walter Reuther get to the top."³⁵ The U.A.W.-C.I.O. chief, concluded Bordeaux, has ". . . mastered the art of saying things effectively. . . ."³⁶

Perhaps most noteworthy is that Tau Kappa Alpha, national honorary speech fraternity, selected Walter Reuther as their 1950 Speaker-of-the-Year representative in the field of labor.³⁷

³⁴ A. Craig Baird, editor, Representative American Speeches: 1949-1950 (vol. 22, no. 3, The Reference Shelf; New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1950), p. 189.

³⁵ Jean Bordeaux et al., How to Talk More Effectively (Chicago: American Technical Society, 1949), p. 3.

³⁶ Loc. cit.

³⁷ "The Second Annual Tau Kappa Alpha Speaker-of-the-Year Awards," The Speaker, 33:10-11, May, 1951.

In the past year, we have seen a significant increase in the number of people who are interested in the study of the history of the United States. This is a reflection of the fact that the American people are becoming more and more aware of their own history and the role that it has played in the development of our country. It is our hope that this book will help to further this interest and provide a valuable resource for those who are seeking to learn more about our past.

AMERICAN HISTORY
 A HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES
 FROM 1492 TO 1876

By the author of "The American People" and "The American Spirit".
 New York: The American Book Company, 1915.
 320 pages, \$2.50.
 (Illustrated by the author)

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

I. SUMMARY

Walter Reuther was born on Labor Day eve, September 1, 1907. He received, in his home training, the gospel of unionism; and there, through weekly debates with his brothers, he became acquainted with the art of public speaking. Leaving his home at Wheeling, West Virginia in 1926, he went to Detroit, Michigan, where he rose to foreman in a Ford tool-and-die room.

While employed as a skilled laborer, Reuther continued his education, obtaining credit at Wayne University for sixty semester hours. Taking most of his work in the social sciences, he supplemented his formal education by participating in the Socialist Party and labor union activities. Dismissed from Ford's because of these endeavors, he and his brother, Victor, embarked in 1933 upon a world trip which carried them to England, Germany, and the Soviet Union. There they observed how communist and fascist varieties of totalitarianism were destroying democratic ideals. Continuing their trip by way of the Orient, the youthful travelers returned to the United States in 1935.

Thus, profoundly influenced by his father's social democratic ideals; by a fairly comprehensive study of eco-

Walter Hamilton was born on July 12, 1807, in the town of
1807. He received, in his own right, a liberal
education at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland,
and he became acquainted with the most distinguished
leaving his home at the age of twenty, he went to
to Detroit, Michigan, where he resided for a short
period.

While still young he became a student of the
his education, consisting of a liberal course in
natural history, during most of the time of his
years, he was employed in the service of the
In the hospital he met and became acquainted with
from Ford's possession of these specimens, he and his
father, as stated in the notes, were the first to
them to natural history, and he has since been
observed and recorded in the history of the
Latin were destroyed in the fire of 1812.
trip by way of the Atlantic, the vessel being
to the United States in 1812.

Thus, naturally, he became one of the first
American naturalists, and he is entitled to
the honor of being the first to introduce into
this country the study of natural history.
He was the first to collect and describe
the American species of the genus *Uta*,
and he was the first to describe the
American species of the genus *Lacerta*.
He was also the first to describe the
American species of the genus *Crotalus*,
and he was the first to describe the
American species of the genus *Agkistrodon*.
He was also the first to describe the
American species of the genus *Coluber*,
and he was the first to describe the
American species of the genus *Phrynosoma*.
He was also the first to describe the
American species of the genus *Sphenosaurus*,
and he was the first to describe the
American species of the genus *Stegodon*.
He was also the first to describe the
American species of the genus *Trilobosaurus*,
and he was the first to describe the
American species of the genus *Stegosaurus*.
He was also the first to describe the
American species of the genus *Triceratops*,
and he was the first to describe the
American species of the genus *Tyrannosaurus*.
He was also the first to describe the
American species of the genus *Diplodocus*,
and he was the first to describe the
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He was also the first to describe the
American species of the genus *Brontosaurus*,
and he was the first to describe the
American species of the genus *Spinosaurus*.
He was also the first to describe the
American species of the genus *Coelacanth*,
and he was the first to describe the
American species of the genus *Ichthyosaurus*.
He was also the first to describe the
American species of the genus *Megalosaurus*,
and he was the first to describe the
American species of the genus *Deinonychus*.
He was also the first to describe the
American species of the genus *Archaeopteryx*,
and he was the first to describe the
American species of the genus *Pterodactylus*.
He was also the first to describe the
American species of the genus *Pteranodon*,
and he was the first to describe the
American species of the genus *Quetzalcoatlus*.
He was also the first to describe the
American species of the genus *Archaeopteryx*,
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American species of the genus *Pterodactylus*.
He was also the first to describe the
American species of the genus *Pteranodon*,
and he was the first to describe the
American species of the genus *Quetzalcoatlus*.

nomics and other social sciences; and by almost three years' observation of world conditions, Reuther launched his career as a unionist.

A final influence on the development of Reuther's attitudes was the working conditions in automotive plants. In Detroit he saw widespread unemployment resulting not only from the depression but also from the industry's seasonal pattern of production. He was confronted with a wage system characterized by many differentials and incentive plans. Reuther soon learned to detest general lack of seniority rules and, most of all, the dreaded speed-up.

Shortly after Reuther returned to Detroit, the United Automobile Workers union was given a limited A.F.L. charter. In 1936, the auto workers elected Homer Martin president, and Reuther was made a member of the International Executive Board. The "red-head" already had become president of Detroit's West Side Local #174.

Following the 1936 convention, Reuther rose rapidly in the union. Within a year his local's membership rose from seventy-eight to 30,000. He and his brother, Victor, led the first major sit-down in Detroit at the Kelsey-Hayes Wheel factory. Reuther was active in the big sit-downs at Flint; and, after General Motors suspended collective bargaining in 1939, he planned the victorious "strategy strike."

nominees and other local politicians and by almost three years
observation of world conditions, whether through his career
as a socialist.

A final influence on the development of Luther's
views was the working conditions in extensive plants. In
Detroit he saw widespread unemployment and suffering and only
from the depression but also from the industry's seasonal
pattern of production. He was troubled with a year ago
for characterized by many fluctuations and income plans.
Luther soon learned to detect general lack of activity
and, next of all, the general depression.

Shortly after Luther returned to Detroit, the United
Automobile Workers union was given a limited A. F. of W. charter.
In 1935, the auto workers elected Luther their president
and Luther was elected a member of the International Brotherhood
of Teamsters. The "Red-bait" attacks and political persecutions of
Detroit's last decade were.

Following the 1933 convention, Luther was elected
in the union. Within a year his leadership rose
from seventy-eight to 30,000. He and his brother, Victor,
led the first union sit-down in Detroit at the Fisher-Body
Wheel factory. Here he was active in the big sit-down at
Flint; and, after General Motors announced collective bar-
gaining in 1937, he played an important role in the sit-down at

Later, when unionists attempted to distribute leaflets to Ford employees, he was beaten severely at the "Battle of the Overpass."

In intra-union politics, Reuther became a leader in the Unity Caucus which opposed Homer Martin. Eventually successful, the anti-Martin coalition itself split into factions, and R. J. Thomas was elected president as a compromise.

When the question of isolationism versus internationalism confronted the union, Reuther strongly adhered to the policies of President Roosevelt. He devised the Reuther Plan for converting the auto industry to war production. This plan, never adopted in its entirety, called for joint labor-management-government councils to direct conversion. During the war, Reuther supported the union's no-strike pledge, and successfully prevented communist attempts to have the union sign contracts which included provisions for incentive pay.

After the war, Reuther demonstrated in his speeches that prices were advancing faster than wages; and, maintaining that corporations had the ability to pay wage increases, defended U.A.W.-C.I.O. policies in labor disputes. The first major post-war strike was the 113-day General Motors strike on which debate was widespread. Certain challenges to commonly accepted standards of labor-management relations were raised by Reuther. These included ability to pay and "a look at the books."

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"a look at the book."

Upon conclusion of the General Motors dispute, Reuther, after a bitter election, was elected U.A.W.-C.I.O. president. In his acceptance speech, the new president made a plea for harmony within the union. Factionalism, however, continued to plague the organization, and the period between 1946 and 1947 conventions was marked by widespread debate on the F.E.-C.I.O. merger plan.

After Reuther decisively defeated the communists in the 1947 U.A.W.-C.I.O. convention, right wing unions began "raiding" leftist organizations. Philip Murray was thus encouraged to use his opening speech at the 1948 C.I.O. convention to attack the left wingers.

Freed of factionalism, the U.A.W.-C.I.O. was able to win significant victories over management in the post-war era. Through public address Reuther demonstrated his underconsumption theory. He declared that if workers did not maintain their purchasing power, depression would result. Reuther often spoke in defense of pension plans, health insurance, and the guaranteed annual wage.

The functions of the U.A.W.-C.I.O. expanded in the post-war era. In his speeches Reuther urged creation of union-owned radio stations and newspapers; supported the cooperative movement; and spoke against the Taft-Hartley Act, particularly its union shop provisions.

Reuther's speaking on post-war public issues illus-

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trates his belief in three major ideas. First, his plans for industrial reconversion and government-owned steel plants demonstrates a belief in economic planning and public enterprise. Second, his support of Fair Deal proposals shows his endorsement of government welfare legislation. Third, Reuther holds that communism's expansion can best be checked by liberalism, not conservatism, and widespread international economic aid.

Speaking extemporaneously, except on a few major occasions, Reuther establishes excellent ethos on the speaker's platform through a responsive voice, modesty, and identification of union policies with that which is virtuous and just. Developing cases through abundant use of novel and relevant evidence, particularly statistics, he also appeals to the impelling human motivations of security, justice, self-respect, and combativeness. Generally, his speeches are so composed that the theme emerges rapidly and each point stands out clearly. Stylistically clear, the speeches reveal Reuther's ability as a composer of clever slogans. In delivery he is convincing, using excellent vocal variety and emphatic bodily action. Although more effective before well-educated audiences, he gains favorable response from labor groups. While his proposals for economic planning have not been widely accepted in Washington, he has been highly successful in intra-union politics and negotiations with management.

traced his belief in Keynes as an economic theory, illustrating the
 industrial revolution and government-owned social planning
 demonstrates a belief in economic planning and public utility
 issues. Second, his support of the New Deal program shows the
 endorsement of government action in economic planning. Third, his
 view holds that government action can be justified by
 liberalism, not conservatism, and widespread liberalism
 economic aid.

Speaking extemporaneously, almost on a few notes
 nature, further emphasizes excellent ideas on the economy's
 platform through a responsive voice, modesty, and clarity.
 action of union politics with that which is visible and just.
 Developing ideas through various sets of notes and relevant
 evidence, particularly statistics, he also suggests the
 political arena with confidence of authority, justice, and
 and confidence. Generally, his speeches are so composed
 that the theme emerges readily and with good results.
 clearly. Evidently clear, the speaker's vocal delivery is
 ability as a component of clear thought. In delivery he is
 convincing, using excellent vocal variety and expressive body
 action. Although more effective delivery well-organized and
 needs, he gains favorable response from labor groups. His
 his proposals for economic planning have not been widely ac-
 cepted in Washington, he has been highly successful in
 union politics and negotiations with management.

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II. CONCLUSIONS

Reuther's Broad Political and Economic Philosophy.

Reuther is an outstanding spokesman for modern concepts of unionism arising in the United States. Thoroughly familiar with complex economic problems, he is a new type labor leader in that he has a broad political and economic philosophy.

The American Federation of Labor, virtually the only organized labor force of consequence in the United States until the advent of the C.I.O., was content with "pure and simple trade unionism." Even when John L. Lewis and others left the A.F.L., the dispute was not over the function of trade unionism in modern society, but over disagreement as to the best method of organizing mass-production industries. The concept that a union should consider its public responsibilities; should be active in political campaigns; and should base its demands on "economic facts, not power," is a view which only recently is becoming widely accepted. Although others, particularly Sidney Hillman, held to this new idea of a union's place in society, Reuther is a leading spokesman for such principles.

Reuther has looked beyond "business unionism" to problems of national economic planning, and evidently foresees an economy with large-scale public enterprise, a healthy cooperative movement, private enterprise, and strong trade unions.

Importance of His Philosophy as Expressed in His Speechmaking. Speechmaking has played a significant role in Reuther's career, and his ideas have had a marked effect on the labor movement. His influence on national affairs has been limited except for the indirect impression left through his impact on labor.

Numerous writers have observed that the ability to speak is a great asset for a union career since most workers, not usually fluent themselves, are impressed by one who has mastered the art of public speaking. Reuther, throughout his career, seized upon every opportunity to present his point of view to the rank-and-file members. During World War II, he spoke widely at local meetings on the incentive pay question and the no-strike pledge. During the period between the U.A.W.-C.I.O.'s 1946 and 1947 conventions, he spoke often, clarifying the somewhat complex issues that were causing factionalism.

Two events stand as striking evidence of the influence of Reuther's speaking ability on his career. First, the 1946 U.A.W.-C.I.O. presidential election was, by any standards, extremely close. Out of 8,765 votes cast, less than 150 separated Thomas and Reuther. The "red-head's" ability to refute Thomas' charges and launch effective countercharges may have been a contributing factor in tipping the scales his way. Had seventy-five of the delegates who voted for

Reuther chosen to support Thomas, the presidency would have gone to Thomas. It is possible that Thomas' refusal to debate Reuther may have influenced that many voters. Second, adoption of the F.E.-C.I.O. merger plan might have injured seriously Reuther's chances for re-election in 1947; not only would it have brought new anti-Reuther delegates to the next U.A.W.-C.I.O. convention, it would have meant a rejection of Reuther's policy by the rank-and-file members. This repudiation might have started a "bandwagon" movement for his rival. The merger plan was appealing in principle as it would have ended the jurisdictional fights between the U.A.W.-C.I.O. and the F.E.-C.I.O. Although Reuther adhered to the principle of merger, he attacked specific details of the plan. This made clarity of issues more difficult. Even so, he was able to persuade the rank and file, and the merger plan was voted down two to one. Thus, the facts indicate that speech-making has played an important role in Reuther's rise to president of the U.A.W.-C.I.O.

On the national scene, Reuther's proposals for reconversion have not been accepted, and his influence on government policy-making has been limited. However, Reuther has spoken on a wide variety of political measures, and this undoubtedly has swayed some public opinion.

It is on the labor movement that Reuther's ideas have had the greatest impact. Reuther's ability as a negotiator

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and mobilizer of public opinion during industrial disputes has enabled him to win significant victories over management. Even more noteworthy is Reuther's advancement of "new" theories of labor-management relations and labor compensation. His emphasis on corporate ability to pay created considerable pressure on management and caused widespread controversy over the validity of the principle. Furthermore, Reuther has led in demanding pensions, health insurance, and a guaranteed annual wage. A final impact that Reuther has had on the labor movement was his forcing the communist issue into public discussion and his playing of a leading role in labor's right wing. Reuther's 1947 victory over the U.A.W.-C.I.O.'s left wing encouraged the entire right wing of the C.I.O. to attack publicly the communists in labor's ranks. Reuther's viewpoint was even forced upon Philip Murray who verbally scourged the "CP's" at the 1948 C.I.O. convention. The U.A.W.-C.I.O. chief undoubtedly made a contribution, not only to the labor movement but also to the nation and the entire Western world, by his leading role in opposing communism.

Reuther's Speaking Ability. Reuther is an outstanding speaker on the American scene generally, and in the labor movement particularly. If one factor can be isolated as the outstanding feature of Reuther's speechmaking, it would be his use of logical proof. Not only does he submit abundant and relevant evidence, but he presents it in a novel and

and publisher of public opinion during industrial disputes
 had enabled him to win a place as a leader over a long
 period of years. His position is further strengthened by the
 fact that he has been successful in his efforts to bring
 order to labor-management relations and labor organization.
 His capacity to organize ability to pay needed attention
 pressure on management and sound widespread participation
 the validity of his principles. Furthermore, he has led
 in domestic and international movements, and a number
 annual wage. A final point that he has led on the
 labor movement was the fact that the committee have into pub-
 lic discussion and the effect of a leading role in labor
 right wing. He has a long record over the U.S.A. and
 left wing movement. The entire right wing of the U.S.A. to
 attack publicly the committee in labor's work. He has
 viewpoint was even found upon this survey and actually
 accounted the "U.S.A." at the 1938 U.S.A. convention. The
 U.A.W.-C.I.O. effort undoubtedly made a contribution, not only
 to the labor movement but also to the nation and the entire
 Western world, by its leading role in opposing capitalism.

Heather's Speaking Ability. Heather is an outstanding

speaker on the American scene generally, and in the labor
 movement particularly. It is a fact that can be factored as the
 outstanding feature of Heather's speaking. It would be
 his use of logical proof. Not only does he exhibit abundant
 and relevant evidence, but he presents it in a novel and

interesting manner which holds the attention of his audience. This ability, in addition to his excellent use of ethical and emotional proofs; his intelligent audience adaptation; his style; and his delivery, leads inevitably to the conclusion that Reuther is a highly competent speaker.

Walter Reuther's Future. One of the values of study in contemporary public address is that it may provide a guide by which to predict a speaker's future conduct. Although it would be absurd for the writer to pose as an infallible prophet, some observations on Reuther's future seem to be in order.

The first noteworthy item is Reuther's youth, for he will celebrate his forty-fourth birthday on September 1, 1951. His advancement during these forty-four years has been rapid. He was Director of the union's General Motors Department when only thirty-two, was a U.A.W.-C.I.O. vice-president when thirty-five, and at thirty-eight was elected to the union's presidency. When most men are Reuther's age, their really productive years are just beginning. The U.A.W.-C.I.O. chief, however, already has made significant contributions to the labor movement. Reuther's energy, ambition, and ability suggest that he will make an even greater impression on public life in the future.

Reuther is a most probable successor to the C.I.O.

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presidency should Philip Murray resign. Reuther has made some references in his speeches to a united labor movement, but this is common among labor spokesmen, and whether or not it can be accomplished in the foreseeable future is highly questionable. Thus, if Reuther can add the C.I.O. presidency to his leadership of the auto workers, he will have achieved about all attainable in the field of labor.

Two questions suggest themselves: can Reuther maintain control of the U.A.W.-C.I.O., and will he look for new fields of endeavor? In answer to the first question, it appears that Reuther has a firm hold on his union. There is some opposition to him, but it is significant that Reuther's re-election in April, 1951, was by acclamation.

When considering the second question, one must determine to what areas Reuther likely will turn. The most probable is the political arena. Many writers have suggested that Reuther is seeking political office; and, during the illness of the late Senator Arthur Vandenberg, there was speculation that Michigan's Governor Mennen Williams would appoint Reuther senator. Although this did not materialize, there is considerable evidence to suggest that Reuther is interested in political office. First, Reuther has been very concerned over industrial wartime conversion and peacetime reconversion and has formulated proposals for government action in these matters. Second, Reuther has ventured opin-

presidency about Philip Murray resign. Heuter has made
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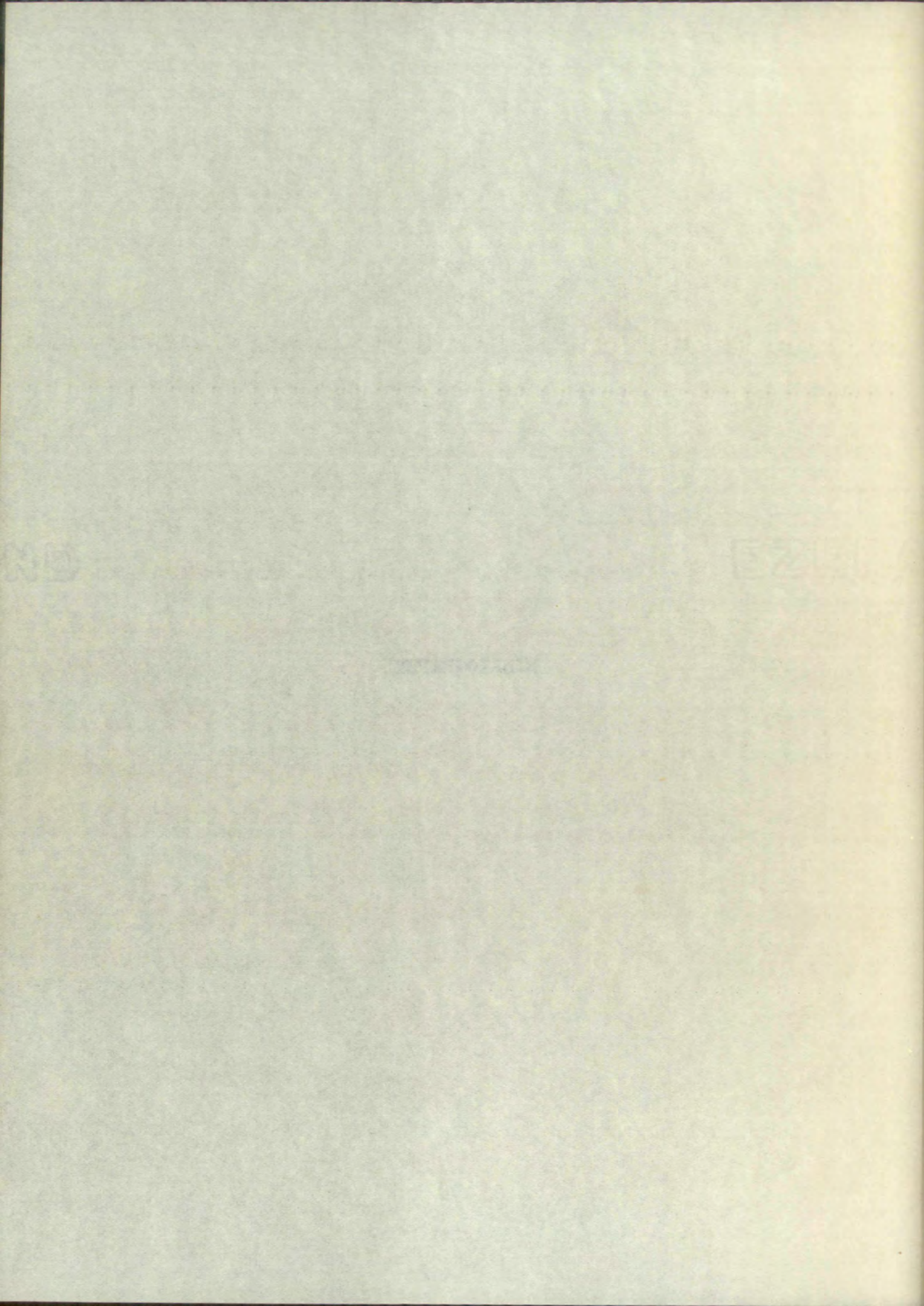
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 there is considerable evidence to suggest that Heuter is
 interested in political office. First, Heuter has been
 very concerned over industrial wartime conversion and post-
 war reconversion and has formulated proposals for government
 action in these matters. Second, Heuter has ventured opin-

ions on virtually all major political measures with which Congress has dealt in recent years. Third, the U.A.W.-C.I.O. spokesman has campaigned vigorously in congressional elections. Of even more significance is the fact that Reuther consistently identifies the economic interests of the farmer with those of labor, and that he once favored creation of a third party. Although Reuther probably does not feel that the present is opportune for launching a new organization, it is evident from his speeches that he thinks present parties contain incompatible elements and that a third major party based upon liberal principles is needed.

Thus, whether Reuther remains in the labor movement or turns to politics, his future will probably be highly productive, resulting in significant contributions to American society.

ions on virtually all major political issues with which
Congress has dealt in recent years. Third, the speaker
has a unique opportunity to address the Congress as a
whole. It even has a tradition of the speaker
addressing the members of the House
with those of labor, and that is a very important
third party. Although many people do not feel that
the present is opportune for forming a new organization,
it is evident from the speaker's address that the
current leadership is not a third party
based upon the first principles in need.
That, whether further progress in the labor movement
or turn to politics, the speaker will probably be highly suc-
cessive, resulting in significant contributions to the
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Washington, D.C. October 1, 1950

Dear Mr. Secretary:
I am writing you today to express my

gratitude for the information you have provided
regarding the activities of the

Communist Party in the United States
and its efforts to infiltrate our

Government and to subvert our
democratic institutions.

I am particularly concerned
by the activities of the

Communist Party in the United States
and its efforts to infiltrate our
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democratic institutions.

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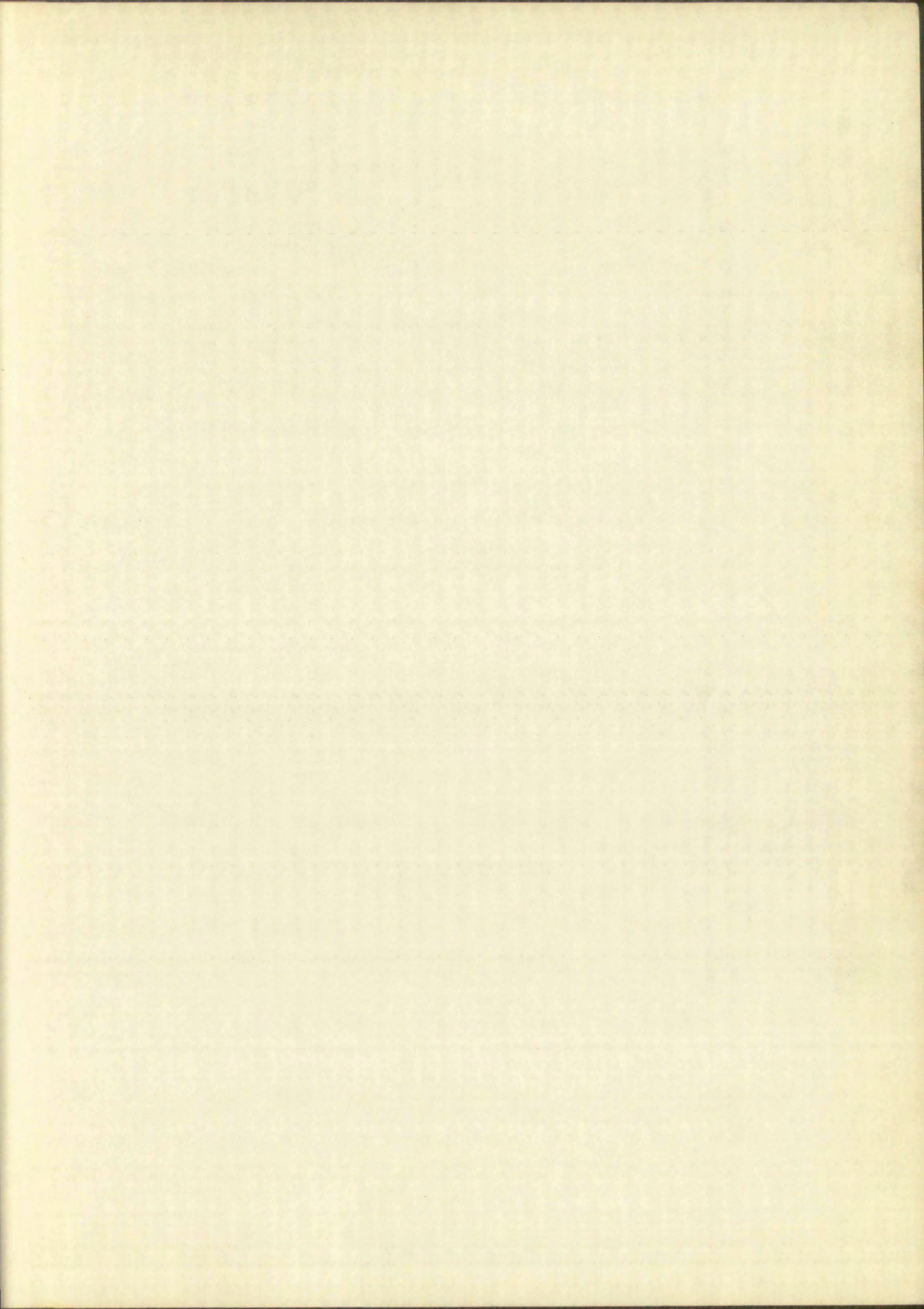
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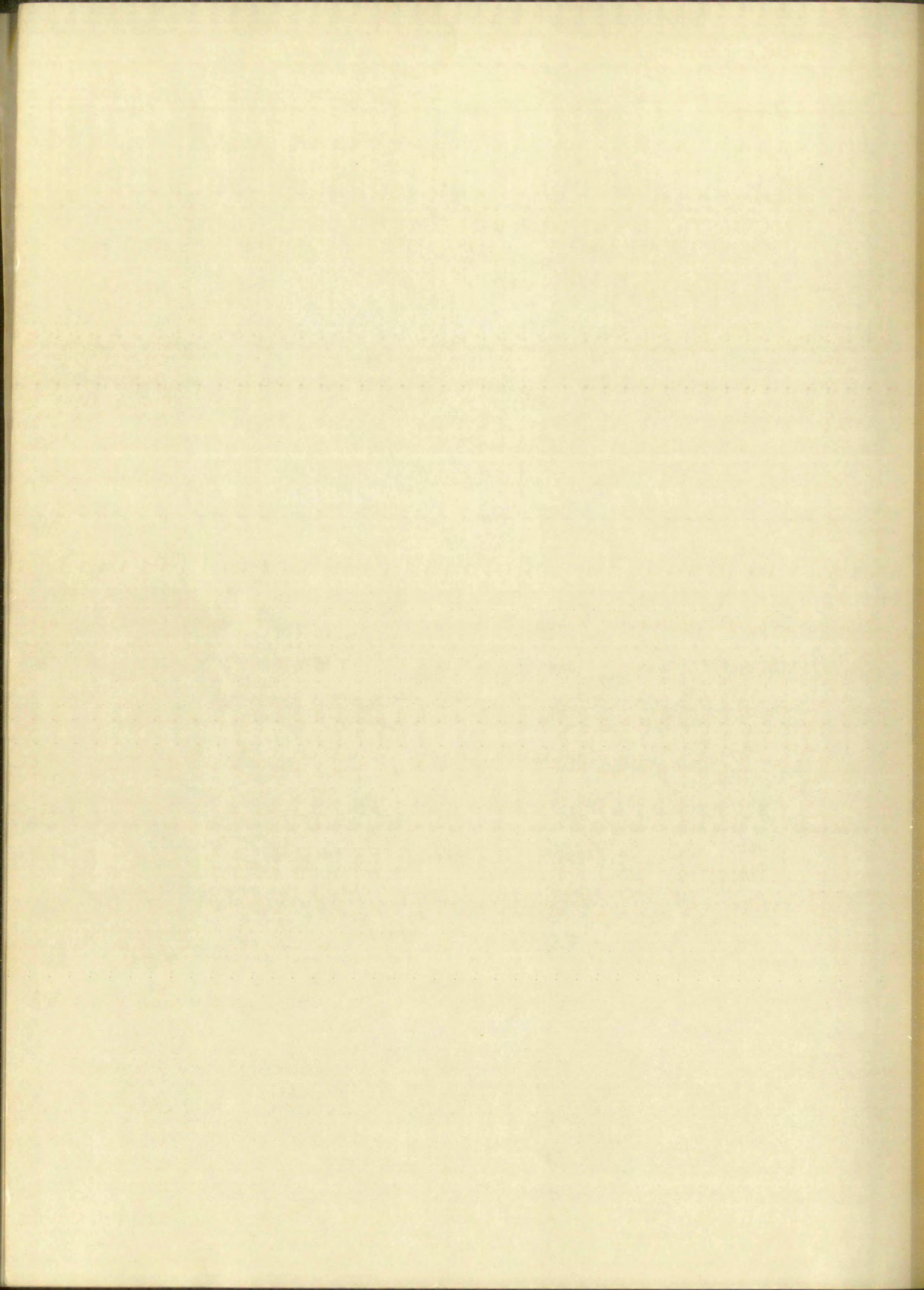
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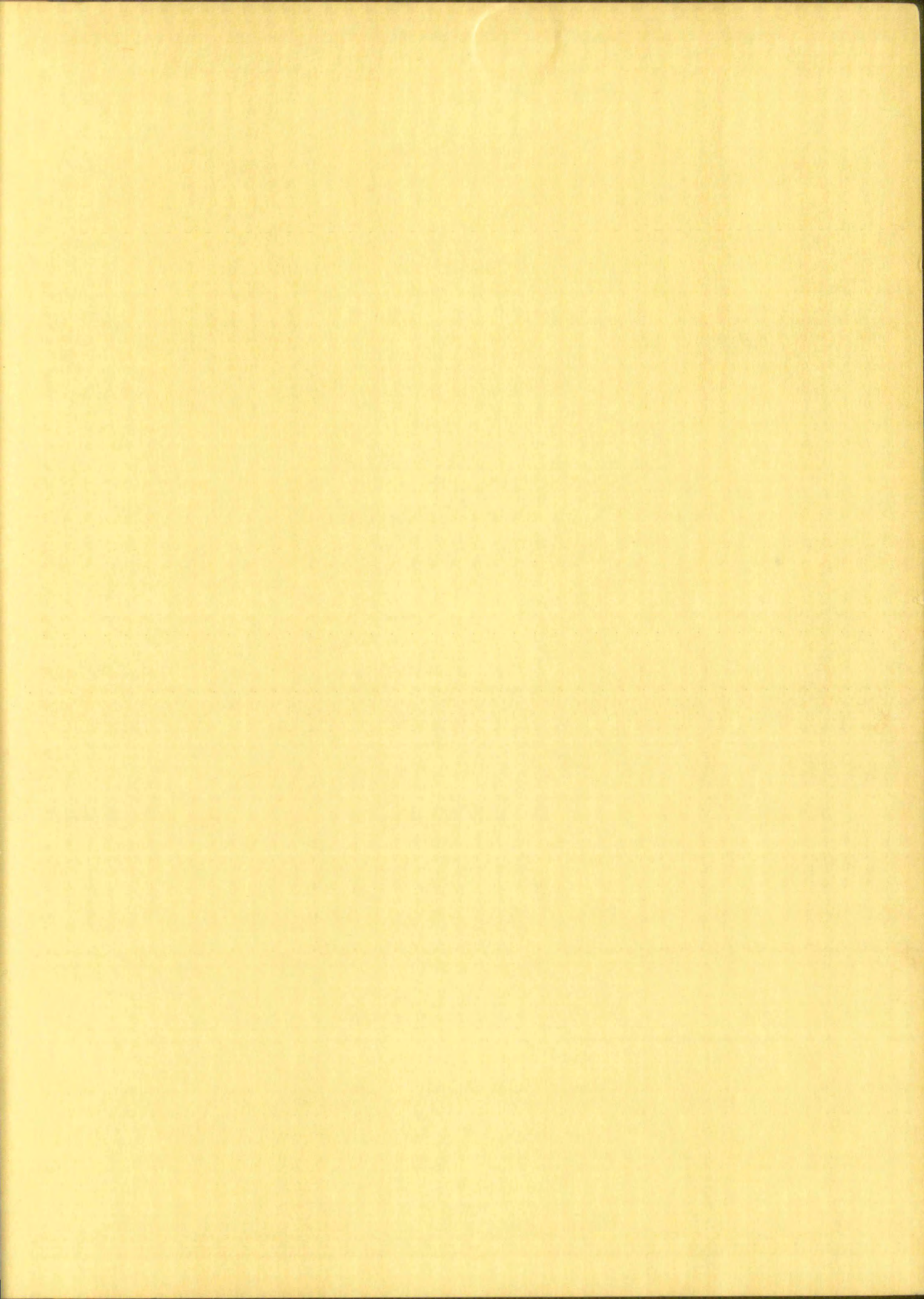
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