

Price Rises Augur New Struggles, CP Hears

New wage demands and a fresh wave of labor struggles will inevitably follow shortly after the current strike movement if the trend of price increases continues, Jack Stachel, member of the Communist Party's

National Board, warned yesterday.

Stachel reviewed the wage-strike movement in a report before the meeting of the National Committee of the Communist Party now in session.

The problems in Stachel's report were covered in the discussion that followed as Communist leaders of all districts described their experiences.

Stachel said that if wage raises continue to be compensated by price increases and productivity increases workers will demand more raises soon.

"That is why it is essential that no long-term contracts barring re-opening of wage demands be signed," he added.

Stachel drew an economic perspective which showed that a crisis was looming "much more severe and of long duration" following a short "prosperity." This perspective demands that Communists and the labor movement "even now make

this clear to the workers and develop a concrete program to meet this situation."

The struggle to prevent the burden of the coming crisis from being thrown on the workers, Stachel said, "will also have a direct bearing in the immediate struggles of those workers who are gaining partial current success.

"The CIO is emerging from the wage and price struggles with greater prestige and authority," said Stachel, "not only among all sections of the labor movement, but also among the broad masses of the people.

"This is so because under President Murray's able leadership, the CIO is defending not only the economic and political interests of its own members and the working class, but through its policies demonstrated that it is at the same time leading the people's fight against trusts. It stands in the forefront for greater economic security for the

people, against reaction and fascism and for carrying forward of President Roosevelt's policy of 'Big Three' unity as the cornerstone of world peace."

Stachel lauded the CIO's initiative in leading the struggle which stopped the planned postwar open-shop offensive. But he repeatedly warned that the bosses' effort is not being abandoned.

At the same time, Stachel warned of emergence of the AFL's top leadership in a new reactionary role in collaboration with big business. This is due chiefly to the presence of John L. Lewis. But the Communist leader also pointed to increasing signs of protest within the AFL's membership against this policy. He noted particularly the strikes of longshoremen, machinists and the increasing number of AFL groups giving aid to CIO strikers.

A high point in Stachel's report was his analysis of Walter Reuther's role in the General Motors strike and the reactionary role of the Social Democrats within the CIO. Referring to Reuther's "one-at-a-

time" strategy, Stachel said:

"This question is no longer in the realm of debate. It is obvious to everyone that it has failed. It should have been obvious from the beginning that it would not succeed. Events have demonstrated that not only the big corporations in the auto industry, but all of big business was acting unitedly in the drive on the workers' living standards, and in their attacks on the trade unions.

"Reuther's policy, which was supported by the diehard Social Democratic elements in both the AFL and CIO, while it may have appeared as militant to some, was actually one of right opportunism because it underestimated the true aims of the monopolies and was based on illusions regarding their role.

"Its actual accomplishment was direct aid to employers because it tended to disrupt the common strategy aimed for by the CIO and its major affiliates, and threw into battle one section of labor at a time, when the test of strength for all labor was opportune.

"The General Motors workers will win their demands for wage increases not because of Reuther's tactics, but in spite of them."

Regarding Truman's role in the wage-price picture, Stachel noted that the present strike struggles "have already dispelled many illusions among large sections of the American workers, and chief among these is that the present Truman administration can be relied upon to fight on their side."

Referring to reports of efforts to renew federal control of wages and a wage-freezing policy, Stachel warned against any compromise.

"We are for the maintenance of price control, but we are not in favor of the maintenance of freeze on wages," Stachel said. "All wages can be decided by direct negotiations between the workers and employers."

As a result of the Truman administration's policy, workers "are learning of necessity to rely on their own strength which must be better organized and exercised more independently," Stachel said.