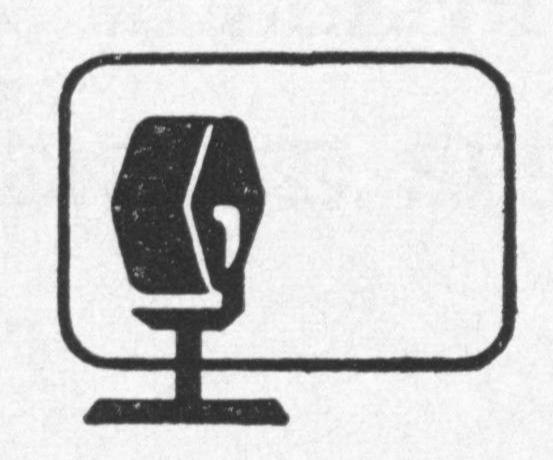
# The National Broadcasting Company Presents



# MEET THE PRESS

America's Press Conference of the Ain

Produced by LAWRENCE E. SPIVAK

Guest: WALTER P. REUTHER President, U.A.W.

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Panel:

DAVID R. JONES, The New York Times
HERBERT KAPLOW, NBC News
CLARK MOLLENHOFF, Des Moines Register &
Tribune
LAWRENCE E. SPIVAK, Permanent Panel Member

Moderator: NEIL BOGGS, NBC News

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MR. BOGGS: Our guest today on MEET THE PRESS is Walter P. Reuther, President of the United Automobile Workers, whose strike against the Ford Motor Company is in its third week. We will have the first questions now from Lawrence E. Spivak, permanent member of the MEET THE PRESS panel.

MR. SPIVAK: Mr. Reuther, you were reported as saying on Friday that your negotiations with Ford continue in a stalemate. Is the union prepared to make any concessions to break the stalemate or can the stalemate only be broken by concessions from the automobile company?

MR. REUTHER: I believe, Mr. Spivak, that both parties share equally in the responsibility of finding the answers, but the basic problem at the bargaining table with the Ford Motor Company currently is that the company is unwilling to discuss the economics of our negotiations based upon the economic facts. We have been saying from the very beginning of these negotiations that our workers are asking for equity. We want no more than that, we are determined to take no less—that the equity of a Ford worker should not be something arbitrary that we determine or something arbitrary that the company determines, that the worker's equity should be a reflection of the increase in productivity and the worker's share of that. It seems to me that the only rational and responsible way to conduct collective bargain-

ing within a free society is to base collective bargaining decisions on economic facts and not economic power.

MR. SPIVAK: Mr. Reuther, it is said that this strike—which costs the workers \$5 million a day, is it, in wages—is going to last at least two months. How long do you expect it to last?

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MR. SPIVAK: Do you think collective bargaining should be permitted to run its course, regardless of how long the strike lasts?

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MR. SPIVAK: Why did you strike Ford rather than General

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MR. SPIVAK: You have no contract any longer with General Motors or with Chrysler, is that true?

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MR. JONES: Mr. Reuther, President Johnson has endorsed a railroad shopcraft settlement that would raise wage rates about five and a half percent a year. I am wondering how this would

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MR. JONES: Does that mean then you would be willing to

settle for less than five and a half percent?

MR. REUTHER: We will settle for that figure that represents the equity of Ford workers. We don't want any more than our share. We will take no less. We have made it very clear that we do not want one red cent that will require a price increase. We are advocating that the industry cut the price, because we believe that if you look at the facts in the last three years—and we have had a three-year agreement with the Ford Motor Company—the Ford Motor Company made \$7,000 profit per worker per year, and they could cut the price of the car \$150, give our people a 80 cents an hour overall wage increase and still make a profit larger than the average profits of manufacturing industries in general in America, and so we want our equity out of that increased productivity.

MR. JONES: You estimate Ford's productivity I believe at

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MR. MOLLENHOFF: Mr. Reuther, some time ago you were talking—several years ago you were talking in terms of kind of an international minmum wage. Was that serious discussion? Have you been doing anything about that since, from the stand-

point of protection of the automobile workers?

MR. REUTHER: What we were talking about, Mr. Mollenhoff, was that we felt that the free world had to achieve higher and higher levels of economic integration. We do not believe the free world can meet the challenges of the 20th Century if we divide the free world into little air-tight economic, national compartments. We need maximum integration. We said therefore the free world labor movement would have to deal with trying to establish some basic minimums so that one nation did not exploit another nation because it had low wages.

MR. MOLLENHOFF: In the steel industry more recently—

both the steel unions as well as the steel companies—there has been concern over American products pricing themselves out of the market and the need for some kind of protection. You are basically against protection?

MR. REUTHER: That is right. Our union believes in free trade, and we have never asked for tariffs to keep out the im-

portation of foreign-made cars.

MR. MOLLENHOFF: Do you see any problem in the automobile industry over a period of time of pricing yourself—American labor pricing itself out of the competitive field inter-

nationally?

MR. REUTHER: No, because you see so long as we base our wage increases and our improvement and fringe benefits upon increased productivity, that does not increase the cost per unit. As a matter of fact, if you take the movement of wages in the American economy and the movement of wages in the European economy, you will find that American wages put American products in a more favorable competitive position today than they did ten years ago.

MR. MOLLENHOFF: Mr. Reuther, with regard to the minimum wage, the other countries around the world do not have minimum wages. Do you consider this to represent any kind of a problem with regard to the United States generally competing

with the rest of the world?

MR. REUTHER: The free world labor movement is working to try to get workers in other countries a full measure of their—

MR. MOLLENHOFF: Well, even in Sweden they don't have one—which is one of the most progressive in this respect that there is.

MR. REUTHER: Their wage structure grew up in a different historical background than ours. You need not have a national wage in each country to meet this problem. It can be met in many ways. What we are trying to say is if we are going to achieve a higher degree of economic integration between the industrialized nations in the free world, then their competition should not be based upon the exploitation of labor. It ought to be based upon sound and constructive economic forces.

MR. MOLLENHOFF: Mr. Reuther, just to switch a little bit, some of your more liberal friends I think are a little upset with the fact that you have given some general support for the Johnson administration's position in Vietnam. How do you feel about the bombing in North Vietnam up near the border? Have you

taken a position on this yet?

MR. REUTHER: I have not taken a position publicly, but I am

happy to do so.

I think to begin with that you can over-simplify the Vietnamese situation. It is a very complex and difficult problem. I share the view that neither escalation nor a pull-out is the answer to the problem, and it is much easier to criticize the President than

it is to come up with a workable alternative.

If I were the President I would, I believe, be willing to cease the bombing of the North in the hope that that might give us the basis for new initiatives in trying to get to the conference table, because I believe over the long pull there are no military solutions to the economic, social and political problems of Asia and that freedom must win that fight over tyranny in the rice fields and not in the battlefields.

MR. KAPLOW: Mr. Reuther, how long would you keep the

bombing off in the hopes that something would develop?

MR. REUTHER: I believe there are certain risks in a bombing pause, and I am mindful of those risks, but I think the risks are more than offset by advantages. I would do it for a period until I think that we have done everything reasonably possible to exhaust the possibilities of new initiatives that might lead to the conference table.

If I found after a given period that it was a hopeless cause, that North Vietnam would not come to the conference table and that American lives in terms of our troops were in jeopardy because of the failure to continue bombing, then I would re-think that, but as of now I would be prepared to agree to a cease in the bombing in the hope that we might take new initiatives in seeking negotiations.

MR. KAPLOW: Do you mean a week, a month, three months, or what? There have been pauses in the past I think running

up to a week or some—

MR. REUTHER: I would take it for that period until, in good conscience, we could really say we have exhausted the possibilities of getting negotiations under way. I would try to get the U.N. more deeply involved. I do not believe that U.N. can really escape its responsibility in this situation.

MR. KAPLOW: Mr. Reuther, can I get back to your strike with Ford? It is rather widespreadly felt that in your negotiations with Ford you never got down to substantive bargaining, and there is one allegation that you never spelled out in any sort

of detail what you wanted.

MR. REUTHER: I have seen that sort of story in the press, Mr. Kaplow, but the simple facts are that we made it very clear from the beginning of these negotiations precisely what our priorities were. We talked about a substantial wage increase for all of our members. We talked about improved pensions. One of

the basic problems we have now is that we can't protect the widows the way they ought to be protected, and so forth.

MR. KAPLOW: Did you ever get to the place really where you

were hammering back and forth?

MR. REUTHER: They know precisely what our priorities are. They have been spelled out simply and clearly and they understand.

The problem, I believe, Mr. Kaplow, is that the industry got together and made a decision, and that decision I think now has created a box in which the Ford Motor Company is the prisoner. Until they free themselves from the box which I think General Motors essentially has built around them, then they won't be able to get down to good faith, meaningful bargaining.

We are prepared. I said to the company on Friday, "We will move here if you will move. Are you prepared to make a dis-

cussion?"

They said, "No, we are not prepared to change anything." MR. SPIVAK: Mr. Reuther, am I right in understanding from what you said a few minutes ago that you will support President

Johnson in 1968?

MR. REUTHER: If he is a candidate and the other people who are talked about being his opposition, I see no reason why I should not, because I think you have got to look at the President and his performance not only in terms of Vietnam—and I may share some differences there—but you have to look at the domestic program. You cannot deny the fact that in terms of the basic needs of our domestic problems the President has worked hard. It is a great tragedy that Congress has not effectively implemented his program.

MR. SPIVAK: You will then support him over anybody who is now being talked about on the Republican or the Democratic side?

MR. REUTHER: I would do that because—I think we have to recognize that what is involved here is not a contest of personalities, but a contest in terms of the basic philosophy of what the role of the government is in a free society. When you look at the record of the Republican party on almost every basic question, whether it was the model city legislation or civil rights or aid to education or rent supplementation or rat extermination, the Republican Party in the present Congress voted 80 to 90 per cent against all of those essential things.

Now, there are many wonderful, fine Republicans—Senator Clifford Case; we supported him with great enthusiasm in the last election. But the Republican party, as an instrument, I believe, is not committed to the service and the solution of the basic problems of the American people. So the question of the

individual candidate has got to be related to the basic concept and the philosophy of the party.

MR. SPIVAK: If it were Rockefeller against Johnson, would

you still support Johnson?

MR. REUTHER: Mr. Rockefeller—I think his general attitude on this is certainly much more enlightened than Mr. Goldwater's, but the Republican party that repudiated him at the '64 convention is not now about to follow his leadership in building a better tomorrow.

MR. SPIVAK: Is the answer that you wouldn't?

MR. REUTHER: That is right.

MR. SPIVAK: May I take you back to Ford for a moment? Ford said that last year's dollar sales rose six per cent from 1965 but that the company's profits dropped 12 per cent.

Since you are talking about really a share of the profits, if Ford loses money, would you take a cut in wages? Would you

have your workers in Ford take a cut in wages?

MR. REUTHER: Mr. Spivak, the workers that I have the privilege and responsibility of representing in Ford, they under-

stand you can't get something out of nothing.

In 1945—and I have copies of those letters here that we have told the Ford Motor Company about—in 1945, the Ford Motor Company wrote our union and said that, productivity had not gone up, our profit position was not favorable and, "We want now to bargain within the framework of that unfavorable productivity profitability picture," and we did.

Now, in 1967 when their profits are high and the Ford Motor Company made in the last five years roughly 22 per cent return on its investment after taxes, when their profits are high and their productivity is up, they say, "Oh no, we don't want to

talk about that."

This is why they didn't accept our arbitration proposal. We said, "Here's a good faith arbitration proposal. Let's submit this to a court of impartial judgment, and let them make a decision based upon the facts."

They said no to that, because the facts support our demand

and do not support the company's current position.

MR. SPIVAK: I don't quite get your answer. If the Ford Motor Company should lose money in the future, would your workers take a cut in wages?

MR. REUTHER: When we deal—first of all, the Ford Motor Company is not about to get into that position, but if they

were\_\_\_\_

MR. SPIVAK: But let's answer the question—

MR. REUTHER: If they were, then we would be obligated to

negotiate within the framework of these economic facts. The answer is, yes.

MR. JONES: Mr. Reuther, you mentioned the arbitration proposal that you had made to Ford, and yet the arbitration offer included certain criteria which Ford felt that they would have to make a concession in granting the arbitration.

I am wondering, if you really wanted arbitration, why didn't you simply request arbitration without imposing any criteria?

MR. REUTHER: Mr. Jones, we submitted a good faith, clean-cut arbitration proposal when we suggested that the criteria ought to be the increase in productivity. An arbitrator shouldn't use a Ouija board. He ought to base his decisions and recommendations based upon facts. The fact in this situation is the question of increase in productivity.

But, if the Ford Motor Company—it took them eight hours to reject our offer—if they were prepared to arbitrate on another basis, then they should have submitted a counter arbitration proposal, and we would have given that consideration, but they made it clear that no matter what the framework of the arbitration, they would not agree to arbitrate under any circumstances. I think they made a serious mistake because this strike could have been avoided had they accepted arbitration.

MR. JONES: Turning to another subject, Mr. Reuther, you have denounced the AFL-CIO as being the complacent custodian of the status quo, and the auto workers have hinted that they will pull out of the Federation if the Federation does not go along with the broad program that you have set forth.

I was wondering if you could tell me specifically what is the

auto workers' price for remaining in the AFL-CIO?

MR. REUTHER: We don't want to divide the American labor movement. We want to revitalize it and modernize it and make it equal to the challenges and the opportunities in the twentieth century. We want to make the labor movement into a vital instrument for constructive and creative social change that relates to the problems not only of wage earners but the total community.

When we had our special collective bargaining convention some months back, that convention made a decision that we would not pursue this difference with the AFL-CIO until after our bargaining is settled, and therefore I am not free to discuss it in detail, but if Mr. Spivak will invite me back after our bargaining is settled, I shall be most happy to talk about this with you.

MR. BOGGS: A little less than three minutes.

MR. MOLLENHOFF: Mr. Reuther, you spoke about increases in pay for all of your members, and you do have some little prob-

lem there in that you have the auto workers as such and then the skilled group. As I understand it, the skilled group can drag this strike out even after your automobile workers generally have agreed to it.

Do you see any conflict there of interest in your representing both groups under these circumstances and is there any reason why you shouldn't give these skilled workers the kind of a craft severance that they have mentioned from time to time?

MR. REUTHER: They made that decision when they joined our union originally, and the Labor Board has held that the appropriate collective bargaining unit in the auto industry is an industrial unit. I think you would have total chaos if you fragmented the bargaining unit of the automobile industry. I think this whole problem of the skilled trade workers vs. the production workers has been blown up out of proportion. We have done for many years what we are going to do this year about the right of skilled workers to vote separately, and we will manage this. We have never had a major contract rejected by our membership, and they have to vote to ratify it by secret democratic ballot. So this is a manageable problem that we will work out.

MR. KAPLOW: Mr. Reuther, the Minneapolis Tribune published the results of a poll this morning. One of the points made was that the people of Minnesota seem to think more highly of General Motors than they do of the United Automobile Workers. Fifty-seven percent expressed approval of General Motors; 35 percent approved the UAW. Why do you think that is so, if it

is so?

MR. REUTHER: I would like to know how the questions

were put.

MR. KAPLOW: All it says here is "expressed approval of." MR. REUTHER: I don't know whether General Motors sponsored that poll or not. The fact is, what we are doing we believe relates to the basic needs of men and women and their right to share in the greater productivity that their labor makes possible, and we are going to fight that good fight because that is how we make progress in this free country of ours. We are not going to be influenced by any polls of that kind. Our problems will be settled at the bargaining table, we hope, based upon facts and not based upon power.

MR. SPIVAK: You have been critical of monoply power in industry. How do you justify your own monopoly power to shut

down an entire industry, Mr. Reuther?

MR. REUTHER: We don't exercise monoply power. We represent the workers who work in this industry, and when those workers are denied their measure of justice as members of a free

society, they have a right to withhold their labor power. It is not a monoply. We were willing to extend the contracts with two of the Big Three, and they refused. They are acting as though they were organizing a monoply—not the UAW.

MR. BOGGS: I am sorry to interupt, but our time is up. Thank you, Mr. Reuther, for being with us today on MEET THE PRESS.

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Produced by Lawrence E. Spivak

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WALTER P. REUTHER, President, U. A. W.

MODERATOR:

Neil Boggs - NBC NEWS

PANEL:

Clark Mollenhoff - Des Moines Register & Tribune

David R. Jones - The New York Times

Herbert Kaplow - NBC News

Lawrence E. Spivak - Permanent Panel Member

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if we divide the free world into little air-tight economic, national compartments. We need maximum integration. We said therefore the free world labor movement would have to deal with trying to establish some basic minimums so that one nation did not exploit another nation because it had low wages.

MR. MOLLENHOFF: In the steel industry more recently, both the steel unions as well as the steel companies, there has been concern over American products pricing themselves out of the market and the need for some kind of protection. Now you are basically against protection?

MR. REUTHER: That is right. Our union believes in free trade and we have never asked for tariffs to keep out the importation of foreign-made cars.

MR. MOLLENHOFF: Do you see any problem in the automobile industry over a period of time of pricing yourself -- American labor pricing itself out of the competitive field internationally?

MR. REUTHER: No, because you see so long as we base our wage increases and our improvement and fringe benefits upon increased productivity, that does not increase the cost per unit. As a matter of fact, if you take the movement of wages in the American economy and the movement of wages in the European economy, you will find that American wages put American products in a more favorable competitive position

today than they did ten years ago.

MR. MOLLENHOFF: Well, Mr. Reuther, with regard to the minimum wage, the other countries around the world do not have minimum wages. Do you consider this to represent any kind of a problem with regard to the United States generally competing with the rest of the world?

MR. REUTHER: Well, the free world labor movement is working to try to get workers in other countries a full measure of their --

MR. MOLLENHOFF: Well, in Sweden they don't have one which is one of the most progressive in this respect that there is.

MR. REUTHER: Well, their wage structure grew up in a different historical background than ours. You need not have a national minimum wage in each country to meet this problem. It can be met in many ways. What we are trying to say is if we are going to achieve a higher degree of economic integration between the industrialized nations in the free world, then their competition should not be based upon the exploitation of labor, it ought to be based upon sound and constructive economic forces.

MR. MOLLENHOFF: Mr. Reuther, just to switch a little bit, some of your more liberal friends I think are a little upset with the fact that you have given some general support for the Johnson administration's position in Vietnam. How do you feel about the bombing in North Vietnam up near the border? Have you taken a position on this yet?

MR. REUTHER: I have not taken a position publicly, but I am happy to do so.

I think to begin with that you can over-simplify the Vietnamese situation. It is a very complex and difficult problem.

I share the view that neither escalation nor a pull-out is the
answer to the problem, and it is much easier to criticize
the President than it is to come up with a workable alternative.

If I were the President I would, I believe, be willing to cease the bombing of the North in the hope that that might give us the basis for new initiatives in trying to get to the conference table. I believe over the long pull there are no military solutions to the economic, social and political problems of Asia and that freedom must win that fight over tyranny in the rice fields and not in the battlefields.

MR. KAPLOW: Mr. Reuther, how long will you keep the bombing off in the hopes that something would develop?

MR. REUTHER: Well, I believe there are certain risks in a bombing pause and I am mindful of those risks, but I think the risks are more than offset by advantages. I would do it for

a period until I think that we have done everything reasonably possible to exhaust the possibilities of new initiatives that might lead to the conference table.

If I found after a given period it was a hopeless cause, that North Vietnam would not come to the conference table and that American lives in terms of our troops were in jeopardy because of the failure to continue bombing, then I would rethink that, but as of now I would be prepared to agree to a cease in the bombing in the hope that we might take new initiatives in seeking negotiations.

MR. KAPLOW: Do you mean a week, a month, three months, or what? There have been pauses in the past I think running up to a week or something like that.

MR. REUTHER: I would take it for that period until, in good conscience, we could really say we have exhausted the possibilities of getting negotiations under way. I would try to get the U.N. more deeply involved. I do not believe that U.N. can really escape its responsibility in this situation.

MR. KAPLOW: Mr. Reuther, can I get back to your strike with Ford? It is rather widespreadly felt that in you negotiations with Ford you never got down to substantive bargaining and there is one allegation that you never spelled out in any sort of detail what you wanted.

MR. REUTHER: Well, I have seen that sort of story in the press, Mr. Kaplow, but the simple facts are that we made it

very clear from the beginning of these negotiations precisely what our priorities were. We talked about a substantial wage increase for all of our members. We talked about improved pensions. One of the basic problems we have not is that we can't protect the widows the way they ought to be protected and so forth.

MR. KAPLOW: Did you ever get to the place really where you are hammering back and forth?

MR. REUTHER: They know precisely what our priorities are. They have been spelled out simply and clearly and they understand.

The problem, I believe, Mr. Kaplow, is that the industry got together and made a decision and that decision I think now has created a box in which the Ford Motor Company is the prisoner and until they free themselves from the box, which I think General Motors essentially has built around them, then they won't be able to get down to good faith, meaningful bargaining.

We are prepared. I said to the company on Friday, "We will move here if you will move. Are you prepared to make a discussion?"

They said, "No, we are not prepared to change anything."

MR. SPIVAK: Mr. Reuther, am I right in understanding from what you said a few minutes ago that you will support President Johnson in 1968?

MR. REUTHER: Well, if he is a candidate and the other people who are talked about being his opposition, I see no reason why I should not because I think you have got to look at the president and his performance not only in terms of Vietnam -- and I may share some differences there -- but you have got to look at the domestic program. You cannot deny the fact that in terms of the basic needs of our domestic problems the President has worked hard. It is a great tragedy that Congress has not effectively implemented his program.

MR. SPIVAK: You will then support him over anybody who is now being talked about on the Republican or the Democratic side?

MR. REUTHER: I would do that because I think we have to recognize that what is involved here is not a contest of personalities, but a contest in terms of the basic philosophy of what the role of the government is in a free society, and when you look at the record of the Republican party, on almost every basic question, whether it was the model city legislation or civil rights, or Aid to Education, or Rent Supplementation or Rat Extermination, the Republican Party in the present Congress voted 80 to 90 percent against all of those essential things.

Now, there are many wonderful, fine Republicans. Senator Clifford Case. We supported him with great enthusiasm in the last election, but the Republican party, as an instrument, I believe,

is not committed to the service and the solution of the basic problems of the American people and so the question of the individual candidate has got to be related to the basic concept and the philosophy of the party.

MR. SPIVAK: If it were Rockefeller against Johnson, would you still support Johnson?

MR. REUTHER: Well, Mr. Rockefeller, I think his general attitude on this is certainly much more enlightened than Mr. Goldwater's, but the Republican party that repudiated him at the '64 convention is not now about to follow his leadership in building a better tomorrow.

MR. SPIVAK: Is the answer that you wouldn't?

MR. REUTHER: That is right.

MR. SPIVAK: May I take you back to Ford for a moment? Ford said that last year's dollar sales rose six percent from 1965 but that the company's profits dropped 12 percent.

Now, since you are talking about really a share of the profits, if the Ford loses money, would you take a cut in wages? Would you have your workers in Ford take a cut in wages?

MR. REUTHER: Well, Mr. Spivak, the workers that I have the privilege and responsibility of representing Ford, they understand. You can't get something out of nothing.

In 1945 -- and I have copies of those letters here that we told the Ford Motor Company about -- in 1945, the Ford Motor

Company wrote our union and said that productivity had not gone up; our profit position was not favorable and "We want now to bargain within the framework of that unfavorable productivity profitability picture," and we did.

Now, in 1967 when their profits are high and the Ford Motor Company made in the last five years roughly 22 percent return on its investment after taxes, when their profits are high and their productivity is up, they say, "on no, we don't want to talk about that."

This is why they didn't accept our arbitration proposal. We said, "Here's a good faith arbitration proposal. Let's submit this to a court of impartial judgment and let them make a decision based upon the facts."

They said no to that because the facts support our demands and do not support the company's current position.

MR. SPIVAK: I don't quite get your answer. If the Ford Motor Company should lose money in the future, would your workers take a cut in wages?

MR. REUTHER: When we deal -- first of all, the Ford Motor Company is not about to get into that position, but --

MR. SPIVAK: But let's answer the question --

MR. REUTHER: If they were, then we would be obligated to negotiate within the framework of those economic facts. The answer is yes.

MR. JONES: Mr. Reuther, you mentioned the arbitration proposal that you had made to Ford and yet the arbitration offer included certain criteria which Ford felt that they would have to make a concession in granting the arbitration.

I am wondering, if you really wanted arbitration, why didn't you simply request arbitration without imposing any criteria?

MR. REUTHER: Well, Mr. Jones, we submitted a good faith, clean-cut arbitration proposal and we suggested the criteria ought to be the increase in productivity. An arbitrator shouldn't use a Ouija board. He ought to base his decisions and recommendations based upon facts. The facts in this situation is the question of increase in productivity.

But, if the Ford Motor Company -- it took them eight hours to reject our offer -- if they were prepared to arbitrate on another basis, then they should have submitted a counter arbitration proposal and we would have given that consideration, but they made it clear that no matter what the framework of the arbitration, they would not agree to arbitrate under any circumstances. I think they made a serious mistake because this strike could have been avoided had they accepted arbitration.

MR. JONES: Turning to another subject, Mr. Reuther, you have denounced the AFL-CIO as being the complacent custodian of the status quo and auto workers have hinted they will pull out of

the Federation if the Federation does not go along with the broad program that you have set forth.

I was wondering if you could tell me specifically what is the auto workers' price for remaining in the AFL-CIO?

MR. REUTHER: Well, we don't want to divide the American labor movement. We want to revitalize it and modernize it and make it equal to the challenges and the opportunities of the twentieth century. We want to make the labor movement into a vital instrument for constructive and creative social change that relates to the problems not only of wage earners, but the total community.

Now, when we had our special collective bargaining convention some months back, that convention made a decision that we would not pursue this difference with the AFL-CIO until after our bargaining is settled and therefore I am not free to discuss it in detail, but if Mr. Spivak will invite me back after our bargaining is settled, I shall be most happy to talk about this with you.

MR. BOGGS: A little less than three minutes.

MR. MOLLENHOFF: Mr. Reuther, you spoke about increases in pay for all of your members, and you do have some little problem there that you have the auto workers as such and then the skilled group. As I understand it, the skilled groups can drag this strike out even after your automobile workers generally have agreed to it.

Now, do you see any conflict there of interest in you representing both groups under these circumstances, and is there

any reason why you shouldn't give these skilled workers the kind of a craft severance that they have mentioned from time to time?

MR. REUTHER: Well, they made that decision when they joined our union originally and the Labor Board has held the appropriate collective bargaining unit in the auto industry is an industrial unit. I think you would have total chaos if you fragmented the bargaining unit of the automobile industry. Now I think this whole problem of the skilled trade workers vs. the production workers has been blown way up out of proportion. We have done for many years what we are going to do this year about the right of skilled workers to vote separately and we will manage this. We have never had a major contract rejected by our membership and they have to vote to ratify it by secret democratic ballot. So there is a manageable problem that we will work out.

MR. KAPLOW: Mr. Reuther, the Minneapolis Tribune published the resutls of a poll this morning. One of the points was the people of Minnesota seem to think more highly of General Motors than they do of the United Automobile Workers. Fifty-seven percent expressed approval of General Motors, 35 percent approved the UAW. Why do you think that is so, if it is so?

MR. REUTHER: Well, I would like to know how the questions were put.

MR. KAPLOW: All it says here is "expressed approval of."

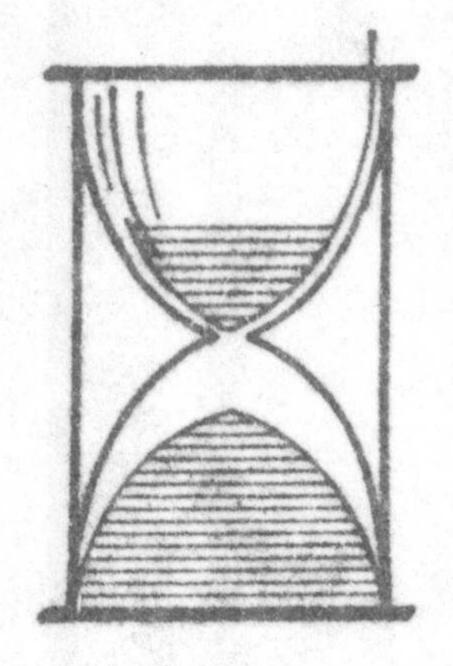
MR. REUTHER: Well, I don't know whether General Motors sponsored that poll or not. The fact is what we are doing we believe relates to the basic needs of men and women and their right to share in the greater productivity that their labor makes possible, and we are going to fight that good fight because that is how we make progress in this free country of ours. And we are not going to be influenced by any polls of that kind.

Our problems will be settled at the bargaining table, we hope, based upon facts, and not based upon power.

MR. SPIVAK: You have been critical of monoply power in industry. How do you justify your own monopoly power to shut down an entire industry, Mr. Reuther?

MR. REUTHER: We don't exercise monopoly power. We represent the workers who work in this industry and when those workers are denied their measure of justice as members of a free society, they have a right to withhold their labor power. It is not a monopoly. We are willing to extend the contracts with two of the Big Three, and they refused. They are acting as though they were organizing a monopoly, not the UAW.

MR. BOGGS: I am sorry to interupt, but our time is up. Thank you, Mr. Reuther, for being with us today on MEET THE PRESS.



### WEWEDO NT

An Interview with Walter P. Reuther



Walter P. Reuther, 58-year-old president of the United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers (UAW), has had a long and outspoken interest in socioeconomic reform. Active in UAW affairs since the mid-30s, Mr. Reuther's rise within the union paralleled, and to a great extent affected, the rising importance of organized labor. Under his leadership, UAW used collective bargaining to pioneer such benefits as funded pension plans, health insurance programs for workers and families, and cost-ofliving escalator and annual improvement factor wage adjustments. He has been active on many government committees and presently is a member of the President's Advisory Committee on Labor-Management Policy and the President's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity. Mr. Reuther has received honorary Doctor of Laws or Doctor of Humanities degrees from seven universities.

#### Medicare-landmark but incomplete answer

Q. The United Auto Workers There are still some inadequacies, union strongly supported Medicare legislation as it was debated in Congress and ultimately made law. Now that the program is about to begin, are you satisfied with the results?

REUTHER: We're proud of UAW's part in the Medicare battle. But major credit for the final victory must go to the hundreds of thousands of older Americans who refused to give up in the face of one of the bitterest and most shortsighted propaganda campaigns ever mounted against a major piece of social legislation in this country.

but surely Medicare is landmark legislation.

Q. Specifically, what makes it landmark legislation?

MR. REUTHER: For one thing, the government finally has assumed responsibility for prepaid health care for the elderly as a matter of social right. Medicare also recognizes the soundness of our social security system as a vehicle that can absorb the changing needs of a changing society. Furthermore, Medicare is the first recognition of the need for (Continued on page 108)

#### VIEWPOINT

(Continued from page 104)

support of social security through general revenue—something that UAW has been advocating for years.

Q. What do you see in Medicare that you consider right and worth having worked for?

MR. REUTHER: Oh, we're very pleased with nearly the entire program of course. I might mention two Medicare concepts that we've considered vital to truly comprehensive health care. First, Medicare clearly recognizes the need for health insurance to be oriented toward preventative medical care and chronic health needs rather than continuing to focus on acute care. Second, Medicare rightly is concerned with quality and cost of care and with standards of acceptability for hospitals and nursing homes. The standards are going to benefit all citizens.

#### Q. How will this take place?

MR. REUTHER: Through responsible control over what is inherently a public program. To achieve the goals of the program we must look to the administrators in Washington and the state capitals to institute prompt, appropriate, and effective controls on the quality of care offered the elderly. They should be insisting on uniform standards for health facilities and health care for recipients under Medicare (Title XVIII) and for those who will be receiving benefits under the public welfare medical programs (Title XIX). Also, a mechanism needs to be established through which the consumers of health care may make their needs and problems known.

# Q. What other Medicare provisions do you question?

MR. REUTHER: The program itself is sound and certainly will meet a large, unmet need. But we have to

recognize Medicare's problems and limitations too, so constructive measures may be taken. I'm thinking of four examples: [1] Limiting the patient's use of health services by the economic deterrents of deductibles and coinsurance rather than medical needs alone is neither economical nor sensible. [2] Arbitrary time limits on inpatient stay violate the known needs of some patients for extended care. Medical necessity should be the only limiting factor in a public program of health care. [3] States must set up effective licensing and franchising legislation to assure the availability of the right kind of hospital and nursing home beds in the right places. [4] Far too little recognition has been given to the group practice of medicine which in its brief history has demonstrated an ability to provide comprehensive, high quality medical care economically.

# Q. So you forsee some early changes in Medicare?

MR. REUTHER: Let me put it this way. I believe that Medicare should and will serve as a catalyst. Medicare should provide for many health needs for the elderly in the United States, but the elderly are not alone in such needs. The time has come to resolve the fragmented, discriminatory, and unequal services offered the medically indigent of all ages.

## Q. Can you suggest how this will be done?

MR. REUTHER: We don't have all the answers, but we do know one important fact: there can be no question of what we can afford for health care. Last year we "afforded" about 6% of our Gross National Product—nearly \$37 billion—for personal health care. Now, we must question and find the answers to what changes can be made in the method of payment for health services.