

Lilbourn Project Croppers Win 30¢ Wage Scale

Special to LABOR ACTION

MISSOURI—Last week LABOR ACTION pointed out that the rise in wages in certain areas to \$2.50 was a tremendous victory for the workers, something of which they could be mighty proud. But LABOR ACTION also pointed out that it was necessary to rally round the union and FIGHT TO HOLD THOSE WAGES.

In every place where the wages have gone up they have been fought for, not only in general but in particular.

On the Lilbourn project last week the large majority of the workers were getting \$3.00—the 30 cents an hour.

This is a landmark in the history of Missouri, and Local 313, which has led the whole fight, deserves above all to receive the rewards of their courage, their determination and their splendid leadership. They have set an example which must be followed today and tomorrow and ever afterward. If the workers of Missouri follow this example and the type of leadership that Local 313 has given them they will not only win higher wages. They will elevate the whole status of labor in Southeast Missouri, whence it will spread throughout the whole South.

In Parma, where the workers, although not unionized, have fought as an organized group, they have also won the \$3.00. Around Capaloue also it is reported that the workers have won 30 cents.

In both these places Negroes and whites have worked in the closest cooperation. The landlords know what it means to be up against colored and white labor well organized.

In Lilbourn town, in Frisco, in Sikeston, in La Forge, in Essex, the wages are \$2.50 though in spots the landlords have got it down to \$2.25. In many places, however, the wages are still \$2.00.

Not to be forgotten is the increase in wages of the workers on hay, wheat and other similar crops. They used to get \$1.25 and sometimes \$2.00. Today they are all getting at least 30 cents. This is far below what they

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Negro Women Pickets Hit Jim Crow in War Industry

By MARY BELL

AKRON — Twenty-five courageous Negro women have been picketing the Federal Employment Bureau here for three days straight, from opening to closing time.

These women are determined to smash Jim Crow in the war industries and obtain training and jobs for hundreds upon hundreds of Akron Negro women who are ready and able to work.

The picketing, sponsored by the Future Outlook League, aided by sympathetic Negro women's organizations and cheered by the entire Negro community, was undertaken after other methods had failed. Numerous interviews—with company employment managers, the head of the employment bureau, representatives of trade schools—all resulted in the usual run-around.

Got Run-Around

The women were told by various officials: "You have to present a reference card from the employment bureau. Negroes aren't trained for factory work. We can't accept Negroes in the training center because the factories won't hire you."

W. D. Westenbarger, supervisor of the local U. S. Employment Bureau, stated that his office "is not referring these women to those training classes, which are maintained to train workers for employment at Good-year Aircraft, because the company has informed us they are not ready to hire them yet."

The company has not indicated when it would be ready to take them, he added. And so the women were handed the same old rotten alibis.

The complete dishonesty of such statements is exposed by the facts. White unskilled applicants for jobs and a very few Negro men are being herded through the training schools in order to supply the enormous demand for labor. A

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Try This Order On Your Palate

The OPA has put ceilings on diamonds, pearls, rubies and sapphires—but not on fresh fruits and vegetables, fish, poultry, lamb, eggs, butter, cheese, flour, prunes, beans.

Oh, well! If you can't afford to eat, just go buy yourself an assortment of precious jewels.

LABOR ACTION

JULY 13, 1942

A PAPER IN THE INTERESTS OF LABOR

ONE CENT

PRICES RISE AS OPA HIKES "CEILING" ON VITAL FOODS

OPA Puts OK On 15% Jump In Canned Fruit Prices

By SUSAN GREEN

Just who is supposed to be fooled by the "price control" goings-on in the Office of Price Administration?

The latest step to take more money out of the consumer's purse for the same goods is the official increase of 15 per cent on canned and dried fruits for the 1942 crop. Not that the prices now are UNDER the official ceiling—there is no shortage of violations. But this new 15 per cent slap-on is OFFICIAL.

This increase is not on luxuries, mind you, but on essential vitamin foods. One department of the government is "educating" housewives on the better nutrition of their families—while another department makes it impossible to buy such nutritious foods as canned peaches, pears, apricots, apple sauce, fruit juices, raisins and all the dried fruits.

Mr. Henderson was, of course, careful to explain the reason for this latest increase which will add 2, 3 and 4 cents to the prices of these canned foods. He said that "growers' prices for fruit have risen sharply under the parity formula, and because of the standards sets in the price control act cannot be prevented from climbing to levels at least 110 per cent of parity."

So growers' prices have risen sharply! And who are the fruit growers who have boosted prices? The reactionary, powerful fruit-growing and canning corporations of California and elsewhere. Their brutal methods against labor are very well known throughout the country. These are the bloated monopolists who will get the millions of two, three and four cent increases that the housewives will be coughing up.

Henderson's Remedy

Mr. Henderson's remedy for this situation is indeed unique—though very popular with capitalists and their politicians. IT IS TO KEEP WAGES DOWN. What else would you expect? The Senate subcommittee considering the appropriation for the OPA got a very strong impression from Mr. Henderson's testimony that he is preparing "to go to bat" at once with the War Labor Board on the question of wage increases. Mr. Henderson's intended crusade against the workers will probably get for his OPA the \$161,000,000 he wants instead of the \$75,000,000 the House committee was willing to give.

In the meantime other leeches are waiting around expectantly to fasten themselves also onto the consumer to suck blood-money. For instance, the vegetable packers are impatient for the final arrangements regarding the 15 per cent increase on canned fruits, to press their own demand for price increases.

To add insult to injury, OPA stages a show in Nyack, N. Y., publicized in the papers and on the screen. Helen Hayes and other notable went around to the retail stores, smiled at the storekeepers and told

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Ain't It Tough?

The "sacrifices" made by the rich are enough to make anyone's heart bleed. For instance, take Mrs. Stuart Duncan of Newport. That lady, as everyone ought to know, is used to driving around behind a chauffeur in a high-powered automobile. But no more. Now she makes her social calls in a scooter-motored buggy. The power, of course, is supplied by the chauffeur's feet.

The Life and Death of a Sharecropper

Odell Waller's execution rated only a few lines in the capitalist press. The most liberal of them buried the news in tiny scraps on the inside pages.

For two years the Waller case was fought through the courts. Waller didn't have a chance before the prejudice-ridden juries of the South. The metropolitan dailies knew it. The politicians, North and South, knew it. The Supreme Court, which refused to review his case, knew it. And so did President Roosevelt.

They were, some of them, perhaps a little embarrassed by the Waller case. There it was, sticking out like a sore thumb—challenging the hypocritical structure of "class unity," and presidential pleas against race discrimination... in the interests of better prosecuting the war.

"Have you thought about some people are allowed a chance over and over again, then there are others allowed little chance, some no chance at all..."

"I accident(ally) fell and some good people tried to help me. Others did everything they could against me so the governor and the coats (courts) don't no (know) the true facts."

"In my case I worked hard from sun-up until sun-down trying to make a living for my family and it ended in death for me."

"You take big people as the President, governors, judge, their children don't never have to suffer. They has plenty money. Born in a mansion (mansion) nothing ever to worry about. I am glad some people are that lucky."

"The penitentiary all over the United States are full of people ho (who) was pore tried to work and have something, couldn't, so that maid (made) them steel (steal) and rob."

—From Waller's last statement.

Waller was a "nobody." He never entertained dethroned royalty; never vacationed in Palm Springs; never even went fishing in his own yacht. Just a "nobody"—like a hundred million "nobodies," black and white, who pay for their daily bread in blood, sweat and ceaseless toil.

Waller was different from other nobodies in that he was black. For the black "nobodies"—and there are thirteen million of them—capitalism has a doubly vicious exploitation. Exploited because he's a worker; exploited because he's black. On such exploitation does capitalism rest!

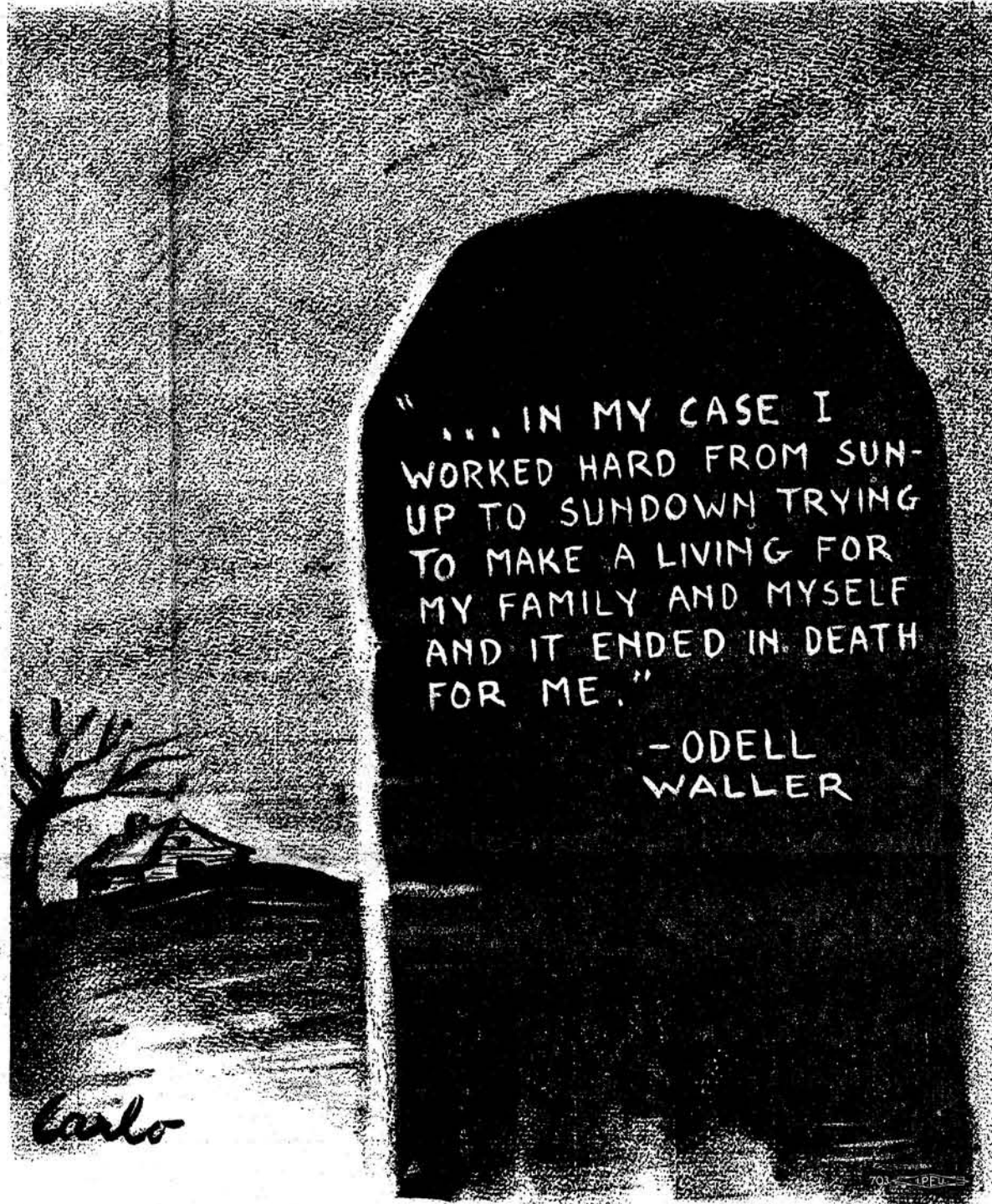
Who was Waller? A Negro sharecropper, working sun-up to sun-down under the lash of Jim Crow rule. Denied even those few fragments of privileges allowed fellow workers of a different race, and different occupation. That's all—just a sharecropper, like the sharecroppers of Missouri, who had to fight bitterly and painfully for 30 cents an hour for work that's seasonal. That's his life story: he worked, got into trouble, worked some more, lived meagerly from moment to moment and finally died by decree of a Virginia court.

Two years ago he shot his landlord. Yes, he shot his landlord—and never denied it. He shot when he thought his landlord was reaching for a gun—shot him during a quarrel over

But they are mistaken, greatly mistaken!

When it was all over, when Waller—railroaded by the due process of Jim Crow law—went to his death in an electric chair on July 2, they breathed a sigh of relief; made a brief mention of it ("all the news that's fit to print") and skipped to more "newsworthy" stories. For them the Waller case was over—and good riddance!

But they are mistaken, greatly mistaken!



Waller's share of a jointly tended wheat crop. Oscar Davis, his white landlord, had refused to surrender Waller's share.

In any court Waller's defense would have stood up—if Waller weren't Negro, if his landlord weren't white. There are legal arguments enough: self-defense, extenuating circumstances. Had the roles and COLORS been reversed, it would have been simple

enough, merely a matter of procedure. Lynchers are never convicted in the South.

Waller didn't have a chance. He had committed two crimes—neither of them the crime for which he was charged. Waller was a worker, and a Negro. That combination doesn't have a chance in Virginia.

Who tried him? His peers? Workers, (Continued on page 4)

Steel Workers Face Fight on \$1 Pay Boost

President Roosevelt has brought to the fore—ahead of the decision of the War Labor Board—the question of a \$1.00-a-day wage increase in "Little Steel." At a press conference last week, he indicated his opposition to the increase as "inflationary."

That is what every boss, anxious to hold on to his war profits, is saying about the demands of workers for more pay to meet the climbing cost of living. That is what every reactionary boss newspaper is writing. That is what every pro-boss spokesman is saying.

However, as ever, facts have more weight than words. In the midst of this verbal barrage against wage increases comes the proof that high wages are NOT the CAUSE of inflation.

Inflation and Wages

For months now wages throughout the country have been at a standstill—stabilized is the phrase used these days. There have been no wage increases to speak of, but what has been happening?

If by inflation is meant the shrinkage of the dollar in relation to the cost of commodities—and that certainly is an indication of inflation—this is exactly what is going on at a pretty quick pace. As every consumer knows, prices are big and the dollar is little. In fact, the very department of the government created

to "keep prices down"—Mr. Henderson's headquarters—is assisting the inflationary process—first, by leaving out of "ceilinged" commodities a long list of absolute necessities and, second, by officially lifting ceilings on others only a few weeks after they were placed.

Definitely, wage increases are not the cause of the inflationary trend. On the contrary, while the prices of everything else are going up, the inflationary scare is being used to keep wages where they are—down. The demands of the workers in "Little Steel," in General Motors and in Ford for wage increases never had better justification.

After four and a half months of hearings and study, the fact-finding panel of the WLB could not get away from the fact—and had to report it—that the standard of living of the steel workers has been reduced. Said the report:

"The panel believes that weekly earnings are the proper criterion for measuring the impact of rising living costs and therefore finds that of the steel workers has decreased approximately 13.3 per cent since the last general change of rates in the steel industry."

This fact-finding panel also was compelled to report that the four

companies in "Little Steel" are "able to pay the requested wage increase of \$1.00 a day"—and when an agency of the capitalist government reports that you can bet your last dollar that the profits of the companies have been plenty.

The 1941 "earnings" of Bethlehem were \$119,785,000; of Republic \$70,288,000; of Youngstown \$37,624,000; of Inland \$38,079,000. What the report did not include—but what is nevertheless very true—is that this same bunch of profit-grabbers have capital connections throughout American industry—and throughout the world—from which they also collect profits.

There is little reason for shedding tears for these moneyed companies. Even after the \$1.00-a-day increase to the workers the profits from labor will still be plenty. Bethlehem will have \$80,000,000 on the 1941 basis; Republic \$50,000,000; Youngstown \$30,000,000; Inland \$30,000,000. And that's a lot of money for workers to have created for their bosses, no matter how you look at it.

Some Funny Arguments

One of the arguments of Inland Steel before the fact-finding panel of the WLB was hilariously funny. It began by pointing out that there is little overtime work in steel and that this is reflected in the pay envelopes of the workers. Then this

traditional enemy of labor developed the point that an increase for steel workers would "subject the workers in overtime industry to gross injustice."

But not even the fact-finding panel was fooled by this quickie. It stated that the company's argument implied that "labor should accept less than its proportionate share of the national income in order to prevent it from acquiring too much of the 'consumer's pie' and that this argument

Oversight?

The WPB has arranged a system for "pinning medals" on workers. The first is the "AWARD of Individual Production Merit," which the speed-up labor-management committees may grant any worker for a good suggestion he may make. The second is the "CERTIFICATE of Individual Production Merit," which will be granted to workers by WPB Production Drive Headquarters for "outstanding suggestions." The third and highest will be the "CITATION of Individual Production Merit," which will be signed by Donald Nelson himself.

No mention is made of the award of higher wages to meet the increased cost of living.

left out of account that money has value, even when saved."

This statement of the WLB panel—while on the surface so very pro-labor—is misleading. For just how much "saving" can the workers do, even if they get the \$1.00-a-day increase, when they were in March, 1942, already 13.3 per cent behind the cost of living—which has been steadily mounting ever since!

The settlement of the question of a \$1.00-a-day increase for steel workers is crucial. If the workers do not get this increase, it will mean that the government openly has adopted the policy of making labor the goat of the war and of war inflation—setting aside the fact that the bosses can well "afford" the wage increase.

If the unions take this lying down, they will be dealt such a blow to their strength and prestige that years of hard work will be required to restore it. The unions have been singularly quiet since the report of the WLB panel was made to the WLB as a whole. To sit still and await the decision is certainly inviting defeat. Why aren't unionists all over the country congregating in their meeting halls and demanding from the WLB a favorable decision for the steel workers? Why aren't the rank and file of the steel workers being heard from?

Europe in Revolt

News from the Socialist Third Camp

"FREE GERMANY"—STALINIST VERSION

We spoke recently about Mr. Grzesinski's version of a "Free Germany." The exploits of this former chief of police could not remain unchallenged by his Stalinist competitors. A Free German movement has been founded in Mexico and New York by various of the Stalinist stooges and the last remaining German fellow-travelers.

This Free German movement has just addressed a telegram of greetings to General de Gaulle, leader of the Free French. The telegram is signed by Ludwig Renn, a novelist of Stalinist fame. Renn is an aristocrat who turned communist in pre-Hitler days without ever shedding much of his former background. It was he who made the proposition, famous in the history of the German movement, that the Communist Party ally itself with the officer and aristocrat clique of the Reichswehr since these circles were presumably favorable to communist ideas. Hitherto not taken very seriously in political matters, he has now been promoted to spokesman of the Free German movement. Thus, ex-Lieutenant Renn reports "present" to General de Gaulle.

The Stalinists do of course agitate against any dismemberment of Germany. For this reason they may have succeeded in attracting some sincere people who have been disgusted with the outpourings of such distinguished renegades as Emil Ludwig. But it would be a big error to believe that their opposition to dismemberment has anything to do with the interests and concerns of the German workers. Their policy is simple: Stalin is opposed to any move on the part of the Allies to carve themselves the biggest bits out of the German dish after the defeat. He wants to swallow the fat piece whole.

"LIBERATION" VIA GPU HANGMEN

Stalin could not very well appoint a former president of police to speak in the name of the German people precisely because no Stalinist German police presidents were available and also because a Russian GPU president could not very well do the job. So he had to pick a "famous German writer" who had, at least, some army officer background to show that he meant business.

Mr. Renn cabled to de Gaulle that "The Free German movement declares itself in fullest solidarity with the struggle of the Free French to destroy Nazism. This destruction is indispensable for a future peaceful living together of both liberated people."

What a wondrous alliance! The monarchist general and the Stalinist stooge working together for the peaceful cooperation of the "liberated" French and German people! This "liberation," in de Gaulle's version, smells like a dictatorial regime and in the Stalinist version is a "liberation" via the hangmen of the GPU. We are sure that neither will ultimately have much appeal for the workers of France and Germany.

The German workers have acquired too much experience with totalitarian oppression to be particularly eager to exchange one for the other. People like Renn or his associates may not be of much importance intrinsically, but their agitation in recent months shows clearly that Stalin has not at all abandoned his aims with regard to the building of a German Stalinist counter-revolutionary agency.

GERMAN WORKERS MUST RESIST THE RENNS

People like Renn, who now make their living in denouncing socialists like Serge Pivert and Gorkin as fifth columnists, should be denounced wherever or whenever they attempt to speak in the name of the "German people." They are mere valets for Stalin, tools of his foreign policy. They do not speak for the German people but for the Kremlin dictatorship. There is no principled difference between the Grzesinskis and the Renns. Their aims are just as foreign and hostile to the aims of the German proletariat. They are fed from different sources and might thus differ for the moment, but basically the former social democratic police chief of Berlin and Stalin's intellectual stooge agree. They both stand for crushing the mounting revolt of the German workers.

But the workers carry on their fight. The New York Times recently carried the following item: "A German newspaper announces the execution of a 31-year-old Marxist worker of a Frankfurt armament factory. It was noticed, says the Berlin correspondent of a Swedish newspaper, citing an unnamed German paper, that suspicion and doubt regarding the prosecution of the war by Germany and her allies began spreading among the workers of this factory. Investigation revealed that Heinrich Maas, a Marxist, was listening to and spreading enemy broadcasts. Maas was shot. Five comrades who helped spread the lies were sentenced to various terms in jail."

Europacus.

2) The Bosses' Substitute for Genuine Unionism

The "Labor-Management Committees"—a Menace to Labor

By H. Allen

In last week's LABOR ACTION article we showed how labor-management committees are against the IMMEDIATE interests of working people. These committees have been developed to make racehorses of workers, with reckless disregard for their health and for established union standards. They aim to prevent strike actions needed to improve working conditions and obtain wage increases in accord with the rising cost of living. Moreover, with the aid of such committees, employers are able to keep workers from seeking and obtaining jobs which pay higher wages or offer better working conditions. Labor turnover has already been reduced from 25 per cent a year in the last war to 4 per cent in the present war (New York Times, June 7). This is a reduction due in no small part to the functioning of the labor-management committees—a sugar-coated technique for "freezing" workers to jobs paying less, without resort to the decree which Paul McNutt avowedly is ready to employ.

The imperialist war offers the ruling class a golden opportunity (in its opinion) to use "national defense" and "national unity" not only to hog-tie labor to the imperialist war chariot, but also to take away step by step, through the labor-management committee's, labor's hard-won gains.

THE BOSSES' PATTERN FOR THE FUTURE

But the employers and the government have also an ULTIMATE post-war objective for the labor-management committees. As Wendell Lund, director of the labor production division of the War Labor Board has admitted, the techniques of cooperation between labor and management developed during the war are to provide a pattern "for the same kind of teamwork and cooperation in the days of peace." (New York Times, June 7.)

Why do the bosses want "teamwork" in the post-war period. First, the bosses have demonstrated their utter incompetence to avoid chaos in their own economy. No more proof of this is needed than the periodic depressions, the periodic capitalist wars and the inability of the bosses to produce effectively even for their own war. On the other hand, labor has demonstrated its indispensability not only as labor power, but also in developing ideas for production. Suspecting its own impotence and incompetence and dispensability, and confronted with the ability of the working class, the capitalist class wants a reorganization of industry with the cooperation or collaboration of labor. The bosses want everything labor can give them—in productivity, efficiency, ideas, as long as this is not accompanied by any threats to or inroads on their continued control, management and ownership of production.

As Wendell Lund said (New York Times, June 7): "The men along the conveyor belts, or cutting dies, or drilling for oil, are a great reservoir of creative and constructive production, ideas that we have, as yet, hardly begun to tap." The bosses can't even run their own system, so workers have been and are being encouraged to devise means for more efficient production. Today, the government steps in to assist the bosses to get these ideas for efficient production by a system of awards, certificates and citations of the War Production Board. But to make sure that using these ideas of the workers does not con-

stitute a threat to the bosses' retaining management of production, these awards "are restricted to plants which have voluntarily instituted labor-management committees." (New York Times, June 16.) In other words, the bosses, with the aid of the government hope to continue their exploitation of workers by tapping their ideas within the frame-work of labor-management committees.

BOSSES WANT SAFE LABOR MOVEMENT

Second, and more important, labor has been developing its strength and militancy in organization, especially in the great strikes resulting in the formation of the powerful CIO industrial unions.

Knowing that a militant labor movement can play havoc with the political and imperialist designs of the ruling class, the problem of this class is and remains how to devitalize a living labor movement and make it "safe and sane" or impotent to stand up for its needs, its living standards and democratic rights.

The labor-management committees are the most powerful organizational device thus far improvised by the bosses in the present period to achieve this end, and they have no intention of relinquishing or ignoring the device made palatable at present by the "exigencies" of war.

In the past the bosses could rely on the safe and conservative old-line AFL unions. But this did not resolve the class struggle issue in relation to the millions of workers engaged in the mass production industries who pressed for organization.

When the NRA came into existence, it gave a tremendous impetus to union organization by giving government sanction to organization. To divert this organization into safe channels and to prevent workers from organizing militant unions, the bosses attempted to foist company unions on the workers. Company unions grew like mushrooms in the beginning of the NRA period.

On the other hand, the Roosevelt Administration, recognizing that it was impossible to stem the pressure of the workers for their own organizations, tried to channelize the struggles and their organizations into safe channels by the utilization of all kinds of government intervention in labor disputes.

But the company union methods of the employers and the government intervention methods of the Roosevelt Administration—both class collaborationist in purpose—failed to stop the organization of labor into strong industrial unions which carried out militant struggles. As a result of the rise in the economic situation in 1935-37, providing jobs for millions after years of unemployment, the CIO came into existence and demonstrated its right to continued existence by militant fighting methods (strikes, mass picketing, sit-downs, etc.). With all the internal difficulties, multiplied several times over, the organization and concept of the CIO still remain the great achievement and hope of labor on the economic front.

Had not the imperialist war intervened, with the resulting capitulation of the trade union officialdom before the offensive of the bosses, the CIO unions would have increased further in strength and militancy. As indicated by Philip Murray, president of the CIO, at the CIO convention in 1941 at Detroit, it is conceivable that they

would have entered the political field independently as a workers' political movement.

THE BOSSES' OFFENSIVE AFTER THE WAR

Fearing the revival of the militant working class movement in the post-war period, the bosses even now seek to strengthen the labor-management committees at the expense of the bona fide unions.

But, in the post-war period, with millions of workers no longer needed for war production, labor will find itself in a much weaker position economically to combat the bosses' offensive—a task which is difficult enough under the most favorable conditions of relative shortage of labor, strong union organization and militant workers.

TODAY, labor must prepare for the future by being on its guard against any attempts to devitalize its organizations. This means, concretely, that militants in the unions continue to speak up at union meetings and conventions for the maintenance of union standards and indicate their distrust of and opposition to the anti-labor purposes and practices of the labor-management committees.

MAINTAIN BONA FIDE UNIONS

It is the bona fide unions which have gained the experience, the technique and developed the organizational machinery for best resolving the problems of workers in relation to the employers. Any and all encroachments, small or large, upon union prerogatives should be resisted. There is nothing in relation to wages, hours, etc., that cannot be better done by the union itself than by the machinery of labor-management committees. These labor-management committees are only a variation of company unionism, a deadly menace to union organization.

Unions only maintain their strength by constant vigilance and struggle—strikes, etc. In abandoning their gains and rights, the unions become unavoidably weaker. The ranks, not feeling the daily effects and not seeing the daily evidences of union efforts, tend more and more to lose their confidence in the unions, which are actually their best weapons. The labor-management

Pickets--

(Continued from page 1)

cent newspaper story said that 20,000 more workers are needed to fill production requirements in Akron war factories, while the Akron labor supply is exhausted. It is common knowledge that men and women are migrating from other states to obtain jobs in Akron.

As Mrs. Loretta Ford, spokeswoman for the Future Outlook League, declared: "There can be no real labor shortage in Akron as long as Negro women are refused the right to train for employment."

The issue is as clear as daylight. Only the anti-Negro prejudice of employers and employment bureaus is keeping these women from the jobs they need and want. The "labor shortage" is a Jim Crow myth.

If Negro men are doubly exploited, as workers and as Negroes, Negro women are triply exploited—as a part of the working class, as a race and as a sex. They are the most oppressed group in society. No job is considered too dirty for them. No wage is considered too low.

Because of this background, the fight of these women for the right to earn a decent living all the more deserves the support of every thinking unionist, every militant, every member of the Negro community. The Jim Crow myth are fighting is personified in the bosses, the same bosses the union had to picket and strike against in order to gain wage increases and union recognition.

The employers will not want the unions to support these women. They prefer to have whites and blacks fighting among themselves so that neither will make demands on the employers. The employers will also be able to hire Negro workers—and they will have to employ them eventually because of the enormity of the war effort—at lower wages than white workers, if the unions do not cooperate.

Europacus.

Ship Worker Writes on Local

Local 9 Militant Says He's Tired of Giving Up Conditions

Dear Editor:

I would like to know if you would print the opinion of one long-time member of Local 9, San Pedro Shipyard Workers Union, who is sick and tired of giving up one thing after another in our living conditions.

Last year we gave up our right to strike in exchange for an increase in wages and the promise that if the cost of living went up in 1941 we would get an equal increase on April 1, 1942. Well, the cost of living went sky-high in 1941; April 1 has come and gone and we still haven't got our raise. Not only that, but instead of the 13 cents that we are entitled to,

according to the Department of Labor figures, all they'll give us is 8 cents.

The 8 cents has a lot of strings attached to it. First of all we lost all rights to any future increases; that means, no matter what happens to the cost of living or if inflation comes in, we get left out in the cold. Local 9 was the first union anywhere in the country that won the right to an increase in wages ANY time the cost of living went up. Now we have to chuck it out to please the AFL and a lot of officials who don't have to work in the yards for a living. It took us years to win it and now in two minutes, and for a lousy 8 cent raise, we sell ourselves out.

Another thing that has the men hot is the staggered work week, just like the Cal shipyard has. That's one thing the men won't go for even for a million dollars. The men don't want to have a different day off each week for six weeks and then have to work thirteen days continuously, all at straight pay. Under this system you only get time and a half for the sixth day of work and double time for the seventh. You only get holiday pay when the holiday falls on the sixth or seventh day of the week. That means that this year we will work on Labor Day, Armistice Day, Christmas and New Year's Day at straight pay because they all fall

during the week. If you lose two days during the week you work for straight pay on the sixth and seventh day.

Well, we don't go for that, and we're all going down to the special union meeting on July 8 to see that we don't lose our future right to pay increases and that we don't get the staggered week put over on us. As long as the shipyard owners are cleaning up millions, we got the right to make a decent living and put something in the sock for the time when we all lose our jobs and have to go back to WPA.

Riveter in LA Yard.

July 3, 1942.

The Cairo Mentality

"Ravishing beauties in Cairo's biggest air-conditioned department store stand behind counters loaded with perfumes, nylon stockings, leather goods, flash-lights, cameras. Americans and Britons flock to St. James' restaurant for thick, juicy steaks... Fashionables dine at the Continental Roof Garden, where Helmet, the famed and sexy belly-dancer, excites the audience nightly.... Most people drink rye highballs, Scotch and sodas, or gin and tonics." (Time, July 6.)

Yes, Freedom!

Today, for some reason or other, Egypt is a "neutral" in the decisive struggle now being fought out on her soil. She has a population of 16,000,000. She might easily have a first-line army of 300,000 men and double that number in reserve. But so far as is known in this country, the Egyptians have not lifted a finger to help stop the Axis invasion....

Burma, with 19,000,000 population, was lost to the British because... the Burmese did not help defend their own country. It is said there were never more than 50,000 Japanese troops in Burma at any time. Next door, in India, there were 390,000 people who might have sent help. Instead they stood, and still stand, with folded arms under the British flag and watch with indifference the Japanese advance....

Today the cry of peoples everywhere is for "freedom"... they resent the kind of aid Theodore Roosevelt praised the British for giving.

By William Philip Simms in the New York World-Telegram.

THE WORLD AT WAR

After Sixty Years of Rule Britain Cannot Rouse Egypt's Masses to Its Side

By WILLIAM BRAD

The present military situation in Egypt is a stalemate with neither side in a position to make a decisive move. Rommel succeeded in pushing his attack to within seventy miles of Alexandria. Yet all this may prove to have been in vain unless he can take Alexandria and destroy the British Eighth Army.

The type of war being fought in North Africa is of the most abstract and mathematical character. It is like a problem during maneuvers, rather than actual warfare. The chief problems are supplies, size of forces and equipment. The entire struggle takes place as if on a chess board with few extraneous factors involved. Above all, there are no large, well populated cities, only points on the map useful for military defense or attack. There are no masses of peasantry who have to be approached politically. The city of Tobruk, before the war, had a population of 500. Places like Derna, El Alamein or Bir Hacheim were tiny watering places. In Libya only one city has a substantial population, Tripoli.

Military Stakes Huge

Egypt is like a keystone wedge between the rest of Africa and the Near East. And if the battle for Libya takes place in uninhabited desert, the battle for Egypt does not. It is true that the desert extends to within a few miles of the Nile, but in the valley of the Nile itself is the most compact and over-crowded area in the world. This population of 16,000,000 is vitally affected by the tides of war. Not only Egyptians, but presumably, the entire Arabian world should be aroused since they represent one of the chief stakes of the war.

Masses Are Silent

But the silence from these peoples is deafening and damning. None of them has declared its solidarity with either of the two imperialist armies striving for their mastery. They have not found in either military camp that which they can support. The similarity with the Burmese and Malayan campaigns is striking. Of course there are some Egyptians and some Arabians who do support either British or German imperialism, but even these have not been vociferous.

In "independent" Egypt there is a Parliament, a King and an army. With their country made a battle ground and the Nile delta, the heart of Egypt, threatened with invasion, why has not the "legal and independent" government of Egypt acted,

at least formally? In the first place, the Egyptian government is little more than a puppet in British hands. The present dynasty was placed on the throne by British bayonets and owes all its support to the British.

The Parliament, elected by very restricted suffrage, has been prorogued for several years. Every time it was elected, the election was nullified by the King-Dictator and his ministers. The constitution practically grants the King dictatorial powers. The Prime Minister, Pasha, represents the large landlords, the sole pro-British section of the population. The Egyptian army, limited by treaty with Britain to 13,000 men, has been used and is equipped only to suppress peasant revolts and nationalist uprisings.

In the second place, any declaration of position on the war would be futile as far as the masses of Egyptian people are concerned, since there is no illusion as to whom this government represents. The government may yet act, however. If it does it will probably be a declaration by the King or the Prime Minister. In any case it will be mere fiat, meaning nothing to the masses.

British Support Narrow

Britain's support in Egypt is indeed narrow. Its base consists of the few hundred landlords of huge estates and the government bureaucracy topped by the dynasty. That is all. The tiny capitalist class of merchants and small industrialists hate the British and are the backbone of the Wafd Nationalist Party. They want real independence to develop their home industry. They are stifled in growth by the British restrictions and the complete domination of the country's economic life. The Wafd has indicated that it is willing to compromise its struggle in return for concessions, but it has never been offered any. The British reply has always been terrorization and suppression.

After sixty years of British rule the peasantry have reason only to hate it. There are a total of 2,365,000 land holdings in Egypt. Over 2,000,000 are of less than five acres each. The average peasant holdings are under three acres each. About 1,600,000 hold less than one acre each. There are 2,000,000 agricultural laborers and croppers who are totally landless.

The concentration of land is very great. Forty-four per cent of the land is owned by 13,000 landlords. These holdings run about 450 acres each, but many run into the thousands of acres. Many of these large estates are owned by British landlords and the native landlords are largely not Egyptian but Turkish, remnants of the old Turkish regime in Egypt. It is with this Turkish landlord class that the British have made their sole alliance in the entire population.

Death Rate Is High

As a result of British insistence that Egypt grow cotton for the textile mills of Lancashire, that one staple has displaced cereals and other diversified crops. Whereas Egypt formerly exported grains and foodstuffs, she now imports them. The Nile soil, some of the richest in the world, has been reduced in fertility from 20 to 50 per cent as a result of the one-crop program.

The working class of Egypt has some 5,000,000 workers. Three and a half million of them earn less than one pound sterling a week. Conditions of poverty, overcrowding, disease are the rule in the miserable slum areas. Death rates are high from epidemic diseases. Eighty-four per cent of the population is illiterate.

It isn't that the people of Egypt have not wanted independence. From 1919 to 1923 and again from 1924 to 1930 there were continual revolts, demonstrations and guerrilla warfare. All were bloodily suppressed.

Egypt's case is not unusual or exceptional in the British Empire; it is typical. The Egyptian people cannot possibly feel any desire to support the British. The Germans offer them nothing different. Sixteen million people flee from the actual battle scenes and otherwise try to preserve life. Wherever the British Empire is examined it uniformly presents a picture of imperialist alienation of the peoples and of oppression. The Egyptian people will be roused to fight only when they have first made themselves free to determine their own destiny. When they have evicted their present oppressors they will be in a position to deal with invaders. At present both British and Germans are invaders.

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committees hasten the weakening of the union structure and organism. The employers like that; the workers shouldn't—and they should do something about it.

RANKS DUBIOUS OF COMMITTEES

The labor union officialdom, almost entirely, has permitted itself to go along, sometimes skeptically and reluctantly, but nevertheless going along with the formation of labor-management committees in order to get "efficient production" for the "war for democracy." The Stalinists also—as servants of the Kremlin—have fully supported and in many cases have been directly instrumental in the establishment of labor-management committees. But the rank and file workers are more than dubious of the labor-management set-up. Their experiences so far indicate that these committees are not in their—THE WORKERS'—interests.

As the war itself proceeds, and the effects of labor-management committees on labor standards and the unions show themselves clearly, the ranks of labor will begin to shake their heads in protest and will say:

"Enough! Labor-management committees are committees of the bosses to manage the workers. Workers want no part of them. Workers will rely on our own organizations—our own labor unions."

WORKER OFFENSIVE TOWARD WORKER CONTROL

Today more and more workers are beginning to realize the need for workers to have a say in how production is carried on; to develop some control in and over production and eventually to take over full control. However, anyone who deludes himself or others that labor-management committees are a step toward workers' control of production finds the answer in the manufacturers' own statements to the contrary. A recent survey of manufacturers proved their satisfaction with these committees because they "in no way enable workers to take over management functions." (New York Times.)

Workers must achieve control of production through their own organizations—the unions, etc. (The relation of workers' control of production to the capitalist system is not within the purview of this article, though decisive in the solution thereof.) In some cases, to protect their own immediate interests, unions have already gained the right to check the books of the bosses to ascertain profits, etc., and to make demands for wage adjustments and other improvements in working conditions accordingly.

WHEN WORKERS GET THEIR HANDS INTO THE MANAGEMENT OF THE PRODUCTIVE MACHINERY THROUGH THEIR OWN ORGANIZATIONS, THEY ARE MAKING IMPORTANT PROGRESS. THEY ARE DEVELOPING IDEAS WHICH IN THE COURSE OF THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL STRUGGLES BETWEEN THE BOSSES AND WORKERS WILL LEAD TO THE CONCEPT OF FULL WORKERS' CONTROL OF PRODUCTION IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKERS EXCLUSIVELY. THAT MUST BECOME AND BE THE FINAL AND REAL ANSWER OF LABOR TO THE LABOR-MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES.

Of Special Interest To Women

By Susan Green

The latest developments in the price fixing fiasco are fully covered on page one of this issue of LABOR ACTION. If you haven't read the item, by all means turn back and do so. The following is merely a report of an incident that has undoubtedly been repeated thousands of times all over the country.

In a large self-service grocery store—one of several operated by the same owners in the City of New York—a woman stood arguing with a clerk over the price of some canned fruit. She claimed that the highest price in March was two cans for 25 cents, whereas the price now is two for 29 cents. Soon other women crowded around, some murmuring that the woman was right but others too timid even to murmur. The clerk, entirely flabbergasted, finally called over the manager.

Exuding "the-customer-is-always-right" make-believe through all his pores, the manager smilingly assured the complaining woman that she was mistaken because "that was a very special price we had on in March and the ceiling is for regular prices, not special ones."

The woman was not prepared for that line—though obviously dishonest—and was silenced. She went away looking like a whipped dog when it hasn't earned a beating. The other women around looked puzzled but skeptical. But the manager had definitely put one over for his boss.

There is only one reason why women are being fooled this way—only one reason why they are timid, don't know their rights and can't stand up for them. They are not organized. THEY NEED NEIGHBORHOOD WORKING CLASS HOUSEWIVES' GROUPS.

For once at least Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt's usual Pollyanna optimism stands her in no good stead. In her column in the New York World-Telegram of July 2 she quoted the following postcard she received:

"Could you enlighten the people, by radio or some magazine article, how can a baby be supported on \$12 a month—which amounts to about 40 cents a day—including his meals, clothing, medicine, etc.? The second child receives \$10 per month, 33-1/3 cents a day, when he must drink two quarts of milk a day. How can you buy medicine, clothing for the other three cents per day?"

"Also I would like to know how baby food which must be mixed with milk can be bought every five or six days at 79 cents. Also I would like to know if there is a nursery in New York States where you could board a child at such a ridiculous amount per month. I am inducted in the army."

The First Lady is stuck.

Fishing around for a possible answer, she says "perhaps" it is in the new \$50 a month soldier pay. This, however, is exceedingly funny for the simple reason that a soldier with dependent automatically contributes \$22 a month, leaving for himself \$28 for the entire month—or less than \$1.00 a day.

Mrs. Roosevelt also suggests as an answer that the mother of a small baby go to work, put her infant in a WPA nursery and her other child in a WPA nursery school—if these still function. Well, we all know what has happened to WPA appropriations in Congress, so that settles the WPA nurseries and nursery schools.

The First Lady has no answer to this problem—which she admits must be troubling a good many people—because of her profound respect for the social status quo. LABOR ACTION, however, has no such respect—and therefore has an answer.

There is plenty of money in this country to give adequate support to every soldier's family. IT SIMPLY HAS TO BE TAKEN AWAY FROM THE RICH. All war profits and all fixed fortunes must be confiscated by the government. Let the rich pay for the war—a very legitimate expense of which is to support the soldier's family like human beings.

From a Washington source comes a rather concrete idea of what is to be expected by way of shortages in civilian goods. The gloomy prospect is that the things you and your family need "will slide down-down-down in the next six months to the FAMINE LEVEL. This famine level will run through something like three to five months, to a low point in the late spring of 1943."

At the same time comes the report by William J. Enright, writer for the financial pages of the New York Times, of charges that "the military services are overbuying and that as a result the civilian economy is being penalized unnecessarily."

Will big-wig bungling never cease? Will little people have to do without food, clothing, medicines and other necessities because of overbuying for the war program—most likely because of too enthusiastic contract procurement for their companies by the dollar-a-year men in Washington?

Why not? Sugar was unnecessarily put on low rations because of an under-estimation of the sugar supply by those who ought to have known better.

Sugar rationing is not too serious. But an all-out famine of consumer goods is. The lack of adequate food, clothing, medicines and other essentials translates itself into sickness, death and more waste of human life.

These are such vital matters that the masses must have something to say about them. Industry must be put under workers' control. Every woman interested in the welfare of her family must also be interested in this issue of workers' control of industry. It is our only salvation.

A very pathetic example of an ineffectual approach to a major social problem was given not long ago in the reports of the activities of Anne Brown in behalf of her race. Anne Brown, as you may remember, has very successfully repeatedly starred in the role of Bess in George Gershwin's ever-popular "Porgy and Bess."

On the basis of her own popularity, Miss Brown was making appeals to the heads of industry to end job discrimination against Negroes. She was reported to be very happy because she was getting such favorable responses. One company president wrote her: "If Negroes are good enough to fight for us they are good enough to work for us."

Miss Brown's jubilation, if true, is as pathetic as self-deception always is. Did she expect company presidents to be anything else but affable to her—whatever their private opinions on race discrimination may be? Were their white words worth the paper they were written on? How many of these agreeable gentlemen did more than give black men a few token jobs—if even that?

A social system that executes the Odell Wallers will not be changed by turning on the personal charm. That change can be effected only by the solid organization of the black and white masses of the country.

Labor Action Exposes Anti Semitic Gang in Congress

Race Hatred Emerges as Political Issue

SPECIAL TO LABOR ACTION
WASHINGTON—A group of senators and representatives are preparing a determined effort to bring anti-Semitism into the open as a political issue and hope to ride into power on the wave of religious and racial hatred they believe they can stir up.

Headed by the erstwhile "liberal," Gerald P. Nye of North Dakota, they have been quietly laying the framework for their anti-Jewish campaign. Thus far, they have openly betrayed their intentions in only a few instances.

Nye, it is rumored, hoped to use recently published charges that Senator David I. Walsh frequented a "house of degradation" in Brooklyn as a springboard for his campaign. But the reluctance of Walsh to open the case for a public airing temporarily derailed his plans.

On the pretext that the "dignity of the Senate" has been insulted by publication of the charges, Nye demanded an investigation into which he intended to bring "evidence" that there is a Jewish organization which has the avowed purpose of "framing" Gentile isolationists. Most of his "evidence," it was learned, comes from the Rev. Gerald L. K. Smith, pro-fascist minister who inherited the mantle of the late Huey P. Long of Louisiana.

Nye's associates in this maneuver include a long list of highly placed senators and representatives. Among them are:

Senator Burton K. Wheeler of Montana, who has frequently charged that "international bankers in New York" are responsible for bringing the United States into the present war.

Senator Rufus Holman of Oregon, who in a Senate speech once praised Hitler for freeing the German people from the "international bankers."

Senator Clark of Idaho, who conducted the recent Senate "investigation" of the movie industry which became so notoriously anti-Jewish that even its backers in the Senate committee had to apologize for it.

Congressman John Rankin of Mississippi, who makes daily speeches in the House in which he thinly disguises his purpose by making a distinction between a "religious Jew" and an "international Jew."

Senator Tobey of New Hampshire, who quotes the Bible freely to prove that the Jews killed Christ.

Senator Clark of Missouri, co-au-

thor with Nye of the resolution which started the movie inquiry.

The campaign conducted by this group has been of long standing and its members believe that the time has arrived to bring it out in the open. In the past their work has been carefully concealed and they have protested loud and long that they are staunch champions of civil and racial liberties.

Nevertheless, their answers to the following questions would be interesting:

1. Why, until Pearl Harbor, did Mrs. Dilling and Agnes Waters—openly avowed anti-Semites—use Wheeler's office, as it is alleged, to mimeograph pamphlets, including reprints of the notorious forgery, "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion?"

2. Why did Joe McWilliams, who campaigned for Congress on an anti-Semitic platform, instruct his followers at a New York meeting to holler "The Jew, the Jew" when Wheeler paused in one of his speeches and said: "You know who is responsible for this war?" Observers overheard McWilliams give these instructions prior to the meeting.

3. Why was the openly fascist newspaper, the Pink Sheet, published in Montana, mailed to the above named congressmen (and few others) during the period it was still permitted to publish?

4. Why did Rush D. Holt, who acted as "hatchet man" for the above group, join Gerald L. K. Smith for a nation-wide speaking tour immediately after he was defeated in his race for re-election to the Senate?

5. Why did NO single member of the above group repudiate Lindbergh when, in his speech at Des Moines, he attempted to turn the natural anti-war sentiment of the American people into anti-Semitism?

At the present time, this group has reached a point where it would no longer deny its intentions and its politics. The members are only waiting a suitable opportunity to come out in the open.

In private discussions they have claimed that anti-Semitism is a force that is raging throughout the country and that it will have to be reckoned with as a political factor. Furthermore, they have the support of three powerful newspapers.

The newspapers are the Chicago Tribune, the New York News and the Washington Times-Herald—all published by the Patterson-McCormick family. These organs have managed to keep within the liberal laws, but they have now and again flirted with dangerous implications.

On the day that Walsh was "cleared" of the charges that he had visited the Brooklyn "house of degradation," these three newspapers printed lengthy accounts liberally sprinkled with anti-Semitic phrases

and remarks. The words "international bankers" (read "Jew") were flung about freely and in such a manner that the meaning was unmistakable.

Unless strong steps are taken to expose and fight this group, they will soon emerge as a potent force in American politics. Because of the past liberal records that some of them can flaunt, they are in an excellent position to confuse workers as to their intentions.

The New Deal Administration has demonstrated its inability to cope with the anti-Semites because many of them are in the Democratic Party and some—like Wheeler—were instrumental in getting a first term for Roosevelt. Workers must be on guard against this group and their propaganda.

General de Gaulle Gives His Program for France

After waiting for two years, the world finally has learned what General Charles de Gaulle and his Free French stand for.

For two years General de Gaulle—militarist, monarchist and imperialist—kept silent on political questions. He said that the future, liberated France would have to decide its own destiny—he was only concerned with military matters.

But now the United Nations are planning to invade Europe, to bring the war to Hitler's front yard. That is, France will again become a battleground in the Second World War. The French people will again be forced to participate in the struggle. And so de Gaulle—the man who is supposedly to cross the Channel and march into Paris at the head of the Allied armies—is forced to state what he stands for, politically.

The French people want to know concretely what he has to offer them. This explains why the Free French movement has finally issued a program explaining what it stands for. According to London reports, this manifesto was printed in four leading French illegal, anti-Nazi newspapers.

What is the program he offers to France's millions of workers and poor farmers?

(1) Complete restoration of the French Empire, with all of its colonies in Africa, Asia and South America. This is his FIRST, his MAIN point. By this fact he betrays that he is fighting to re-establish the old, reactionary and rotten French Empire of pre-war days.

(2) The removal of German totalitarian rule. Fine! But what is to replace it? The old French parliamentary system of the pre-war days! Not the democratic rule of the French people through their own organizations, but the Parliament that gave birth to Laval, Reynaud, Daladier and all the other sell-out artists and corrupt politicians of the old France.

(3) Punishment of the German leaders responsible for the war, and punishment of the German people responsible for supporting the war. That is, the imposition upon a defeated Germany of a new Versailles Treaty. This will again set into motion all the old hatreds and imperialist forces that helped bring about the present war.

(4) A France to be based upon the old slogans of "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity." But de Gaulle's interpretation of these words is not that of a French socialist and revolutionary worker. General de Gaulle means liberty for capitalism to continue in France; equality with his fellow English and American imperialists to exploit tens of millions of slaves in the African and Far Eastern colonies; fraternity among his fellow reactionaries and capitalists in preventing a workers' socialist revolution in France.

For the French worker these slogans have an entirely different meaning, a meaning that sets him in complete opposition to de Gaulle's reactionary program. He wants the liberty that comes with workers' democratic rule; he wants social and economic equality based upon a workers' government; he wants fraternity with his fellow workers in Germany, Belgium, Holland and all the other countries that suffer under fascist, totalitarian rule. He wants the fraternity that a United States of Europe can bring about.

The program of de Gaulle is the program of United Nations imperialism, and of the French capitalists who support and lead the Free French movement. Every worker and revolutionist cannot but reject this manifesto.

H. J.

Things Crazy And Not So Crazy---

By Gertrude Shaw

It has been the aim of civilized man to gain freedom from want and from arduous labor—through the use of the machine.

What is more, the machine has certainly come across. It is able to give to the human race all the good things of life and plenty of time in which to enjoy them.

Is that crazy? Quite the contrary. For instance, look at the Ford Willow Run plant. It is a marvel of labor-saving devices—the very acme in mass production technique. But—

It produces none of the good things of life. Instead it turns out a death-dealing bomber every two hours. Furthermore, it doesn't save its workers any labor. In fact, they have never toiled harder in all their lives.

In the Ford plant certain operations which used to take 1,500 man-hours now take only 300 man-hours—or one-fifth of the time. Another process which meant six hours of labor now is finished in thirty minutes—or in one-twelfth of the time. Salvage of working hours on a large scale is typical of the whole of war production.

But on these very labor-saving machines which are one of the wonders of the world, the workers slave on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays. Every day of the week they toil long after their regular working hours. They are driven so long and so hard that overpowering exhaustion gets many of them—and industrial accidents steadily mount as a result.

Yes, a process in Ford's plant is cut to one-fifth of its former labor-hour requirements—but deaths of factory workers for the first two months of this year were one-fifth more than the 1941 fatalities.

The machine has come across and saves labor—but workers toil more, and more dangerously, instead of less. Doesn't that sound crazy?

CRAZIER AND CRAZIER

Now how about those good things of life that the machine can produce in mass? Bombers at the rate of one every two hours are certainly not among the good things of life. Nor can machine guns turned out as fast as breadsticks, be eaten.

Mass production leaps ahead, but the standard of living is shoved back a whole decade—to that of 1932, according to the estimate of Mr. Lean Henderson, famous for his perforated ceilings. Definitely, this is crazy—and far from the goal that civilized man has set for himself.

And isn't it crazy that thousands upon thousands of the men and women who operate the modern machines for tremendous mass production go "home" to shacks, trailers, barns and hen-coops? Yes, this is the way the housing situation for the workers of the Glenn L. Martin bomber plant near Baltimore has been "solved," to cite only one instance.

TROUBLE WITH WISE ALECS

At this point some wise Alec shouts: "This is a war!" Yes, that's exactly the idea: Look at the crazy waste of war!

But what this wise Alec means to imply is that in peacetime the modern machine does give mankind freedom from want and from arduous toil. The trouble with wise Alects is that they have conveniently short memories.

What happened to the modern machine for mass production in the post-war depression of the '20's? What happened to it in the all-time record depression of 1929-1939?

The machinery of production stood idle or partly idle. True enough, the workers were saved arduous labor—in fact, all labor, even the bother of eating. So where does the goal of mankind come in? Just at what point—under the present capitalist-imperialist set-up—do human beings get the good things of life and plenty of time in which to enjoy them?

The answer is never—never under the crazy profit system. During the imperialist war inherent in this mad system, human beings are allowed unrationed "sacrifices" of every kind while the machines mass-produce for death. During the depression periods between wars, unemployment with widespread poverty and misery sets in. That is the dizzy, unvaried gyration of capitalism because—

The hand at the controls is that of a ruling class drunk with power and crazy for profits.

But do you want to know something? The powerful working classes of the earth can unite to remove that crazy hand from the controls and create their own abundant socialist society. That ain't crazy!

Lilbourn Project Croppers Win 30c Scale

(Continued from page 1)

demanding but it represents a gain of 100 per cent.

Henderson Conference

If the workers had any help from the UCAPAWA the wages would have been \$3.00 for chopping in every town and village in Missouri. Donald Henderson, however, has called a "conference" in Cape Girardeau for Sunday, July 12. Local 313 and locals at Matthews, La Forge, Wyatt, Charleston, etc., called a meeting in Charleston on May 16.

These locals published a pamphlet, they went around and begged for money, they gave what they had, they published leaflet after leaflet, they went around organizing, they went to the St. Louis CIO, who gave them money and support. The St. Louis CIO sent three delegations down to Missouri who traveled all over the area encouraging the workers.

All this work and much more has been done by Local 313 and the other locals who worked with them. Splendid work. Magnificent work. It is this which helped to win the increases.

Now, today, when so much has been won at the cost of so much work and sacrifice, Henderson calls a conference—a conference on July 12, when only a few more weeks of chopping remain. When the struggle is almost over Henderson calls this meeting. He calls it at Cape Girardeau, over 50 miles away from where most of the workers live. Why has Henderson called this conference for so far away? It is to prevent the workers who have fought and suffered from being able to attend. Henderson fears the workers, whom he has neglected and deceived and betrayed.

On Conference Agenda

The conference has three points on the agenda:

- 1) The tasks of the CIO and the war.
- 2) The struggle for wages in cotton.
- 3) The organization of the UCAPAWA in Missouri.

In regard to Point No. 1, Henderson is going to shout and rave and stamp about Trotskyists and Jap

agents. The workers should pay no attention to him. LABOR ACTION says that the war is an imperialist war. But that is not the question of this conference. What Henderson wants to do is to trap those workers who are opposed to the war and turn the conference into a man-hunt against militant workers, calling them Trotskyists and Jap agents. The workers should not fall into that trap.

Now Henderson knows that the workers in Missouri are not fools. For weeks Otis Nation and Whitfield have been up and down Missouri trying to get workers to go back to work at starvation wages. They have tried to cause bad feeling between Negroes and whites. They have slandered the workers' leaders. Whitfield wrote letters to the landlord press against the workers and finally he went to St. Louis and before the representatives of the 50,000 CIO workers, he spoke bitterly against Local 313. Luckily there were Southeast Missouri delegates present who heard him. But the St. Louis CIO Council did not support Whitfield. It reaffirmed its support of Local 313, and all Missouri is now talking about the way Whitfield has turned against the people.

Picking a Goat?

Henderson therefore knows he will have to say something about all this. So already Billy Fisher, Henderson's stooge, is going around saying that the UCAPAWA is going to get rid of Whitfield and "all that trash."

Isn't that wonderful? Henderson and Otis Nation and Hughes and Fisher and Whitfield, all of them worked together like one man against the workers. Now that the workers have found out all about them they begin to whisper that Whitfield is trash. No worker must be fooled by this. Henderson knew everything that was going on.

What did he do for the workers while they starved at home and fought the landlords?

The answer is: NOTHING.

For two years Henderson and Whitfield and Fisher did not organize one local, not one.

And when the workers, tired of this, asked for permission and fought,

Henderson not only opposed them, but tried to get the St. Louis CIO to send money to him. The money that was coming to help the workers to organize and fight—he wanted to take even that away from them.

But the workers have fought on and they are determined to fight and keep on fighting. If all day laborers in Missouri today get at least \$2.00 a day and some \$2.25, some \$2.50 and even \$3.00, it is because Local 313 and the other locals fought.

If the St. Louis CIO says, as it prints in its press, that the workers in Missouri are our people, it is because Local 313, La Forge, Matthews, etc., fought.

The workers now must get something from Henderson. They must have a program of action. He must do something.

The workers must have immediate organization of locals. They must have organizers.

But the organizers must be people they can trust. Whitfield has shown himself an enemy of the people. Nobody in Missouri wants him any more. Otis Nation is a traitor, a man who spent his time trying to break the solidarity between colored and white. The workers walked out on him and his friend from Arkansas the other day. They don't want such people around. Furthermore, the workers don't want promises. They want action—now—action by the workers for everybody to get 30 cents an hour for the rest of the chopping season.

We must end the slanders and persecution of the workers' leaders as "Trotskyists" and "Jap agents." The locals that led the struggle so well are the locals that must lead in the future. Lilbourn, La Forge, Matthews, Wyatt, Charleston, the groups at Catron, Parma, Portageville, Wardell, Essex, Dexter—all who in their various ways have fought so courageously—these are the men who must lead. ALL THE SYMPATHETIC GROUPS MUST BE GIVEN CHARTERS AT ONCE. They must be allowed to speak at the conference.

If Donald Henderson comes to

this conference and turns it into a courthouse for persecuting the men who have led the struggle, then he will drive the last nail into the coffin of the UCAPAWA in Missouri.

But, though he may kill the UCAPAWA in Missouri, the struggle will go on. The UCAPAWA cannot kill the determination of the Southeast Missouri workers to fight the landlords.

For the St. Louis CIO says, as it prints in its press, that the workers in Missouri are our people, it is because Local 313, La Forge, Matthews, etc., fought.

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The workers must have immediate organization of locals. They must have organizers.

But the organizers must be people they can trust. Whitfield has shown himself an enemy of the people. Nobody in Missouri wants him any more. Otis Nation is a traitor, a man who spent his time trying to break the solidarity between colored and white. The workers walked out on him and his friend from Arkansas the other day. They don't want such people around. Furthermore, the workers don't want promises. They want action—now—action by the workers for everybody to get 30 cents an hour for the rest of the chopping season.

We must end the slanders and persecution of the workers' leaders as "Trotskyists" and "Jap agents." The locals that led the struggle so well are the locals that must lead in the future. Lilbourn, La Forge, Matthews, Wyatt, Charleston, the groups at Catron, Parma, Portageville, Wardell, Essex, Dexter—all who in their various ways have fought so courageously—these are the men who must lead. ALL THE SYMPATHETIC GROUPS MUST BE GIVEN CHARTERS AT ONCE. They must be allowed to speak at the conference.

If Donald Henderson comes to

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Editorials

On Meaney

Every worker knows the kind of politics Mayor Hague of Jersey City stands for. So does President Roosevelt, who appointed, as federal district judge for New Jersey, Thomas F. Meaney, a faithful tool of Hague and his machine. So do the thirty-nine senators who confirmed the President's cynical appointment.

It cannot be forgotten how Hague has ruled his bailiwick by means of "storm troopers"; how this little Hitler fenced off his domain from the rest of the county and abolished the Bill of Rights; how unionists, socialists and liberals were all bunched together under the label of "reds"—and it was no fault of Hague's that they were not all shot or sent to concentration camps.

In the appointment of a federal district judge for New Jersey, President Roosevelt had a dramatic opportunity to repudiate Hague, his machine and his politics, by passing up Hague's man. But Mr. Roosevelt did not do this. He thus dramatized for the whole country the close connection between the Washington Administration and the unsavory Hague machine, as well as the hypocrisy of the "democratic" verbiage issuing from Dictator Hague's colleagues in high places.

Thomas F. Meaney is no innocent who happens to have wandered into bad company. He is every inch Hague's man, doing yeoman service. He is known, for instance, to have maneuvered a fancy shuffle whereby Hague's son, an inexperienced young lawyer, landed on the bench of the highest court in the state of New Jersey.

The thirty-nine senators knew this. But they had their ukase from above. They voted along strictly party lines. They understood that the appointment of a Hague machine man by the President meant that he was taking no chances at weakening the Democratic Party vote-catching ability by offending the Jersey party boss.

The great "crusader for democracy" reveals himself as only a petty politician.

It Won't Work

"Democracy"—with a capital D—has come to India. We have the assurance of the British-appointed Viceroy of India about this.

Here is how he knows: He has just reorganized his Executive Council—a body having purely advisory powers—by increasing it to fifteen members, with eleven of them Indians!

So now, 400,000,000 people are supposed to shout with glee that at last they are liberated, and "democracy" prevails! The fact that this numerical rearrangement won't affect them in the least—so far as the occupation of their country by foreign (British and American) troops is concerned; the fact that their position as a slave race toiling for the benefit of the British imperialists who own everything re-

mains the same—all this is of no concern to the British authorities. They have done their duty and brought "democracy" to India.

But with a couple of hitches, however. "The appointment of Indians to sit with the War Cabinet does not affect its responsibility to Parliament for the conduct of the war." (New York Times, July 3.) "General Wavell still in complete command..." (New York Times.) In other words, a concession without responsibility or powers!

And who are the new members of the Executive Council? All of them are well known to the Indian people. Well known as British stooges and lick-spittles. The Times says some of them are Nationalists but "not so violent Nationalists as Mahatma Gandhi and the majority of the Congress Party who repudiated all British proposals to demand complete independence." Imagine! "Nationalists," but less violent than Gandhi, the famous champion of non-violence! In other words, a couple of shades more timid than Casper Milque-toast.

Who are these Indian traitors who sit on the War Council of their enemy?

1) Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar—a notorious Hindu reactionary, a 20-year-old enemy of the Congress. He got his "Sir" from the King of England.

2) The Maharajah of Nawanagar—representing the "democratic" feudal princes of India. England buys and sells the Maharajahs at will, depending upon their needs.

3) Sir Firoz Khan Noon—another anti-nationalist and former Indian High Commissioner in London. He, too, got his knighthood in England. He is known as a reactionary Moslem politician.

4) Dr. B. R. Ambedkar—this notorious racketeer and petty politician has lived off of the so-called untouchable caste for many a year. Now he represents them on the Viceroy's council. A shyster lawyer from Bombay, he no more represents these people than the Viceroy represents the 400,000,000 Indian people.

Those are some of the new councillors. The rest are also "Sirs," "Rajahs," "Maharajahs," etc.

Will it deceive the Indian people? Will it work?

Not for a moment! They want complete independence—nothing else.

LABOR ACTION

A Paper in the Interests of Labor

Published Weekly by the
Labor Action Publishing Company
114 WEST 14th STREET, NEW YORK, N. Y.
(3rd Floor)

Vol. 6, No. 28 July 13, 1942

Editor: Emanuel Garrett

Subscription Rate: 60 Cents a Year
75 Cents for Canada, New York and Foreign

Re-entered as second-class matter May 24, 1940,
at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the
Act of March 3, 1879.

WORKERS PARTY PLATFORM

Against Both Imperialist War Camps! For the Victory of World Labor and the Colonial Peoples! For the Victory of the Third Camp of Socialism!

LABOR MUST DEFEND ITSELF!

1. Hands off the right to strike! For the defense of civil rights and all workers' rights! Against any wartime dictatorship measures!
2. Thirty hours a week; thirty dollars the minimum wage; time and a half for overtime! Rehire the jobless millions by a six-hour shift!
3. Wage increases which meet rising costs! No sales tax on consumer goods; no taxes on wages! Freeze rents and food and clothing prices at the 1940 level to stop the rise in the cost of living!
4. No government contract without a union contract! The closed shop in all war industries!
5. Maintain and increase all government social services!

SOAK THE RICH—LET THEM PAY FOR THEIR WAR!

6. A government levy on capital to cover the cost of the imperialist war. Confiscate all war profits!
7. Conscript all war industries under workers' control!
8. Expropriate the "Sixty Families"—the 3 per cent of the people who own 96 per cent of the national wealth!

DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS TO THE DRAFTEES!

9. The right of free speech, free press and free assembly for the men in the armed forces!
10. Sixty dollars a month minimum for draftees!

SMASH JIM CROW!

11. Down with Jim Crow and anti-Semitism! All discrimination against Negroes in the Army and Navy or by employers in industry must be made a criminal offense!

12. For full political, social and economic equality for Negroes.

BE PREPARED!

13. For Workers' Defense Guards, trained and controlled by the unions, against vigilante and fascist attacks!
14. For an Independent Labor Party and a Workers' Government! No political support to the Roosevelt government!
15. For Peace Through Socialism! For immediate independence of all colonies! Only a socialist world will destroy capitalist imperialism and fascist barbarism. For a League of Socialist Nations!

The Life and the Death Of a Negro Sharecropper

(Continued from page 1)

sharecroppers, Negroes, the oppressed and exploited? That's what the law provides—a jury of peers. But not for a Negro, hence not for Waller. Waller was tried by a white, poll tax jury, upholding the Jim Crow tyranny of Southern justice.

Waller did not have a fair trial, as constitutionally provided. It was up to the Supreme Court to intervene, order a new trial. But the Supreme Court, most of the "Nine Old Men" replaced with young men of liberal reputation, turned its head, refused to acknowledge the glaring injustice.

Governor Darden of Virginia could have saved him. President Roosevelt, by public repudiation of the



injustice, might have saved him. Neither of them did. Roosevelt said nothing publicly. Darden did—and rejected the plea for a commutation of sentence. With all the hypocrisy and smugness of a Southern reactionary, Darden doubted that a poll tax of \$1.50 a year "had the effect of dividing the

people of the Commonwealth into economic classes."

No, the poll tax doesn't divide the "people of the Commonwealth into economic classes." The poll tax is the reflection of a class division which already exists—in Virginia as elsewhere. And to a sharecropper, a Negro to whom \$1.50 may represent a week's food, it is an effective bar to voting—and therefore to jury service. That's why Virginia maintains the poll tax; that's why Southern politicians fight tooth and nail against any congressional restrictions on the poll tax.

The papers reported that President Roosevelt had communicated privately with Darden. It is possible. A legal execution of a Negro in Jim Crow circumstances won't sit well with the Negro masses who are being daily exhorted that black and white are one in the imperialist war effort (not merely in their "right" to die). There are a million denials of that lie daily—discrimination in employment, in bond collections, in blood-bank appeals. The Waller execution is another denial. And Roosevelt may no doubt have wished to avoid it.

BUT ROOSEVELT DID NOT UTILIZE THE POWERS OF HIS OFFICE TO FREE WALLER OR GRANT HIM A NEW AND FAIR TRIAL! The Workers Defense League, which handled the Waller defense, couldn't get in to see him.

Could it be that with congressional elections coming up soon Roosevelt preferred not to antagonize the vote of the "Solid Poll Tax South"? Could it be that Darden told him to lay off? In any case, Roosevelt's failure is well known. A. Philip Randolph, Negro president of the Sleeping Car Porters Union, announced after the Waller execution that "the President and government have failed us."

The Waller case may have ended for the New York Times or the "liberal" New York Post. But it hasn't ended, and NEVER WILL, so long as one Negro remains the victim of race discrimination.

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ANNOUNCEMENT

The New York branch of the Civil Rights Defense Committee, observing a year of struggle for civil liberties in support of the Minneapolis labor defendants, will hold a roof garden dance on Saturday, July 18, from 9:00 till 2:00 at the Hotel Diplomat, 108 West 43rd Street. The price of admission is \$1.00. Don Henry's orchestra will syncope.

Waller cases, some of them cruder, some of them less crude, repeat themselves in a multiplicity of ways every day.

Every time a Negro is denied the right to a job, the Waller case is repeated.

Every time a Negro is barred from a restaurant the Waller case is repeated.

Every time a Negro is lynched, the Waller case is repeated. And a Negro was lynched in Tuskegee, Ala., the very week that Waller was legally murdered!

There isn't a Negro in this country who won't bear the scar of Waller's death so long as capitalist class and race injustice continues. There ought not to be a white worker who forgets this new victim on the long list of class injustice.

Read Waller's statement which we print in this issue. Victimized as he was by "whites," Waller knew the source of his persecution. In his statement there is no reference to "whites" against "blacks." In the two years of his incarceration and defense, Waller learned that—if he didn't know it before.

It wasn't the "whites" who sent Waller to his death. It was that tiny group of "whites" who live off the exploitation of the millions, black and white alike: They executed Waller, the way others of them executed Sacco and Vanzetti, who were white.

There are white sharecroppers and there are Negro sharecroppers, and the one is little better off than the other. There are white workers and Negro workers, and the one is fundamentally little better off than the other. The boss system, which thrives on the double exploitation of the Negro worker, which seeks to divide him from his ONLY ally—the white worker—is the enemy of that white worker as much as of the Negro worker.

The Waller case will end only when that boss system is replaced by a workers' system. By a workers' government, organized by Negro and white workers. By a workers' socialist government under which all men will truly be free and equal!

By Their Words Shall Ye Know Them---

Elsewhere in this issue we cite the fact that the capitalist press in general made no more reference to the Waller execution than it could get away with in terms of its obligation to publish the news.

But there's a paper which uses the word "worker" in its mast-head and, even pretends to be communist—though what it stands for is a very far cry from communism. We're referring to the Daily Worker.

It reported the Waller execution. True enough. But how! After two years during which it did mighty little in behalf of Waller, it waxes truly indignant against what it aptly calls "the disgraceful lynch execution of Odell Waller." But whence its real indignation? The execution "is a Blow to Negroes and War Unity" (headline) and further:

"All the politically unscrupulous elements—the unspeakable Trotskyists and their Norman Thomas bedfellows—will be seizing upon this stupid piece of Hitlerism to undermine the war effort, national unity and best interests of the Negro people themselves."

There it is—black on white. A Negro is lynched by "a piece of Hitlerism," and the Daily Worker levels its barbs against whom? The Virginia Hitlerites? The whole system of Southern boss justice? No; it attacks the "unspeakable Trotskyists and their Norman Thomas bedfellows"—WHO KEPT THE WALLER CASE ALIVE WHILE THE DAILY WORKER WAS SILENT, WHO COLLABORATED WITH THE WORKERS DEFENSE LEAGUE IN MAKING A PUBLIC ISSUE OF THE WALLER CASE!

This is the reaction of the Daily Worker to the Waller execution. An image of the reaction of the Daily Worker's colleague, Donald Henderson, who used his post in the UCAPAWA NOT to defend the Missouri sharecroppers—but to attack them! These people stand condemned out of their own mouths!

ECONOMICS:

Basis Now Laid for Militarized Economy

By Henry Judd

Last week in this column we described how Roosevelt is laying his plans for an American army of world conquest with an eventual enrollment of eight to ten million men. We described how a gradual adaptation to the "Prussian" school of militarization of the entire nation, by age and class groups, is occurring.

Side by side with this militarization, our entire economic and social structure begins to take on a more totalitarian air and appearance. Aware that the war can only be won by "guns—not butter," Roosevelt deliberately has taken the road of organizing the highly centralized, all-powerful state, whose leaders and administrators will have full command over every individual, every resource, every instrument of production.

PRODUCTION FOR WAR

The expanding needs of the military forces cause the diversion of American economic and capital energies into production for war purposes primarily. The Army demands more food, more tents and equipment, more steel and metal for its mechanized forces; the Navy demands more battle craft and supply ships, it takes over the peacetime Merchant Marine; the Air Force demands more training schools, more planes, more material for its newer experimental craft.

The results are, of course, apparent to all of us. They can be measured in terms of shortages of goods (silk, clothing, typewriters, kitchen utensils, etc.). The decline in consumer goods is the first and earliest stage of the militarization of American economy. The second stage—already begun—is the rationing of these same consumer goods. So far, this extends only to a few commodities like gas, rubber and typewriters. Sugar is the only food affected to date. But everyone understands that this is but the start—with at least fifteen other commodities to go on rations within the next few weeks, and undoubtedly dozens and dozens to follow within the year—as war conversion proceeds.

A familiar process, is it not? Familiar to the students of totalitarian war economies. Furthermore, it should not be assumed that the civilian populations will remain untouched by this great capitalist tendency toward regimentation and militarization.

To begin with, the proportion of American workers engaged in the DIRECT war producing industries (airplane factories, munition plants, steel mills, machine shops, tank assembly lines, etc.) has grown up, million by million. Next year, it is estimated, 23 to 25 million workers will be working in the war factories—the greatest concentration of its kind in the world! These workers are, in reality, just as much in the American Army as are the millions who now wear the uniforms of our country.

Says Paul V. McNutt, chairman of the War Manpower Commission, in the current issue of the American Magazine: "The only Americans who aren't earmarked for the fighting forces, shipyards, munitions factories or farms, are the very old, the very young and those who haven't any talent or energy that can be used." In other words, the military state will utilize everyone it can lay its hands on for the carrying out of its military and social objectives.

BINDING LABOR TO THE MACHINE

Having mobilized its industrial manpower, American capitalism will then dictate its role and destiny. Some part will go into the armed forces; another section will stick only to the task of producing for these armed forces. According to McNutt, deferment ratings on war workers and priority ratings on war industries for employment purposes have been worked out. The employment services of the various states (a federal institution which, like all other federal institutions is becoming more powerful and dominant in its authority) will determine the order of men to be drafted. Those exempt are the skilled workers (diplomats, first-class machinists, toolmakers, set-up men, etc.) who cannot be replaced. Those with less chance of exemption are the less skilled and experienced (carpenters, ship metal workers, lathe hands and second-class machinists). While those with little skill (assemblers and operators) will be taken first. But the bulk of American industrial power will find itself either in the fighting or productive branch of the war machine.

A hardening process will take place, side by side with the mobilization we have mentioned above. Here the role of the employment services will become more rigid and bureaucratic. Says McNutt: "The time may come when all employment in war industries will be supervised by the employment service and men will change jobs only when permitted." That is, American labor will become bound to the machine, the shop and the farm on which it toils.

The ultimate characteristics of the military, bureaucratic imperialist state should be plain to all. After all, the world is filled with innumerable examples. From the trends we have described in these two articles, they can be summarized as follows:

1) An enormous body of manpower under arms, comprising perhaps as much as 10 per cent of the population (13,000,000)—assuming the same percentage relation as in Germany.

2) A staggering fall in the amount of consumer goods, with a resulting decline in the traditional standard of living that America has known. The ultimate rationing of practically every basic and needed commodity.

3) The binding of American labor to the war factories, accompanied by an effort to strip the trade unions of virtually all independent and class functions they have heretofore exercised.

4) The imposition of a bureaucratic regime, emanating from the federal center at Washington, which will dictate by agency decree all matters affecting social and economic life (price control, quality and quantity of goods, ability to move and change living quarters, etc.).

The capitalist press constantly harps on the fact that the American people are not yet fully aware of the meaning of the war. By their complaint they do not mean what LABOR ACTION means, but there is some truth in the statement. The war and its continuation mean the hardening of central authority and the vast growth and expansion of all tendencies leading to a totalitarian regime.

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