

THIS MAY DAY, LAUNCH THE FIGHT— FOR A LABOR DECLARATION OF POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE!

Where do we stand this May Day?

The war is almost four years old, and the end is nowhere in sight. All that Hitler can promise his people is that he will hold out and continue the war indefinitely. Meanwhile, the dictatorship of terror is to continue, the devastation of Europe is to continue, the unspeakable enslavement of the peoples is to continue. All that the Allies can promise the people is that Hitler will be defeated in three more years, maybe in two, and then the war against Japan will be launched in earnest.

The real truth is hidden from the masses, who are groaning under the yoke of a war they did not want. Neither side in the war has a way out on the military field. Each hopes to go on and on until it has the last living soldier and a victory. Hitler cannot appeal to the people on the side of the Allies. The Allies cannot appeal to the people on the side of the Axis. On each side, the people rightly fear the victory of the other side. Hitler's victory only holds out the promise of an extension of his fascist slavery to the conquered peoples. The Allies' victory only holds out the promise of a new Versailles Treaty, and a worse one, for the conquered peoples.

What Are the War Aims?

The imperialists on both sides are not fighting to bring an end to war—they are fighting a war without an end.

Every thinking person knows what Hitler and the Axis are fighting for. They are fighting for a vastly expanded German Empire, for a vastly expanded Japanese Empire, for a vastly expanded Italian Empire. Every thinking person knows what a victory of Axis totalitarianism would mean, especially for the working people and the farmers and peasants of the conquered nations. Look at conquered Europe, look at conquered Asia and the islands of the Pacific! The peoples have been reduced to slavery and worse. No worker can call his soul his own. Forced labor is the rule. Starvation conditions are the payment for labor. Only the rulers have real rights; the masses have only the right to toil like galley slaves and in silence. Whole nations, whole peoples, are put to the sword, physically exterminated with an unmentionable cold-blooded savagery. Hitler's "New Order" is the Old Disorder, a hundred times intensified, a hundred times worse.

What are the Allies fighting for? No one had the right to have illusions about the Axis war aims from the very beginning. There were many illusions at the outset about Allied war aims. There is no longer any good reason for entertaining them now. We have lived, we have seen, we should understand.

As on the enemy side, the United Nations, or, rather, the big powers which dominate the alliance, are fighting a rival imperialism, a competitor in the business of ruling the world and garnering the fat profits and privileges that go with such rule. As for the "war for democracy," or "the war against fascism," there is not a trace of reality in it. They are mocking the people, that's all!

Do you think for a minute that the bloated pigs who will not

Now More Than Ever!



turn out a firecracker for the government until the government guarantees them their blood-profit, at so much and so much per cent, while working people fight and die on the battlefield—do you think for a minute that the big bankers and industrialists who monopolize war production and its direction care a fig about democracy, or are concerned with warring against fascism?

The workers hate fascism, because they know what it means to them; the workers are

ready to fight for democracy, as they understand it. They do not get "cost-plus" for their labor and their sacrifices. The capitalists are "cost-plus" patriots, nothing more. The war to them means profit and bigger and better profits now. The victory means to them new markets for the industries which their "genius" couldn't keep operating during the crisis. It means new fields of investment for the money which they kept accumulating in their banks. It means new millions of colo-

rial slaves to exploit, with pistol in the hands of the overseer. It means new foreign sources of raw materials to steal from the peoples to whom they belong.

'Freedom' in North Africa

What does the "war for democracy" look like in the first lands that the United Nations have taken from the Axis—North Africa? That is where imperialism is emphasizing the hypocrisy of its appeals to the American and British and Russian peoples, and of its promises of salvation to all the Axis-enslaved masses. Has democracy been established in North Africa by the victorious United Nations? No! Instead, they are supporting with their arms a gang made up of as reactionary a group of fascists, semi-fascists, anti-Semites and professional militarists as Europe has produced in a long time.

Who cares a penny for all the bureaucratic squabbles between Giraud and de Gaulle and Catroux and reactionaries of the same stripe. All they are fighting over is how to restore the power of French imperialism. Their fight has nothing whatsoever to do with democracy. One of the first rights of democracy is the right of self-determination of all peoples and nations. Unless a people can decide what it wants, without foreign coercion and dominion, it has anything in the world except democracy.

Why are not the native people of Morocco, of Tunisia, of Algeria, the people to whom these countries properly belong, allowed to rule themselves? That would be the first step in the direction of real democracy. Do they have to have foreign rulers over them—be they Nazis or Italian fascists or Giraud or Nogues or de Gaulle or Catroux? Are they not human beings like the rest of us? Aren't they capable of self-government and entitled to it? Hitler says that the Poles of Poland, the Czechs of Bohemia, the Frenchmen of France are not. He openly talks the classic language of the imperialist slave-monger. That is also how Mussolini talks, that is also how the Japanese ruling class talks. That is how all of them act. Where are the United Nations different in the tests that have been made of them—the test of England in India and Ireland, the test of the United States in North Africa and Puerto Rico, the test of Stalinist Russia in Finland, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia?

Burdens Unloaded on Labor

Where do we stand this May Day in the United States?

Every worker with an ounce of intelligence hates Hitlerism, not because it is "German," but because it is merely the German name for fascism, that is, the bloody, totalitarian dictatorship of big business. Every worker wants to see fascism crushed like the viper that it is, and crushed in every country, crushed no matter what disguise it assumes.

But fascism cannot be crushed by imitating it. How can German people, especially the German workers, who fear and hate the Nazis, who made them gagged slaves, be summoned to over-

(Continued on page 7)

Celebrate May Day by Getting Those Subs!

APRIL 11-17—SIXTH WEEK

Detroit	47
New York	19
Chicago	18
Buffalo	9
National Office	7
Philadelphia	3
Los Angeles	2
Cleveland	1
St. Louis and Missouri	1

WEEKLY TOTAL 107
GRAND TOTAL 416

FOR THE SECOND WEEK, OUR HUNDRED-SUBS-A-WEEK PACE HAS BEEN MAINTAINED! We've even pulled the throttle out a few more notches. This is an achievement to be proud of. Those supporters of LABOR ACTION whose tireless efforts have made it possible should understand that they have made and are making, in this way, the best possible contribution to the socialist and labor movement, and no one is forgetting it.

FROM NOW ON, TO DROP BELOW OUR HUNDRED-SUBS-A-WEEK QUOTA WILL BE GOING BACKWARD! THE SUB-GETTING MACHINERY MUST BE TIGHTENED UP, EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO GET NEW SUBS MUST BE EXPLORED, and each reader must plan a little campaign of his own, among friends and fellow workers, above and beyond his regular quota, if he has one. That's the way we'll get the extra margin that will make up for any minor breakdowns in the drive.

The final weeks of the drive are the most important. THERE MUST BE NO LET-UP! We are confident that none of our friends will want to sit back and coast, now that the goal is in sight.

Last week Detroit went over the top on its quota for the drive; Buffalo is well on the way. Subs are coming in from individual readers all over the country. But our Weekly Quota still depends too much on the EXTRA EFFORT of one or another city each week. Localities not heard from so far, or only barely heard from, must show themselves on the

scoreboard. Philadelphia should do MUCH better; New York and Cleveland should do better. Los Angeles slipped this week but promises to make up for it. Detroit made a big haul at an Anti-Jim Crow Demonstration; there's probably a similar opportunity in most cities almost every week, BUT YOU HAVE TO LOOK FOR IT—and you have to think up new ways to bring in the subs.

Our NEW SUBSCRIBERS can do their bit, and not only by sending in new subs themselves. We don't make any money (to put it mildly!) on the twenty-five-cent subs; we must depend on RENEWALS to actually supply the cash for the printer. SEND IN YOUR RENEWAL PROMPTLY; IF YOU LIKE THE PAPER, SEND IT IN NOW, A LITTLE AHEAD OF TIME—it will be a big help. Don't wait for a letter from us. And check up on renewals from the friends you got subs from.

This week we will pass the midway point in the Sub Drive. After a pretty weak beginning, we gained momentum, and now we can and will drive through to a smashing climax—a demonstration of how the social-

ist press meets the concerted attack of reactionaries and renegades.

MAY DAY, 1943, SEES LABOR ACTION AT THE HIGH POINT OF ITS CAREER—AND CLIMBING! ALL OUT FOR THE LAST HALF OF THE DRIVE!

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News and Views from the Labor Front

Local 9 Militants Stand Firm Against 10-Hour Day

SAN PEDRO—Corporation attempts to install ten-hour shifts at the Los Angeles Shipbuilding & Drydock yards were held in check by the vigorous action of Local 9 of the CIO Shipyard Workers Union, after the membership let it be known that it was flatly opposed to the two-shift plan.

While the union has agreed to permit men in the machine shop to work ten-hour shifts on repair work, it was done only after a written statement by the company that it was for a limited period only, and that such a temporary shift arrangement would not be used as a prece-

dent for other departments or on new construction.

The issue of the ten-hour day arose when a couple of days ago a considerable number of men in the machine shop were asked to work ten hours. As this made the swing shift start at 6:30 instead of 4:30, shop stewards of the departments immediately took it up at the shop stewards' meeting, where opposition to this opening wedge toward a ten-hour day was practically unanimous. Walter S. Pollard, administrator pro tem of the union, as reported before in LABOR ACTION, held a meeting in the ma-

chine shop and found that opposition to any form of the ten-hour day was overwhelming.

Thereupon Pollard wrote a letter to the corporation, stating that any such shift change was contrary to the union's contract with the corporation and demanding that the issue be negotiated.

Union's Proposals

As a basis for negotiation the union proposed that (1) the ten-hour shift should be in effect for only thirty days; (2) it apply to repair work only; and (3) not only should time and a half be paid, but shift premiums also. That is, all work after 4:30 p.m. for day shift workers was time and a half plus ten per cent, and all work after 12:30 a.m. on the swing shift carried the regular graveyard shift premium of 15 per cent. Pending these negotiations all men in the machine shop were instructed not to work more than their regular eight-hour shift.

Finding the union opposed to the ten-hour shift and unwilling to be short-changed out of premium pay by juggling the shifts around, the corporation decided to let it slide pending the June meeting of the National Shipyard Stabilization Board. A sub-committee of that board is "studying" the ten-hour day and the company wisely decided it would be better to deal with such a body rather than with their own workers directly through Local 9.

During the past week, however, they telephoned the union office and verbally agreed to the union's terms. Pollard was in Washington, so Ralph Winstead, his assistant, called a special meeting of the swing shift. The meeting was well attended, with the men intent on preserving the basic eight-hour shift. However, they agreed to the temporary concession for thirty days, providing it was restricted to the machine shop and on repair work only.

The meeting also insisted that this

acceptance be held in abeyance until the verbal agreement of the corporation was put in written form.

Militants Heartened

Militants in Local 9 are heartened by the vigorous action of the membership in opposing the attempt of the corporation to establish the principle of the ten-hour day. The importance of these negotiations is not only in the fact that the shift premium was saved, but in the decisive manner in which the rank and file let the corporation AND Pollard and the rest of the union officials know that they want three eight-hour shifts and not two ten-hour shifts.

They did this by their vote in the machine shop department meet-

ing and through the yard-wide stewards' meetings, where every mention of the ten-hour day was voted down. At the Monday meeting of shop stewards, just three days before the special swing shift meeting, the day shift stewards against the long shift.

Even though local autonomy has been lifted and Pollard installed as a virtual dictator over the affairs of the union, by this sort of action the membership can assert their strength and let their views be known. An alert membership that will turn out for meetings, plus a good functioning shop steward system can do a lot to overcome the handicap of not having democratic control over all affairs of the local.

Walkout Halts Carnegie Steel Work for Twenty-Four Hours

CHICAGO, April 12 — About 350 workers at the Carnegie-Illinois Steel works in Gary staged a twenty-four hour walkout over the weekend. All of the workers are members of the United Steel Workers Union, CIO. The walkout began in Shop 5 and spread to Shop 1.

The immediate cause of the men's action was the violation of the terms of the contract by Superintendent Coundiff. Coundiff posted a work schedule for the furnaces in Shop 5 late on Friday with an undermanned crew on the list. Three cindersnappers were not on the list.

When the men reported for work on Sunday and discovered that they were expected to work with a short-handed crew and make up the extra labor themselves, they objected. Coundiff had failed to notify the union's committee about this new set-up and about the transfer of the three cindersnappers. This was in violation of existing procedure, as provided by the contract. Failing to get satisfaction, the men could do nothing but walk out in self-defense.

Though this was the immediate cause of the walkout on Sunday and Monday, there has been what the union has called "an accumulation of grievances." The management has been giving the men a merry run-around since the no-strike agreement went into effect. The supervisors have become steadily more surly and rough in all their dealings. The union declared the walkout was "provoked by lack of management on the part of the supervisor." But is, is not only true of Coundiff but of all the petty bosses at the plant.

At four p.m. today the men voted to elect a grievance committee to handle the question of the cut work lists. In addition, the company agreed to discuss the piled-up grievances with the union. The men must be vigilant and keep track of these negotiations with the management. The walkout taught the management a lesson—they cannot trifle with the men too long. Such militancy can get results.

Walter S. Pollard Joins Chamber of Commerce; Pretends to Act for Local

Walter S. Pollard, national administrator of Local 9, IUSMWA. Last week became a director of the San Pedro Chamber of Commerce. At the same time it was announced that Local 9, the National Maritime Union, and the Fishermen's Union joined the Chamber.

Mr. Pollard, who seems bent on quickly becoming a solid and substantial citizen of San Pedro, though he is presumably his "temporarily" administrator of Local 9 during the period its autonomy is lifted, did not see fit to bring the matter of joining the Chamber of Commerce before the membership.

When the proposal to join the Chamber of Commerce came before the ILWU, the longshoremen voted it down. San Pedro longshoremen may not have more intimate knowledge of the Chambers of Commerce than Pollard, but certainly they have a better CLASS knowledge.

Every schoolboy who knows that commerce means business knows that any Chamber of Commerce represents BUSINESS—or, in clearer language, the bosses. Pollard should ask if the San Pedro Chamber of Commerce, of which he is now a director, is affiliated with the United States Chamber of Commerce. That body, Pollard should know, is the mouthpiece of the National Association of Manufacturers, the most rabidly reactionary anti-labor organization of employers in the United States.

It is at the instigation and with the support of the National Association of Manufacturers that the notorious congressmen, Cox, Smith et al., introduce their vicious labor-baiting bills.

Into such company Pollard is welcome to go if he wishes. But it is disgraceful that he should drag Local 9 with him and pose there as its representative.

Work Stoppage Hits Sun Shipbuilding Company

PHILADELPHIA — On Tuesday, April 6, 13,000 workers at the Sun Shipbuilding & Drydock Co. stopped work in protest against the repressive and dictatorial methods of the company. After years of vicious attacks on the workers, Pew, company president, proclaimed that he would no longer hear grievances of the progressive CIO members who hold a majority in the yard.

Another order was that he would prohibit freedom of speech of the workers on their dinner hour! His only explanation was that he was afraid that the Sun Ship Employees Association (his own company union) would sue him if he did otherwise! It should be noted that just

before these moves by Pew, the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, acting under pressure from Pew, reversed the decision of the NLRB and the WLB. The courts stated that they had come to the conclusion that the SSEA is not a company-dominated union, which proves in whose interest the courts act.

Pew, armed with this decision from the courts, launched an all-out attack on labor at the Sun Shipyard. On Friday, April 2, plant guards attempted to break up the usual lunch hour meetings. However, meetings continued in all four yards despite the warnings and threats. Friday evening, Lafferty, chief guard, delivered a message from Pew to the office of

Local 2, CIO. It stated that workers who spoke in the yard thereafter would be arrested, fired and thrown out of the yard!

The next day, at lunch hour, mass meetings were in session throughout all four yards. Workers defied Pew to arrest them. Not a guard showed his face. It would have been just too bad for anyone who tried to stop a worker from exercising his democratic right of free speech.

Then on Tuesday, at the North Yard plate shop, several CIO men were penalized and fired for no tangible reasons. Immediately a CIO committee of workers went into the foreman's office and demanded an interview with Pew.

He flatly refused. Then the workers realized that they had only one alternative—TO STOP WORK!

The plate shop stopped first and marched down to Pew's office, demanding justice for the men who were discriminated against. Workers from other departments, many of whom had been intimidated themselves, gladly joined the parade. After a large number of men had assembled before Pew's office, Pew THEN decided, or rather was forced to decide, to see a committee. Seeing that the workers had the guts to use their power, Pew yielded to some of their demands.

The second shift did not work all night, and the third shift stopped for about an hour.

The WLB then decided that CIO workers would be allowed to take up their own grievances with the company. However, the first shift, after a pep talk on patriotism, in which the Stalinists played a traitorous role, decided to go back to work.

The WLB, acting under pressure from Pew, reversed its decision again and ordered that grievance rights again be taken away, thus putting the workers in the same position as of Tuesday morning. The workers had been misled by the bureaucrats who told them to pull their punches. But, and this is the point to remember, the workers have learned in action how much power they have.

Negroes--the War--Jobs--and Democracy

The American Negro is being asked to participate in what he is told is a struggle for democracy and against fascism. American Negroes see this vast struggle going on. They read the papers. They see almost every nation under arms and sending its youth and old men to the front: the yellow people of the East, the brown people of India, the black colonials of Africa and the white races of Europe and America. They read about and see armed men marching. They hear the hum of the mines and factories. The farmers plant every square foot to produce more food. These are the arsenals of democracy the Negro is told; it is a war for democracy.

The Negro in the United States is examining this picture and evaluating the claims of those who pretend to give him advice on how he should act. He wants to know: do they speak the truth, can Negroes believe what they are being told? The Negro wants to find out what is happening, in practice, right here in the United States, and what is the hope for the future.

We agree that the Negro must do this because he is being asked, along with other races and people, to close ranks, lend a hand, co-operate. Everybody wants the Negro to answer the call for national unity. This is urged on the ground that the interests of all the people are the same. Everyone is faced with the same danger and the identical peril, rich and poor, white and black.

The Negro, along with others, is being called upon to sacrifice, not

only many of the material things to which people have become accustomed, but many of the so-called rights and privileges to which we have become accustomed. In the face of the demands being made on them, Negroes certainly have the right to inquire and investigate how they are faring.

Negroes are certainly willing to fight for democracy. They have proved in the past that they are willing to die for democracy. For 300 years Negroes have been fighting and dying for democracy right here in the United States! Therefore, the struggle for democracy is nothing new to Negroes. On the day that the first Negroes set foot on American soil in 1619, the struggle for democracy, liberty and freedom began. This struggle has continued without abatement through all the decades and centuries since.

That is really what all the slave rebellions were about. They were struggles for democracy. They were struggles against the concentration camps of that day. That's what Gabriel, Denmark Vesey, Nat Turner were doing when they organized the black slaves and led them forth to battle against their masters and oppressors. It was her love of democracy that induced that glorious old Negro woman, Harriet Tubman, to take her shotgun in hand, go into the South and lead Negro men and women to freedom. It was love of democracy that caused her to become a spy for the Union army, and be commissioned for some of the most dangerous missions.

It was democracy that Frederick Douglass was talking about in his great anti-slavery speeches. It was his fight for democracy that caused him to be hounded and hunted from place to place. It was in the name of democracy that the free Negro, Walker, thundered his courageous anti-slavery editorials in his paper. It was the struggle for democracy that led John Brown to a gallows at Harpers Ferry in 1859. It was democracy that Julia Ward Howe was calling for when she talked about the "terrible, swift sword," the "lightning of a hundred circling camps," and the place where "the grapes of wrath are stored."

Churchill talks about blood, sweat and tears. Negroes know something about this, too. There is nothing that Churchill can teach them here. Negroes have gone through centuries of blood, sweat and tears for democracy: for the right to live and work and play like other people. For the right to be free from insult, discrimination and Jim Crow.

But Negroes haven't reached the Promised Land yet. There is still segregation and Jim Crow everywhere. The federal government practices Jim Crow, and so does every governmental sub-division in the United States. Negroes are denied jobs in the war industries, and when they are hired, they are segregated and discriminated against. Negro boys go into the Army and are Jim Crowed and maltreated.

Public places all over the country continue their old practices of

insult and discrimination. Lynching and mob rule continue. They're doing business at the same old stand in the same old way.

All this goes on while the Negro is told that this is a war for democracy and freedom. Freedom for whom, and democracy for whom? Surely not for the Negro!

What did Mr. Churchill mean when he said that he did not take office to sit in at the death of the British Empire? What did Mr. Witherow mean when he said that we are not fighting this war to supply a quart of milk for every Hottentot?

Is Mr. Churchill fighting the war for the perpetuation of the British Empire? If so, what does this mean? It can only mean the perpetuation of the subjugation of the Indians, and the continuation of the slavery of millions of black Africans for the benefit of the British ruling class. What does Mr. Witherow want the Hottentots, or the American Negroes, to get out of this war? Only what they have been getting in the past!

Negroes have been fighting for democracy for 300 years here in the United States. Why shouldn't they continue? What reason is there that white people who believe in democracy should not aid in this struggle: the trade unions, for instance? If it is a war for democracy, then Negroes can really give of their vast experience and demonstrate how it should be done. We can try it out here in the United States; and, if successful here, we can take it to Poland, Czechoslovakia, Africa, Germany, Greece, Italy and all the is-

lands of the Pacific.

How can this be done? What will be the proof? We suggest the following:

1. Elimination of all Jim Crow, segregation and discrimination by federal, state and city governments. Negroes to hold any and all jobs where qualified. This would apply to the Cabinet and Supreme Court and any state or city post. No Jim Crow of any kind in the Army or Navy. This must mean: no separate Army or Navy units, ships or schools.
2. Elimination of all Jim Crow and discrimination in industry. Negroes to be hired and promoted just like all other workers.
3. No discrimination in federal, state or city housing projects.
4. No discrimination of any kind in public places.
5. These demands to become operative in the South, the same as in the North.

These are modest demands. They are all covered by the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

We don't see how any white man or Negro who believes in democracy can object to them. We fail to understand how any nation that claims to be fighting for democracy can withhold these rights and privileges from fifteen million of its citizens.—D. C.

"Letters of Release"

A New Runaway Slave Law

By E. LUND

A new man started working in our shop the other day. He was a toolmaker by trade. Age in the late fifties.

Yesterday afternoon the superintendent came out and spoke to him. The man looked worried. He put on his hat and coat. When asked, "What's up?" he replied: "My old boss is after me. He found out where I am working and notified the Manpower Commission office. They called here and now I have to go down to see them."

The next morning at 10:30 the man came in and with a crestfallen look began packing up his tools.

"It's no use. Got to go back to that sonova ----- boss of mine. He won't give me a letter of release. If it weren't for the war I would put a couple of his machines on the blink. Shove you right in jail if anything happens now. He will be watching me like a hawk. Might as well be working in Germany. What's this war about, anyway?"

The history books tell us of a great fight over a law we are reminded of when we see things like the above. It was a law called the "Runaway Slave Act." It was passed through Congress by the powerful slave-owners' bloc in the 1850's. The law gave a slave owner the right to ask the government to arrest and return a runaway slave, no matter where he went, even in "free" states. The courts upheld the law. Federal officials enforced it. Yes, the judges and politicians worked hand in glove with the slave owners in those days just as they do with the capitalists today. And most of the newspaper editors, then as now, added their blessing.

Is it far-fetched to compare "letters of release" with the Runaway Slave Law? Not if you are a worker in a shop where conditions are unbearable and they won't let you go. Have you ever been on a job where the foreman had it in for you and rode the life out of you? Have you ever been given monotonous work so it came out of your ears and you felt you couldn't stand the sight of it? Have you ever been stuck on a "graveyard shift" month after month with no hope of change? Have you ever worked the evening shift while your wife worked days? Have you ever worked for a company that was so cheap and chiseling and strict that you wanted to go elsewhere just so you could breathe freely again?

And then been told that they would not release you? Or, if by some means you got another job, they reached out and hauled you back to the old slavery?

Well, if you have lived through it, as hundreds of thousands of workers do, you will agree that Roosevelt's "Letters of Release" order is nothing but a NEW RUNAWAY SLAVE ACT.

But let the powers-that-be read their history books. The Runaway Slave Law hastened a bloody civil war in this country.

Do they believe free labor will stand for these new chains being forged in the name of a "war for democracy"? Do they believe our generation to be too servile and cringing to act as did the abolitionists of eighty years ago? Every recent strike, from the anthracite miners to the Boeing Aircraft workers, should teach them what they are in for.

Shachtman Opens Series Of 5 Lectures on the War

"Why the War Came," a remarkably profound summary of political developments since World War I, was the topic of a lecture by Max Shachtman last Friday evening at Labor Temple in New York. This was the first in a series of five talks to be given by Comrade Shachtman on questions relating to the present war. The dates of the other lectures in this series are announced elsewhere in this issue of LABOR ACTION.

A large crowd attended and participated in the discussion and question period which followed the main speech.

From Versailles to War

Comrade Shachtman started his summary by describing the Treaty of Versailles as a truce rather than a treaty—a truce which left the imperialist powers even more bitterly arrayed against one another than before the war.

France was left bankrupt and desperately attempted to suck some sustenance out of Germany. England and the United States, frightened by the Russian Revolution, were anxious to strengthen Germany to act as a bulwark against communism while at the same time they tried to prevent Germany from becoming strong enough to go any farther than its eastern borders. An "Independent" Poland and the Little Entente were created as part of the policy of encircling the USSR. England encouraged Japan in Manchuria and North China.

Disarmament conferences occupied the attention of European and American statesmen, liberal Prime Ministers were placed at the head of their governments, the League of Nations took front page prominence. The United States poured currency into Germany. However, beneath the diplomatic negotiations, the imperialist nations continued their eternal jockeying for position, playing off one country against another, still torn by the contradictions and animosities of which dying capitalism suffers.

When the United States had to withdraw its financial support from Germany, because of its own eco-

nomie depression, the internal crisis became even worse and fascism took over. Fascism, in Germany as elsewhere, is the shot in the arm that a dying capitalism injects into itself, drawing strength by depressing still lower the working classes.

Conflicting Ambitions

With England's tacit support, Germany reoccupied the Ruhr and re-armed itself. England was still hoping that Germany would crush itself against Russia, and thus dispose of two threats to British imperialism. However, Hitler refused to play England's game and widened his operations. Still England hesitated to go to war with Germany, fearing the revolutionary consequence of war and the inevitable downfall of her world position. The Hitler-Stalin pact forced England, though she was not at all prepared, to declare war against Germany.

Roosevelt understood sooner than the British that a war against Germany would be necessary. A victorious Germany would spell "finis" to the American dream of world domination. But Roosevelt had to batter down the opposition from the isolationists in the United States, who preferred to concentrate their war plans against Japan. The isolationist group saw the British as the main rival to the United States and they wanted to get Japan out of the way in order to leave the U.S. top man in the East.

England for her part also feared American ambitions in the East, and therefore allowed Japan to strengthen itself through the conquest of Manchuria and North China, even refusing to back up American protests against the war in China. England had other fears in the East as well; it feared a proletarian-peasant revolution in China which would sweep over India. The British hoped that the Japanese would act like gentlemen and not step into South China, where the British interests were. No more than the Nazis, the Japanese refused to be grateful to England. And so, event after event, the imperialisms of the world clashed in war.

LABOR ACTION

Announces a Series of Lectures on the War

By MAX SHACHTMAN

FRIDAYS AT 8:15 P.M.

April 30—Fascism and Democracy in the War.

May 14—United States in the War.

June 11—Russia in the War.

June 18—Socialism or the Third World War?

Place—Labor Temple, 14th St. and 2nd Ave., New York

Admission—25 cents per lecture.

May Day Is a World-Wide Tradition of Labor!

A Day of International Struggle

It Started in the United States

It has been said by enemies of labor and reactionaries of all kinds that May Day is a "foreign holiday," an "alien celebration," an "international idea." Even if this were true, it would not necessarily mean that it is a bad thing. But it is only partly true. The fact is that May Day, labor's holiday, originated in the United States! Americans gave the European workers the idea of celebrating labor's struggles on May 1. It merely proved that the problems and interests of the workers of all lands are essentially the same.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century the American workers were involved in a bitter struggle against a twelve-hour and longer working day under the most miserable working conditions. In their fight for a shorter working day—the eight-hour day—labor in this country faced the organized opposition of the boss class, which was aided by the government and the bosses' press. It was a bitter war they waged against the American workers, employing troops, municipal and company police and armed thugs. And it lasted for many years!

During the year 1877 a general strike of labor took place. It was especially bitter in Pittsburgh, Baltimore, Chicago and St. Louis, where all the forces named above united to wipe out, in blood, the union movement. Labor was still weak and the bosses partly succeeded. But labor had learned its lesson: the need for militant trade unionism to defend its rights and interests!

In 1883, at the convention of the Federa-

tion of Organized Trades and Labor Unions, the struggle for the eight-hour day began officially. At the convention of the following year, 1884, on a motion of Delegate Gabriel Edmonston, representing the Carpenters Union, "eight hours was constituted a legal day's work from and after May 1, 1886."

The fight for the shorter work day, however, was not only an American affair. The workers of Europe were engaged in the same struggle at the same time. At the first congress of the Socialist International, held in Paris in 1889, the problem of labor and the workday was one of the most important questions discussed by the worker delegates. The American labor organizations were invited to attend but were unable to do so. Instead they sent a message to this congress advising it of their struggle for life and asking the European labor movement to support them.

This Congress adopted a resolution calling for support to the American Federation of Labor (the newly organized American union movement) in its drive for the eight-hour day, which was to begin on May 1, 1890. A French trade unionist by the name of Lavigne made a motion to accept the American proposal and it was decided to make May 1, 1890, "an international manifestation in favor of the eight-hour day." From that time on, labor the world over has celebrated May 1 as the workers holiday, a day of rededication to labor's struggle.

Because May 1 was born out of labor's militant struggles, the boss class, the government and the "labor scabers" have fought against its celebration. Together with the new deceased Samuel Gompers, the "class collaborationist" former president of the AFL, the government decided to make the first Monday in September Labor Day. The purpose of this is obvious. Since the first Monday in September has absolutely no significance, it would direct the attention of the workers away from the bloody past and to overlook its need to struggle for its most elementary rights now and in the future, until it is finally emancipated from exploitation at the hands of a parasitic boss class. It was done, too, to draw away the attention of the American workers from their fellow workers in other countries, to prevent the international solidarity of labor.

But you can see from the history of labor's struggle for the eight-hour day that it was a world struggle of labor; that its problems, and that its enemy is the same. Thus, May Day originated in the militant struggles of American labor. It became an international working man's holiday at the instigation of American labor.

Let the working men of this country remember this well on May 1, 1943, 60 years after the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions began the struggle which has helped the present generation of American workers enjoy the shorter working day! Their struggle was ours; ours is the struggle of the workers of the entire world.



May Day Belongs to All Labor, and Is Dedicated to Its Power

By M. WILSON

For over half a century May Day has been a day of celebration for the workers of the world. Lay Down Tools!...To the Streets! These have been the slogans of international solidarity and international strength on this workers' holiday.

Founded in the struggle of the American labor movement for an eight-hour day, these slogans found meaning and support throughout the world.

Strike for Eight-Hour Day

In 1886 the Knights of Labor and the newly-formed American Federation of Labor organized a general strike of all organized workers in the struggle for the eight-hour day. During this period, industry was operating anywhere from twelve to twenty hours a day. Incredible as it may appear, a twelve-hour day was close to being standard, and a working day much longer than that was not uncommon. Out of this exploitation grew the strike movement which swept the country in 1885.

During the rapid industrial development of America, the coun-

try went through periods of prosperity followed by the severest depressions. The workers flocked to the organizations which were in existence. Strikes occurred frequently. Most of these ended in defeat, but they taught American labor the necessity of organization.

When the demand for the eight-hour day was first raised, it was branded as ridiculous. However, even before the Civil War, Eight-Hour Leagues had sprung into existence, and spread over the country. Finally, in 1884, a group of trade unions, later to become the AFL, meeting in Baltimore, went on record with the declaration that after May 1, 1886, "... eight hours shall constitute a legal day's labor."

May 1, 1886, witnessed a general strike in many of the industrial cities of the United States. Three hundred and fifty thousand workers struck, and 150,000 almost immediately won their objective: an eight-hour day. The strikes continued until many more workers had gained their demand or, at least some concessions toward the fulfillment of the demand. In Chi-

cago alone, 45,000 won their demand; 40,000 others followed their example and went out on strike. Several days later 80,000 workers in the city of Chicago were out on strike. Labor had learned that by concerted, militant action it could improve its condition.

Haymarket Square Massacre

At the same time a strike had been going on in the Chicago plant of the McCormick Reaper Works. On May 3, the strikers gathered at Haymarket Square. Expecting trouble, the Mayor of Chicago attended the demonstration. Shortly before the conclusion, Mayor Harrison left the meeting and reported to the police precinct that no violence should be expected.

The speeches he had heard did not incite to violence but merely pointed out the brutality of the police and described the action which the workers would have to take in order to insure for themselves a decent living condition.

Suddenly, without warning, 180 policemen surrounded the crowd. The speaker pleaded with the po-

lice that he be allowed to conclude his address and pointed out that the meeting was proceeding peacefully. But the police had been commanded to attack the meeting. At the same time a bomb was thrown into the police lines. A police sergeant was killed and a riot ensued. An armed police force had attacked an unarmed workers' meeting.

The active leaders of the Chicago labor movement were brought to trial. No one charged them with responsibility for throwing the bomb. This provocation was clearly the work of the police force under the order of the Chicago bosses. The only charge against the labor leaders was that their previous writings were responsible for the bombing and the riot which followed. No one even dared to claim that the speeches of the day were responsible. The bosses and their police force were clearly the ones who had taken the lives of four workers through their unprovoked attack upon a peaceful meeting of workers in a public square. Their reason: to behead the militant union movement of Chicago of its leadership.

And with the comedy of a "trial," where no serious charge was introduced, they succeeded in sentencing seven of these men to be hanged and sentenced the eighth to fifteen years in prison. Spies, Parsons, Engel and Fischer, four of those who were condemned to be hanged, refused to beg for mercy. Of those who did, their sentences were commuted to life imprisonment. As Spies mounted the scaffold, he said: "The time will come when our silence in the grave will be more eloquent than our speeches." Workers throughout the country expressed their sympathy with these martyrs who carried on their fight against the capitalists to their death.

It was some time before the labor movement recovered from this attack. The Knights of Labor, which had been a powerful force in the labor movement, with a membership of 700,000 in 1886, rapidly began losing members. Their leadership had turned sour. The ranks were prevented from taking any action against their oppressor.

At a convention of the AFL in St. Louis in 1888, the demand for the eight-hour day was reconstituted. One year later, in July, 1889, representatives of the labor movements in all countries, meeting in Paris to lay the foundation of what was to become the Second International, declared that May 1, 1890, was to be an international holiday of the workers, with strikes in all countries organized around the demand for the eight-hour day.

May Day Lives On

May Day has lived in the minds and hearts of the working class. During the First World War, in Germany in 1916, Karl Liebknecht, revolutionary socialist leader, organized a huge demonstration in Berlin in defense of workers' rights and against the war from which they had nothing to gain. Demonstrations were held elsewhere in Europe.

In the United States, in the emergency conference of the Socialist Party which was convened in order to state its opposition to imperialist war, it was voted that demonstrations be organized on May Day, 1917. (Apart from that, the Socialist Party as a party never did get around to taking its resolution off paper.) On May 1, 1919, Cleveland witnessed one of the largest demonstrations of workers in the city's history. Over 20,000 strong, they marched into Public Square, where their ranks were swelled by many thousands more. A mass demonstration of the strength of the working class, which threatened the few who control the lives of these workers by their ownership of the means of production.

It is always in the interest of capitalists to divide the working class, foreign workers against native born workers, white against Negro, women against men, etc. It is this division of the strength of the majority of the people, the workers (those in society who produce the wealth but who do not enjoy its fruits), that makes it easier for the bosses to continue their exploitation. In Cleveland, a new group was called upon to divide the working class. The returning soldiers were organized in the reactionary American Legion to attack the workers. Again the bosses succeeded in creating a false division in the working class: the worker in uniform was pitted against the worker in overalls.

May Day Is Ours

May Day has been the international holiday of working people of the world: those people who are united in one interest... a roof over their heads, enough to eat and a little of the wherewithal to enjoy life. Today, when the trade union leaders have again chained labor to an "equality of sacrifice" in which the workers do the sacrificing and the bosses do the profiting, there is no

organized May Day celebration. But May Day will remain alive in the consciousness of the American worker as it has in the consciousness of the workers around the world. In occupied Poland in 1942, the underground movement distributed leaflets, calling for "Freedom, Independence, Socialism!" "Long live the brotherhood of all peoples of the world" was written on billboards all over this country suffering under the rule of Hitler tyranny. The workers of the world remember well this day on which they mass their strength and proclaim their solidarity.

May Day belongs to the workers and is dedicated to their power!

Chi. Labor Unions Fight Formation Of State Militia

CHICAGO — AFL and CIO labor are united in combating the bill for reserve state militia. The bill is now before the House Committee on Military Affairs of the State of Illinois for hearing. Officials of both bodies of the labor movement testified at Springfield, the state capital, against passage of the bill.

The labor unions correctly fear, out of experience with similar militias in other states, that their democratic and civil rights—e.g. the right of free assembly—would be suppressed if the state militia comes into existence.

All too often, violence has been exercised by the militia against strikers with the object of smashing the strike. At the same time, the militia authorities have felt free to attack the workers, knowing full well that their actions had the full support of the bosses, and they had no fear of any consequences to themselves.

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. \$1.00-an-hour minimum pay! Time and a half for overtime; double time for Sunday and holiday work.
3. Wage increases to meet rising costs. No wage or job freezing! Equal pay for equal work!
4. For a greater share of the increasing national income. For a higher standard of living!
5. No sales tax on consumer goods! No tax on wages! Against forced savings!
6. For control of price fixing and rationing by committees of working class organizations. Freeze rents and consumer goods prices at the 1940 level to stop the rise in the cost of living.
7. No government contract without a union contract. The closed shop in all war industries!
8. Maintain and increase all government social services!

SOAK THE RICH—LET THEM PAY FOR THEIR WAR!

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

DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS TO THE DRAFTEES!

12. The right of free speech, free press and free assembly for the men in the armed forces.
13. The right of soldiers to vote in all elections.
14. The right of all youth, male or female, to vote at the age of eighteen. Old enough to fight; old enough to work; old enough to vote!
15. For adequate dependency allowances paid by the government with NO deductions from the soldier's pay.

SMASH JIM CROW!

16. 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!
17. For full political, social and economic equality for Negroes!

BE PREPARED!

18. For Workers' Defense Guards, trained and controlled by the unions against vigilante and fascist attacks!
19. For an Independent Labor Party and a Workers' Government! No political support to the Roosevelt government!
20. For Peace Through Socialism! For the independence of all colonies!
21. For a World Socialist Federation! Only a socialist world will destroy capitalist imperialism and fascist barbarism!

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MAY DAY AND THIRD ANNIVERSARY DINNER

Labor Action - - Workers Party

Date: SUNDAY, MAY 2, 1943 at 5 P.M. Place: MARINI'S, 9 East 22nd St.

Speakers • Italian Cuisine • After Dinner Dancing

\$1.25 Per Plate

Joint Auspices: LABOR ACTION - - WORKERS PARTY

Reservations must be made in advance - - Send your order to Labor Action, 114 West 14th St.

Three Years of the Workers Party and "Labor Action"

Join With Us in the Fight for Socialism!

The Workers Party is three years old this month. But in its origin it is much older.

The militants who founded the Workers Party in April, 1940, shortly after the outbreak of the war, were among the founders of the Trotskyist movement in this country, as far back as October, 1928. Even further back, for they included founders and pioneer builders of the Communist Party in this country, as well as left wingers who had carried the brunt of the fight for revolutionary principles in the Socialist Party.

The causes for the founding of a new party are connected with the outbreak of the Second Imperialist World War in 1939 and with the history of the Trotskyist movement in the United States.

TRUE TO OUR CONVICTIONS

The Trotskyist movement in this country, as in every other, was born in a struggle against the poison of bureaucratism and nationalistic degeneration in the Communist Party and the Soviet Union. In one country after another, once the full truth about the fight in Russia became known, the best communist elements rallied under the banner raised by Trotsky and his comrades against the virus of Stalinism. At bottom, their fight was and remains a fight to reconstitute the revolutionary socialist movement on a world scale.

It has not been an easy fight, and it is still far from triumphant. A steady stream of blows has rained down upon the head of the international working class; and Leon Trotsky was right in speaking of the period from 1923 onward as a period of reaction and defeat for labor and socialism. In this period, not everyone who began the struggle for revolutionary internationalism proved capable of continuing it to the end. Many lost heart. Deceived by what seemed to be the durable strength of world capitalism, they dropped away from the revolutionary movement entirely. Others returned to the ranks of Stalinism, which consolidated itself—also temporarily—and even became respectable. A few found pitiful refuge from the class struggle in the ranks of one or another branch of the bankrupt social democracy. But enough militants remained true to their flag and their convictions, in every country, to keep alive the firm core of the world movement, that is, the only hope of a free, socialist future—the Fourth International. It is of such militants that the Workers Party is composed today.

SPLIT WITH CANNONITES

Our party is the direct product of the split that took place in the Socialist Workers Party in 1940. Almost from the day of its birth, the Trotskyist movement in this country experienced recurring internal discussions and struggles not only over political and theoretical questions, but also over the question of bureaucratism. Underlying and clarifying these struggles was, at almost all times, a healthy reaction against the tendencies toward bureaucratism displayed with increasing obviousness by a section of the American Trotskyist leadership represented by Cannon and a little clique of permanent supporters and apologists.

It is not surprising that militants, young and old, who were attracted to the Trotskyist movement by its unrelenting struggle against Stalinist bureaucratism, or the old-style bureaucratism of the American trade union hierarchy, reacted vigorously against a diluted, or dressed-up, variety of bureaucratism in their own party. This reaction only gained in vigor, and in determination to fight, as it became clear that the clique in the leadership did not have sufficiently imposing political virtues to compensate for its bureaucratic rule. On the contrary, it was characterized—this is more so the case now—by its conservatism, political timidity or opportunism, adoration of internal maneuvers (both in the party and in the trade union movement), backwardness and in some cases outright indifference to Marxian theory, especially so far as its leader was concerned.

The outbreak of the Second World War took this leadership completely off guard and revealed its inability to deal with big and new events. It was at this point that its bureaucratic tendency showed positively disastrous results. The only party in the country committed to a program of consistent struggle against imperialist war found itself tongue-tied, because when the war finally broke out it did not take precisely the form that had been envisaged. The imperialist world did not launch an attack on Russia; Russia and Germany joined, instead, in an imperialist assault for the division of booty named Poland, and later on, of other countries of Eastern Europe.

In this situation, all the official leadership of the party could say, when it finally summoned up the ability to speak at all, was to repeat what was at best an utterly meaningless formula: "We

Three years ago, on May Day, the first issue of LABOR ACTION appeared. It was a special two-page and two-color edition. Several weeks later LABOR ACTION began regular appearance. Readers of our paper are acquainted with the completely phenomenal growth of LABOR ACTION—unequaled by any labor periodical at any time. Beginning with an initial circulation of some 3,000 copies each week, LABOR ACTION's circulation has risen steadily as new THOUSANDS of workers have joined its reading ranks, to the point where today its regular weekly circulation lies between 32,000 and 35,000. On special occasions we have gone as high as 50,000; on this issue, for example, 46,000 copies are being published. And, along with the general increase in circulation, our subscription lists have gone up so that now over 2,000 workers subscribe to LABOR ACTION, and many more hundreds will subscribe before our current subscription campaign is over.

Throughout, LABOR ACTION has been closely associated with the Workers Party. Beginning as the official organ of the Workers Party, LABOR ACTION a year and a half ago severed its formal relations with the Workers Party. However, the closest link continues between the two. The members and friends of the Workers Party are the most consistent champions of LABOR ACTION, and we of LABOR ACTION are champions of the Workers Party, and its socialist clarity of program. Below, for those of our readers who are not acquainted with the history of the Workers Party, we present a survey of its origins and development, written by Max Shachtman, national secretary of the Workers Party.—Editor.

By Max Shachtman

are for the unconditional defense of the Soviet Union," and what was at worst a position of objective support to one of the two imperialist camps in the war.

Taken together, a majority of the membership of the party and the youth organization attached to it rebelled against this position, demanding first of all a broad, well organized and thoroughgoing discussion. To extract permission for such a discussion from the leadership was no small task in itself. Cannon even wrote that a discussion of the burning questions connected with the war was a "luxury." The leadership pretended to act as if it directed a mass party of hundreds of thousands of members up to its hips in the trenches of a civil war, with little or no time for a democratic discussion—this in 1939, in the United States! In fact, the only three branches of the party which, to the very end, remained unambiguously in favor of the official position (they were the only three that were unanimous, on either side of the dispute), never did have a debate on the contested questions throughout the internal fight.

Our group, then called the Minority, rejected the slogan of "unconditional defense" of Stalinist Russia in this war and raised instead the slogan of the victory of the Third Camp—not the camp of the imperialist Axis or the camp of the imperialist democracies (plus their more than one totalitarian ally), but the independent camp of the working class of the world and the oppressed colonial peoples. We pointed out, and it has yet to be refuted, that it was impossible to do anything in the "defense of the Soviet Union" that did not mean aid and support of the imperialist camp of which it was an integral and subordinate part. It is not surprising that to this day, be it during the period of Stalin's alliance with German imperialism or of the alliance with Anglo-American imperialism, the Cannonites have found it impossible to advocate DOING anything—anything!—for the "defense of the Soviet Union."

In one sense, the struggle in the party, insofar as it was a political and theoretical dispute, took place between us and Comrade Trotsky. Trotsky, as is known, was no small opponent, and he never shrank from a discussion. He did not refrain from this one! Virtually every single document that appeared in behalf of the leadership on the Russian question, on the organizational question, and a number of other questions that were raised, rightly or wrongly, by both sides, was written by Trotsky. The majority leaders confined themselves to underlining their own sterility by trying to repeat Trotsky's arguments; but the imitation was not one-tenth as good as the original, which was not very adequate to begin with. Left to themselves, without Trotsky's counsel (regardless of whether or not it was good), the majority leaders proved to be a pretty helpless lot. The party membership could not help observing this fact.

The official leadership won a majority of the delegates to the special convention of the party early in 1940. That is not surprising. What is surprising is that its majority was so slim—a bare 55 per cent—in view of the tremendous, irrefragable aid given it by Trotsky's long and well-earned prestige and authority in our movement. What their convention delegation would have amounted to without that aid is not even worth talking about. As it is, if the support we had in the party is joined with our support in the youth (which was overwhelmingly on our side), we had a clear majority of the united Fourth Internationalist movement in this country.

NEW TWIST FOR BUREAUCRATISM

Recognizing, however, that we were formally in the minority in the party, we demanded, in view of the enormous importance of the differences, that we be permitted to publish a special period-

ical of our own, free from the control of the majority, in whom we had no confidence and could not have any. In this periodical, we would of course support the fundamental principles we held in common, the general party program, but present our own standpoint on Russia in a responsible manner.

There was nothing new or outrageous in such a proposal; on the contrary, it was the best method, under the circumstances, of preserving the unity of a party whose leadership had shifted away from a revolutionary internationalist position. It was a right we had all fought for when we were the Left Wing of the Socialist Party, and what we said about the Thomas bureaucratism when it denied us this right was a little too vigorous for public prints. It was a right long enjoyed by groups in the Russian Social-Democratic and Bolshevik movements before the war, under Lenin's leadership; and even during the most critical period of the revolution itself, the exercise of this right was not a basis for expulsion or other organizational sanctions. It was Stalin who abolished it, as early as 1925, when he hammered the Leningrad Opposition for attempting to exercise this right. The Cannonites, again acting as if they were right in the midst of a civil war, would not hear of it. Trotsky, unfortunately, with a complete misunderstanding of the situation in the party, and above all a misunderstanding of the character and composition of our group, supported the Cannonites in this matter.

For the bureaucratic clique in control of the party, our demand was of course only a pretext for action to get rid of a group of militants whose criticism they could not endure. They did not act as men confident of their position, and of the early verification that events would bring; and they did not act in panic. Quite coolly and deliberately, they split the Fourth International in half and thus relieved themselves of our embarrassing presence—to them, the one was worth the other.

SOMETHING NEW IN EXPULSIONS

Characteristically enough, we were not expelled for any violation of discipline! We were not expelled for publishing LABOR ACTION, for example. Our expulsion occurred before LABOR ACTION saw the light of day, before we were even accused of having violated party discipline. Immediately after the convention, our representatives in the Political Committee were confronted at a meeting with a prepared motion. It was in two parts. We have often challenged the Cannonites to make public this infamous improvement on Stalinist procedure. They have not accepted.

Recently, they published, in an introduction to a collection of Trotsky's articles against us, the FIRST PART of the motion; they are obviously sufficiently shamed to keep the second part secret. The first part pledged all members to abide by the convention decisions. The second part—observe this innovation in the revolutionary movement!—declared that anyone who does not vote in favor of the motion is...kicked out! A magnificent formula for getting unanimity in the leadership. Not even Stalin ever equalled this brilliant product of Cannon's brain. No wonder he permits his magazine to write of him repeatedly in this wise: "Marx, Lenin, Trotsky and Cannon"—an invincible combination if there ever was one.

We are not unaccustomed to bureaucratic measures, expulsions included. Bureaucrats live most uncomfortably in the presence of revolutionary ideas and of people capable of holding them and expounding them, and not being frightened out of them when small-time officials scowl and threaten. But we must say that when we were expelled, along with Cannon, from the Stalinist leader-

ship and party, our "trial" lasted almost a week. When Cannon had us "finished off," he turned from his watch to his colleagues with the triumphant remark, "Only four and one-half minutes!"

OUR PARTY HAS GROWN IN STRENGTH

Many wishfully gloomy predictions were made about our imminent doom when we founded the Workers Party and launched LABOR ACTION and The New Internationalist under our auspices. You'll last six months, we were told by the most pessimistic of our expellers. Without regrets, we have refused to comply with their hopes. We draw profitable consolation from the fate of others who so prematurely predicted our doom: the leaders of the CP who expelled us and degenerated completely into reactionary, totalitarian bureaucrats; the Lovestonites, who directed our expulsion from the CP and ended at the boot tips of the imperialist war machine; the Socialist Party leaders who expelled their Left Wing and then completed the ruin of a once so promising party; and even the SWP leaders who have to explain constantly to their members that they are not really opportunists on the war question, on the question of their now-buried "military policy," on the trade union question.

In launching the new party, we merely continued the struggle for the proletarian revolution and socialism to which we have always been devoted and which is the only progressive cause in the world today. We have gained some modest but gratifying successes; under the pressure of the war situation we have suffered our share of setbacks and losses.

Immediately after the founding of the party, one of its most promising leaders, Burnham, quit its ranks, deserting the struggle for socialism. He proved incapable of measuring up to the task, and revealed that lack of character and stamina which is, alas, not uncommon in our time. The working class movement has a history studded with examples of desertion even of some of its most prominent spokesmen, and the Fourth International has not been and could not be immune from this malady in its ranks.

It is here, by the way, that was shown how sadly Trotsky misjudged our group, which he thought was led by Burnham, and was imbued with "Burnhamism." Nothing of the sort, of course. Burnham's desertion, as is always so in such cases, was a blow, but not a particularly serious one. The loss was his, not ours. Important was the fact that no one among us, not a soul, followed him into the void. There have been other losses, as we originally counted there would be, and there will undoubtedly be still others before we reach our goal. But all of them together have not been very important, and we have made up for them ten times over in different ways. Every one of us knows this, knows that our Workers Party today is by far and away more solid and more effective than it has ever been.

FIGHTERS FOR A SOCIALIST WORLD!

Our confidence in the party is strengthened by the fact that it has remained true to the banner of revolutionary internationalism and to the interests of the working man and working woman at a time when it counts—during the war. We have not retreated from our principles, we have not vacillated, we have not given up an inch of them or sought to gloss them over in the hope of gaining a deceptive and momentary popularity, or of winning "mercy" from our enemy. And that is how we shall continue to be.

Our LABOR ACTION—and we call it ours because we are in the forefront of those who have made its existence and growth possible—has reached a point in popularity and distribution unknown to the radical labor press in our generation. Exact figures would show that more workers read LABOR ACTION than read the Socialist Call, the New Leader, the Militant, the Weekly People and the Industrial Worker combined. And of the tens of thousands who read it, those who feel themselves in solidarity with the program it fights for, surely number in the thousands, at the very least.

Our membership is firmly established among the rest of their class—in the factories and mills and on the ships, for we record proudly that our party is made up of at least ninety per cent of proletarian men and women, who stand out from the rest of the working class only in their socialist convictions and in the degree of their determination to fight for working class interests night and day, without exception, on all occasions and in all places. Their activity is the kind that assures the future of a party that rightly calls itself the Workers Party.

Join with them! Unite with us all, you militants, you workers who are ready for a brighter day, for a new age, for a society free of war and oppression, of exploitation and inequality, for world socialism!

Trotskyist Victims of Stalinist and Fascist Reaction

We Pay Tribute to Our Many Martyrs in the Cause of Liberty

By R. CRAINE

More than two and a half years after the murder of Leon Trotsky, Stalin's henchman and confessed assassin, Jacques Mornard, alias Frank Jacobson, was sentenced last week to serve twenty years in a Mexican prison. He was convicted for premeditated murder. Although the court which passed sentence did not directly link Jacobson to Stalin's GPU, there can be no question in anyone's mind that Jacobson's act was carried through at the behest of the destroyer of the Russian Revolution, Joseph Stalin, and that Jacobson himself was for a long period an agent of the notorious GPU. During his thirty-two-month imprisonment Jacobson had plenty of money, and it most likely came from the Stalinist machine.

On August 20, 1940, when Jacobson struck an alpenstock into the brain of Leon Trotsky, Stalin succeeded in crowning his long, bloody record of murder and assassination of the men and women who had devoted their lives to creating the first workers' republic. For over fifteen years now, Stalin has been systematically wiping out not only the Old Bolsheviks, not only the Trotskyists, but all who oppose his counter-revolutionary regime. This terror has not been confined to the borders of Russia, nor has it ceased to this day. The GPU has spread its tentacles throughout the world.

Ever since his expulsion from the Russian Communist Party in 1927 and his deportation from Russia in 1929, Leon Trotsky had been hunted by Stalin's agents. After a few years in Turkey, Trotsky took up residence in France. That was during the days of the long-since forgotten Franco-Soviet pact. Stalin saw to it that Trotsky was expelled from France. Norway, his next place of asylum, was pressured by Russia into expelling the world's outstanding revolutionist. He was virtually a prisoner in Norway until Mexico agreed to offer Trotsky refuge. The Mexican Stalinists conducted an endless campaign to have Trotsky deported from Mexico. The GPU made several attempts on his life in Mexico. In August, 1940, Stalin had his way.

From 1927 up to the time of his death Trotsky remained the indefatigable revolutionist he had been ever since he first en-

BELGIUM: Leon Lesoil — executed by the Nazis, 1942.

BRAZIL: Hilcar Leite, Honorio de Freitas Guimaraes, Carlos Prestes.

CUBA: Gaston Medina — died of tuberculosis contracted in Cuban jail, 1938.

FRANCE: Jean Meichler — executed by the Nazis, 1942.

GERMANY: Rudolph Forka — died in Nazi concentration camp, 1937. Rudolph Klement — kidnapped and killed by the GPU in Paris, 1938.

GREECE: Scalaios — died in a

concentration camp.

INDO-CHINA: Ta-Tu-Thau.

RUSSIA: Add to the thousands of proletarian fighters in the Siberian concentration camps; to the thousands murdered in the Stalinist purges: Glasman — suicide, 1924. A. A. Joffe — suicide, 1927. Heinrichsen, Butov, Sulov, Rabinovitch, Rosanoff, Zinzadze — died in Stalinist concentration camps. Blumkin — shot by GPU, 1929. Nina Trotsky — died in Russian hospital because of lack of medical care. Zinzadze Trotsky — driven to suicide by Stalinist per-

secution, 1933. Sergei Sedoff — missing in Russian exile. Leon Sedoff — died in hospital in France, undoubtedly at hands of GPU. Christian Rakovsky — reported dead in Russia exile. Ignace Reiss — murdered by GPU, 1937.

SPAIN: David Rabull — executed by Franco, 1939. Andres Nin, Moulin, Edwin Wolf — killed by GPU in Spain. Hans Freund — killed by fascists in Spain.

UNITED STATES: Sheldon Harte — kidnapped and killed by GPU in Mexico, 1940.

tered the workers' movement in the small Russian town of Nikolayev in 1896. His years of exile were spent in the most creative work. The large collection of books and articles written in those thirteen years is testimony of the fact that Trotsky never for one moment faltered in his devotion and faith in the idea of socialist emancipation, and that he worked with every resource at his command to hasten the day of working class victory.

Stalin thought he could destroy Trotsky by exiling him from Russia. He thought he could end Trotsky's influence by slander. The Moscow Trials, the most infamous of all frame-ups, were used

to smear Trotsky's name, to tie him to the Gestapo, but the prosecutors only succeeded in revealing the depraved depths to which they had sunk. Trotsky's record was vindicated by the Dewey Commission hearings held in Mexico City, and the Moscow Trials were exposed for what they were—a sham to cover the physical annihilation of the few remaining Old Bolsheviks, comrades of Lenin, who might serve as a reminder of the once-glorious Russian Revolution.

The outbreak of the Second World War, which found Stalin in a shameful partnership with Hitler, stripped the Russian bureaucracy of its last disguises. It stood revealed for all to

see—a class which lives off the toil and sweat of the Russian workers, which conquers and plunders foreign territories for its own profits, and engages in imperialist war. Only the voice of the Fourth International rang out clearly against the war. It alone pointed to socialism as the way out of the capitalist morass.

In his craven stupidity, Stalin sought to wipe out the Fourth International, the program and idea of proletarian solidarity and socialism, by killing its leader, Leon Trotsky. Like all despots before him, like all contemporary tyrants and oppressors, he seeks to still the inevitable revolt of the millions and hundreds of millions by jailings and bullets.

How wrong, how very wrong, Stalin is! His victory is but a fleeting one, for to destroy the idea of socialism, he would have to destroy the working class itself. A thousand and one times "Trotskyism" has been declared "liquidated," finished, dead—and yet it lives on. It lives in the prisons of Stalin, in the concentration camps of Hitler, in the underground movements of Europe; it lives in the Indian and Ceylonese jails, in the far-away reaches of China and Indo-China; it lives and grows in every country where there is oppression and where men fight back. For Trotskyism is the hope and dream of human liberation; it is the road to the socialist revolution and to the international brotherhood of man. It can be hounded, it can be jailed, its leaders can be killed—but its ideas cannot be destroyed.

On this May Day, 1943, when the entire world is aflame, when thousands are dying on the altar of profits, when the rulers of the capitalist countries do not know how to extricate themselves from this chaos, we pause to pay our tribute to our fallen comrades, martyrs in the struggle against capitalist and Stalinist reaction, who saw clearly the road ahead and remained loyal at their posts until the very end. We remember also and honor the nameless hundreds and thousands who have given their full measure to the cause of socialist liberation.

A MAY DAY PROGRAM FOR AMERICAN LABOR

Class Militancy, Political Action—These are the Order of the Day

By DAVID COOLIDGE

The celebration of May Day was instituted by the working class in the United States during the struggle for the eight-hour day. Involved in the fight for the eight-hour day was the broader struggle for better working conditions, higher wages, the right to organize, to bargain collectively and in general to secure for labor greater security and more of the fruits of daily toil in the mines, mills and factories. The spirit of May Day represented the demands of the working class for freedom, security and happiness.

This struggle was a conflict between two classes: the working class and the ruling class of industrialists and financiers. The struggle for the eight-hour day was a political struggle between the bosses and their government on one side and the rising working class on the other. It was not a fight over simple trade union rights, important as these were, but a struggle of the entire working class for an increased measure of control and greater economic and political power.

Immense organizational gains resulted from this conflict between the bosses and the working class. It was the demonstrations and the strikes that brought gains to the organized workers of the seventies, eighties and nineties. It was the demonstration of their power through mass action that produced the results from which labor benefits today. It was out of this struggle that the American Federation of Labor was born and took its place as the most progressive section of the labor movement of THAT day. Here was the first great national movement of wage earners organized as a class, becoming wage conscious and fighting a class battle against the organized power of the bosses.

ANOTHER NATION-WIDE STRUGGLE

Today, over a half century later, labor finds itself engaged in another nation-wide struggle against the bosses and the boss' government. This struggle takes place in a different period and under different conditions.

The United States has moved away from the relatively simple capitalist economy of the eighties to enormous mass production based on the most advanced scientific and technological discovery and invention that the world has ever seen. On the foundation of this scientific creation and technological invention, industry has been concentrated, huge monopolies have been reared and around it all centralized wealth has fastened itself like hoops of steel.

Furthermore, the United States is no longer a young nation feeling its way toward economic sufficiency and political democracy, isolated from the rest of the world. It is now the world's greatest producer, hoarder of the earth's wealth and resources; the greatest of the capitalist nations. The "American Way of Life" has already triumphed and "Our System of Free Enterprise" has extended its reach to every corner of the earth.

Today the United States is producing for war and spending at the rate of \$250,000,000 a day to prosecute that war. Now it is a great imperialist nation engaging in the Second Imperialist World War to determine which nation shall dominate the world and all its people.

As always, the working class finds itself emeshed in the

tangled web of the imperialist conflict. As in all the struggles of the national ruling classes against each other, the workers are called upon to bear the brunt, to toil ceaselessly, to bear arms, to die.

Just as in the May Day struggles of the nineties, the workers forged a new weapon with which to fight their battles against the boss, so today they have called to their aid a new type of trade union organization: the industrial union. And just as in the eighties the new craft unions of the AFL could aid labor only insofar as they tackled the concrete problems of the day, so industrial unionism must lay hold on the concrete and pressing problems before the working class today.

Labor is in a better position to do this now than it was fifty years ago. The working class is approaching maturity. It is stronger numerically and organizationally. It has a better understanding of capitalist society. It is beginning to understand vaguely today, as it did not in the eighties, that the economic struggle is not sufficient but that this struggle must be raised to a political level and from the economic struggle independent class political action and organization must emerge.

MANY STILL TO BE ORGANIZED

The first big task before the labor movement, especially the industrial union movement, is the completion of the organization of the masses of industrial and agricultural workers. This means to spread the industrial union movement, particularly into the South. The country is not organized. There are millions of agricultural workers virtually unorganized.



PHILIP MURRAY

There is plenty of work to be done and the surface has only been scratched by the industrial union organizations. The unorganized workers will not care who does it—Murray and the CIO or Lewis and District 50. They want the job done. In these days the organized labor movement should count its membership by tens of millions, and not by the few millions that are organized now.

There are millions of Negro workers to be brought into the

organized labor movement. Most of these workers are in the South. Here again it is necessary to emphasize the imperative necessity for the penetration of this section by the industrial union movement. These Negro workers must be integrated into the labor movement. The industrial unions must take it as their special task to wage a ceaseless battle against Jim Crow, discrimination, disfranchisement and segregation. They must initiate the fight for social, political and economic equality for the Negro; first inside the unions and then in the country.

There are millions of women workers in industry and more going in daily by the thousands. These women workers present new problems for the unions. They are taking the places of men who have been taken into the armed forces. Serious post-war problems may arise in connection with the employment of millions of women in industry, if the unions do not do their job and make of these women workers the best and most loyal of union members.

THE PROBLEM OF UNIFICATION

As important as is the matter of organization, the labor movement cannot win by size alone. It may have its millions and yet be continually pushed back by the bosses and the government. In fact, if the bosses today could be assured that organized labor would be docile, inactive and submissive they would prefer to deal with organized workers. It is far easier, pleasanter and more beneficial to the bosses to come to agreement with Phil Murray and Bill Green than to have to deal with militant shop, plant or industry committees democratically elected by the union membership.

As a means of increasing the striking power of labor it is necessary for the working class to pay attention to the tough problem of the unification of the labor movement. Merging of the AFL, the CIO, the Railway Brotherhoods and the UMWA would mean a national organization of ten millions. A properly conducted organizing drive could increase this membership to 25,000,000 in one year. Such an organization of workers, if correctly led, would be invincible.

Again, however, mere size is not enough. Merely having larger numbers will not automatically produce the results the mass of workers want. Any worthwhile unification must have as its base and dominant force the millions of workers in agriculture, mining and the mass production industries. The principle of industrial unionism must prevail—and there can be no compromise on this point. Even if the AFL should not consent to this, there are enough unorganized workers to make such a mighty force, if organized, that the craft unions would be rendered helpless and impotent except in a very narrow field.

RETURN TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Organized labor today has virtually given up the practice of collective bargaining with the employer. This practice, which labor has fought for since the earliest days of the trade union movement, has been almost surrendered right at the moment when labor is numerically stronger than ever before. This surrender has had a most enervating effect on the unions and has given the

ruling class a club which it is using today in a most devastating manner. In the place of collective bargaining between the unions and the employer, government has interposed a host of boards which claim jurisdiction in all matters for which labor formerly used the procedures of collective bargaining.

Any movement of the unions to regain their former prestige must start with the demand for the restoration of genuine collective bargaining. This should begin in the shop with the shop stewards and go on up to the negotiations which are the province of the higher union committees and representatives.

To restore collective bargaining between the workers and the boss, organized labor must cease to bend the knee before these government boards: the WLB, the WPB, the OPA and the rest of them. The ranks of organized labor should and must demand that their elected leaders get off the government boards, stay off of them and give their time and attention to the just grievances of the workers who pay them and whom they have been elected to represent.

Connected with the shelving of collective bargaining is the no-strike agreement, sealed and signed by the trade union leaders without the consent of the membership. Labor can only agree to a no-strike policy for a period if it gets some concessions from the bosses in the course of collective bargaining. As could have been known in advance, the no-strike agreement has worked terrible hardships on labor. As soon as the bosses, with the assistance of Roosevelt, got the promise of Green and Murray to oppose all strikes for the duration of the war, they began to crack down on labor and on the unions. All workers know this story and there is no need to repeat it here. Of course, there have been strikes; the workers had to strike or they would have been far worse off than they are today.

If labor wants to protect itself and its standards, the unions must say that "our agreement not to strike is contingent on your agreeing to our demands about wages, hours, working conditions and union recognition that we will present from time to time, just as we have in the past." These demands can be discussed and settled in the process of collective bargaining between the union and the employer. In no other way can the integrity and the power of the trade unions be preserved. The unions cannot be and will not be preserved if they bow to the will of the government boards or submit to the present offensive of the bosses.

These are simple matters that should be understood by every worker in the factories, the mines, the mills and on the farms. (Continued on page 8)



JOHN L. LEWIS

Whether Through Revolution, or Imperialist Rivalry, the Fate of the British Empire Is Sealed

Greatest Empire in History Is Collapsing

By A. A. B.

After the fall of Singapore and Burma, and the Indian response to the Japanese threat, it began to penetrate into the minds of many people that the British Empire was doomed. The victories of Rommel in Egypt and the possibility of a German-Japanese junction in the Middle East made the end of the empire appear contingent on a few days or weeks of military conflict.

With the defeat of Rommel, however, and the general improvement in the Anglo-American military prospects, the empire seemed saved. Churchill crowed: "We shall hold our own," and Cripps, who, during the first stage of the Indian crisis, seemed second in British importance only to Churchill, was thrown out of the War Cabinet. Finally, the British have suppressed the first insurrection in India and, after many years, summoned up enough courage to challenge and defeat the dietic politics of Gandhi. Yet the empire is as fated to disintegrate as was the Austro-Hungarian Empire during the First World War. Nothing can save it. This becomes more visible every day.

ANGLO-AMERICAN RIVALRY

France collapsed on the battlefield in 1940. But France's ruin was prepared by the incapacity of metropolitan France to hold the positions won in earlier centuries. This now applies with ten times as much cogency to Britain.

Even if the Axis is defeated, Britain must hold her position in an air-dominated Europe; she must guard her long line of communications to the Far East; she must hold India against the Indians and against the United States; she must safeguard her position in China and Southeastern Asia against the United States; she must fight the United States in Latin America and the West Indies; she must fight the United States in Canada and Australia; she must safeguard her African colonies.

All these are, for Britain, losing battles. To save the empire from the Axis, Britain had to pawn it and herself to Roosevelt. And the pawnbrokers in Washington are already gathering in the spoils, for one reason because the spoils are begging and praying and beseeching to be gathered in.

This did not begin yesterday. USA capital has Canada in its grip, and Canada is fighting Roosevelt's war, not Churchill's. An American general commands in Australia, and it is to America that Australia sends emissaries begging for help. The pro-American orientation of Australia is now decisive. It appears on the surface to be merely a question of defense. In reality, nothing would be more superficial than any such analysis. Capital concentrates by its own inherent laws, though this may take the form of open violence, as by Germany in Europe, today, or military and naval necessity, as in Australia. The smaller capital gravitates naturally toward the orbit of the larger capital.

It is obvious to any child that if Britain has survived so far it is because of the support of the USA. As in war, so in the peace to come. Britain can offer nothing that the USA cannot double or treble at the stroke of a pen. The Indian bourgeoisie and the Chinese bourgeoisie know that they must find shelter and loans somewhere. And Britain's name stinks so in the Far East, that to denounce Britain and to hold up America as the true friend of democracy everywhere, is a useful weapon for any Oriental demagogue anxious to prove that he can combine 100 per cent political independence and 100 per cent sub-

servience to American capital. That is the role of Chiang Kai-shek, that is the stock-in-trade of Manuel Quezon, the Philippine faker, and that is the role Nehru is thirsting to play. But, in all this, whoever is in, Britain is out.

SMUTS, THE JOLLY GOOD FELLOW

The natural trend of capital away from Britain toward America can be seen with singular clarity, above all places, in the Union of South Africa. The tendency is most strikingly manifested there, precisely because Britain owns some three-quarters of all the capital invested in Africa, and apparently holds every strategic position.

It is commonly known that pro-British Smuts could only with great difficulty defeat the anti-British party led by Hertzog on the question of entry into the war. The Hertzog group contains rabidly pro-German elements, such as the former Minister of the Interior, Pirow. That conflict between British financial and mining capital and the local farmers is insoluble. However, for many years all South Africa has hankered after the creation of a great African empire, including South Africa, Northern and Southern Rhodesia, Tanganyika and Kenya. For them this would mean a solution of many problems. For Smuts, it will mean national unity of the whites, of vital necessity in any part of Africa.

Just before the final attack was launched on Rommel, Smuts was chosen to address the empire and the united houses of Commons and Lords. The united legislators sang "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow," duly relayed to what Churchill fondly hoped would thereby be a unified South Africa. It takes more than a male chorus to stop the concentration of capital. Even Smuts was not unified with the empire by this remarkable demonstration of British blarney.

Just at this time the British Empire was under serious fire from Wendell Willkie. And Life magazine, seeing in Smuts, the man of the moment, asked him to write an article stating the case for the empire. This jolly good fellow thereupon expressed himself as follows: "In the first place, the mother countries should remain responsible for the administration of their colonies, there should be no interference, etc. But, and here the ungrateful South African must be quoted literally: "Wherever possible, isolated colonies belonging to a mother country should be grouped into large units both for more efficient and economical administration, and for larger-scale development policies common to all. Thus British colonies... on the African continent could be grouped with larger powers assigned to the group, and corresponding decrease of power in London." He had probably lunched with Churchill the day he wrote this!

But Smuts, to rule, must satisfy the white colonists in South and East Africa who have been fighting with Britain over this for years. Smuts is not only putting his claim before the world. He is inviting the "Arsenal of Democracy" to come in and share in the profits of democracy in Africa. "Thus the United States of America, although no colonial power, could be on the regional control council of the West Indies or of Africa or elsewhere." This is a particularly mean blow at Britain, which is now fighting a losing battle with the United States in the West Indies.

Smuts concludes on a note which is a direct challenge to Britain and a bid for United States support in his future attempt to dominate a large part of the African continent. "It appears to me essential that the United States should in the future have a direct say with the mother countries in the settlement of general colonial policies..." He ends in true British fashion: "I have no doubt that such a partnership of the USA in overhead colonial controls would be cordially welcomed so far as the British Commonwealth of Nations is concerned." Cordially welcomed, my eye! No sooner was Rommel driven out of Egypt than Colonel Oliver Stanley, Secretary of State for the Colonies, told the Oxford Conservative Association that he was "much more interested in what Britain

thought of the empire than in what the U.S. thought of it, and rejected any scheme for international administration of the British colonies after the war."

These are brave words, but only words. The case of South Africa shows that, as far as the dominions are concerned, the tendencies to disintegration are coming from inside, even without pressure from the United States. The First World War brought the Westminster Charter of 1926, which granted to the dominions the right of secession. The end of the present war will see the beginning of the exercise of that right. To think that such a Britain will be able to hold India is an absurdity, unworthy of argument.

CHURCHILL'S LAST CARD

It is under these circumstances that Churchill throws himself into the arms of Stalin. By this means he hopes to counteract the influence in Europe of Roosevelt and his invading armies. In addition, Churchill is going to fight for his position in Southern China and the Java Sea. Stalin aims at slicing off a large part of Northern China. In these compensatory plans for plunder it seems to Churchill that he and Stalin can give each other mutual aid and comfort. Thus Britain will be able to put up a fight in Europe and Asia and have the potential strength to bargain elsewhere.

All such dreams are vain. The Russian dictator is listening to Churchill today. He will listen to Roosevelt tomorrow, and Roosevelt has already stated his willingness to go to Soviet territory to meet Stalin—a sure sign that he has something to sell. Above all, however, Stalin listens to the dictates of his own interests. Stalin is as interested as all the other groups in the scramble for the pieces of the empire. All he can get in the Middle East, for instance, he will swallow.

It is true that the balance of power demands that you do not entirely destroy your ally. But Italy was junior partner to the Allies in World War I and to Hitler in World War II. Look at Italy today as well as yesterday. But there is an even more painful example, the example of Britain itself, junior partner to America in World War II, and now compelled to seek refuge from that loving embrace in the arms, of all people, of Stalin!

A weak country like Japan, with all its interests concentrated in one area, can play a powerful role; a powerful economy like Germany's, even after it sustains a ruinous defeat, occupies such a strategic position on the European continent that it can exercise a strong, if subordinate, influence as the tool of United States imperialism. But Britain, an island off the coast of Europe, with its interests scattered in every corner of the globe, is falling to pieces before our very eyes.

REVOLUTION—BRITAIN'S GREAT FEAR

But the danger to the empire lies concretely in the subject colonial populations. Hard enough to hold down in any case, they will be infinitely less submissive to a disintegrating "mother" country. In 1914-18 they fought or Britain and then revolted; in the West Indies, Negro populations in West, South and East Africa; in Malta, in Egypt, in Ireland and in India. This time they have refused to fight. Ireland and Egypt have remained sullenly neutral. India has begun her revolt already.

A great fear hangs over India today. Gandhi's fast and its failure mark the end of a period. Every correspondent remarks on the uncertainty which now exists. For if Gandhi loses



influence in India, then, as is known far and wide, the greatest obstacle to violent action against the British will be removed.

Let us take the best possible variant for Britain, defeat of Germany, defeat of Japan. Once that danger is removed, such a revolution will burst out in India as could never be put down by the British. Even in 1921 the British administration was paralyzed by the civil disobedience movement. It was Gandhi who, at the critical moment, stopped it with his doctrine of non-violence. We can judge of the future of India by the Chinese revolution, which began in 1911 and has had that country in turmoil for thirty years.

The Indian proletariat may achieve the socialist revolution in a reasonably short space of time. If it fails to do this, then India will split into warring groups, revolution and civil war will tear the country to pieces for years. America may intervene to restore some sort of order, i.e., suppress the proletariat, as America is intervening in Europe to suppress the revolution. But this much is certain. Britain will not, at the war's end, proceed to lecture Indians about "Hindus and Moslems" and the ethics of fasting as a political weapon. That is over.

And as India goes, so will go Burma, the Malay States and the British East Indies. If the revolts in Egypt and the Arab world are merely as powerful as they were after World War I, Britain will not be able to resist them today. All the signs point to the fact that they will be ten times as fierce. Britain's only hope is to seek shelter behind America, which means walking into the jaws of its enemy. Such is the colonial and anti-imperialist struggle of British capital. In addition, it faces the British proletariat at home, the most cohesive, powerfully organized, and most politically confident proletariat in the world.

It is now that we can appreciate the policy of appeasement so stubbornly pursued by Chamberlain and practically the whole British ruling class. They followed it until they could follow it no further. For Neville Chamberlain believed and said that, come what might, another war meant the end of the British Empire. He knew that it could not hold. He was correct. War or peace, defeat or victory, it is done. The only question now is whether it will fall to American imperialism or to the colonial peoples themselves. That, the struggle will decide.

But whatever the outcome, we see day by day the crumbling of the greatest organ of tyranny and oppression the world has ever seen. The tendencies we have shown will not all run in a straight line. Great historical tendencies never do. But their cumulative direction is inexorable. The Britain that will emerge from even a victorious war will be a Britain where the class struggle will be fought to a finish, until either a fascist Britain attaches itself as a Mussolinian satellite to some great imperialist power; or a socialist Britain which gives "Merrie England" to the masses of the British people and makes it possible for them to add their great contributions to human civilization.

Have You Your Copy Of 'India in Revolt'?

If you haven't read Henry Judd's magnificent pamphlet, "India in Revolt," published by the Workers Party, lost no time in getting your copy. With India in the new almost daily, no worker should be without detailed knowledge of the situation in that unhappy country: the centuries of cruel oppression under British rule, the aims and desires of the nationalist movement, the role of Gandhi, the facts on Moslem-Hindu "enmity," the program of the Bolshevik-Leninists of India, and much more. Order "India in Revolt" from the Workers Party, 114 West 14th Street, New York. N. Y. 25 cents per copy; 20 cents in bundles of five or more.

The Readers of Labor Action Take the Floor...

Michigan CIO Protests Murder Of Ehrlich-Alter

A special resolution condemning the execution of Ehrlich and Alter, Polish socialist leaders, by the Russian government was adopted by the Michigan CIO Council Executive Board at its regular quarterly meeting held in Detroit on March 27.

The resolution "condemns the action of the Soviet Russian government in the case of Ehrlich and Alter and brands their execution as murder under color of a war emergency, perpetrated only because they were members of the Socialist Party..." The Council forwarded copies of its resolution to all its affiliates with the suggestion that the resolution be endorsed.

The Council points out that the charges against the two executed men are belied by their entire record in the labor movement as Poles, as socialists and as Jews. "The record is clear," states the Council, "that Ehrlich and Alter were not tried publicly on the grave charge against them but rather in secret by star-chamber methods and presumably denied the right to be represented by competent counsel of their own choosing and to summon witnesses in their own behalf..."

Heading its protest, "Murder in Russia," and reporting a "storm of protest over the execution of two labor leaders for political reasons," the Michigan CIO News, published by the Michigan State Industrial Union Council, condemns the execution of Henryk Ehrlich and Victor Alter by the Stalin government.

The article, published in the March 26 issue, ascribes the execution to the fact that the two Jewish socialists opposed the communists on political grounds, were advocates of democracy and opposed to dictatorship, and would have fought Russian territorial and political aggressions in Poland after the war.

"We do not hesitate to criticize England for its treatment of India," the article continues; "we do not hesitate to condemn undemocratic tendencies of our own government. We should not therefore remain silent when Russia kills two non-communist labor leaders who had lived lives of brave and unselfish service to freedom and labor."

"The American communist press and their stooges within the labor movement are doing their best to drown out protests against the Ehrlich and Alter executions by libeling the records of these two men. They should not be allowed to succeed."

The article concludes: "We should remember these executions as proof of the fact that although Russia is our military ally, communism and the communists have not changed one bit."

The error the Michigan CIO News makes here is the identification of Russia and the Communist Party with the ideas of communism. Both have long ago thrown overboard any connection with socialist revolution.

Chicago Unionists Protest Ehrlich-Alter Executions

CHICAGO—Over 500 trade unionists assembled at the Hotel Morrison on April 8 to protest Stalin's murder of Ehrlich and Alter, Polish socialists. The meeting was held under the auspices of the Chicago Federation of Labor and the Jewish Trade Unions. The Stalinists brought enough pressure on the local CIO Council to prevent it from sponsoring and participating in the gathering.

All the speakers condemned the assassinations and cited the records of Alter and Ehrlich to refute the incredible accusations that they were Hitler's agents.

Without exception, however, the speakers failed to connect this case with the crimes, frame-ups and brutal murders committed previously by Stalin and the GPU—that is, the Moscow Trials, the purges, etc.

In condemning the executions, the speakers at the same time put in a good word for the imperialist war and for military cooperation with Russia. They used the occasion, also, to extol the virtues of capitalist "democracy" in the United States.

One speaker, however, a representative of the General Labor Union of Poland (the Bunal), speaking in Yiddish, presented a somewhat more accurate picture of what Ehrlich and Alter stood for.—H. R.

The Kind of Letter We Like to Receive

Dear Brother: Please find enclosed money order covering seven six-month subscriptions to LABOR ACTION.

All of these men are good unionists (considering what they have had to read hitherto) yet I do not know how receptive they will be to social ideas.

As for me, I have always been a socialist, although I did quit N. Thomas' party quite some time ago because of its somnolent bourgeois attitude toward the class struggle.

I enjoyed the copy of The New International very much.

Yours for the Brotherhood of Man, P. G. (Mich.)

Happiness Is What We Can Make It

Dear Sirs: May I ask you to print the following in the next issue of LABOR ACTION:

So many of your articles in LABOR ACTION seem to be based on a fallacy of thinking. We are of the "have not" class, and I fully realize the necessity of a constant fight if the laborer is to have a living wage, but in our long experience we have come to know that HAVING THINGS does not necessarily count for happiness, and not having them does not necessarily mean unhappiness. Happiness, which is what the world is striving for in one way or another, depends upon something inside us and not upon what we have or do not have.

And another thing. Some men, comparatively few, are born with the ability to manage large enterprises. Most of us are not. If those who are so endowed will use their talents to make employment for the rest of us, why should we care how much they get out of it? The vital thing is for us to have work and a living wage, and beyond that we should not worry about what the fellow at the top has.

We defeat all possibility of happiness when we look around us with envious hearts instead of rejoicing in what is ours to enjoy and realiz-

ing that the simple joys are the most dependable and enjoyable.

J. N. T. (Calif.)

(We agree that happiness depends on "something inside us"—meat and bread, for example. Happiness on an empty stomach is not likely to last, or be particularly satisfying. We believe it possible to build a world in which happiness will be universally possible precisely because the "insides" of men will be filled with good food, and the "outsides" surrounded by the most advanced creations of science in comfort, luxury and PEACE.

If people are born with the ability to manage a plant, we say: fine; employ them in that capacity. Just to say: if a man is best endowed to be a machinist or an artist, let him contribute to society as a machinist or an artist. We do not, however, believe that one man has the right to exploit another because he owns a plant. It happens that owners are usually born ("endowed") that way—they receive their ownership as an inheritance. But even if they do have a productive ability and skill, we do not see where that skill or talent justifies the exploitation of others.

If we enjoyed ALL that modern society could give us in food, clothing, etc., we wouldn't care particularly how much the next fellow got—because we would be getting all we need. We do object when one man lives in luxury while another toils for a wage—even in that best circumstance under capitalism where the wage is a "living wage."

The owners of industry aren't in business so that they can provide us with work. They are in business to make a profit. And when the business doesn't produce a profit, the business stops operating. Have you forgotten the ten-year-long depression? The men "endowed with the ability to manage large enterprises" didn't do very well then, did they? And are they doing better now because their industries are operating to produce the materials of war?

It is our opinion that the men in the plants are fully competent to run industry themselves. Among them are all the talents necessary to run a large enterprise. Kaiser is a great "manager"—that is, he is a great

capitalist promoter and owner. Will you say that he knows as much about welding, shipfitting, chipping, caulking or riveting as the men who actually produce the ships from which he "earns" his profits?

In a socialist society each man will be employed at the skill he is best fitted for—and one of the skills that will be considered completely unessential is the "skill" to OWN (the way J. P. Morgan or Mellon owned an empire of wealth) and the "skill" to exploit.—Editor.)

Who Gets the Gravy? Poor Farmers Don't!

Dear LABOR ACTION: Haven't received my paper for about a month. Wonder what is happening. If my paper has expired, please let me know.

I am just a farmer. Work like hell for the middle exploiters. Fat roosters—twelve cents a pound. Potatoes didn't pay to dig them last fall—they are still cheap, only \$5.00 per hundred.

We have had lots of nice sunny weather this March. Weather rationing will come next. That won't be so bad until we have to wear an air meter and pay for the air we breathe.

Land sharks are busy baiting their hooks for suckers.

As you can see—a lover of the profit system.

O. T. (Durham, Mo.)

What's Going On In the MMSWU?

Dear Brother:

You might be interested in knowing a few of the behind-the-scenes in the Union of Mine, Mill & Smelter Workers. This union was mentioned in our paper in connection with the resolution passed by the Phelps Dodge local against LABOR ACTION.

At the last election for international president, Reid Robinson, Stalinist stooge, received 13,000 votes. The opposition, led by John Driscoll of Waterbury, Conn., got only 6,000. Driscoll challenged the election, charging that thousands of votes cast for him were disqualified by the Stalinists on the flimsy pretext that

they were not cast in the union halls but in the shops (voting in the shops is an old tradition in the union). The Driscoll forces appealed to Murray and the executive board of the CIO, withholding the per capita tax to the international at the same time.

The latest news is that the Stalinists have been ousted from the leading posts in the East, and the Driscoll forces are preparing for the next step in the fight. Everywhere progressives and trade union militants realize that the Stalinist stooges will use all foul methods in their sabotage of working class interests. These militants are organizing themselves into an opposition that will make the union their own and not the property of Uncle Joe's boys.

MMSWU Member (Los Angeles)

Sharecroppers Pay High Prices for Food

Dear Editor:

This week, I have covered a wide section of the farming area in S.E. Missouri. The only type of work being done is plowing, and new ground work. The price for plowing is \$2.00 per day in one section and \$1.50 in the others. This covers almost two counties. The price for new ground work is \$2.00 per day, or \$10 per acre to put the ground in plow shape, which means that everything the size of a broom handle cut in six or eight pieces be piled and burned.

People are still moving away. And others are planning to leave. The cost of living is going up every week. Last week eggs were thirty cents per dozen. In some places this week they are thirty-five cents. White meat is twenty-five cents per pound, low grade as it is. Pork chops, steak and bacon run from forty to sixty cents per pound. Cheap flour, twenty-four pound sack, from \$1.10 to \$1.30. Garden plants are sky high. Onion sets ninety-five cents to \$1.10 per gallon. Cabbage and tomato plants were twenty cents per bunch of fifteen to twenty last week, this week they are twenty-five cents per bunch. It looks as if the farm people are going to have it as hard as the people in the city.

We need union strength.

R. (April 10)

Letter Proved Better Than L. & T. Bonus

Dear Editor:

Just got a big fat bonus from Lord & Taylor (\$32.25), of which they deducted \$16.00 victory tax, and thirty-two cents social security. So, net, I collected \$30.33. This is really a very staggering figure, since it amounts to 58-17/52 cents per week.

This has been the biggest year in Lord & Taylor's 128 years. It has to be included in our income for tax purposes, so about a third comes off in taxes. They, on the other hand, DEDUCT it from their corporation tax and so pay nothing.

However, I realize I'm a very ungrateful wretch. I got the most beautiful letter with the bonus, signed by dear old Walter Hoving, the president, himself, that all this is in recognition of faithful service, etc. Really, the letter was worth more than the cash.

Lord & Taylor Worker (N. Y. C.)

Labor-Baiter Is Appointed Censor

Editor:

For distinguished service in his attempt to smear labor by means of the well known and equally well disproved Guadalcanal story, John Knight, owner and publisher of the Akron Beacon Journal, the Detroit Free Press and the Miami Herald, has been appointed censor for news that will come from North Africa.

Perhaps this appointment is a reward for the foul story put out by his paper in Akron about the workers on the merchant ships at Guadalcanal. No doubt most people are aware by this time that the story was thoroughly disproved by congressional investigation, but if the people do know this it is not because the Akron Beacon Journal ever printed a retraction of the story or an apology to the American workers for carrying this lying tale.

On the contrary, this man's papers have been busy with their labor-baiting campaign against absenteeism, wage increases to the rubber workers and other workers, even when approved by the WLB.

Now the idea of a \$25,000 limit on salaries after taxes gives this cru-

sading publisher an acute attack of jitters. All incentive would be lost, the American way of life would be endangered because no one could ever look forward to earning more than \$25,000 per year after taxes.

What sort of justice is this? he asks. Well, the worker who is frozen in his job, whose wages are stabilized below the rising cost of living will probably not lose much sleep worrying about the "twenty-five grand" boys, and we can safely bet that Mr. Knight will still have enough incentive left to continue his labor-baiting.

With this brief background, we present the new censor of news from North Africa, John Knight, publisher and owner of the Akron Beacon Journal, the Detroit Free Press and the Miami Herald.

Melvin Strong (Ohio)

Offers Suggestion About Rickenbacker

Dear Editor:

A lot of odd talk has been going around about this fellow Rickenbacker. The newspapers say that he is a hero and the fellows in my shop come out with stuff that you wouldn't print. We workers he talks about all the time should find out for ourselves what he has to say. My proposal is really very simple. We can find out when Rickenbacker is scheduled to speak and we can tune in on his broadcast. It would mean stopping work for maybe an hour or two every other day but then for a man as important as Rickenbacker that isn't too much to ask of a worker. Some of his speeches are not broadcast, but we can take that time anyway to have one of the men in the shop read aloud one of the old ones so that we can catch up on what he has been saying about us so far. The boss may get us wrong at first and think that we are going out on some kind of strike, but once we explain to him our reasons for stopping work he will be sure to understand.

Isn't it a swell idea and wouldn't it please Rickenbacker no end if the workers in the plants where he is director set the rest of us a good example the next time he decides to make one of his speeches about us?

D. F. (Ohio)

West Coast Pine Workers Roused by WLB Edict

By DONALD McDONALD

PORTLAND, Ore.—The organized workers in the lumber industry of the West Coast, both CIO and AFL, have until recently abided by Murray and Green's attempt to commit their respective organizations to a policy of no stoppage of work.

It has been the official policy of both the CIO and AFL to resort to the innumerable government boards, "as they come and go," for the purpose of securing wage raises, paid vacations and other concessions.

Last spring, in the Jensen award, workers employed by the big operators in the fir belt of Oregon and Washington received a 7½ cent wage increase, a paid vacation, and a twenty-five-cent night shift differential.

These gains slowly trickled into the surrounding fir operations and into some of the pine regions, where the workers were militant enough and well enough organized to demand and secure them. But these gains were not universal throughout the West Coast lumber industry.

Fir and Pine Decisions

In the late summer of 1942, all locals of the International Woodworkers of America, CIO, in fir and pine, made a concerted move for a raise in wages, stabilization of brackets, equal pay for women, and a night shift differential where none had yet existed.

On December 17, the West Coast Lumber Commission, a panel of

the WLB, granted fir workers 7½ cents more per hour, equal pay for women, a twenty-five cent night shift differential where not in existence, and recommended that a survey be made preparatory to a standardization of brackets.

Inasmuch as the pine case dealt primarily with a different set of operators, a somewhat different geographical region and with supposedly different production costs, a separate hearing was held before the West Coast Lumber Commission.

This hearing resulted in a minority decision on the part of the labor representatives on the commission and was followed by a majority decision by the WLB in Washington concurring in almost every respect with the majority of the commission.

This decision, as handed down on March 23—subject to the approval of the OPA or by Director of Economic Stabilization James F. Byrnes—has resulted in creating one of the most chaotic wage variations, seldom equaled even in the depths of the depression.

It purportedly gave a 7½-cent blanket raise to the members of the unions involved, but upon close examination the raise varies from nothing to 22½ cents per hour, and with a minimum base pay of from 67½ to 87½ cents per hour.

CIO unions party to the case received a twenty-five-cent night shift differential and equal pay for women except the unskilled, who are to receive 2½ cents per hour less.

The ruling apparently does not apply to the AFL unions party to the decision.

Full retroactive pay was granted to September 1, 1942, and with not more than 2½ cents per hour to go beyond that date. Such pay is determined by the contract held by the unions, and by the date of the wage demand. All retroactive pay beyond March 1, 1943, to be paid in war bonds and stamps.

The pine region covered by this inconsistent and discriminatory decision lies, broadly speaking, between the crests of the Rockies and Cascades, and extends from the British Columbia boundary southward into Northern California. In the general region there are in excess of 1,500 mills of all sizes employing approximately 55,000 wage earners, of which some 27,000 are directly affected by this order.

Upon close examination of the evidence presented in the case, and of the decision of the majority, it is clearly evident that the decision was not based upon the record but upon extraneous matters.

No Harmony Here

The opinion is in violation of a mandate of the WLB contained in paragraph three of the directive order of the board creating the commission and enunciating the following purposes for which it was created: namely, to effectuate a stabilization of labor conditions in the lumber industry; to secure industrial harmony in said area, and to assure maximum production of lumber and lumber products.

It says, for example: "The occasion of the raise in wages in the pine region arises out of the existence in general of much the same inequities and inequalities as were disclosed in the fir case." Yet this same board handed down the pine decision that granted fir a minimum of ninety cents an hour.

The adoption of this report creates by the fiat of a government war agency a definite wage differential within an industry where the history of this industry shows that in recent years only time lags have occurred in the adjustment of wages as between the fir and pine belts.

How then can we assume that the sort of harmony will prevail in the pine belt "that will assure the maximum production of lumber and lumber products" when the established wage range is from ten to forty per cent less than is being paid in adjacent defense plants which are vigorously advertising for manpower; or where the wage freeze is from five to thirty per cent less than is being paid in nearby fir?

The employees in the pine industry were frozen into the industry

September 6, 1942, at the same time that the employees were in Douglas fir.

Owners Could Pay

In the Douglas fir case the West Coast Lumber Commission based its decision upon the non-ferrous case and the Ranger case. In the Ranger case, Dean Morse, in writing the unanimous decision, stated: "It is not fair or reasonable to require a worker, either by employer practice or by governmental policy, to remain on his job for the duration of the war unless reasonable adjustments are made in his wages so that he is not discriminated against economically as a result of such a manpower stabilization program."

The majority opinion in the pine case did not question the ability of the industry to pay. The record shows that in only two or three exceptions did the parties to the case plead inability to pay. Furthermore, the Morgan report, which was placed in evidence, showed that the pine industry could well afford to pay any increase, even to the full demands of the unions.

The majority opinion has created new artificial differentials between pine and fir and also created a differential within the pine area itself, which heretofore has not existed. But the record shows that from 1917 to 1925 the wage scales in pine and fir were the same. From 1925 to 1934 there is no record. In 1935 there was a strike in fir. From then on there was a time lag in wage adjustments in most of the pine industry, which can be explained in part by the fact that until 1940 labor in general was not organized in pine.

Prior to the Jensen award of the spring and summer of 1942 and the fir award of last fall, many of the pine sections now unfairly dealt with enjoyed a scale equal to or above other sections of pine. Under this last award they pay as much as 12½ cents under fir and ten cents less in pine. Operations in different sections but belonging to the same owners vary from 82½ to ninety cents minimum per hour.

In the Spokane area we see the results of this iniquitous ruling in all its inconsistency and inequality. In manufacturing plants, such as sash and door, we see a minimum of 67½ cents, with 87½ per hour in Los Angeles and ninety cents in fir for like work. In this same area the low ranges from the above quoted 67½ to 87½ cents in the various types of lumber working operations.

But at this date even these miserable wages have not been put into effect, as the decision handed down was subject to the approval of the OPA or James F. Byrnes, both hav-

ing stalled. The date of April 7, on which payment of retroactive wages was to have been complete, has passed and the workers' pay envelopes are not one cent larger. The workers of the Spokane area, tiring of all this red tape and run-around, walked out on strike 1,000 strong in protest not only against this parsimonious award and accompanying delay, but also against the hamstringing commitment of the leaders of both the CIO and AFL. If Byrnes does not act quickly, it is very likely to spread to such proportions that we will see the break-up of the West Coast Lumber Commission, and wedges driven into the WLB.

While in the past many workers in fir have enjoyed gains made through the various government agencies, thousands are now rapidly arriving at the conclusion that the day of gains made that way is past, and are asking: "Why do labor representatives remain on the WLB when such decisions are handed down?"

More and more they are saying: "Remove these labor mis-representatives from the WLB. Remove the commitment of Murray and Green to a no-strike policy!"

Mexico Unions Ask Wage Boost To Meet Prices

A blanket wage raise to meet the threat of starvation brought about by the steep rise in the cost of living has been asked by the Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM). A minimum wage of ten pesos a day is necessary to provide workers with enough to eat if the present price levels continue, declared the CTM.

The present wage level is about three pesos or less for union labor. The Confederation statement came after an inspection of various Mexico City stores carried out by members of the executive committee, during which the exorbitant prices charged consumers were verified.

The CTM has long advocated a sliding scale of wages be set up under government auspices, with wages adjusted to the cost of living. Thus if the index of living costs went up five times, wages would also be boosted five times.

What has actually happened in Mexico, however, has been that while the cost of living has gone up an average of 300 per cent during the last three years, the wage level has remained fairly much the same. Such wage increases as have been obtained have averaged about ten per cent.

Skirmishes Mark Ford Relations With Workers

DETROIT, April 10—Further evidence that the Ford Motor Co. is utilizing the cry of "wartime emergency" to crack the union is revealed in a series of incidents this week in Detroit.

At the River Rouge plant, 712 transportation workers on the day and afternoon shifts struck for one day in protest against stalling over their demand for a ten per cent wage increase.

In the pressed steel division of the Rouge plant, 397 men were reported on a one-hour stoppage in protest against the firing of a UAW member.

At the Ford Highland Park plant five men were sent home from work for matching quarters on their own time during lunch hour. Matching coins to pass the time during lunch hour is as common a practice in all shops as smoking or talking. The disciplinary action taken against these men was merely a pretext for taking a dig at the union. As a result of this high-handed action, 4,600 men stopped work.

Three week ago the firing of several union committee men at the Rouge plant precipitated a stoppage.

The Detroit News, with its usual anti-labor hysteria, compares these strikes to the bombing of the plants by German planes. But the fact is that the Ford Company forces workers to stop work in order to defend their union rights. The only alternative the men in the plants have is complete submission to the dictatorial rule of the company—and that is too reminiscent of the days of the open shop.

The CTM declaration added that "these facts will be brought to the knowledge of the President, carefully documented, for the purpose of showing the need for a wage increase. We point out that the ten-peso minimum is merely enough to cover the cost of food, without taking into account the cost of rent, clothing, education or anything else to which a working man has a right."

Attention, Los Angeles Workers!

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Something Can Be Done About Prices

By Frances Michaels

One year of price control and food crisis has passed, and no attempt is being made by the Administration to evaluate for public consumption the triumphs and successes of the OPA and the Department of Agriculture. For the sad story—sad for the millions of workers under wage stabilization—is that the program has not succeeded and is now in the process of being demolished by the blows of the farm bloc and big business.

The OPA was set up in the spring of 1942, based on the positive program "to guarantee to our people the basic living essentials that they must have at prices they can pay."

Ceiling prices were set as of March, 1942, and regional offices set up to assure proper functioning—with little control and enforcement power. For the food program is essentially a voluntary program dependent upon the good will and cooperation of business—but binding upon the worker with its limited budget and the necessity of eating. The 7,000 price-watchers proved inadequate—prices rose and are continuing to rise.

WHAT THE LABOR COMMITTEE FOUND

The President's Labor Advisory Committee, headed by William Green and Philip Murray, reported to the President that food prices in some categories have gone up as high as 100 per cent since January, 1941. The housewife does not need statistics—every trip to the market convinces her that prices have gone up beyond the reach of her pocketbook—but, as against the statements of politicians and business men, the figures of Green and Murray prove the lie. The Labor Committee, taking Canton, Ohio, as a typical city, found that from January, 1941, to January, 1943, butter had risen 51 per cent, tomato juice 100 per cent, oranges 145 per cent, bottled milk 25 per cent, eggs 60 per cent and boiled beef 260 per cent!

In Los Angeles, the Better Business Bureau, investigating meat markets, found that, out of thirty-four stores checked, twenty-eight were violating the law. Short-weighting, switching cuts and disregard of price ceilings were common practice.

After checking 10,000 retail stores in November the OPA sent WARNINGS to 4,000! And the machinery set up to enforce price ceilings is so cumbersome—through the courts—that companies go along fooling the public.

Committees investigating the food markets found that under the voluntary and cooperative system of the OPA, the "honest and patriotic" concerns were changing labels and raising prices and decreasing quality and quantity. Coffee, which had had about a four-cents-a-pound cost reduction since vacuum packs went out, had a price increase adjustment of two cents to seven cents per can. Milk prices in California rose from one-half to one and a half cents—and the butterfat content was lowered by from five to seven per cent.

BUSINESS CREATES ARTIFICIAL SHORTAGES

The OPA has proved itself incapable of solving the food problem in war—as the government has proved itself incapable of handling the problem in peacetime. Under a capitalist system, with the profit motive all-important—everything must be subordinated to the demand of business—"business as usual, profits as usual!"

An artificial shortage in butter was created by the milk trust, which switched to cheese and condensed milk—in which there was more profit. The Department of Agriculture did nothing to stop this. (These are CIO findings in California.)

An artificial shortage in eggs was created by withholding eggs from the market in an attempt to raise prices—not due to a sitdown strike by hens, as the companies insinuated. The OPA did do something about this—it raised prices!

The California CIO Meat Advisory Committee reported that an artificial shortage in meat was created by the Big Four packing companies, which attempted to raise prices on meat by refusing to slaughter unless given a higher price, and bid up livestock prices in an attempt to drive small packers out of business. For months the situation continued, with the result that meat was rationed at sixteen points per person! And now the high ceiling of \$14.50 per hundredweight of hogs is reported—which legalizes the actions of the packing trust!

And the voluntary allocation of food products has meant that the merchant who pays the highest price (which is passed on to the consumer) and the areas of low-price ceilings get the commodities.

ANOTHER SHIFT IN FOOD CONTROL

The concerted attack by the farmers, business and labor has caused another shift in food control. The appointment of Chester C. Davis as the new food czar is one of the latest victories of the big-farm bloc. It is interesting to note that both the Grange and the National Council of Farmers Cooperatives were opposed to a housecleaning of the Department of Agriculture. According to the Washington Merry-Go-Round of April 5, Chester Davis, St. Louis banker, has been a staunch Farm Bureau man, and the Farm Bureau Federation represents the aristocracy of agriculture. Pearson states that when Davis was AAA administrator he had no patience with friends of the little farmer and tangled with those who believed more help should be given the sharecropper and tenant farmer.

Since Davis has taken office the corn ceiling has been raised five cents a bushel "to stimulate the sale of corn, sales of which have been tied up largely by owner anticipation of higher prices." And Davis gave it to them! Prentiss Brown, OPA administrator, has also announced a reorganization, the prediction being that "business men" will replace "theorists"—based on the theory that every business man understands the need for profit incentive—and the higher the profit, the greater the incentive. Brown is also building good will in the reactionary Congress by not requesting money, which can only result in a slash of personnel—and more confusion.

WORKING PEOPLE MUST CONTROL FOOD

What is to be the result of all this? If food control is to be kept in the hands of business, the working class can look forward to increased prices and slow starvation. The cause is simple: the chaos of capitalist planning and inefficiency. The profit-mad capitalists use every means to increase their profits. And the government, which they control, must kow-tow to their demands, meanwhile making ineffectual attempts to avert inflation and the increasing threat of the working class to raise wages and take control.

There is only one solution—socialism—with its planned economy for the good of all, where production is geared in the interests of the people—and not for the desires of the bosses. But TODAY, there MUST be an increasing demand by the working class and the small farmer to control food. Trade unions, farmers' organizations and housewives' committees must force the OPA to put control in their hands!

Why Is Meat Expensive and Scarce? We've Found the Key to the Answer!

By P. ROBAL

No day passes without new headlines about meat. Every paper has news, and everybody reads it—for the subject is one that has been forced (or better, has not been forced) down our throats. But what news stories! Newsweek, altogether not a bad magazine and much better than most dailies, comments: "The net effect of the appointment of Chester C. Davis is good... At least the appointment showed that the President was aware of the way the program had been fumbled..."

Some things we need not read about. No housewife, and no worker who brings home his wage to a housewife, has to be told much about prices. They may not know that general prices are the highest since 1925, and that food prices are the highest since 1920. But when we have to dig deeper and deeper into our pockets for the little meat available, it is a bit of statistics that does not seem too relevant.

Where Does It Go?

Meat is expensive and it is scarce. But why? In general, the answer we have gotten is "The War." But it was not very long before editors began to realize that this was not making The War any more popular and they have shown that this or that aspect is not responsible. When you add it all up, it is evident that they have proved altogether too much.

First, lend-lease. It was necessary to send food to Churchill's Britain and Stalin's Russia, so that they could concentrate on fighting for their democracy. But Stettinius, the lend-lease administrator, came to the defense of his agency and showed that it was not doing nearly so much as people suspected. In 1942 only six per cent of

the meat supply went to lend-lease and only one per cent of this was beef. The rate in January and February of this year was slightly higher, but even for those two months the shipment of beef amounted to "less than a quarter of an ounce of beef per person per week." Obviously, whatever the cause, the lend-lease program cannot be blamed for the meat shortage.

The Army, then. Everybody knows that our soldier boys have big appetites, and they must be fed. As any soldier will tell you, they are not being fed too well these days. The OWI itself admits that the Army has experienced difficulty in obtaining adequate supplies of meat. Recently some kind of survey was run, with the preposterous result that the favorite meat of soldiers was found to be—frankfurters! Even Yank, the Army-censored sheet, didn't believe it.

You may have seen statistics saying that the Army ration is twice, or some such figure, that of the civilian population. But that does not mean that men eat twice as much when they get in the Army. It means that men in the Army—young, healthy, active men—eat about twice as much as the average for the civilian population, which includes everything from milk-sucking babes to vegetarians. At worst, the shifting of several million men from civilian life to the Army should not have involved a large increase in their consumption of meat.

But whatever increase it may have involved was taken up by reciprocal lend-lease. To quote from Stettinius again: "Last year our forces received from Australia and New Zealand as reciprocal

lend-lease more beef than was shipped out from the United States to all areas under lend-lease." The American forces in the Solomons, New Guinea, and New Caledonia received last year a total of 13,000 tons of meat. Britain supplied American troops with 145,000 tons of foodstuffs. But how much of this is meat is not said.

In all, only nine per cent of the meat produced in 1942 went to the armed forces. That, together with lend-lease, totals only 15 per cent.

How Much Produced?

Then perhaps there is less meat being produced? On the contrary, there is more than ever before. For the years 1935-39 there was an average production of 8,000 tons. By 1941 this jumped to almost 10,000 tons. In 1942 it was 11,000. This is an increase in production from 1935-39 to 1942 of 27.3 per cent, while army needs and lend-lease put together total about half this. (And even this is not the whole story, for from the Army figure should be subtracted the meat these men ate as civilians, and from lend-lease the usual peacetime export of meat.)

In short, the meat shortage has nothing to do directly with The War. Indirectly, through the avenue it opens for profiteering, it has much to do with it. Roy Hendrickson, director of food distribution for the Department of Agriculture, has said as much: "Our increases in food production from 1939 to 1943 added up to more than the government used for lend-lease shipments and to feed our own fighting men. Only now, in 1943, is the government BEGINNING to take out for war uses

more than the farmers and food processors are adding to the national supply."

Then why the meat shortage? Hendrickson points out that there are now available for civilian use about 140 pounds a year for each of us. In 1935-39 there were only 120 pounds. "And there were no shortages."

His explanation is that the workers now have so much money in their pockets that they go out and buy—or try to buy—much more meat than ever before. Actually, as LABOR ACTION has pointed out time and time again, the cost of living has risen much faster and much farther than wages. But this is a point we need hardly take time out to prove again.

Who's in Charge?

Once again, why the shortage? Let us take a look behind the scenes of the Office of Price Administration, that foul-smelling bureau that sets the policy for determining how much you and I may eat. In a hearing last week before the House Small Business Committee, Poll-Tax Congressman Wright Patman touched ever so lightly on the crux of the matter. Prentiss Brown, who was a senator from Michigan until the people decided not to vote for him again and who is now the Roosevelt-appointed head of OPA, was testifying. "Do you want to see the entire meat industry entirely under the control of four big units?" Patman asked Brown. "Certainly not," said Brown. And he proceeded to deliver a long, windy statement. But neither he nor Patman again mentioned—even so discreetly, without naming them—the "four big units."

(To be continued)

For a Declaration of Independence --

(Continued from page 1)

throw fascist tyranny by people whom they see adopting the methods and institutions of fascism one after the other? How will they be encouraged to struggle against their oppressors, if they see the workers of the other countries accepting one blow after another at their rights and standards without resistance?

Under the pretext of the "war emergency," the workers of the United States are being pushed back step by step! With all the taxes that he pays on profits guaranteed him by the government, the capitalist still has enough left over to assure him of power and luxury; he still enjoys profits such as he has not known for many years. But the taxes that fall heavier and heavier on the economically-weak shoulders of the worker leave him with burning problems of food, clothing and lodging that are harder and harder to solve each day.

Has the government issued an order saying to the capitalists in industry and banking: "Your salaries are high enough; there are to be no more profits made out of the work of war-workers and the death of war-soldiers"? Of course not! A capitalist government does not talk or act that way toward the capitalists! But the government has issued an order freezing wages at a time when millions of workers in this country still get a below-subsistence wage, and when millions of others get wages which cannot meet the terrific rises in the cost of living, rises which the same government promised to prevent and failed at miserably.

What is the meaning of the outrageous decision just made to freeze labor to the job? When did the people decide it, when were they consulted? Job freezing is little different from forced labor. Job freezing means you are tied to the machine, no matter how the boss treats you, no matter how he keeps down your wages, no matter how inadequate your wages are to meet the tightening family budget.

Imagine what a picnic Hitler will have explaining to the German workers that in the United States, in that "democracy," they are adopting more and more of the same measures he imposed upon the workers of Germany! How will the German worker feel when he learns these facts? Will it prompt him to fight for the overthrow of Hitler sooner? Will it encourage him or will it depress him?

Has the government taken one serious step toward wiping out the triple scandal of Jim Crowism in the United States? A little patch here, a little promise there—and that is all. In fact, the government orders that Jim Crow shall be preserved intact in precisely those places where it is the most hideous scandal of all, in the Army and Navy. The 13,000,000 American Negroes are treated like inferior scum even when they are fighting and dying in the war, and not only in the industries and on the land of America.

Imagine what a feeling of righteousness that gives Hitler, Goebbels & Co.! Imagine what a picnic the shameless Japanese oppressors of the Asiatic and Pacific millions will have explaining to these colored peoples how the American government and the American ruling class treat their colored citizens!

Racial and national discrimination is a blot on a nation and its people. Jim Crow is the dirtiest blot on the United States. Labor must be fiercely determined to wipe it out, and not be a silent partner to such a crime, and, in the long run, a helpless victim of it.

Workers' Rights Under Attack

What is happening to workers' rights in this country during the war? The government, through the Post Office Department, has already deprived one labor paper, The Militant, of its second-class mailing rights, only because it courageously tried to tell the truth about the war, only because it would not sell out to capitalism and the "cost-

plus" patriots. The same Post Office Department has tried to harass and persecute LABOR ACTION, for the same "crime."

That is not all. In one state legislature after another, the most vicious anti-labor legislation has been made into law upon the initiative of employers, fascist groups and other reactionary elements. The national Congress has dozens of similar anti-labor bills before it for action. It plays the cat-and-mouse game of trying to intimidate labor into docile acceptance of every blow at its rights and standards by threatening to adopt these bills and make them law. Every one of these bills is aimed at destroying unionism, or the effectiveness of unions—that is, of the most potent weapon of self-defense the workers of this country have in their hands today.

How long will the cringing labor leaders lie on their bellies and beg for mercy that is not forthcoming? How long before they rise to their feet and help organize the fight against the capitalist offensive?

Much more important: How long will labor stand by without resisting the encroachments on their hard-won rights and their hard-won but still far from adequate living standards? If they do not fight back now, if they do not defend themselves militantly and in their organized and invincible might NOW, it will be ten times harder later on.

The reactionary offensive of bloated and arrogant capital must be shattered. They say in the war that "Too little and too late" is fatal. If labor does "too little and too late" in the war that is being carried right to it by capital, it will be just as fatal.

Time for a Labor Offensive!

Labor has nothing to fear! It is stronger today than ever before in the history of this country. It has, in its organized union movement, well over 12,000,000 members. That is a power that nobody and nothing can defeat, provided it acts militantly, consciously, unitedly. The time to act is now.

The burden of the war must be put on the shoulders of those who can carry it: the big business men, the bankers and industrialists! Expropriate the super-millionaires, so that they get a real taste of "equality of sacrifice." Conscript the war industries! We do not mean that the government should continue building plants for the industrialists free of charge and at public expense. We do mean that the industries be taken out of their hands, that they get only the salary they are entitled to as technical experts (if that's what they are), that they are no longer permitted to coin blood-profits out of our fighting and dying fellow workers on the battlefields. Load the taxes onto their shoulders—the shoulders of the working class never were, are not now and never will be strong enough to carry that burden, especially now when it has reached stupefying proportions.

Control of production and democratic control of rationing in the hands of the workers and the workers' organizations—not in the hands of the capitalists and of capitalist-minded government bureaucrats. The present rationing system is a joke and a crime. The way it is conducted makes scarcity certain, makes high prices sure, makes the black market inevitable. How can the workers KNOW whether or not there is enough food for civilian use, and what food is available? The same goes for other necessities of life: They cannot KNOW, and they cannot DECIDE upon allocations for civilian use, unless they have control of production, as well as control of rationing. We are told that this war is being fought for the benefit of the people. The bulk of the people is made up of workers. Let the workers put themselves in a position to get these benefits!

The wage-freezing and job-freezing set-up must be eliminated. The wages of the workers

everywhere must be raised, at the very least, to keep pace with the rise in the cost of living, that rise which makes a family budget a nightmare for the housewife today. Cut the profits of the "cost-plus" patriots to the bone, and labor will have a fighting chance to live decently.

Make the practice of Jim Crowism and anti-Semitism a federal offense, heavily punishable. The Bourbons and reactionaries all over the country who have the slave-driver's mentality, who secretly envy and worship the regime of fascism, who wish they had one here, who are even now secretly working to get it here—must be put in their place. Labor, in its own elementary self-interest, as well as from the standpoint of the noble ideal of working-class solidarity and fraternity, must set an example by burning out of its ranks with a white-hot iron all signs and practices of Jim Crowism and anti-Semitism.

Where Is Our Labor Party?

Where do we stand this May Day? On the political field, badly—very badly. Labor is still at the mercy of two big, reactionary capitalist parties, the Democratic and the Republican. Any worker who relies on individual capitalist politicians, no matter how friendly to labor he may be or may seem to be, is blind as a bat and is riding to sure doom. It is the PARTY that counts; it is its PROGRAM that counts; it is the CLASS that leads and controls it that counts.

In the shortest possible time, labor must come out boldly and unitedly as an independent political force. That can only be done by forming a mass, militant Labor Party, with a thoroughly working-class program and leadership of its own. Even those workers who do not believe in a revolutionary, socialistic Labor Party, which aims to overthrow capitalism altogether, will be surprised at how many concessions the capitalist politicians are ready to make to labor once it sets itself up as an independent political party!

Labor's independent political organization means nothing short of labor's intention to fight for political power in the country. That should be our aim, and high time, too! On to a workers' government!

Toward a World of Plenty!

The people, the working people, have had enough of low living standards, of war, of sufferings, of inequality. They have had enough of the precarious life—the life in which you do not know from one day to the next if you will have a job; the life in which you do not know from one day to the next if you will have security for yourself and your family; the life in which you do not know from one day to the next if you will have peace for a while or another dreadful, devastating purposeless war, another fratricidal world carnage; the life in which you have the economic possibilities of abundance, of plenty, and the social assurance of scarcity; the life in which the few rule over the many, in which the few oppress the many, in which the few exploit the many. For the working class, that is the only life bankrupt capitalism offers.

Labor can make this world a planet of plenty. It can make this world a planet of peace. It can make this world a planet of the brotherhood of peoples. It can make this world a planet of freedom for mankind. That is the life offered by socialism!

Join hands together fearlessly and confidently! Shatter the reactionary conspiracies of capitalism, and shatter the conspiracy against the people which is capitalism! Onward to the world-liberating victory of socialism!

National Committee of the Workers Party, Max Shachtman, Secretary.

Absenteeism Figures Can And Do Lie

By Everett Westo

A good example of the use of fraudulent statistics concerning absenteeism is to be found in a recent release of the National Industrial Conference Board. This is not another Rickenbacker shooting off his mouth but a respectable business research outfit. Their lie however, are hardly more subtle.

"Absenteeism in industrial plants during 1942," the New York Times account reads, "resulted in the loss of more than 422,700,000 man-days. . . . The board found this was an increase of 72,000,000 man-days over the loss in 1941. . . ."

These figures as they stand mean nothing. It is percentages, and percentages only, that are meaningful. According to these figures, there was an increase of 17 per cent in absenteeism in 1942 over 1941. But what was the increase in the number of workers? A telephone call to the board with this question was able to raise only polite surprise that anyone should think it worth asking.

Figures for the total years are not available, but we take the figures for December of the two years (reported in the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Monthly Bulletin), we find it to be 61.9 million in 1942, as compared with 50.2 in 1941. This represents an increase of 23.3 per cent.

In other words, while the number of workers increased by 23.3 per cent, the number of man-days lost increased by only 17 per cent. This 17 per cent, looked at another way, represents 8.3 days lost per man, and 13.3 days lost per woman during the year.

These figures are, in a way, an amazing record. During 1942—a year when the bosses piled up unheard-of profits while the workers' standard of living was attacked on every side, a year that saw in North Africa the beginning of the system of setting up fascist underlings as American agents, a year that will be surpassed only by the present one in its anti-labor record, a year in short, apparently designed to make workers cynical of the supposed war aims—during 1942 the average worker was absent from his bench for only a week.

And why was he away that week? The Wall Street Journal ran a series of articles, apparently overlooked by most of the other papers, on a survey in certain West Coast Airplane factories made by the Aircraft War Production Council, a boss group. According to their findings, 95 per cent of the absenteeism was due either to illness or transportation difficulties. The remaining five per cent was miscellaneous, and only a portion of this can be the reasonable object of attack by even the most devoted patriot.

But phony figures have a purpose. The figures of the National Industrial Conference Board were just prelude to "certain measures for coping with the problem": "the use of key employees or of employee representatives to discipline absentees, utilizing also management-labor committees for the purpose, discipline management, premiums for good attendance, and appeals to patriotism."

All of this leads up to one thing: "discipline by management." An aircraft factory in England recently employed girls to keep tabs on output and machinery stoppages—the next logical step. They were dismissed, however, when 700 machinists struck in protest.

Here is the real reason for the headlines on absenteeism. They make a good background for anti-labor speeches, and for anti-labor legislation. It is for this reason that every lie concerning absenteeism must be nailed. Every Rickenbacker must have his false figures pushed back down his throat, with the true figures of the immense profits he made as dessert.

Yes, It Takes An Expert!

A House Military Affairs Subcommittee has been told by G. Howland Shaw, assistant Secretary of State for Administration and Personnel, that 261 deferred State Department foreign service officers cannot be released to the armed forces because they are "indispensable to our operations because of their high grade of intelligence and two to four years' specialized training."

On the whole, this is easily understood. A complicated maneuver like that executed in North Africa in collaboration with the late-lamented Darlan requires a delicate sense of just how much the public will swallow. These young gentlemen and budding diplomats, after their "specialized training" acquired in the most select reactionary circles of England and the continent, are indeed "indispensable" to the State Department. They are able to move about in North Africa amidst the stink of a decaying remnant of French fascism, with perfect ease and unconcern, and all the grace born of the best universities.

Their "high grade of intelligence," sharpened by the classic State Department game of dodging all question while pursuing a set course of dealing only with reactionaries, is "entirely impossible to replace," beyond any doubt. The magnificent opportunities provided by the pre-war diplomatic service, for turning out young men who could balance a teacup and swim in a political sewer with equal facility, no longer exist. Not because of the Four Freedoms, of course!

The State Department has always defined freedom in its own way. You can go back as far as the Mexican War and carry the record up to the Spanish-American War, through our missionary efforts in Siberia and Nicaragua, up to the present. But the Army is hornin' in, little by little, on the State Department. It is training its own military administrators and governors. It indicates that, in the big expansion of American imperialism shortly to come, the mint-julep reactionaries of the State Department are outmoded; the Army proposes a more scientific form of totalitarian rule—also under the banner of the Four Freedoms! But then nobody expects the brass hats to bother about freedom in actual fact—and a lot of minor difficulties are thus avoided.

The contrast between the State Department, fighting to keep the few "bright young men" that remain in the Army, overflying with bright young shavetail anxious to demonstrate how to establish "order" in "liberated" territories, is a sad one for those of us who have some feeling for old American institutions.

Our Platform Is the Program of Socialism!

We Can Win, We Shall Win!

By SUSAN GREEN

In our issue of February 15—under "The Readers of Labor Action in the Floor"—we published a letter from "Shipyard Worker, San Francisco," in which he stated his "substantial agreement" with the views expressed in LABOR ACTION but requested us to "devote a column or two of your paper to explain how socialism in our time can come about and why it will, if indeed, you believe it will."

He also wrote in this letter: "I know men of like opinion with my own who would go to the point of death for their views, yet these men have no wish to be martyrs for the sake of being martyrs alone. They wish the assurance of conviction that even if they are lost in the fight, that the fight itself is not lost. Not a sure thing, mind you, but just a reasonable chance."

This May Day issue seems the appropriate place for answering this friend who is a bit doubtful about us as well as about himself.

CAPITALIST DISEASE HAS ONLY ONE CURE

Let me ask our San Francisco friend this question: If a man is suffering from a fatal disease and his only chance of survival is an operation, is he being a martyr if he submits himself to this operation? You'd say, No. He's acting intelligently.

While this is an old analogy, it still serves well to make the point. Our reader agrees with us substantially. Therefore, he must see that society is suffering from the rotten, cancerous, fatal malady of decaying capitalism. He understands, undoubtedly, that all the schemes for bolstering the system are, at their best, palliatives that cannot cure—and, at their worst, strictly dope.

What choice has the intelligent worker? He can either resign himself to the progressively worsening fits of the capitalist system—bigger and better wars; more widespread unemployment; labor's cruel suppression under totalitarianism, the newest symptom of the disease; and to the eventual collapse of civilization, tragic and complete. Or he can submit himself to the operation known as social revolution!

The capitalist system is not the first rotting, exploitive system whose poisonous carcass had to be removed by social revolution to allow humanity a new lease on life. The slave system of the Roman Empire was swept away by social revolutionary forces. Feudalism was ushered out by history by great and inspiring revolutions. The thirteen American colonies in 1776 obtained by revolution a national independence that no other British colony acquired.

The Russian Revolution cleaned out the rubbish heap that pompously called itself the Imperial Russian Empire and a few months later drove the capitalists and landlords out of their strongholds. That the Stalin bureaucracy, as the new ruling class, now has to be sent to keep company with the Czar, the capitalists and the landlords, does not alter the efficacy of revolution as the instrument for social betterment.

Must not the intelligent worker place himself on the side of historical progress—as the ailing individual must place himself on the side of medical and scientific progress?

IS THERE A "REASONABLE CHANCE"?

Our San Francisco friend wants to know "how socialism in our time can come about" and if he is "lost in the fight, that the fight itself is not lost." He says: "Not a sure thing, mind you, just a reasonable chance."

I invite him to cast his appraising eye on the European continent. Will those suffering people in Nazi-invaded lands be content to drive out the Nazis only to welcome back their old masters? Because socialists have been driven underground, has socialist thought and the socialist objective perished? Quite the contrary. Besides, the political commingling of "democrats" and fascists makes it clear to the European masses that the "democratic" imperialists no more than the Nazis will give them simple human freedom. Is there not a "REASONABLE CHANCE" that the people of Europe, whose sufferings have made them deadly earnest, will have to make a try at the socialist solution—in our time?

Suppose that the United States does establish its military police and its food commissary for ruined Europe—to keep down revolution with plenty of bullets and a few crumbs of bread. How long before that volcano must erupt?

Now consider our own country. Who do you suppose will be the goats of the post-war military dictatorship envisaged by our imperialist planners? The workers, of course. When Rickenbacker, representative of the crudest self-interests of his class, calls for the outlawing of strikes, the suspension of the forty-hour week, the banning of the closed shop, the prohibition of double time pay and the institution of incentive wages—in his wishful thinking he is already fastening the burdens of the post-war global dictatorship upon the American workers' backs. Will the workers stand for it?

There is a REASONABLE CHANCE that they will not—that they will fight like hell for their unions, their social gains, a living wage, against the heavy taxation that will be their post-war lot, for jobs for the unemployed, and so on. Under post-war conditions, these fights, these strikes, must necessarily assume not only a political character—that is, against the capitalist system—but also an international character.

Our San Francisco friend is worried that today he cannot persuade his union to his point of view. He says: "A worker who sought to speak the truth about this war would hardly get his mouth set for the words before he'd be pounced on from a dozen sides." What of it? Today he can open his mouth on union issues, on the folly of the no-strike pledge. Tomorrow he may be able to persuade his union about the necessity for independent political action. And if he himself is not around to issue the call for social revolution, he can be sure that the era we live in will make that call compelling.

THE WORKING CLASS CAN WIN THE FIGHT

Will this fight be lost?

Many workers ask this question with Russia in mind. The 1917 Revolution has not brought socialism to Russia, but a new exploiting class ruling through a barbarous dictatorship. Again let me make a comparison with something very easy to grasp.

Suppose a country doctor is called to a patient and finds it imperative to perform an emergency operation in a farm house, without proper antiseptic conditions, without a nurse, without an anesthetic, without the full range of instruments for drainage of pus, etc. The operation itself is successful, but later an infection sets in, necessitating another operation. Let us hope this time the patient can be removed to a modern hospital and the operation performed under favorable conditions.

Did the development of the infection prove that the cause of surgery is lost? No more does the counter-revolution in Russia prove that the cause of socialism is lost. Stalinism is the infection produced by the "farm house" conditions of the Russia in which the first socialist revolution took place—and because the Russian people got no revolutionary support from the workers of the more advanced countries of the West, just as the isolated country doctor got no assistance from the outside.

Yes, the infection of Stalinism necessitates another operation—another revolution. But this time the conditions will be better for success, because the overthrow of Stalin will be part of the European revolution as a whole. The working people of all Europe together will be fighting for a socialist federation of their countries

Our Plan Is Simple: Socialism!

By SYLVIA MERRILL

The planners are having a hey-day. Everyone has devised a means by which the world can be saved and social security assured the working class. It is not an accident that the air is so full of schemes to give the working class a few crumbs.

War stirs the social consciousness of all people. Men and women both at home and in the battlefield, are asked to, and do, make supreme sacrifices. They naturally ask themselves some questions like: What am I going to get out of all this misery? Will we have one war after the other? Isn't there some way we can end all of this? After the war—what?

This is very dangerous for the capitalist system. A few crumbs must therefore be given to the workers. The capitalist gives the workers a little unemployment insurance—but he feels he is REALLY getting "cheap insurance against red revolution." (PM). That was the sentiment of the British industrialists toward the Beveridge Plan—"cheap insurance against red revolution."

While the plan caused much discussion in the ranks of the working class, and twice as much hurrahing among the liberals, the head of the British government, Churchill, made no comment on it. When Churchill finally did make a speech about his "plan," he did not mention the Beveridge Plan, but submitted instead what can only be described as a stall.

Roosevelt's "cradle to the grave" plan was heralded in huge headlines in December. But in March when it finally saw the light of day there was much consternation among the liberals. It didn't even go as far as the Beveridge Plan.

A MODEL FOR FUTURE INSECURITY?

Now what does the famous Beveridge Plan propose? Remember that it is the plan that has become the "model" for the future security of the working class.

It is extremely important that we read and re-read this statement of the Beveridge Plan: It is, first and foremost, a plan of insurance—of giving in return for contributions benefits up to SUBSISTENCE LEVEL. In clear, simple language, this means that the worker insured under the plan will pay eighty-five cents a week to be insured, the state insurance fund will pay fifty-two cents a week and the boss sixty-five cents. In other words, the burden of insurance will be borne by those least able to pay, the persons to be insured. Beveridge himself says that "one of the fundamental things in my scheme is the large contribution from the insured persons."

The plan, further insures you no more than a SUBSISTENCE LEVEL. We are asked to fight and die for a better world, and the better world the promise is only enough to keep body and soul together. We can all remember from relief days that subsistence level can mean a lot of different things to different people. We remember when "food experts" used to eat lunches prepared at the cost of a few cents, proclaim them good and nourishing and proof that relief clients could live on thirty-two cents a day. I guess that was subsistence level if you had a good dinner to go home to. So the war will be over and instead of PLENTY we will once again have "subsistence levels."

The Beveridge Plan is supposed to take care of you from the cradle to the grave. Upon examination of the concrete proposals one notes that there is a provision for a "childbirth grant" and a "burial grant." The only fallacy is that between the time you are born and die, you are going to have a rather difficult time grubbing along on the Beveridge Plan.

You will get free medical and hospital treatment under the Beveridge Plan. But the fact that the conservative medical profession has declared itself against socialized medicine, and all public hospitals have never had the necessary facilities to care for the sick, isn't answered by any specific proposals in the plan. This is a typical example of capitalist planning.

BEVERIDGE HIMSELF ADMITS PLAN IS NO GOOD

It is impossible to discuss every phase of the Beveridge Plan here, as space does not permit it. Besides which, it would, in our opinion, be a useless task, since the whole plan is based on an economy of scarcity in a society where the basis for PLENTY exists. If once we understand that it is possible for society to provide health insurance commensurate with the needs of the

—so that the backward and the most advanced will merge their resources.

What about us here in the USA? American capitalism looks huskier every day—with its tremendous plants, its pile of gold, and now its intimidating array of air, naval and military strength. What can the American working class do against this powerful fortress of entrenched wealth?

What, indeed, but the simplest, most natural thing in the world—just step out from under the capitalist fortress—WHICH IS SUSTAINED BY LABOR!

Workers have learned from their own strikes and sit-downs the elementary lesson that those tremendous plants are useless without them. The accumulated wealth of the capitalist class is wealth the workers produced but never got. The military strength of this country is the sum total of war material produced by labor and of soldiers, sailors, marines and flyers stemming mainly from the working people. Let the working class merely decide to use its labor and life for a better purpose than to sustain this capitalist fortress—and socialism will have that "reasonable chance" our reader is worrying about.

There is, of course, the question of leadership. Who will form the necessary vanguard? A political party is necessary to give

patient, and in line with a standard of living that is based on how much is necessary to maintain good, healthful living, and not on how little you can get by on, it becomes meaningless to discuss an increase of \$3.60 a week in unemployment insurance such as the Beveridge Plan provides. The problem is not how to provide unemployment insurance—but how to wipe out unemployment!

The impracticability of the whole plan is stated by Beveridge himself:

"If we have mass unemployment we may not be able to carry out the proposals in my report. We may give people money, but there won't be goods for them, and thus there will be poverty. I don't know how we shall continue productive employment after the war. When people say we cannot abolish unemployment, I say we have abolished it twice in my lifetime—during the last war and in this war. I simply won't believe it is impossible to abolish mass unemployment, yet I do not know how it is to be done and do not even know whether anyone else does."

Do we need a more lucid statement of the bankruptcy of capitalism? Do we need a clearer statement of the worthlessness of a plan than the opinion of its author? He declares that the fundamental premise upon which the plan is built—no mass unemployment—cannot be achieved, unless it is during war. And what is more, he admits neither he nor anyone else knows how to abolish unemployment.

WE SOCIALISTS HAVE A WORKABLE PLAN

It is quite true. Capitalism does not know how to abolish unemployment—BUT WE SOCIALISTS DO! If capitalism, with its system of production for profit—its system of international rivalry for domination of foreign territories and trade, which produces one war after another—if capitalism, which keeps millions subjugated and exploited, whether it be by its wage system, or its outright suppression of colonial peoples—if this system cannot give peace and plenty to its people, socialism will.

Socialism means production for use and not for profit. Socialism means internationalism. It means that one working class is not pitted against the others in wars. It means that one working man is not pitted against the other in the fight for a job. It means that one working class is not cutting the throat of the other by producing at lower wages than the other. The criteria for production under socialism would be—how much is needed? Some people will argue that it can't work, it's a utopia. We can only answer that capitalism has demonstrated that it can't work. A society organized on the basis of production for use would have more of a chance of working than our present economic system.

CAPITALIST PLAN RUNS AFOUL OF CAPITALISM

Not only Beveridge has condemned his own plan. Without understanding that they are giving away the basic fallacy of the Beveridge Plan, the liberal and conservative press writes that it "solves no fundamental economic problems, such as the cyclical mass unemployment that swept the industrial world in 1929..." (The newspaper PM).

Time magazine pointed out that "contrary to general pre-publication expectation, there was not a revolutionary idea in the whole report."

And the conservative British weekly, "The Economist," understood that the Beveridge Plan was going to change nothing essential when it said that this was "a plan for the security of incomes up to a minimum level... based upon existing schemes and existing methods."

Let us not be taken in by all of these plans now floating around. In actuality there is nothing new about them. If you go to a library and look on the shelves for books on post-war plans, you will find hundreds of them. If you open them you will see that they are not dated 1942 or 1943, but 1917, 1918, 1919 and so on up to the present war.

The thing to observe is that none of these people have been able to devise any kind of plan to solve the basic ills of capitalism. They all seek to do the impossible: make capitalism work. Two world wars in twenty-five years, untold misery, poverty and unemployment are the living facts that prove that capitalism doesn't work—not for the working class, anyway.

force and direction to the struggle to mobilize the most advanced sections of the working class.

The Stalinists are tools of the Kremlin who exploit their connections with labor to carry out Stalin's fluctuating international policies. The top union leadership is sold on capitalism and lies organized labor to a policy of class collaboration.

There remain the WORKERS PARTY, the supporters of LABOR ACTION, a handful of true revolutionaries in other organizations—and the thousands of advanced and militant workers who, like our San Francisco reader, are or will be "in substantial agreement." Out of this grouping will be built a WORKERS PARTY that will combine clarity of socialist program with the size of a mass organization and the proportions of working class leadership.

But not by worrying about being martyrs, about putting our necks "on the chopping block," as our San Francisco reader expressed it. If we keep our heads and courage in our hearts, we can weld a revolutionary party of class-conscious, disciplined, purposeful militants for whom "socialism in our time" will be a realistic slogan with a very, very "reasonable chance" of success. And we recommend to our San Francisco reader that, as a first step, he join the Workers Party.

May Day Spirit Is Alive!

AN EDITORIAL

There are, so far as we know, no "Down-Tools" May Day demonstrations of any consequence in the country this year. The reasons for this are many and obvious. Does this indicate that the working class is supine, that it has forgotten its heritage, that it no longer breathes with the fire of militancy that characterized May Day demonstrations in the past? Nothing, absolutely nothing, could be further from the truth.

Because of the special May Day material in this issue, we have found it impossible to cover the latest developments in the general wage situation, the miners strike, etc. But readers of LABOR ACTION, in which material is covered week by week, are well acquainted with the facts. The truth of the matter is this: the labor movement is seething with discontent, and with the impulse to action. So strong is this ferment that the most servile of the union bureaucracies have had to go along.

In last week's issue we reported Roosevelt's wage-freezing decree. There was a momentary silence in the country this year (except for the mine workers, who condemned it immediately without equivocation). However, since the Roosevelt decree, and the Byrnes and McNutt decrees that followed it, the labor movement,

almost to a man, has joined in a loud clamor of denunciation. Not all the statements were as bold or as forthright as they should have been. A few were, and it was these that spoke the deepest urge of the working class today—for higher wages to meet the rising cost of living, and dissatisfaction with, and lack of confidence in, the government's price fixing policies.

A fury of indignation against the government's wage policies, which are sharply in contrast with the government's solicitude for zooming profits, is sweeping the country. So, for example, Walter Reuther, a leader of the United Automobile Workers, has spoken out strongly against the decree.

Next week we will return to covering the daily developments in the union and wage situation. For the present we wish to express our conviction that had the union leaders called the workers to the streets in May Day demonstrations this year, this massing of workers would have exceeded any in the history of the country. And that's what we mean when we say the May Day spirit is still alive. The May Day spirit is the spirit of class independence and class insurance. That spirit burns brightly; its flame is unextinguished; its intensity grows sharper!

A Program For Labor --

(Continued from page 5)

They have been through the experience of depending on the WLB and the WPB and they have gotten nowhere. They have seen Roosevelt issue a wage-freezing and job-freeing decree while doing nothing about profits. They have seen Congress and the state legislatures pass anti-labor bills. They have tried to make ends meet while the profiteers push up the price of the necessities of life daily. There ought to be an end to this docility, this turning of the other cheek, somewhere—and soon.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IS ENOUGH

During the First World War the workers were faced with problems similar to those which we face today. It has always been so in capitalist wars and will remain so as long as capitalism exists in the First World War we were told that "this is a workers' war." Government officials, just like Bard of the Navy Department today, and employers' stooges, just like Rickenbacker, were going up and down the country telling labor that the war was for democracy and that the working class had everything to gain by supporting the war. Big labor leaders supported that war also, just as they do today.

Labor was regimented and lined up similarly to the way it is today. Only today matters are worse and with less reason, because the workers have had twenty-five years to learn a lesson. And today there are more industrial workers and their potential strength is far greater.

What is happening to labor in the United States is going on elsewhere; in England, for instance. There too there are promises and the same old speeches. There too the profits pile up and the militancy of the unions decays. American labor must look on the problems faced by labor in Europe, Asia and Africa. They are our kind and suffer the same blows that we do. The struggle for the emancipation of the working class in any one country cannot be separated from the struggle for the emancipation of the working class of the entire world.

Workers in the United States are fully aware that fascism must be defeated. It is the most barbarous form of capitalism. It is the most vicious manifestation of imperialism.

There is only one guarantee that even if there is a military victory over Hitler we will have the opportunity to live in a truly democratic world. That guarantee can only be given by the working class of the world. Whether or not the combined ruling class of England and the United States can gain a military victory over Hitler, it cannot guarantee a victory over fascism. No capitalist and imperialist ruling class can; neither the American nor the British.

The working class in the United States can take the lead in providing guarantees against the advance and spread of fascism. It is the largest working class in the world. It is the strongest working class in the world also because it has not come under the heel of an oppressive totalitarian government such as the Stalinist regime. It still has a large degree of freedom.

POLITICAL ACTION A PRIME NEED

The first step of the working class to guarantee a victory over fascism is the mass militant, economic organization that we have already been talking about. But as we have said many times before, this is not enough. The all-important step today is the political organization of the working class. The struggle in which labor is engaged today arises out of the political offensive of a capitalist and imperialist government which represents the needs of an imperialist ruling class. It is a struggle of one class against another.

It is urgent that we ask what we mean when we say "the government." Government in the United States as in all capitalist countries, is party government. That is one political party or another is in power, as they say. It is political parties that run candidates for office: for President and for Congress. These parties seek to control the government; that is, to govern; to rule. In the United States the party in power is always the Republican or the Democratic Party. It has been demonstrated through successive administrations and in all changes in administration that both of these parties are the political organizations of the ruling class, of the bosses.

Due to the fact that at the time of the coming of the present war the Democratic Party was in power and in control of the government, it was the Democratic Party which made the decision to enter the war. It would have been no different of course if the Republican Party had been running things and controlling the government. This is demonstrated by the fact that this party is in solid support of the war today. There was no fundamental difference between the platforms of the two parties in the last election. This is as it must be because both parties serve the same ruling class, the same bosses.

It is necessary to re-emphasize that decisions are being made today by political parties: by the Republican and Democratic Parties. This is what in practice is meant by "the government," the rule of a political party. Today it is the Democratic Party. If Willie defeats Roosevelt in 1944 then "the government" will be the Republican Party.

That will make no essential difference in "the government" because the two parties together form a unified class political organization representing the ruling class. This Democratic-Republican Party has as its main function the protection of the interests of capitalist society. It makes decisions, issues decrees and passes laws for the minority and against the majority, that is, against the working class. Therefore, "the government," that is, the President, the Cabinet, government boards, Congress and the courts—are not neutral or impartial; they represent their class.

How can labor, the working class, face this organized political force of the bosses with only their economic organizations—their trade unions? It can't, and the truth of this is being demonstrated before our eyes. Labor unions as they are—that is, not politically organized—cannot control the government. This is the function of political organization. Not just any political organization, but a class political party that represents its own class and the class from which it gets its strength.

Every class in history has formed its own political organization or institution and fought for the establishment of its own government. The working class in the United States and in all capitalist countries is confronted with this necessity today. This is the only guarantee for the birth of real democracy, the only guarantee against the extension of fascism: political parties of the working class in control of working class governments all over the world. And not only is this the only sure way to defeat fascism, it is at the same time the best guarantee for the military defeat of Hitler.

This is a call to the militants in the labor movement. This call comes to us from all of labor's martyrs of the past: the men, women and children of the labor movement who died for the freedom of their class and the liberation of mankind.

New leaders must step forward. The present leadership is tied body and soul to the capitalist oppressors and the imperialist war makers. They have had their day and have played their puny role. The task of political organization is beyond these labor leaders. They must be replaced by men and women who think in terms of a victorious working class and who know how to organize for this victory. A working class victorious over hunger and fear, exploitation and oppression. And, above all, a working class victorious over both fascism and imperialist war.