

## Sequel to the Miners' Strike

By GERTRUDE SHAW

The miners fought a nine-month struggle to get a little more money to meet the high cost of living. They were vilified. Their leader, John L. Lewis, was vilified.

Labor leaders, hog-tied to the Roosevelt Administration by the no-strike pledge, trembled at the "bad" example the miners were setting for the whole labor movement. But the rank and file of labor admired the miners, knowing that sooner or later they would all have to do likewise or be the suckers of the war profiteers.

The government stepped in, as the saying goes. Secretary of the Interior Ickes became government operator of the mines. The miners returned to work. After much negotiating, the leaders of the United Mine Workers finally entered into an agreement with Government Operator Ickes by which certain very modest gains were clinched for the miners. Among the gains was portal-to-portal pay.

Whereupon the miners were returned to their "rightful" owners—AND THE SAME OLD PROFIT-SQUEEZE BEGINS ANEW!

The mine operators now contest the portal-to-portal pay clause in the agreement. A test case is brought by Jewell Ridge Coal Corporation, a Virginia concern. Solidly behind the Jewell company is the Southern Coal Operators Association. **They want to continue getting for nothing the many hours of miners' time consumed in traveling underground.**

The other day Judge A. D. Barksdale ruled in the Jewell case. This judge of the Federal District Court, meting out "justice" according to his capitalist lights, naturally decided against the UMW and in favor of the coal barons.

**The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, this learned judge declared, was not intended to force mine operators to pay underground employees for the time they consumed traveling in mines to and from their places of work. No, of course not. It was, by inference, intended that this well-earned pay should be pocketed as profits by the mine owners.**

The Southern Coal Operators Association is jubilant about this anti-labor decision. Its president, Edward R. Burke, proclaims that the Jewell decision "sweeps away the framework upon which portal-to-portal agreements were made between Secretary Ickes, as government operator of the mines, and John L. Lewis' UMW."

The United Mine Workers will, of course, appeal the case either to the Circuit Court or immediately to the United States Supreme Court. In a word, a legal fight is on—AFTER THE NINE-MONTH BITTER AND HARROWING STRIKE STRUGGLE FOUGHT BY THE MINERS.

But, under the circumstances, what else could be logically expected? Loudly and clearly, the miners are called upon TO CHANGE THE CIRCUMSTANCES.

Government operation of the mines for the avowed purpose of breaking a strike is of no benefit to the miners. As soon as the mines are returned to private ownership, the exploiters of the miners get busy with new vigor.

FOR THE SAKE OF THE MINERS AND OF THE NATION AS A WHOLE, THE MINES HAVE TO BECOME THE PROPERTY OF THE NATION.

But that does not say everything. The question is: **Under what kind of government should the mines be nationalized?**

There are plenty of government employees today who are exploited as badly as, if not worse than, employees in private industry. No worker wants to jump from the frying pan into the fire.

Furthermore, a government so constituted that capitalist-dominated courts can nonchalantly break the agreements made by it, is not what the workers want.

What, then, is the way out?

Something new is needed in these United States—A WORKERS' GOVERNMENT, BASED ON A COMPLETE REORGANIZATION OF SOCIETY.

The interests of the miners and of all the working people must become the paramount concern of government. Nationalization of the mines, the railroads and all industry under a workers' government will mean that the workers themselves will actually operate industry for human use instead of inhuman profit. **The capitalist government gives to the workers with one hand and takes away with the other—thus maintaining the supremacy of the capitalists and their ever-increasing exploitation of labor.**

The class-conscious and pioneering spirit of the miners is traditional in this country. The eleventh hour has struck for a real break away from the capitalist merry-go-round. Will the miners arise to this task?

Will they come out with the absolutely necessary demand for nationalization of the mines?

And will they follow the logic of this demand which calls for independent class political action through a national independent Labor Party—fighting for a workers' government.

The workers have to vote as they strike—NOT WITH, but AGAINST the capitalists!

## Can You Top This?

As we go to press it looks as if the poll-taxers in Congress are having it their way about disfranchising the soldiers in the 1944 elections.

The President's challenge to Congress to stand up and be counted was nonchalantly sidestepped. The House refused to provide a rollcall vote on soldier-balloting legislation. This is rightly interpreted as a preliminary victory for the poll-taxers and their political cousins.

The week's debate in Congress on soldier-vote legislation has provided some tidbits to be turned on the tongue and relished. Outstanding among them was the open admission by Senator Eastland, Democrat from Mississippi, that provision for balloting by the armed services would be a threat to "white supremacy in the South."

Furthermore, he unashamedly blurted out his "democratic" opinion that "the boys from the South are fighting to maintain white supremacy."

Can you top this?

# LABOR ACTION

FEBRUARY 7, 1944

A PAPER IN THE INTERESTS OF LABOR

ONE CENT

## COST OF LIVING UP 43.5% WAGES ARE FROZEN AT 15%

By SUSAN GREEN

### Break the Chain!

If another nail was needed to make secure the lid on the coffin of the Little Steel wage freeze, that nail has now been hammered in good and proper.

It will be remembered that even the figures of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, which organized labor claimed to be far below the facts of the cost of living, admitted that costs have risen 23.4 per cent above January 1, 1941—which is already 8.4 per cent above the 15 per cent grudgingly permitted by the Little Steel formula.

Now come R. J. Thomas of the CIO and Thomas Meaney of the AFL, the labor members of the President's Cost of Living Committee, with their factual report.

They put the figure at 43.5 per cent above January, 1941—or nearly twice as much as the fluke index of the Bureau of Labor Statistics—and 28.5 per cent above the 15 per cent basis of the Little Steel formula.

That cadaver is definitely buried.

### How Report Was Made

The report of Thomas and Meaney is by no means a slipshod affair. It is heavily documented, based on field surveys, on consultations with experts in government, business and organized labor, on interviews with hundreds of workers and housewives.

One of the field surveys covered 1,500 steel workers of the CIO and the method used was so outstandingly fair that even the acting chief of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in charge of its index, had to offer his praise.

As a result of this painstaking work to arrive at the truth, Thomas and Meaney find that today it takes \$143.50 to buy what in January, 1941, it took only \$100 to buy.

How many of you rich (?) war workers have received a wage increase of 43.5 per cent since January, 1941?

However, the report makes it clear that this figure is only tentative. It was difficult to arrive at an accurate estimate of the rise in costs effected by such factors as quality deterioration and selling of low quality merchandise at the same price as higher quality. "It is apparent," the report adds, "that our findings with regard to the overall increase in the cost of living will need to be adjusted upward when these data become finally available."

That Little Steel formula is not only dead and buried—but rapidly decomposing.

(Continued on page 4)



## Casualties in War Plants

### Workers and Soldiers Brothers in Life and in Death

By HILDY JOHNSON

Generals, cabinet secretaries, editors and others have a particular stock in trade at the moment! It seems to be to slander the working man as a slacker who betrays the soldiers at the front by loafing, by living in the lap of luxury by virtue of "silk-shirt" war wages, and by wantonly striking. These slanderers of labor are all very much interested in casualty lists.

They play upon the people's natural horror and shock as they see the ever-growing lists of those wounded and killed in the war—only to try to inflame public opinion against labor. They make a great point of computing the number of man-hours lost by striking workers and hint that these workers are directly and indirectly responsible for the ever-growing casualty lists, or at the very least giving aid and comfort to the military enemy. These gentlemen are indeed very busy trying to turn the soldiers against their brothers at home by spreading this false propaganda that they are being knifed in the back by labor.

Under cover of this campaign of slander against labor, the slanderers are trying to put over Roosevelt's labor draft slave law which will help the corporation owners further break down labor's standards of living and smash its unions.

It is not surprising therefore that these labor-haters in their speeches and editorials never mention one casualty list that the government has officially issued—WAR CASUALTIES IN THE WAR PLANTS.

Government figures on industrial casualties reveal the following:

From Pearl Harbor to January 1, 1944—37,600 people were killed in industry—7,500 MORE THAN THE MILITARY FATALITIES.

Also, 210,000 workers were perma-

nently disabled—SIXTY TIMES MORE THAN THE MILITARY WOUNDED AND MISSING.

Injuries account for four times as many lost man-hours as do strikes, for 50,000 injured workers are absent from industry daily.

Deaths and injuries on the job are occurring now at the rate of 270,000-000 lost man-days a year, WHICH IS LIKE WITHDRAWING 900,000 WORKERS FROM THE PLANTS FOR A FULL YEAR.

The anti-labor speechmakers have been silent about this casualty list. If they had spoken, it would have had to be to give these figures as one more evidence of labor's sacrifices in this war.

The workers in the plants who make up the anonymous list of war casualties are victims of the corporations' greed and cruelty. They are victims, not of loafing, but of speed-

up and working overtime. They are victims of exhaustion. They are victims of greedy capitalists who refuse to install obvious measures of safety and accident prevention.

In crowded boomtime towns where they cannot get proper housing and recreation facilities, workers are an easy prey to exhaustion and disease, WHICH THESE FIGURES DO NOT EVEN TAKE ACCOUNT OF.

Labor should stand for no slanders from these stooges of the corporations. As yet there have been no casualty lists of management. As far as we know, there has been no large number of corporation presidents and members of boards of directors permanently disabled or killed on the "job." THE ONLY KNOWN CASUALTIES HAVE BEEN OF SLIGHT CASES OF SORE MUSCLES DUE TO SHOVELING IN SWOLLEN PROFITS.

## NAACP Joins With Labor Group In Defense of Negro Unionist

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People has joined with the Workers Defense League in filing a "friend of the court" brief in the Arkansas Supreme Court in behalf of Tee Davis, of Edmondson, Ark., sharecropper member of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union, serving a ten-year jail sentence for defending his home.

Davis' trouble was that he took too seriously the law in Arkansas that every man's home "shall be deemed and adjudged his castle." That's the law—if you're white. Davis happened to be colored—and he shot through the door at an unidentified man who shouted: "Open up, you goddamned black son of a bitch!"

and tried to break down his door. The man shot back. No one was hurt. The man turned out to be white and a marshal, attempting an illegal search, without a warrant, for someone else.

Still, Davis, an active member of the interracial Southern Tenant Farmers Union, got ten years for shooting "with intent to kill."

The brief, written by Ernest Fleischman and Robert L. Bobrick of the New York Bar, attorneys for the WDL, with the cooperation of Milton R. Konvitz of the NAACP, stressed the point that "a man's home is still his castle," and the record was barren of evidence of intent to kill.

## Another "Dissolution"

The latest move of the Stalinist bureaucracy in constitutionally altering the present "Soviet Union," and creating sixteen "constituent republics" with their own governments, armies and diplomatic representatives, reflects the great diplomatic war now raging within the camp of the "United" Nations.

Full details and analysis of this latest move by Stalin will appear in the next issue of LABOR ACTION. However, we wish to point out now that Stalin's latest move in a series of "dissolutions" has the following two important aims:

1. By creating these sixteen "autonomous" but allied "republics," he hopes to be able to include among his nations parts of Finland, the Baltic states, parts of Poland, a greater Ukraine, and whatever else he can get. The constitutional change creating the sixteen "republics" will have about the same value in creating "independent" nations as the Stalinist constitution had in guaranteeing non-existent democratic rights in Russia—the rights of free speech, free press, assembly and organization!

2. The second aim of this latest action is to increase the voting strength of Russia in any diplomatic conferences held by the United Nations seeking to settle post-war problems—provided, of course, agreement can be reached in granting Stalin this kind of heavy representation. All indications point to increased aggravation of relations between the Allies and an absence of real agreement.

## NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE LABOR FRONT

## What Labor Can Learn From Recent RR Situation

By DAVID COOLIDGE

One of the strangest escapades yet indulged in by the Roosevelt government has been terminated by the return of the railroads to the capitalist bondholders and stockholders, that is, to the owners of the roads. The twenty-two-day colonels have returned their eagle bedecked uniforms to the War Department, along with their commissions. These railroad presidents remain "gentlemen" but they are no longer "officers." The saluting is over, the presidents are plain Mr. or Bill, and Mr. Roosevelt is no longer their Commander-in-Chief.

## Farceful Bumping

These twenty-two days of government "ownership" were not only an escapade, but somewhat of a farce. Not a farce from the side of the railway unions, but a farce from the side of the government bureaucrats who attempted to bungle through as in so many labor disputes. The railroad unions did a good job and came out of the affair with real gains which resulted from the mass pressure they had voted to exert.

In the course of the fight, "Assistant President" Brynes and Vinson, the assistant to the "Assistant President," were kicked around like a Missouri hound dog. General Marshall also came in for attention by "Labor," the official paper of the railway unions. This paper stated that the White House had used Marshall in the "strangest of propaganda stunts," "in a scheme to inflame public opinion" against the unions.

It was only the railroad unions that came out of the contest with any degree of honor. Not only this, but they achieved something more substantial than the honor of the unions. They got wage increases beyond what they were prepared to accept from the National Mediation Board. The board had made an award of eight cents an hour. Boss Vinson vetoed this and said that four cents was enough. In the final settlement, the operating brotherhoods got an increase of nine cents an hour, plus a week's vacation with pay, which they didn't get before.

The non-operating organizations got increases of from nine to eleven cents an hour. The four to ten cents part of the settlement is retroactive to February 1, 1943. This will total about \$170,000,000.

One of the most important aspects of the victory of the unions was the defeat of Roosevelt's intention to freeze the wages for the duration of the war. "Above all," says Labor, "they blocked the scheme of President Roosevelt and 'Assistant President' James F. Brynes to freeze rail wages for the duration.... On top of that, they vindicated the all-impor-

tant principle of collective bargaining... and set a precedent which will aid all unions in all industries."

## Another Hole in Little Steel

The railroad settlement means that the Little Steel formula has been punctured again. Last June Vinson vetoed the eight cents an hour increase because he said it exceeded the Little Steel formula. But now it is claimed that although nine, ten and eleven cents are more than eight cents, the formula has not been breached and "inflation" need not be feared.

How did the government arrive at such a conclusion? The slick statisticians and economists who work for the various government boards and stabilizers said that overtime pay should be absorbed in the hourly increase in pay.

If you call overtime pay which you never got before, a part of your regular hourly rate of pay even though this means more money per hour and by the week, that is not inflationary. If you get nine, ten and eleven cents increase in pay by counting in your overtime, that will not produce inflation even though you get more money each week. But if you are given a straight eight cents an hour increase, that will be inflationary, even though you will have less money in your pay envelope each week!

## Holding Down Basic Pay

This sounds crazy, but there is method in the madness of the Roosevelt government on this point. The Roosevelt capitalist government and the capitalist employers are not so much concerned with what they call "inflation" but with holding down the base rate of pay.

They are insisting here, as in the case of the miners, that if workers get more money in their weekly pay envelopes, it must come, not from an increase in the basic hourly rate, but from overtime work, from putting in more hours. That is, they want to increase the length of the working day. They have no serious objection now if the workers take home fifty dollars for sixty hours of work, but they are against his having the opportunity to take home fifty dollars, say, for forty hours of work.

The owners of industry and their government at Washington have their eyes on the post-war period. Should labor establish comparatively high basic hourly rates of pay now, the workers will fight after the war is over to retain this basic hourly rate. The employers, aided by their government, are laying plans for holding down wages and increasing hours for the period after the war. The nonsense about infla-

tion is simply a scheme to hide their intentions from the working men and women.

It is necessary to make some comment on the business of the government taking over the railroads.

## It Was a Phony

The government didn't really take over the roads any more than it took over the mines. A government does not and cannot take over capitalist private property simply by nailing up a sign saying: "No Trespassing, Property of the United States Government." Neither can any government take over capitalist private property by putting a few corporation presidents in army uniforms with eagles on their shoulders.

The only way a government can really nationalize capitalist private property is by expropriating the capitalists, by taking their property from them, in the name of and for the benefit of all the people, eliminating the payment of interest and dividends to the private owners, and of all private profit.

All the government did in the case of the railroads was exactly what it did in the case of the mines. It carried on operations to guarantee that its imperialist war plans would not be interfered with and to head off a strike against the capitalists who own the railroads and the mines. All the workers know, however, that neither the railroad workers nor the miners got anywhere with the government and their capitalist bosses until they decided that mass action was the next step.

Now that the railway unions have won a victory for themselves against their employers and the government, we think it in place to call their attention to a very disgraceful situation which they have conspired with their capitalist employers to create.

## Negro Railroad Workers

We refer to their monstrous, reactionary, anti-labor and anti-democratic attitude toward Negro railroad workers. We are speaking specifically about the firemen, engineers, conductors, clerks, brakemen, switchmen and all those railroad unions which exclude Negroes from membership, and conspire with the employers to keep them from holding certain jobs and getting promotions.

With the utmost stupidity, these unions make a bloc with the railroad companies against Negro workers. They mouth about "democracy," they fight for the democratic rights of white workers and at the same time lead these same white workers to practice the most vicious form of discrimination and hatred against Negro workers.

Instead of placing themselves in the forefront of the struggle for democratic rights for Negroes, these unions join with the reactionary employers, the Negro-hating and labor-hating Southern congressmen, the

Ku Klux Klan and all the most rabid and backward forces in the population against the Negro workers.

"Labor," the official organ of the railroad unions, is a very progressive union paper on many important issues. But on the matter of discrimination against Negro workers it is noticeably and strangely silent.

At the top of its editorial page

"Labor" carries the expressions: "INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY" and "TRUTH, JUSTICE AND FREEDOM." For whom does "Labor" seek industrial democracy? For whom does it seek freedom and justice? For white people and white workers only? It's about time Brother Keating had something to say in "Labor" on this question.

## Washington Likes Dalrymple

Sherman H. Dalrymple, head of the United Rubber Workers Union, has definitely lost ground in the eyes of the rank and file by his recent dictatorial actions, including the expulsion of seventy-four good union members. But he has made up for it by the praise he is receiving from Washington.

According to Clifford Prevost and Radford Mobley, writing in the Beacon Journal of Akron, "Washington officials were gratified when they learned that tough, quiet and respected Sherman H. Dalrymple, head of the powerful United Rubber Union, CIO, had expelled several score union members for participating in an unauthorized strike. This act did a great deal toward restoring public confidence in the unions, which have been losing ground during the past year."

One thing labor leaders must be taught by the rank and file is that the function of a labor leader is not to win praise from the capitalist government, but from the union for serving its interests. The union-wrecking actions of Dalrymple deserve only the praise of the enemies of labor.

The same writers go on to say: "None denies that the strikes haven't seriously harmed the war effort, with about three major exceptions, but everyone knows the fear of a great strike in wartime has a depressing effect on the whole people."

Oh, ho! So the cat is out of the bag! Strikes have NOT "harmed the war effort." Washington is simply afraid that they MAY. That indicates the degree of the dishonesty of the anti-labor propaganda with which the nation is being flooded. You can be sure that the soldiers are not going to be let in on the secret that "None denies that the strikes haven't seriously harmed the war effort."

Prevost and Mobley conclude with the sentence: "We probably hear Dalrymple's name mentioned in Congress." Among the rank and file of rubber workers his name has been blackened.

## Prefers Fighting Labor to Fighting Japs and Nazis

CLEVELAND, Jan. 30—An investigation of an anti-labor speech made by Major Ralph Coburn in this city last month is being undertaken by the adjutant-general's office in Washington. Coburn believes the investigation is a result of complaints of labor leaders.

In his speech, Coburn, connected with the Cleveland Ordnance District, said in a direct threat to all American workers:

"I could do some fighting myself in this war, and it wouldn't be against the Nazis and the Japs, either. I think you know who I mean."

He charged that strikes were responsible for shortages of munitions at the front and added: "These strikes are no atonement for the

mistake of Pearl Harbor."

The most important part of this whole incident is the attitude of Mayor Frank Lausche, reported candidate for the governorship of Ohio, who appeared on the same platform with Major Coburn. Questioned by reporters, Lausche said: "I agreed with what the Major said then and I still do."

As usual, the local union bureaucrats are taking a weak-kneed, middle-of-the-road position. Richard Reisinger, Stalinist president of the Cleveland Industrial Union Council, and William Finegan, president of the Cleveland Federation of Labor, after disclaiming any responsibility for the investigation, make no reply whatever to this fascist speech.

## WORLD EVENTS

By Europacus

## Paper Describes Strikes in Nazi Occupied Italy

The Italian underground paper, "Italia Libera" (organ of the Action Party), reports that a tremendous wave of strikes swept the Milan area during December. Nothing has been reported about this highly important movement in the boss press (apparently this is news which the New York Times does not think fit to print).

It is well worth remembering that the first wave of the Italian revolution, which brought about the fall of Mussolini, also started by a big strike movement in Northern Italy and Milan. The forces of the Italian working class are by no means exhausted. After a certain rest it is again surging forward. The reports describe the following events:

The Milan strikes began on the afternoon of December 13. The most obvious causes were the increases in prices, even of "controlled" goods, and the fact that for some time there had been no distribution of rationed foods... the fascist authorities looked on helplessly at the general increase in prices. They were interested only in suppressing the movement of revolt.

The strikes started at Sesto Giovanni (near Milan) and spread rapidly to all large and fairly large industries in the area. It broke out at the Breda works, the Marelli, the Magnaghi, the Innocenti, the Pirelli, the Radaelli—in fact, everywhere. On Tuesday abstention from work was general, and on Wednesday even the Alfa Romeo Works, which in the past had been notorious for fascist penetration, joined the movement. The clerical staffs of the factories also joined the movement which in the meantime had spread to all the area around Milan up to Monza.

The fascist authorities appeared to

be bewildered by the extent of the movement. The Nazis distributed manifestos and in some factories notices were posted threatening individual and collective reprisals. The strike continued everywhere and, in addition, the workers demanded the prompt release of their comrades who had been arrested. Armored cars paraded the streets of Sesto San Giovanni driven by SS men.

Later the representative of the German command decided on an "offensive of persuasion." He urged the workers to return to work and "await in confidence what will be accomplished." The end of the speech was greeted with deadly silence. The Nazi policy during the strike—which was still going on when this report was written—has been alternated between threats and promises. "But what could be the good of their promises of extra ration cards when there are no rationed goods to be distributed? The Nazis have looted the country, the so-called government of Mussolini on the other hand has increased wages, but prices have increased by 200 to 400 per cent. Of what use is a wage increase of fifty or sixty per cent here?"

The Italian paper which gives this report concludes: "The workers must not allow themselves to be taken in by the blandishments of the Germans or by the insidious and inefficient measures of the Italian fascists. They must continue the strike until satisfactory living conditions have been achieved; and above all they must prevent Italian labor from being used by the Nazis and for the benefit of that army which the fascists are trying to organize by coercion. Working men and women, clerks and technicians must look to themselves..."

## Third Front at Work in the Other Camp Also

James B. Reston reports in the New York Times of January 28 that there were more strikes in Great Britain and Northern Ireland in 1943 than in any other year since 1893. Of a total of 1,775 strikes, more than half have been in coal mines. The workers have acted spontaneously, without the consent of the trade union leadership. Says Reston: "Labor experts and officials put the great outbreak of short 'wildcat' strikes down to four war years of strain and overwork."

The government has extraordinary powers to deal with strikes, but has seldom used these powers because the strain on the men has been so great. Only in one hundred and three cases has legal compulsion been used.

At present, 1,765 miners of the

Snowdown colliery in Kent are out after a dispute with the management which started over a foreman who was alleged to have sold fascist literature and is continuing, as the miners' announcement said, because "the management has shown a lack of courtesy."

This is true anti-fascist action, which does more for undermining the fascist ideology than all propaganda. By such actions, the British workers set an example for their German comrades by showing them that they and not their bosses take action against fascist infiltration. By showing the German workers the power of the working class they will one day regain consciousness and courage to finish once and for all with all fascist foremen, gaultiers and fuhrers.

## The Virtue of Frankness

Why is Washington, capital of the richest nation on earth, disgraced by some of the worst slums in the world? We have asked that question many times, and now Senator Arthur Capper gives a startling answer.

"I have reached the conclusion," says the Senator, "these slums exist because they pay a better return on the money invested than almost any other investment in Washington."—From "Labor."

## South Chicago Steel Locals Join in Contract Negotiations

CHICAGO—Steel Workers from Carnegie-Illinois, Youngstown, Republic, Wisconsin and other steel plants in this area expressed their solidarity with the union's contract proposals at a meeting held in South Chicago, January 23.

David J. McDonald, international secretary of the United Steel Workers, who addressed the meeting, voiced the demands of steel workers to bring steel wages up to the level of costs of living.

The bosses are opening their assault on labor now, McDonald warned.

In a hurt voice, he charged President Roosevelt with deceiving workers by advocating a national service act, which "Steel Labor" has termed "quack medicine."

McDonald stated that the union leadership is categorically opposed to a labor draft, and attacked the Stalinists and native fascists for their support of it.

## Workers Party School

Starts Friday, February 18.  
Write for Information:  
114 West 14th Street  
New York 11, N. Y.

## Rich (?) War Workers

The daily press is filled with stories of how war workers are waxing fat on big wages during the war, while soldiers are fighting at a salary of \$50 monthly.

The University of California debunks that story most emphatically with FACTS, not fancies or fables.

The University has issued a statement that \$2,991.79 is needed to properly keep a family of four, and shows living costs as follows:

Taxes and job insurance	\$ 334.23
Savings for war bonds	300.00
Food for four	916.85
Clothing for four	256.67
Rent, water, fuel, etc.	523.97
Personal furnishings	15.76
Miscellaneous (auto, medical care, insurance, recreation, carfare, tobacco, gifts, dues, charity, etc.)	644.32
	<b>\$2,991.79</b>

We are moved to ask: How many war workers are making \$2,991.79 each year? We are also moved to ask: What is the percentage of war profits the industrialists are making out of this supposed-to-be "profitless war"?

—Reprinted from The Progressive Miner.

## A Reader Discusses Labor Draft Law

Dear Editor:

Anyone but a politically blind man can see that the regimentation of labor means the end of the worker's freedom to seek another job where and whenever he chooses; the forcible detachment of a worker from his family, friends, home and the feeling of anguish such partings will bring; no right to quit your job, no right to more pay, no right to redress for grievances, physical pain, emaciation, inevitable sickness, mental agony from worry.

If the progressive, organized, militant workers do not master sufficient strength to stop these most reactionary anti-labor proposals from being enacted into laws, by which the government will intimidate and browbeat workers, unions within a comparatively short time will be a thing of the past, and with them will go all semblances of free speech, free press and right of assembly.

Though this is the main purpose of the exploiters of labor, it is not the point I wish to bring out.

## Other Ramifications

These embryonic laws have other ramifications. Though secondary as they may seem, they are very important and should not in the least be overlooked.

The President proposes that every able bodied man and woman must be regimented to contribute to the war effort. Who is going to decide the fitness of the workers? They themselves most certainly will have no say about it.

It is only six months since the WPA was discontinued, which was, as everyone knows, an essentially

integral part of the relief set-up. The subsidizing of soldiers' dependents, though brought about under different circumstances, is not unlike relief, as the recipients of this form of relief will be subjected to the same machinations as during peacetime relief.

The proposal to conscript every able bodied man and woman comes only two and a half months after signing of augmented allowances to soldiers' dependents. This increase in allowances, served as a sop to the unwary public and will serve the purpose of absorbing some of the mass resentment against the labor draft proposal.

If the President's proposal becomes law, all available facilities will be added to the state's present machinery, to speed up the examination of all men and women from eighteen to sixty-five years of age, not excluding all those who are now enjoying a few crumbs given them through the soldiers' dependency measure. It is very plain to see a repetition of the relief-WPA tactics.

## Compared with WPA

If Mr. Roosevelt's request of the Congress to formulate and pass his reactionary propositions is complied with, dictatorial powers will be given the bureaucratic medical examining agencies that will determine the fitness of each respective worker. The iniquities and abuses suffered by the unemployed workers of depression days will look like child's play.

Our failure to forestall fascist measures now will mean cold-blooded abuses of thousands of men and women who will be forced to work long hours under slave-driving conditions. Dependent parents of soldiers may be cajoled or forced into

some war activities under threat of their government allowance being discontinued.

The differences between this and "democracy" with its "liberal" government is that during the depression years one could accept a job on WPA, work for cheap wages in a factory, or absolutely refuse to work—and starve. But if we permit fascist developments in this country, we may be forced to starve while working.

B. P., Chicago.

## "Profit Hogs" and The Black Market

Dear Editor:

Our administration leaders and their collaborators, big business, the capitalist clique, are certainly making a fuss, as are newspapers, radio and radio commentators, about gasoline, canned goods, etc., being sold in large quantities in the black market?

What puzzles me is if these articles are so scarce that they are rationed so strictly to the public, how can they be so plentiful in the black market? Why the need for such strict rationing or even rationing at all then?

These leaders, politicians, big business, etc., know these things, and it seems to me they are blundering as usual or purposely ration some articles too strictly so as to create the black market for their own profit at the expense and hardship of the unsuspecting public. It seems to me that the "profit hogs" are the "secret" of the black market, while they blame the people for creating it.

Buffalo, N. Y.

## ... Readers of Labor Action Take the Floor ...

## A Correction—We Thank You

Several weeks ago we received the following letter from a well informed reader of LABOR ACTION relating to our analysis of the Cairo-Teheran conferences:

"Your editorial with regard to the Cairo conference was excellent, and the same goes for Harry Young's article—with the exception of his remarks about Manchuria. I would like to point out for your information that the population of Manchuria—now some 45,000,000—is ninety per cent Chinese, plus more than a million Koreans and almost a million Japanese. There are about half a million Mongols all told—most of

them toward the western border of Manchuria.

"To speak of Manchuria as 'mainly Mongolian' is similar to speaking of California as 'mainly Mexican.' There was NEVER any 'powerful nationalist movement against North Chinese domination.' The word 'Manchuria' is itself non-Chinese; we took it over from the Russians. The Chinese—whether in this area or elsewhere—referred to these regions as the 'three eastern provinces' until the Japanese took them over. The language is, pure Chinese—mainly the dialect of Shantung, whence came many settlers.

"This letter is simply an attempt to be helpful, and I trust you will take it in the spirit in which it is written."



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## India Paying Billions for England's War

By STANLEY GREY

A century of misery and starvation has chiseled into the minds of the Indian people the real meaning of English rule. They do not need any political lessons about British "democracy."

They know that this war, like the First World War, is being fought by England in order to preserve her Empire. That can only mean continued and increased exploitation of the Indian people for the sake of British profits.

The Indian people have no real interest in the present slaughter. Whichever side wins, their position as slaves to an imperialist master will remain the same.

Nevertheless, they are forced to pay with their blood and money to help England fight her war. Indian troops fight in the British armies so that their families and friends can remain under the yoke of British rule—and huge sums have been paid out by the government of India to aid England in the war.

India has had to pay billions of dollars to help England fight her war. This money should have been used in developing Indian industry and raising the standard of living of the masses of the country. Instead it is being absorbed into the huge waste of the world slaughter.

### FIVE BILLIONS WASTED

The total war expenses of the Indian government in five years of war will reach, according to estimates, ALMOST FIVE BILLION DOLLARS. The amount is enormous with respect to the Indian economy. The total of British investments in India up to the war—after a century of rule—was no greater than about TWO AND A HALF BILLION DOLLARS. In a word, the war is costing the Indian government TWICE as much as the British have invested in India in over one hundred years.

Pause for a moment and consider what these naked figures mean in terms of Indian lives and Indian misery.

India's first and immediate need is to industrialize the country. That is, money must be invested in building factories, in manufacturing machinery and industrial goods, in developing mines to extract India's rich mineral resources, in utilizing India's vast forests, etc.

Such industrial developments would absorb millions of destitute Indian peasants into employment in the factories and would raise their standard of living. Cities would grow and along with them a more advanced working class. Agricultural machinery introduced on the farms would increase the yield of the land for feeding the people. Inroads would thus be made in the old and reactionary farming and landowning systems, out of which the big landowners grow rich. Manufactured goods would reach millions of peasants who now live as their forefathers did centuries ago.

India must have its industrial revolution in order to begin to raise the standard of living of its oppressed and starved population.

### ENGLAND SITS ON THE LID

But that is not to be under British rule. England has choked India's industrial development. Even during this war, with England's need for munitions, airplanes and ships for use in the Far East, it has not encouraged India to build factories and import machinery to manufacture as much war material as is possible.

Today less than two million workers are in industry and of these about one and a half million are in the textile industry. This figure is picaresque out of a population of almost 400,000,000. Neither has India's industrial production increased much during the war. Though its war budget soared to the sky, its industrial development did not.

Before the war, India's defense budget was \$110,300,000. In 1942-43, India spent \$716,600,000 on war expenses—an increase of 650 per cent.

However, in 1938-39 India's industrial index was 111 (with 1935 as a base of 100), and in 1942, from March through September, its industrial index averaged the same, 111. India's war expenses for England's war went up 650 per cent. India's industrial expansion, so necessary for its population, grew ZERO per cent.

Here is shown the enormity of the crime against the Indian people. They are forced to pay for a war in which they do not believe and which will mean their continued oppression. They cannot use this money in building up their own country. The slave master compels the slave to pay for his own servitude!

### POPULAR RESENTMENT GROWS

The Indian people understand this state of affairs. All sections of the country have protested against the financial costs of the war. The one notable exception is the Communist Party of India which peddles the idea that this is a "people's war" for the defense of India.

One Indian complained that "India is made to pay to the point of squeezability." Another "saw no reason why the entire cost of the British garrison should not be borne by the British government. It was His Majesty's government that wanted the Empire saved. Let them pay for this preservation of the Empire."

That is the feeling of the Indian people. They say: let England pay for her war—we've had enough of England. The Indians have no illusions about fancy-dressed Pacific Charters and the rest of the imperialist glitter. The Indians want their freedom.

To gain their economic and political freedom, the Indian workers, peasants and oppressed masses must take the lead not only to oust the British lion, but also to overthrow their native feudal princes and industrial masters who work hand in glove with the foreign exploiter and fatten off the population along with the foreign exploiter.

The industrialization of India, so vitally needed, cannot take place until both the foreign and native masters are sent packing and a workers' government is established to steer the ship of state in the interest of the Indian people.

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## THE NEW COURSE

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## Open Doors to Nazi Victims!

# No Let-Up in Nazi Torture of Jews

If the White Paper issued by the Chamberlain government in May, 1939, is allowed to go into effect, immigration of Jews to Palestine will be arbitrarily stopped. That remaining refuge for Jews fortunate enough to escape the bloody claws of the Nazis will be closed.

Can the American workers stand by and see the road to salvation cut off from people whose sufferings and bravery both beggar description?

The Congress of the United States has before it a resolution to ask Britain to abrogate the White Paper. Pressure upon Congress for the passage of this resolution should come from all organized labor.

But a token resolution is not enough. For a long time the policy of the British has been to discourage Jewish settlement in Palestine. The colonial interests of the British Empire come first—and human concern not at all where that may damage the domination of the Empire.

The democratic pretenses of the British ruling class must be punctured.

Nor does this apply only to the British. It is not noticeable that either the United States or Russia has opened its arms to give succor to the people most victimized by the Nazis, namely, the Jews.

The White Paper must certainly be abrogated—but not only Palestine but the doors of all countries claiming to be anti-Nazi must be opened to the Jews.

The following report indicates how urgent this is.—The Editor.

By JESSIE KAAREN

News dispatches coming in from underground sources continue to give ample evidence that there has been no let-up in the Nazi determination to exterminate physically the last remnants of Jewish survivors in Nazi-dominated lands.

**In Poland**  
Of the 40,000 Jews who were in the ghettos of Warsaw at the time of the famous battles fought by the Jews against Nazi soldiers sent to liquidate them, about 25,000 remain. They are interned in a concentration camp near Hanover, Germany. Conditions of starvation, hard labor and disease cause hundreds to die daily.

**In Belgium**

The underground Belgian newspaper, "La Légion Noire," reports that

of a large group of Belgian Jews arrested last summer, about sixty per cent have died either in detention camps or en route to their points of exile.

These Jews were rounded up by the Nazis with the aid of Gestapo storm troops. They were stripped of all their possessions, including dental plates. Many were beaten and then forced to sign statements that they had not been mistreated prior to their deportation. Some of the prisoners died in the Malines Camp in Belgium, while others died en route to camps in Holland or Poland.

**In France**

The French Legion of Volunteers Against Bolshevism, under Nazi tutelage, has called for an unceasing struggle against Jews, according to the Nazi-controlled Paris radio. The Vichy radio quotes the Paris Soir, which charges that the Polish Jews living in France are saboteurs. Three hundred Jews were rounded up in Lyon and sent to an unknown destination, and raids have been resumed on Jews in other French cities.

**In Norway**

From Stockholm comes the news that about seven hundred Norwegian Jews were sent to Poland and Upper Silesia, where they are being used for hard labor in the Silesian coal mines. The Swedish newspapers report that between 6,000 and 7,000 non-Jewish Norwegians also are being held prisoners in Germany, among them being many anti-Nazi students. These deportees are being forced to clear air raid wreckage from the streets of Berlin.

**In Bulgaria**

An ultimatum has been issued by the Bulgarian authorities that all Jews in the country change their Bulgarian-sounding names to Jewish ones by April 1. The Bucharest radio also reports that three Jews, including a woman, were executed last week for "pretending to be policemen."

**In Hungary**

Jewish refugees from Poland who succeeded in reaching Hungary during the last few months, numbering about 10,000, were interned in government concentration camps. The fugitives came over the frontier in rags, many of them barefoot and penniless.

### Guerrillas Fight Back

Striking back against this oppression is a band of Jewish guerrilla units which is supposed to be operating from Poland. They are said to be survivors from the Warsaw ghetto battle and call themselves "Ghetto Guerrillas," even publishing a clandestine newspaper. They claim to have "liquidated" many Germans.

**Britain, the "Liberator"**

The tactics of oppression against Jews practised by Great Britain, although more subtle, also need to have the spotlight thrown on them to dispel the illusion that England is acting as the Great Liberator.

Fifteen hundred Jews are rotting away on the island of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean. They are the survivors of a group of refugees who

sailed to Palestine in 1941 and were refused admittance there by the British government.

The British barred these helpless people from Palestine because they did not have "legal" passports from the country they were fleeing. Since they were refugees from Germany, they could not, naturally, stop long enough to induce Hitler to provide them with legal immigration papers. With that excuse, Great Britain still refuses to allow these hounded Jews to enter Palestine.

About seventy per cent of them are suffering from malaria and malnutrition. The men live in an ancient prison while the women and children occupy barracks.

These people actually landed in Palestine and were then brutally deported.

## Growing Unity Between Jews And Moslems in North Africa

A dispatch from Algiers discloses that many French Jews in North Africa are united with the Moslem nationalists in their attempt to break away from French colonial domination. They are supporting the present Moslem demand for dominion status, bitterly opposed by the De Gaulle Committee of National Liberation.

Conservative Jewish leaders are fearful of this separatist tendency and are raising the cry that the nationalist demands will weaken the position of the French Committee of National Liberation.

Some anti-Jewish regulations issued by the Vichy regime during its reign in North Africa are still being applied by local officials in Morocco and other parts of West Africa. This goes on despite the arrest of local leaders of the anti-Semitic Doriot Party and the Petain Legionnaires, and despite the enactment of the Cremieux decree restoring French citizenship to Jews.

It is interesting to note that Moslem leaders approved the restoration of citizenship rights to the Jews in North Africa. It is, therefore, interesting to recall that in the early days of the American military regime in North Africa, the excuse was given that it was not practical to revoke too hastily the anti-Semitic measures previously imposed because the native population would resent it.

The formation of a Western Arab Federation to include the three French colonies of Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco is counterposed to the demand of the Moslem nationalists for dominion status. It is hoped by that move to bring the three colonies even more firmly under French domination, inasmuch as some parts of Tunisia and Morocco still have some autonomy on a small, local scale under the Sultan and the Bey of the region.

# Maintenance of Membership Attacked

By JOHN BERNE

The big boys, out to break labor's back, are holding no punches. Their blows are now being aimed at the maintenance of membership clause which is the policy of the War Labor Board to permit in contracts.

It will be remembered that this clause provides that union members on a certain date remain in good standing for the duration of the contract or lose their right to employment under the contract. This has given the unions a considerable degree of membership stability during this period. Union membership strength is something big business is not really crazy about.

On January 26 an open attack upon the WLB's policy of granting maintenance of membership was made in the House of Representatives. The majority report of a special House committee declared this clause in contracts an "autocratic challenge to constitutional rights."

William H. Davis, chairman of the WLB, pointed out that the House of Representatives itself, by a vote of 204 to 73, authorized the board to provide the maintenance of membership clause in contracts.

One Pretext or Another

However, it does not matter what pretext is being used by the pioneering labor-haters. For them one meaningless phrase is as good as another. The majority of this particular committee is headed by Representative Howard W. Smith, Southern bourbon poll-taxer from Virginia. He typifies those supporters of the Constitution who are withholding from the soldiers their basic constitutional right to vote—on the basis that this will violate "states' rights."

Smith is also the Smith of the Smith-Connally anti-strike law. He and the other sponsors of this fascist law are now trying to put more teeth into it so that "the effect of the legislation would be to wipe an offending union out of existence for the duration of the war."

The close tie-up between Congress and big business stands out like a camel's hump. Only a few days before the Smith committee made its antiunion report, Benjamin F. Fairless, president of the United States Steel Corporation—emblem of industrial autocracy—took the same stand against the maintenance of membership clause in contracts.

Such "Friends" Labor Knows

Speaking before the Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce at its annual dinner, Fairless declared on a full stomach: "Gentlemen, our conviction is as firm today as it ever was that the right to work should not be dependent upon membership or non-membership in any organization."

Of course, Mr. Fairless does not believe the right of a worker to a job should depend on membership in a union. He is one of those who believe that a worker's right to a job should depend on the wish and whim of the capitalist.

It is a bit humorous to hear the Fairlesses and the Smiths defend "workers' individual freedom" against their unions. WHAT A HAVEN FOR THE PROFIT-GRUBBERS WHEN THEIR WORKERS HAVE "INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM" BUT NO UNIONS!

A Rank and Filer's View

A shop committeeman connected with a recent shipyard strike, had the following to say about maintenance of membership: "For selling to their memberships the meager gains made under WLB rulings, un-

ion officials are rewarded by maintenance of membership, closed shop, and automatic company check-off of union dues."

It is, of course, all too true that these union concessions have been used as "bribes" for the no-strike pledge and the whole sell-out policy of Murray, Green & Co.

However, the fact remains that maintenance of membership helped keep the union ranks tight during the discouraging Little Steel formula period, out of which the rank and file of labor is now emerging. The fact that the Fairlesses and the Smiths are out to kill the clause proves that it has been useful to the unions.

Organized labor must face the facts squarely. It is being attacked on more fronts than there are battle fronts in the global war. The very life of unionism is at stake. To fight back, labor needs all its strength. Without the right to strike, it has none.

Therefore, the pivotal point in labor's comeback to the Fairlesses and the Smiths is to rescind the no-strike pledge and reassert its right to use its economic power.

## "New Course" Recommended To Our Readers

By PAUL ULLMAN

On November 7, 1917, the workers of Russia overthrew the existing regime and took power. For the first time in the history of mankind the working class was in control of its own government. Society was to be organized in the interests of the masses of the country.

The feudal landlords and capitalists were now to live by their toil, not by the whip of the cosack or the club of the police. Russia had made a tremendous leap from a semi-feudal country to the doorstep of a new era. In 1917, it represented the hope of mankind, the dawn of a new day.

THE FACE OF RUSSIA TODAY

Over a quarter of a century has passed since. Today, instead of the realization of the goal of the revolution, Russia has become a land of a new, modernized barbarism. Stalin's GPU shuts all mouths that would criticize the regime. At the top a thin layer of a prosperous ruling group, the bureaucracy enjoys summer homes, de luxe automobiles and sends its children to the best schools. At the bottom the masses of the people sweat out a borderline existence.

The profits of industry that used to go to the capitalists now go to the state. This state has become a closed corporation, with Stalin and his appointed officials as president and board of directors.

What happened to the hopes and ideals of the Russian revolution? Was this decline into ruthless repression and reaction inevitable? If so, what hope is there for the working class ever making a successful revolution?

How was it possible for Stalin to take power and carry out his murderous policies without arousing the masses of Russia against him?

What kind of monstrosity is this Russian government, anyway? It isn't a capitalist country and it has no resemblance to a socialist country operating in the interests of the workers and peasants. What attitude must be taken with regard to this new "growth" on the political scene?

READ "THE NEW COURSE"

The crucial questions are answered clearly and convincingly in "The New Course," by Leon Trotsky, and in an essay by Max Shachtman, "The Struggle for the New Course," both published in one volume and now on sale through LABOR ACTION.

The series of articles comprising Trotsky's "The New Course," written in 1923, was the opening gun in the struggle against the degeneration of the workers' state. Trotsky warned against the developing bureaucracy and the stifling of democracy in the party and the country.

Trotsky saw the need for regular and honest elections, as against the policy of appointing all officials and creating a party machine divorced from the people and dominated dictatorially from the top.

In fighting for the New Course, Trotsky also fought for the establishment of planned production on a country-wide scale. The first and immediate task of the regime was to build up Russian economy to provide manufactured goods for the people, for socialism could not be built on the basis of scarcity. That would only lead to the renewal of the old internal struggles.

SHACHTMAN'S ESSAY

In his essay in the same volume, Max Shachtman describes the development of the Left Opposition led by Trotsky. It represented the program

of international workers' solidarity, immediate planned production, and political freedom and democracy for the Russian workers.

Shachtman analyzes the real meaning of Stalin's doctrine of "socialism in one country," which in effect meant socialism in no country—least of all in Russia.

Shachtman proceeds to show how it was possible for Stalin to take power in the party, build his cliques, then larger circles, then whole layers of officials and bureaucrats who support him, right or wrong.

Stalin's victory over Trotsky was not accidental, nor was it a matter of one man being cleverer or more correct in his ideas than another. The victory of reaction—of Stalinism—in Russia was a product of many factors: the backwardness of the country in its economic development; the failure of the workers of Europe to come to the aid of the Russian Revolution by successfully taking power in their own countries; the profound fatigue of the Russian people after many years of war, revolution and civil war.

All of these factors are carefully and clearly outlined by Shachtman. It is essential to read this analysis to understand the character of the gigantic historical abortion that Stalinism represents.

THE STALINIST STATE DISSECTED

Finally, Shachtman dissects the structure of the Russian state. He demonstrates that nationalized economy is not sufficient—even though necessary—for a workers' state. In a workers' state, the state must act in the interests of the workers, and be subject to their control in some form. He therefore calls Russia a "bureaucratic collectivism." This label clearly tells you what is in the bottle.

# Roosevelt's Anti-Labor Plans Are Real

By WALTER WEISS

Every time President Roosevelt brings forth some anti-labor proposal, such as the labor draft, there are sure to be some wise men who rise up and assure us that the President is only fooling or playing a deep political game.

This time, they say, he knows that Congress will not pass a national service act. By proposing it, the President does no actual harm to labor but he does gain soldier and middle class votes and so improves his chances for a fourth term.

VERY REMINISCENT

The reader will probably recall that a similar "theory" in connection with the Connally-Smith bill enjoyed wide popularity last summer. After encouraging Congress, through his War Labor Board, Maritime Commission, War Department and other executive agencies, to pass the bill (with a few modifications), the President vetoed it.

Aha! said the wise men of both the labor and capitalist press, we knew it all along. Murray and Green proceeded to write the President letters of humble thanks.

But Roosevelt himself was perfectly consistent all along. His complaint was that the bill's provision for a strike vote after a thirty-day notice would encourage strikes and that an anti-strike law really oughtn't to do that.

Otherwise the bill, with its heavy penalties against labor, was fine, said the President in his veto message. If, however, Congress really wanted to be effective, he told it to pass a law permitting him to induct men up to 65.

Here was a forerunner of the labor draft idea then put forth by the President. But the press and Congress denounced it as a trick, and Congress repassed its own bill over the veto. The President, as many observers noted at the time, made no effort at all to rally his congressional followers in support of the veto.

Roosevelt had, however, made himself a hero to the labor leaders by his veto. When, less than two months later, he issued his executive order of August 16 adding "teeth" to the Connally-Smith law, these hero-worshippers were dumbfounded, maintained a deep silence and acted as if they had never heard of the order.

FDR "IMPROVES" BILL

This presidential order not only provided that a union which defied the War Labor Board might lose "any benefit, privileges or rights" which it enjoyed under a contract. It also provided that individual workers subject to the draft (that is, up to forty-five) might lose their deferments and that any worker might be put on an employment blacklist by the War Manpower Commission.

It is a simple fact that the law had penalties of its own and that Roosevelt was under no compulsion at all to give it these new teeth. Was he still just fooling? Well, no, but he didn't want to bite anybody except John L. Lewis and the miners—just his labor enemies, not his labor friends.

MINERS AND RAILROAD WORKERS

The fourth miners' strike, however, showed the workers so solidly united that the President considered it unwise to apply his executive order. Instead, on November 1, he issued a special order in which, because he appreciated "the desire of the miners to work under a contract," he DIRECTED Ickes to offer LEWIS a contract for the period of governmental operation. He also directed him to maintain the customary working conditions and grievance procedures.

Now, compare this with the recent executive order directing Stimson to take over the railroads. The railroad workers had not gone on strike but merely threatened to—the miners had actually gone on their fourth strike. Stimson was told to recognize the right of the unions to bargain with the owners concerning the period after government control only. But while the War Department is in charge, says the order, Stimson "MAY maintain the working conditions" of existing contracts. He is NOT directed to do so.

In other words, if he should do so, it would be a favor. Stimson's own judgment—"to the extent deemed practical by him"—was to be his guide in maintaining working conditions. Nothing at all is said about maintaining grievance procedures. As to pay, Stimson was simply "authorized to prescribe the compensation..." without violating any laws or executive orders and regulations.

The Bureau of National Affairs, which publishes, for the benefit of employers, an authoritative review on labor laws and decisions, is moved to comment that the order for seizure was "unprecedented," the unions being deprived of any voice during the period of governmental operation. Even the "drastic" Connally-Smith Act, notes this review, allows a union to petition the War Labor Board for changes under such circumstances. After all, it goes on to say, except in name, the management of the roads continued as before.

The seizure order merely helped "to conceal the resulting and very real diminution of the employees' former rights." The rights of collective bargaining, guaranteed by law, were thus, through the technical device of seizure, "diluted" into PRIVILEGES which could be "curtailed or withheld altogether..."

OBVIOUS CONCLUSIONS

1. Even before reaching the point of asking for a labor draft, Roosevelt was steadily proceeding on his own hook by executive order drastically to curtail the rights of labor. There was nothing at all to compel him to issue such orders. They were hardly a bid for the favor of the soldiers and the middle class, since their provisions were given relatively little publicity. The President can always get publicity, when he wants it.

2. The unyielding miners and their determined leaders were handled far more gently than the more patient railroad workers and their long-hesitating leaders. In fact, so much milder was the mine seizure order of November 1 from the executive order of August 16—supposedly a weapon to be used against the miners—that Roosevelt felt it necessary to counteract the mine order by stating that nothing in it should be interpreted to repeal or amend the earlier executive order.

It is clear from the above that Roosevelt has been moving steadily toward a slave labor law. The following facts pile up to this conclusion: the yes-and-no nature of his veto to the Connally-Smith bill—his executive order of August 16 giving the law extra teeth—his recent publicity campaign conducted in the shrillest possible tones by his leading aides (Byrnes, General Marshall and Stimson) as well as by himself, and designed to make the American people believe that the mere threat of strikes will cost hundreds of thousands of lives in the war—and his railroad seizure order flaunting the rail workers' rights.

The President is not fooling or just playing politics. This time the labor leaders don't think so either, despite the propaganda of many capitalist commentators. Labor can protect itself and make advances only to the extent that the unions show that they aren't fooling either.

William Green thinks erroneously that the way to defend labor from General Marshall and the others who have launched anti-labor attacks is to say that the railroads never had a thought of striking. Roosevelt, in granting some wage concessions, had a better appreciation of the temper of the rank and file. His pulling in his horns temporarily in the mine seizure order shows that he had a very deep appreciation indeed of the temper of the miners.

Editorials

# Japanese Atrocities and Race Hatred

The official report of the Army and Navy on the fiendish treatment of war prisoners by the Japanese has sent shudders of horror and indignation through the nation. That these atrocities are being used as war propaganda does not make them less horrible.

They have, of course, given the Hearst papers an unprecedented opportunity to get hysterical against the "yellow race." But even the usually more sober capitalist papers like the New York Herald Tribune have gone off on that crooked tangent—referring to the Japanese as "monkey-like," "sub-human breed," "sadistic creatures unhappily human in form." However, to indulge in racial hatred is more dangerous to the progress of mankind than are these atrocities in themselves.

Frank L. Kluckhohn, writing to the New York Times from New Guinea, has a very plausible explanation for the gratuitous inhumanity of the Japanese military machine. He says that this cruelty to prisoners is meant as an example to their own soldiers. Japanese soldiers are thus shown what will happen to them if they allow themselves to be captured.

Kluckhohn further states that Americans and Australians fighting the Japanese are convinced that when the Japanese soldier blows himself up with a hand grenade, it is not because of any hard cult of emperor worship. He simply is afraid of becoming a prisoner because he has been made to believe that if captured his fate would be as devilish as that of war prisoners in Japan.

## Not a Matter of Race—But of War

That is one way of keeping up morale—unspeakably filthy as it is. However, this has nothing to do with race. It has to do with war. The vile inhumanities of the Nazis against the Jews, the Poles and their other victims, have as little to do with the whiteness of the German skin as the Japanese atrocities have to do with the yellowness of theirs. Both show to what extent the frenzies of war can be carried by those fighting in desperation. But war is the explanation.

Life means nothing at all in war. Human beings are just material of war—expendable in whatever way the war-makers believe will best serve their purpose, just like so much ammunition or gasoline! If the Japanese warlords believe that treating war prisoners as they do helps their "cause," it becomes their policy. If many Japanese soldiers, therefore, needlessly commit suicide out of fear of their fate as prisoners that is also the morality of war.

## We Blame Capitalism as a Whole

And what is at the bottom of war—of this terrible holocaust we are now in with its varying degree of hair-raising cruelties of man to man? We will quote no socialist on this point. Good enough are the words of President Wilson, Commander-in-Chief of the United States forces in World War I. He said that "the seeds of war in the modern world are commercial and industrial rivalry." We socialists use the words: Imperialist quest for world power in the interests of capitalist profits.

Let us place blame where it belongs.

Again, there is only a difference in degree between the inhuman ruthlessness of wars fought to ACQUIRE territories, colonies and markets—as is being done right now—and the cruelties employed by imperialists to hold what they already have. Has, for instance, the British Empire held human life more precious than the Japanese hold it? Certainly NOT the lives of the Indian masses snuffed out wholesale through man-imposed hunger, disease, starvation—and the gunfire of the British occupiers. The bloody suppression of Indian people rising in rebellion has been used by the British as an "example" to the rest of the population—in similar vein as do the Japanese rulers use "examples."

To carry the argument into another field, do capitalists anywhere in the world—not under pressure of war frenzy—think much of human life when they battle workers on strike with the guns of their thugs or their governments? Did the steel barons of the United States, for example, place a high

value on the lives of steel workers shot to death when picketing?

Life is "expendable" throughout the brutal capitalist system. The thread begins with exploitation of man by man in the factories and on the land and in the mines. It weaves through to the tortured exploitation of colonial peoples. It is the same thread we see in this totalitarian war—in which the crimes against human life reach the highest crescendo.

We socialists shudder at the atrocities of the Japanese warlords. We condemn all the great human waste of this global war. We oppose from A to Z the capitalist system under which—whatever the circumstances—life is expendable merely to maintain or better the rate of profit.

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## "Join Hands With German Workers!"

One of the main problems for the underground trade unions is their relationship with anti-Nazi German workers.

German and foreign workers are constantly in contact. According to a report published in "Die Weltwoche" of Zurich on January 7, "German workers now are giving countless daily proofs of their friendly attitude toward their (foreign) colleagues whose situation is worse than their own. They begin by offering...cigarettes, clandestine gifts, food and even financial and technical assistance to those who have deserted from conscription and to escaped prisoners of war." Nothing would be more fatal for the Nazis than effective collaboration between foreign and German workers in underground trade unions.

In their instructions to their countrymen in Germany the various national trade unions have taken very different attitudes.

The French underground resistance movement in its recently published "Manual for Deportees to Germany" reminds its adherents that "there are two kinds of Germans...the type of Germans with whom you will make contact...are victims of Hitler. Among such Germans excellent work can be done, no matter whether or not they are actual members of an...anti-Nazi organization.... Explain to Germans the advantage of democracy and freedom. Explain that happiness can return to Germany only after her defeat.... Organize German resistance groups.... Join hands with the German workers!"—From an article by Paul Wohl, in the New York Herald Tribune.

## Cutbacks in War Orders Lengthen

# Shadow of Unemployment

By V. JENSEN  
The first walkout against Army "cutbacks" (cancellation of war orders), which took place in the furnace department of the National Tube Co., a subsidiary of United States Steel, is just one sign of the nationwide fear among workers that widespread shutdowns of plants are due soon.

The members of the United Steel Workers walked out after an announcement by the corporation that it would have to "take off" the No. 1 furnace at the McKeesport works because of a decline in war orders, thus eliminating the jobs of two pouring crannemen who were offered "downgraded" jobs elsewhere in the plant.

This quick and aggressive action of the steel workers is of great importance and significance—a hint of things to come.

Cutbacks are occurring on a large scale throughout the country and the pinch of unemployment and economic dislocation is beginning to be felt even in the midst of booming war production.

Philip Murray has predicted that steel production will fall from five to ten per cent below the capacity levels of last year in the early months of 1944.

The president of the Aluminum Workers of America reports heavy layoffs due soon in that industry.

Already there have been significant changes in production. The Army and Navy are cancelling orders on guns, tanks and ammunition, to such an extent that factories will be closing down soon.

The Remington Arms plant at Lowell, Mass., closed down before the first of the year. The Army has enough of the .50 caliber shells this plant produced for the emergency.

Five thousand workers are thrown out of work by this shutdown. Low-

ell is a small town, and not all of these workers will be able to find employment there even now.

There were serious cutbacks in Navy orders for destroyer escort, patrol craft and other vessels, plus cutbacks on major ordnance items and aircraft items. These cutbacks amounted to almost three billion dollars in the past six months.

Aircraft is rolling off the line at such a rate that it is expected in a few months that production will pile up more than Allied fliers can handle.

What About Jobs?

The manpower situation has eased up so much that the War Manpower Commission has dropped thirteen areas from its Class 1—critical—group. Although the official employment figures show need of hundreds of thousands of men, these figures are deceptive.

There are plenty of jobs in the tight areas, but how are thousands of workers going to go to and stay in those already overcrowded sections. Also, some 60,000 miners and the same number of lumberjacks are needed, but you can't uproot city factory workers and make lumberjacks and miners out of them.

The walkout of the McKeesport workers is a good indication of the temper of the workers. These workers and the American workers in general have seen that the factories can be worked at full capacity. They know also that civilian goods are badly needed. They are not ready to be pushed out of the plants or to be downgraded whenever a corporation loses a war order and its super-profits.

The big corporations and capitalists are prepared for shutdowns. Widespread unemployment is what they expect—in spite of pious mouthings of big business spokesmen at occasional ten-dollar-a-plate luncheons. But the fortunes of war have

been good to them. They have a tidy nest-egg of super-profits which will help them over the rough spots of the post-war depression.

Not so labor. The working men and women of this country can't retire on what they made in the war. And they are not ready to go back to unemployment and a pittance of government relief.

Labor leaders are fully aware of the widespread unrest and fear in the ranks. Murray, following the McKeesport strike, wrote a letter to the War Production Board urging that the shutdown furnace be used to produce needed civilian goods.

The auto workers also face widespread unemployment. Reuther of the UAW has made public a large-scale plan for conversion to full peacetime production. But polite letters to the WPB will not avoid the dislocation and unemployment contingent upon cutbacks and the inevitable change to below-capacity peacetime production.

Whose Program Will Be Used?

The political program of big business, as made clear at the last convention of the National Association of Manufacturers, is a recognition of steady unemployment, production where profitable, no government interference—and low taxes.

The labor leaders have announced their program as being one of full production and employment.

But press conferences, hopeful speeches and plans which remain on paper, feed no unemployed workmen's families.

LABOR MUST ORGANIZE POLITICALLY TO EFFECTUATE ITS PROGRAM.

The action of the McKeesport workers is a warning to corporations, government and labor leaders that American labor is not going to be pushed into a new depression while the big boys feast on their war profits.

# Cost of Living Up 43.5% - -

(Continued from page 1)

The other members of the President's Cost of Living Committee are William H. Davis, chairman of the War Labor Board, heading the committee; H. B. Horton, president of the Chicago Bridge & Iron Co., and George K. Batt, vice-president of Dugan Brothers, both representing business on the President's committee.

Naturally, not one of these three agrees with the figures presented by the labor members. They are pretty worried about what these figures will mean in terms of wage demands to catch up with that 43.5 per cent rise in costs.

So Mr. Davis hastened to comment that the report of Thomas and Meany is "not in any sense the report of the committee." And the business contingent pompously declared that the "committee is under the responsibility not to make a final report to the President and to the public until careful consideration has been given to all the relevant data."

But even the New York Times, right in the midst of a long editorial "disproving" the labor figures, admits that "it is undoubtedly true that the BLS index somewhat underestimates the rise in living costs." THAT SLIGHT UNDERSTATEMENT AMOUNTS TO ALMOST 100 PER CENT.

Breaking down this slight understatement, the labor report gives the cost of food as going up 74.2 per cent as against 40.2 per cent in the BLS index; clothing 72.2 per cent as against only 33.7 per cent; rent 15 per cent, against a meager 3 per cent admitted by the BLS; household furnishings 62 per cent against 27.8 per cent.

Statisticians and Statisticians

How come there is such a discrepancy? Very simple. When statisticians have a certain purpose in mind, they can do almost anything with statistics. REMEMBER THE PURPOSE IN THIS CASE WAS TO MAKE IT APPEAR THAT THE 15 PER CENT FREEZE OF THE LITTLE STEEL FORMULA WAS FAIR.

So, for instance, the BLS index does not take into account the disappearance of cheaper goods, compelling people to buy the dearer commodities. This even Price Administrator Bowles admits. Furthermore, the BLS food index was the guide for keeping prices down on only those foods that are listed there. The labor report shows that many

categories of foods used just as extensively were left out of the index and went skyward.

These are only two of the numerous ways in which the BLS statisticians kept the cost of living "down."

On the other hand, while the labor report remedies these convenient "oversights" of the BLS, it by no means takes into account every one of the items boosting living costs. For example, the effects of the black market, of changes in living conditions, of higher taxes, were not considered even by the labor report.

What conclusions are to be drawn? Apparently, labor can only trust itself—even in the matter of ascer-

taining the facts and figures of a situation—or shall we say especially in such a situation which involves wages against profits?

Second, the Little Steel formula being six feet under, labor's campaign to obtain wages commensurate with the real cost of living should assume real vigor.

Wage demands need to be upgraded not only to the existing cost of living, but should be escalated upward periodically in step with the cost of living.

And to put teeth into labor's demands, the no-strike pledge has to be ditched, so that labor can step out in its full strength.

## From England:

# Unbelievable Statement

Before us lies the January, 1944, issue of the Workers International News, theoretical organ of the Workers International League of England. The League calls itself a Trotskyist organization and stands for the Fourth International. Inside the Fourth International movement it has consistently taken the position of the American Cannonites—the Socialist Workers Party—on all important questions, and devoted itself frequently to violent attacks upon the so-called "petty bourgeois" position of LABOR ACTION and the Workers Party. According to the spokesmen of the League, THEY defend the views of revolutionary socialism, but WE do NOT.

In this issue of their paper, there is printed the keynote political speech delivered at the national convention of the League by Ted Grant, editor of its paper and its outstanding spokesman. The speech contains an utterly "unbelievable" statement, unbelievable—except that it is there, black on white. We quote it word for word:

"We have a victorious Army in North Africa, and Italy, and I say, yes, Long Live the Eighth Army, because that is our army. One of our comrades has spoken to a number of people who have had letters from the Eighth Army soldiers, showing their complete dissatisfaction. We know of incidents in the Army, Navy and other forces that have never been reported, and that it is impossible for us to report. It is OUR Eighth Army that is being hammered and tested and being organized for the purpose of changing the face of the world. This applies equally to all the Forces." (Emphasis in original.)

There has never been such an example of vicious imperialist poison in the history of the revolutionary socialist movement. Never before has such an outrageous insult to the very name of Trotsky and to all he stood for appeared in a paper that wraps itself with his banner.

The army of British imperialism may be "our army" (and "this applies equally to all the Forces") to Grant & Co. To socialists who have respect for their principles and to the peoples all over the world against whom this army is directed, it remains the army of British imperialism.

Is Grant's statement the final outcome of the notorious "proletarian military policy" first proclaimed by the leader of the Socialist Workers Party in this country and then blindly copied by the Workers International League? Is Grant's statement of defense of "our army," that is, the army of British imperialism, the step that follows from his defense of Stalinist imperialism in the war?

We direct the following questions to Grant's colleagues in this country, the editors of The Militant and the spokesmen of the Socialist Workers Party: "What have you to say about the shameful statement we have quoted from this 'Trotskyist'? Do you agree with it? If not, will you denounce it publicly? Or will you remain silent, as you have done about such questions in the past?"

It would be erroneous, however, Shachtman stated, to believe that Browder and his cohorts are now working in the service of the American capitalists. No, they still are in the pay and service of Joe Stalin.

At the present time this means—by Browder's own words—that the workers should continue to produce at ever-increasing speeds, that they should not try to increase wages or to improve their conditions, that they must be satisfied with any crumbs thrown their way. The Browder boys will continue,

In this Column We Discuss the Need for a New Social Set-Up

## ONE ENGINE OR THREE

By NANCY NATHAN

How many workers know that for one model of medium tank produced in this country for war use, there are three different types of engines?

Seems silly, doesn't it? Three different types of engines make a big problem of replacement of parts and of repairs. It makes production much more complicated.

All the tanks with the three different engines in them function just as well. Nothing is gained by not having a single type of engine.

Then why are the medium tanks produced that way? Why the unnecessary difficulties of having three different production centers, three different varieties of parts, three different requirements for repairs?

Why? Because the three big automobile companies want it that way. Ford, General Motors and Chrysler will not agree on a single engine. They keep up competition in the trade. Each looks after its own business as usual. Each has its eyes fixed on the profit side of the balance sheet.

DO THE SOLDIERS KNOW?

General Marshall, Secretaries Stimson and Patterson and the other busy people who have taken time out from fighting the war to slash at labor, don't mention the case of the three different engines for the same medium tanks as a thing that holds up the war.

Of such situations as this, there are very many. They are not, however, held up to public condemnation.

More than two years ago, Walter Reuther, leader of the United Automobile Workers, CIO, did lift his voice in protest against this competition for profit in the midst of a war putting such heavy burdens on the working people. But Reuther was sh-sh-ed into a corner and into silence.

When one understands the reason for three types of engine in the same model of medium tank, it no longer looks just silly. It becomes menacing. For it indicates the power of private capital.

If capitalist greed for profit is so dominant during a war in the interest of the capitalist system, how much more ruthless is that greed when "only" the interests of the workers is involved?

HISTORY MUST BE REPEATED

There was a time in the history of this country when the thirteen colonies were operated by the British rulers in their own behalf regardless of the public interest of the colonists.

It is also recorded in the annals of American history that the colonists decided this situation was too menacing to their welfare to be tolerated. The results of that decision we all know. That was the American revolution.

It is true, of course, that the British were foreign imperialists imposing their will for power on the American colonists. But is the will for power and profit sweeter to the masses of people because it is imposed on them by native exploiters?

Is there any good reason why the owners of Ford, General Motors, Chrysler and all the other industrial monopolists of this land should not be ousted from the industries as a menace to society—even as the British imperialists were ousted from the colonies?

THE EXPROPRIATORS

Certainly the magnificent industries of the United States are not the personal creation of the industrial monopolists who exploit them. Our vast means of production are the result of the inventive genius and of the labor by hand and brain of really all of mankind.

At one time, when machine production was in its infancy, the new capitalist class did then make a contribution to industrial development—along with the workers, scientists, inventors and other contributors to progress.

But today the contribution of the capitalist class is typified in their manufacturing three different types of engines where one is called for—simply because it is more profitable for them to do so. Why should this class be allowed to usurp and use for their own gain the industries which grew up from the efforts of all of us?

Marxian socialists call the owners of Ford, General Motors, Chrysler and the other captains of industries, the expropriators. These industrial masters have expropriated the whole people from the industries, which are the social means of production, which are the means of life. So Marxian socialists believe that to expropriate the expropriators is the goal of the working people.

FOR PEACE AND PLENTY

It is not that the socialist is interested in producing tanks. As a matter of fact the civilized society that is the socialist's aim would not produce instruments of war because it would not engage in war. Wars are the greatest crime of the capitalist system, and will disappear when the workers end that system.

The socialist is not thinking in terms of wars, but in terms of the possibility of peace and plenty for all. The socialist says that peace and plenty are within the reach of humanity. Those who produce three engines instead of one because they are motivated by private profit—while the world is a mire of blood and mangled bodies—must be thrown out of their places of power.

Therefore, the socialist raises the slogan of national ownership of the industries through a workers' government—so that the workers themselves may control production for the uses of the masses.

# Workers Party Meeting Explains "Dissolution" of Communist Party

By R. CRAINE

A large, interested audience filled the meeting hall at the Irving Plaza on Sunday, January 30, and listened to Albert Gates, editor of LABOR ACTION, and Max Shachtman, national secretary of the Workers Party, discuss the significance of the "dissolution" of the Communist Party which had been "announced" some weeks earlier by Earl Browder.

Comrade Shachtman began by explaining the purpose for which the Communist Party was originally organized, namely, to teach and pre-

pare the working class of this country for the abolition of the capitalist system, for the establishment of a workers' government which would reorganize society on a socialist basis of brotherhood and real equality.

Through a series of events, declared Comrade Shachtman, the workers in Russia lost control of their government until the power was finally usurped by Stalin and his circle of bureaucrats, who now rule and exploit the Russian people even more brutally than did the czars. The Communist Parties every-

where became the tools of Stalin.

When Stalin and Hitler embraced each other in 1939, the American Communist Party became violently anti-British and was opposed to United States entry into the war on the side of the Allies. During that period, the American Stalinists advocated strikes—even when these were not beneficial to the working class—opposed conscription, and called the war an imperialist war.

Then came war between Russia and Germany, with the former's entry into the camp of the Allies.

Overnight, the American Stalinists became advocates of American participation in the war, of the opening of the second front, of "more production regardless of wages" of "national unity," of the "no-strike pledge," of "incentive pay" and of similar anti-labor measures.

Browder's recent proclamation in favor of the capitalist system, of free enterprise and of the two-party system in the United States was an open admission that the Communist Party had long ago given up the struggle for a better world.

It would be erroneous, however, Shachtman stated, to believe that Browder and his cohorts are now working in the service of the American capitalists. No, they still are in the pay and service of Joe Stalin.

At the present time this means—by Browder's own words—that the workers should continue to produce at ever-increasing speeds, that they should not try to increase wages or to improve their conditions, that they must be satisfied with any crumbs thrown their way. The Browder boys will continue,

as in the past, to disrupt any labor organization or trade union which does not allow itself to be used to further Stalinist policies.

Comrade Shachtman was confident that, despite the Stalinists, the working class as a whole will find out what the more wide-awake workers already know—that capitalism offers them no way out of the mess into which the world has gotten.

To be successful in this fight, to prepare for it today, the working class needs a party of its own—a party which stands clearly for the

immediate and ultimate interests of labor. The national secretary of the Workers Party called upon the workers in the audience to be on guard against the Stalinists in their unions and organizations. He urged those workers who wished to join ranks in the fight for a better world, for socialism, to become members of the Workers Party.

At the end of the meeting a number of members of the audience indicated a desire to learn more about the Workers Party, and one worker joined the party.