

LABOR ACTION

NOVEMBER 27, 1944

A PAPER IN THE INTERESTS OF LABOR

ONE CENT

Prices Go Up, Up, Up--But They're

STILL STALLING ON WAGES!

High Wage Myth

The storm brewing over the obstinate refusal of the President, his Directors of Wage Stabilization and the War Labor Board to grant the workers of this country legitimate and long overdue wage increases, is coming to a head with the violent attacks made on the WLB by the organized labor movement.

At the same time that this fight has broken out into the open, a Senate subcommittee is in session taking testimony on wages in connection with the Pepper bill before Congress directing the WLB to fix a national minimum wage of sixty-five cents an hour instead of the present fifty cents.

LABOR ACTION is read by workers, and a reproduction of the testimony of witnesses earning low wages is not necessary. All of you know by personal experience what it is to try to live on your incomes with a cost of living which has risen way beyond your ability to meet it. Such testimony is needed for senators and congressmen, who find it difficult to understand why it is hard for a worker's family to live on twenty-five or thirty dollars a week.

The interesting thing about these hearings is that they expose the myth about high wages being paid to American labor. The facts are exactly the opposite. The American worker is being gypped. His wages are low. His ability to make ends meet is more and more difficult. The standard of living of the workers deteriorates each month, while profits for big business have risen beyond the wildest dreams of American industrialists and financiers. You don't believe that?

Look at the graph which appears alongside this story. It tells you everything you need to know about the wages of American labor. The most important thing it records is that the straight time pay of the workers, based on the forty-hour week, is extremely low.

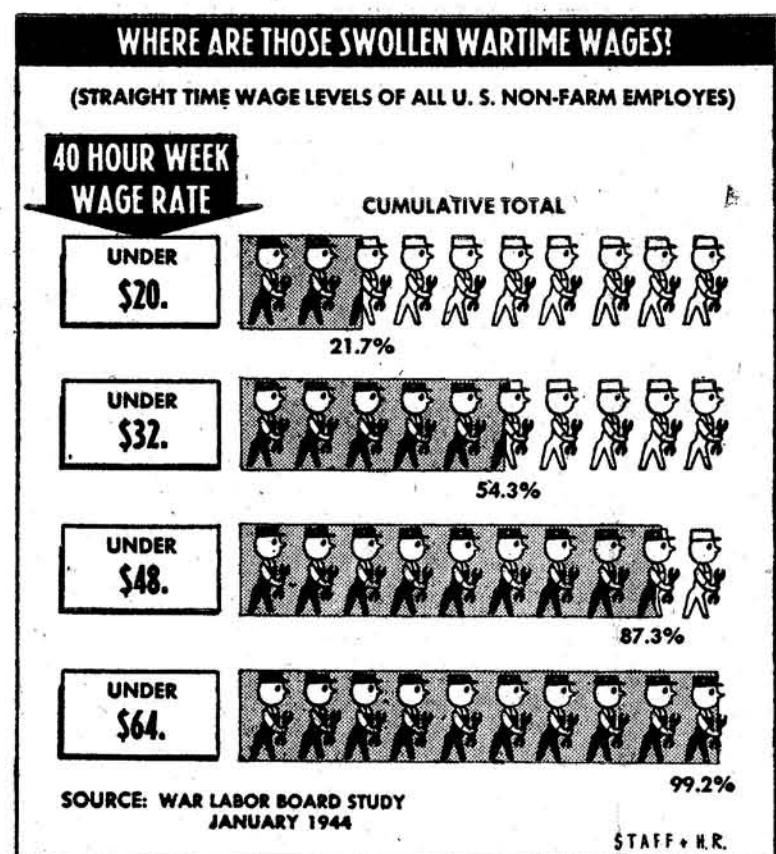
THESE WARTIME WAGES

Workers earning under \$20 a week make up 21.7 per cent of all workers. Workers earning under \$32 a week make up 54.3 per cent of all workers, or over half of all industrial and other non-farm employees.

Workers earning under \$48 a week make up 87.3 per cent of all workers. Workers earning under \$64 a week make up 99.2 per cent of all American workers earning over \$64 a week!

These figures are cumulative. Look at them another way and you get these results: The workers earning between \$20 and \$32 a week make up 32.6 of all workers; those earning between \$32 and \$48 make up 33 per cent of all workers, and those earning between \$48 and \$64 total only 11.9 per cent of all workers, a distinct minority.

But here is the real joker in this story. The figures, as you can see by the chart, were prepared by the War Labor Board in a study made in January, 1944. If the above figures are correct, and there is no doubt about (Continued on page 3)



Newspaper PM Chart, Copyright Field Publications

Murray Rants, But WLB Is Hard of Hearing

By MARY BELL

If Phil Murray, head of almost six million CIO workers, has a dyspeptic look these days, it must be because he is having some difficulty digesting his own words. We refer to the statement made at the UAW convention, where Murray said: "I am as sure as I am living that the Little Steel formula will be revised."

The cowardly, pro-employer War Labor Board is doing no revising. FDR, to whom the board leaves the question of wage raises, is keeping silent. Fred Vinson, Director of Economic Stabilization, says that the rise in living costs must stop, recognizing, as does every last man, woman and child in the country—from coolie-paid textile workers to even the employer members of the WLB—that living costs are way out of line with the formula.

At the CIO national convention, being held currently, Murray went about as far as he could go in lambasting the War Labor Board. It made a "travesty" of the wage increase demand, he stated. He assailed its "weakness," its "lack of courage," its "policy." Said Murray: "In the face of labor's no-strike pledge, such

policy is the equivalent of denying labor any such benefits during wartime." Unassailable fact!

Murray was forced to say: "...The board, after a full year of encouraging the unions to submit their cases on the basis of voluminous records, has refused to discharge its obligation.... Employers are permitted to

enjoy a field day through long delays, appeals and reconsiderations of cases which actually result in a complete denial of an effective relief to a labor organization and its members which have submitted its case to the machinery of the board.... The board has to date refused to direct employers to grant such con-

cessions [sick leave, group insurance, etc.] when the latter refused to do so in collective bargaining."

Does Murray then conclude logically that the WLB is anti-labor and that labor should have nothing to do with it? That genuine collective bargaining should be restored?

No, says Murray, he agrees with the board in principle and adds there is no question but that labor must retain its no-strike pledge.

Doesn't Mr. Murray know that it is only because of the helpless position of labor that the WLB and FDR hold the line on wages? That the only action that is causing sleepless nights to these people and might give rise to a revision is the fear of the pending no-strike referendum in the ranks of the UAW? That "collective begging," companion to the no-strike pledge, will continue as long as labor has no recourse but to think, speak and write against the anti-labor practices of employer and administration—and can DO nothing?

If Mr. Murray meant what he said about the WLB policies, he would demand categorically that every labor representative immediately get off the board. Labor leaders on the board are parties to the "travesty" made of wage demands, the "weakness" in the face of public need, "lack of courage" to recommend a wage increase.

The War Labor Board system is the price of the no-strike pledge. (Continued on page 3)

FDR Plans New WPA for Post-War

By M. J. MARSHALL

Among the proposals FDR was reported to be readying for the consideration of the congressional session which begin in January were the following:

1. Further assistance to big business through tax reductions and other legislation to "ease" industry's reconversion to peacetime production.
2. A plan for a nation-wide public

works project which would start with an appropriation of one hundred million dollars to get the project into motion.

3. Aid to private building constructors to develop new housing, plus certain health measures, supplemented by government aid where necessary.

4. Tripling of foreign trade by the extension of heavy loans to the principal Allied nations.

5. Study of Fair Labor Standards Act to discover whether or not there might be a need to lower the forty hour week.

If this represents the sum total of Roosevelt's plan to avert an almost

certain economic collapse at the conclusion of the war, then the American working class is doomed to witness what Boris Shishkin, AFL economist, describes as "the biggest and the most devastating crash anyone has ever conceived."

Roosevelt's plan, to put it mildly, is a fearful, mincing, little mouse of a thing, totally unrealistic and contrary to the whole trend already set into motion by previous legislation and developments.

We say that FDR's "plan" is unrealistic because, for one thing, it does not start at the beginning of the problem—what happens to millions

(Continued on page 2)



"I STAKE MY LIFE" PHIL

Labor took the board up on this position. It presented figures and material to show that the cost of living had far surpassed the levels agreed to in the Little Steel formula.

(Continued on page 4)

Labor Action Gets 261 Subs for Week; Drive in Last Lap

The drive for 4,000 new subscriptions to LABOR ACTION came back with a bounce after the low totals for last week. This week's subs jumped up to 261 from last week's 102. We're still short of our goal, however, and a little off the pace necessary to end the drive with 4,000 subs. But there are good signs to show that it can be done. All we need is a little more push and a little more effort, such as was displayed in the last week.

There is not the slightest doubt in our mind that readers of LABOR ACTION can supply a little punch to the campaign. They have sent in their share of subs, but not in the amounts we would like to receive. This week we received a couple of letters that made us swell with pride, not only because these readers sent in subs, but also because of the things they said in their letters. As you read them, you will hardly blame us for feeling pret-

ty good on a day that's cold and rainy. One Chicago reader sent us four subscriptions with the following letter:

"These subs have been a long time in coming and for a while I was out of contact with Workers Party politics, but after again experiencing the gradualism and misguided activity of the PAC in the labor movement LABOR ACTION's militancy is refreshing."

Thanks, fellow worker. We're much obliged to you. We'll do all we can to keep our paper refreshing and militant. It may sound a bit selfish, but all we're asking from you is to just keep on sending us subscriptions.

From out on the West Coast we got another four subs, this time from the wife of a worker who received LABOR ACTION at his plant. Just read what she says:

"My husband has been bringing home

LABOR ACTION from the plant, which I believe is distributed. I like it very much. Very good reading in facts and figures. I should like to have a few friends read it, as occasionally I send it out to them.

"I noticed you have an introductory offer for a six-month subscription for twenty-five cents. I only have the one slip to send in from my own paper. Would it be all right to send three of these introductory offers out to the following? I should also like a year subscription for myself."—Mrs. R.

It's perfectly all right and we have taken care of it right away. Thank you, too, Mrs. R. This ought to be a tip to other readers of the paper. Get subscriptions for your friends to the best labor and socialist weekly in America.

On the other side of the ledger, we had a pick-up from some of the Workers Par-

ty branches. The New York organization of the WP had a mobilization which we like to describe as a "Labor Action Sunday." Several dozen WP members came out in a house-to-house drive for subs and did a fair few hours' work. As a result, New York's totals in the sub drive jumped up a few notches. This is a tip-off to other branches of the Workers' Party as well as to agents of LABOR ACTION. New York is preparing another "Labor Action Sunday." How about other cities?

There are still some weeks to go before the drive is over. A little more push and drive and we'll make it. What do you say, LABOR ACTION champions?

City	Quota	Week	Total	Pct.
Akron	150	—	162	108
Buffalo	150	—	145	96.2
Chicago	300	23	224	74.6
Cleveland	200	18	58	28.5
Detroit	750	38	640	85.5

Los Angeles	200	—	119	59.5
Louisville	25	—	25	100
National Office	500	9	138	27
New York	1,000	88	545	54.5
Philadelphia	175	—	70	40
Reading	50	35	51	102
St. Louis	50	4	25	50
San Francisco	200	—	116	58
Seattle	150	30	134	89
Southeast Missouri	—	—	10	—
Streator	50	—	58	112
Youngstown-Warren	50	—	20	40
Totals	4,000	261	2480	62

SUB BLANK

YES, I want LABOR ACTION. Please send it to me regularly. Enclosed find twenty-five cents in stamps or coin for a six-month subscription , or fifty cents for a year's subscription . (Check which.)

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ Zone _____ State _____

MASS ACTION

By David Coolidge Nat'l Labor Sec'y, Workers Party

The story carried in LABOR ACTION last week on the defeat of George Bass and his fellow militants in the Goodrich Local in Akron should be a warning to real union progressives and militants. Bass, who has served four terms as president of Goodrich Local, was defeated by a coalition of reactionaries who conducted the type of campaign that reactionaries always conduct, whether in the labor movement or elsewhere. They lied, they appealed to the primitive backwardness of many of the workers, they played on the prejudices of these workers, they sought to make it appear that the finances of the local were in shady condition and they allied themselves with the labor-baiting Akron Beacon Journal.

Our correspondent writes that this reactionary clique made their appeal mainly to those in the union who were inactive and who were not in the habit of attending union meetings. These are the workers the reactionaries usually appeal to. They are the least educated in trade unionism, they know less than other workers what the union program is and they are the workers most likely to be influenced by sugar-coated anti-union propaganda which appears in the daily press.

The defeat of the Bass slate demonstrates, however, that there was something seriously wrong in the picture at Goodrich. There were 5,000 votes cast. Bass received only 2,496 to 3,102 for his opponent. What have Bass and his supporters been doing the four years they have been in the leadership of the local? What kind of campaign did they carry on for re-election? What kind of program did they have for the local and how well was this program understood by the masses in the rank and file? What platform did the Bass slate have for the election campaign, how did they organize for the elections and how much attention did they pay to the important matter of getting their platform and their record before every member of the local?

Our correspondent says that Bass expected to be re-elected because his supporters comprised the bulk of the active membership. Bass evidently forgot that the inactive also vote and that the vote of an inactive member is equal to the vote of an active member. Furthermore, hasn't Bass learned yet that one of the problems before the militants today is to involve the largest possible mass of the membership in the activities of the local and to make every effort to get the maximum attendance at union meetings?

This is the only way to bring the union rank and file under the influence of the progressives and militants and win them away from the appeals of the reactionaries. This is part of the very essence of inner union democracy: to involve the greatest possible number of members in union meetings, union activity and participation in formulating the union program and policies. Any other procedure is bureaucratic; whether indulged in by reactionaries or progressives. A small group leading the union, no matter how well-intentioned, no matter how militant, cannot substitute itself for the widest possible participation of the entire local membership. To attempt any such paternalistic procedure is to court disaster and defeat.

It is, furthermore, necessary for progressives and militants to proceed in the most democratic manner, involving the whole union membership, because this is the only way that the rank and file can be educated and led along the most progressive road.

What Progressives Must Do

Also it is necessary for progressive and militant leaders to remember that they cannot and should not depend too much on their popularity and past record. They must stand primarily on a clear and unambiguous militant and progressive program. They must fight for this program in the most forthright and uncompromising manner. To fight in a forthright manner means, first of all, to see to it that the program goes before the whole union and that the membership understands the program. Not only must the leadership be convinced that it is correct but they must bend every effort to guarantee that the rank and file are convinced that their leadership is correct.

Militant and progressive leaders must pay attention to the principles and tactics of organization. This means the devising of ways for penetrating the ranks of the union with the program; the organization of publicity and education; confronting the reactionaries with the militant program before the membership; refuting every lie and smear in the membership meeting, by leaflet and folder as well as by word of mouth.

Progressives must proceed in this manner because they must not and cannot resort to the tactics of the reactionaries. Progressives must not become a "power clique," they must not be, in any degree whatsoever, mere place holders or job hunters. Theirs is the task of democratic and militant leadership and of education.

This means that trade union progressives must be prepared to lead today—now. Too many of them are living in the past in the remote past when trade union problems were simple and all one had to do was to go to the employer, beat the desk, utter a few threats and quite often walk out with a signed contract. If the demands were denied, the next simple step was to call the workers on strike. Despite the fact that things have changed, many militant leaders attempt to go on in the old way.

Role of the Government

With the entry of the government into the picture and with the whole ruling class lined up against labor as a class, the chief problems before the working class become political in nature. It is time that trade union militants learned this and prepared themselves to act accordingly. This goes for Bass and all the other trade union militants and progressives. Their opponents go into action with a political program: a reactionary, anti-working class political program. They are for the government's no-strike pledge. They echo government officials and the employers about "inflation." They sing the glories of "incentive pay" piecework schemes and mouth nonsense about "equality of sacrifice." They are solicitous that the employer should have a "fair profit." They wallow in spurious and fake patriotic blarney about workers sacrificing for the war effort. They propagate the tricky and slimy catch phrases of reactionary papers like the Akron Beacon Journal such as "Decency, Honesty and Respectability Pay."

This is politics and such a program is a political program. It is the political program of the government and the capitalist ruling class for labor. Any progressive leader who does not understand this is out before he reaches first base. Such politics, such a political program, such an attack, can only be defeated by an open and democratic appeal to the rank and file on the basis of another program: a militant union program and a militant working class political program; openly propagated, explained to the masses and fought for without wavering or compromise.

Progressives Can Win

Many militant and progressive trade unionists draw back from this step. They often attempt to substitute cleverness or popularity or the assumed strength of a small group of loyal followers for understanding, a program, education of the membership and efficient and democratic organization. They always believe that they can "handle the situation" and that somehow they will come out on top.

One reason for this attitude on the part of some of the militants and progressives is their fear of "going too far," of being seen in the company of the "radicals" in the union. They fear that the reactionaries will call them "Trotskyites" or "LABOR ACTION people."

What they forget is that they must adopt and defend a militant and progressive program and that they must associate themselves with those forces in the union which are the most loyal, the most militant, the most democratic and the most capable of formulating and carrying through a militant working class program.

They must do this with clarity, firmness and consistency and with full knowledge that such a course leads to political reorientation. Not to understand this is to fail in the most elementary responsibilities of militant and progressive union leadership today.

They Did Business with Hitler!

In 1937-38 big business in this country knew that Hitler was preparing for war, but it continued to send him supplies. Fascism in Germany had destroyed every shred of democracy, all trade unions and working class organizations. Whole populations were being exterminated, but big business didn't seem to mind—business is business.

In Stolberg, Germany, the staff correspondent of the New York Sun visited a munitions factory on November 3, 1944, and sent the following account back to his newspaper: "As you walk among drill presses and lathes, hot and cold rolling mills and flattening mills, the engineer tells you that there had never been a shortage of materials here. He adds that the plant could operate for another year on the materials on hand. The engineer says most of this copper, brass, zinc and aluminum was shipped here from the United States six years ago."

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE LABOR FRONT

1920 Wage Level Prevails in Textiles! Profits Up 600%

Two items of interest relating to the textile industry were reported last week, indicating in a practical way what is wrong with the WLB, the Little Steel formula, the no-strike pledge, the OPA—in a word, the whole Administration's domestic war program.

One report disclosed that the OPA issued regulations "under which manufacturers may apply for a hike in ceiling price" in order to break a bottleneck which is "preventing workers from obtaining work clothes." Interesting, isn't it? Textile manufacturers of work clothes CREATE a shortage of these commodities because they are not permitted to increase prices. Once the shortage in work clothes develops by refusal of manufacturers to produce, the OPA, with its customary "toughness" on big business, permits an increase in prices. The manufacturers having received their demands are now willing to produce more work clothes!

On the other hand, the Department of Labor reports a dangerous situation in the textile industry caused by workers deserting the Southern textile mills. The labor turnover in that industry is seventy-eight per cent, the greatest in industry. The industry has already lost over 25,000 workers and employment has declined to the lowest level since 1940. Why should this occur? The answer is not hard to find.

The workers in the Southern textile mills are among the lowest paid in the country. The War Labor Board itself reported that it found wages in at least 289 mills to be sub-stand-

ard. The Southern Conference for Human Welfare declares that the reason these workers desert the Southern mills is because wages are so low as to make the existence of the worker and his family impossible. Their report says of the 375,000 textile workers that they are "forgotten men and women." Detailing their investigation, the Conference states:

DEPLORABLE CONDITIONS

"The average hourly pay of these workers is the lowest in American industry. It is almost incredible to realize that in the South today textile workers are earning only slightly more than in 1920! The exact figures are: 1920, \$22.56; 1943, \$23.16 a week.

"Research proves that Southern living costs are not appreciably less than in Northern states, while wages are often thirty to fifty per cent below the national average.

"...Workers live worse because they have to. They eat less and inferior food; they wear flimsier, cheaper clothing; they live in less comfortable and less sanitary houses, and they send their children less to school.

"They do this simply because a family cannot do anything more on \$23.16 a week, BEFORE payment of taxes."

Contrast this situation of the workers with that of the textile manufacturers, whose profits increased from \$212,000,000 in 1941 to \$427,000,000 in 1942, "while profits for the first six months of 1943 were up 600 per cent over pre-war profits."

Well, you might ask: what is being

done for the textile workers, when obviously so much is being done for the textile bosses? The answer is simple: Nothing! The reasons are also clear. American industry is run on a profit basis. The capitalist bosses do not produce for use—not even in wartime. They must get their guaranteed profits. The Roosevelt Administration, which is a capitalist administration, gives the manufacturers that guarantee.

But when we get down to the problem of the textile workers we see an altogether different picture. The workers get less than subsistence wages. To make sure that this situation continues the President's war stabilization law freezes wages. To enforce the law we get the War Labor Board which makes sure that demands for wage increases are rejected or sidetracked. And to make doubly sure of this, the "indispensable" Mr. Roosevelt evoked a no-strike pledge from labor leaders of the AFL and CIO, endeavoring to make impossible the struggle for the workers for better wages and an improvement of their economic position.

The moral is clear: to improve the position of the workers, to get higher wages, it is necessary to end the wage freeze, get labor's representatives off the WLB, the graveyard of labor's wage demands, and the no-strike pledge, which binds labor's hands and prevents it from struggling for its rights and, finally, to organize labor's political party, to fight for a genuine labor program of interest to all workers, one which seeks to wrest power from the capitalist political parties.

Boston Teamsters Strike for Democracy in Tobin's Local

BOSTON—More than six thousand members of Local 25, International Brotherhood of Teamsters & Chauffeurs, AFL, have been on a "holiday" since November 12. The strike came because the union officials cancelled the election of local officers and suspended fourteen members of the union who are leaders of the rank and file group.

At the latest mass meeting of the strikers held on Sunday evening, November 20, they were informed that the union officials would not meet with their representatives. Ten minutes after they heard this report, the truckmen unanimously voted to remain on their "holiday" until the officials grant them an election and the suspended members are reinstated.

The situation in Local 25 has been developing for some time. This is the third time local elections have been cancelled. Hundreds of militant union members have been victims of the dictatorial administration, and previous attempts to dethrone the present officials have been killed by the international office. Local 25 is the home local of Daniel Tobin, the international president, and the present officers are his staunchest supporters. Tobin has already sent his special representative, John S. English, to Boston to assist Harry Jennings, his New England agent in

fighting the membership, which is trying to have democratic election of officers.

CONDITIONS OF THE STRIKE

After the strike had been on for four days and the Governor and all the state agencies, as well as the WLB, Army and Navy, had been putting pressure on the strikers to return, John M. Sullivan, president of the local, called a union meeting. Over 3,500 strikers jammed the hall and 1,000 more lined up outside on the sidewalk. The situation was so tense that the original fifteen policemen assigned to the meeting were increased to 250 and all the cruisers throughout the city were alerted for possible trouble.

Sullivan opened the meeting, expecting to find a "back to work" sentiment among the strikers. He was booed and cat-called until he and the other officers sneaked out of the hall by climbing down a rear fire escape and drove off. The meeting became orderly as soon as the strike committee took over. The committee is composed of all the men who have been suspended from the local for leading the strike. Maurice J. D'Ambrosio, one of the strike leaders, asked the members: "Are we being benefitted by the officers we have now?" The rafters shook as the men on the floor said "No!" "Do we want new offi-

cers?" he asked. "Yes!" the members answered.

Another demand was added by the strikers at this meeting: that there shall be a complete accounting of the finances. Members have not had any reports in years of the finances of the local. One of the strikers, Patrick Porcaro, a veteran of World War II, said: "We shouldn't work until we elect our own officers."

The role of the veterans is significant, for it is one of the first strikes where it has been possible to see their reactions. A number of the strikers are veterans and two of the suspended members were honorably discharged after being wounded.

The union's agreement with the trucking associations is expiring in January. The union officials have done nothing about it, and the workers suspect that a plan is afoot to just go along with the old agreement. Many of the companies have already notified the truckmen that they are fired. The next step is up to the union officials. Will they provide strike-breakers for the bosses? Or will the aggrieved truck drivers succeed in having a democratic union?

The capitalist newspapers are always howling about union "dictatorship." In this case, where it actually does exist, the ranks are making a good fight to turn the union back to its membership.

FDR's Post-War WPA--

(Continued from page 1)
of workers and demobilized servicemen the day they are "reconverted" to unemployment when hostilities cease.

It seems that the first point in any plan for the post-war period should revolve around this consideration. It is also a matter of record that such a consideration was presented to the Congress of the United States at its last session in the form of the Kilgore-Murray bill, which provided some measure of relief from the joblessness and dislocation arising from cutbacks and contract terminations.

FDR, too busy with the fourth-term campaign, ignored the bill completely, despite the nation-wide campaign in its behalf by the CIO, AFL and Railway Brotherhoods. Over four hundred congressmen, Republicans and Democrats alike, were so completely oblivious to the pressing need for the legislation that they absented themselves from the House when the bill came to a vote.

Not once during the past election campaign did FDR (or Dewey either) mention the "human side" of reconversion. Both candidates limited themselves to empty and hollow promises of "high employment levels" after the war.

V-E DAY PROSPECTS

Now what exactly are the prospects of the American economy on V-E Day (Victory in Europe)? Present business activity is sup-

ported by government spending at the rate of about seventy billion dollars a year for the direct purchase of war goods. Even high government officials expect a cut of about forty-five billion dollars in this spending at the end of the European phase of the war. This reduction would immediately result in a release of sixty per cent of existing manpower currently engaged in war production.

Since there were approximately fifteen million jobs in war production or allied industries at peak activity in 1943, this means that V-E Day will cancel out some nine million jobs right off the bat.

Around this time discharges from the armed services will amount to an estimated 300,000 per month. Almost a million and a half have already been discharged. Current unemployment, according to Current Business, a Department of Commerce publication, is about one million.

The total number of unemployed after V-E Day, therefore, may well amount to eleven millions.

The other side of this picture offers very little to get happy about. Resumption of civilian manufacturing, restocking and building up of inventories can at best account for 1,700,000 jobs, since capital expenditures and expansion will be much less than professional business optimists would lead us to believe.

Where, then, will the jobs come from to fulfill Roosevelt's campaign

promise of sixty million jobs after the war? What happens to the national buying power once there is a forty-five billion dollar cut in government outlays for war goods?

These are questions that do not begin to be solved by the faltering "plan" offered by the President.

Can "private, free enterprise" be trusted with the bulk of the job, as the President is wont to believe?

Is one hundred million dollars a sufficient amount to begin a public works program with? (The U. S. is spending two hundred and fifty million dollars A DAY to wage this war.)

Will the trebling of U. S. foreign trade or generous loans abroad provide full employment for sixty million American workers?

Our answer is a categorical "NO" and we shall explain why in the second article in this series next week.

NEXT WEEK:

THE MCF IN THE ELECTION

By Grace Scott

WORKER'S DICTIONARY

By Stanley Grey

SOLDIERS AND THE NO-STRIKE PLEDGE

By Mary Bell



General Strike in the Coal Fields

Out of the Past

By RUTH PHILLIPS

When half a million coal miners went on strike during this Second Imperialist World War, they called down upon their heads the vilification of all "respectable" society. Yet every man of the 500,000 stood firm and loyal to his union. Unionism in the coal fields is a living tradition, carried on from one generation of miners to another. It is a tradition based on bitter struggles dating back to over one hundred years ago when the first unions of miners were organized.

Coal mining has always been a tough, dirty and dangerous job. It is still an underpaid job, considering its hazards to health, limb and life itself. Back in 1897, before the union was well established in the mining towns, the miners lived a poverty-stricken life, subject to all sorts of abuses by the companies, and working long hours. Their union was weak, numbering only 10,000 members.

Agitation for the eight-hour day was at its height among American workers at that time. The carpenters had struck the first successful blow for the eight-hour day in 1891. Other crafts had followed suit. In 1897, the United Mine Workers called a general strike for the eight-hour day, a twenty per cent increase in wages, abolition of company stores and recognition of the union.

The general strike call was answered by the 10,000 union members plus all the unorganized miners in every mining area except West Virginia. Injunctions were issued by the courts at the request of the mine owners forbidding meetings of the strikers. The miners defied the injunction despite arrests and imprisonment. The strike lasted for twelve weeks. When it was over, the miners had won every one of their demands. It was the first great victory for unionism in the coal fields.

Women of the Pacific: Union-Busting Front

The reactionary anti-union forces on the Pacific Coast, having just suffered a defeat in their efforts to pass legislation barring the closed shop in California, are already preparing new blows against organized labor. Business Week, journal of Wall Street, reports in its latest issue the fact that petitions "are already being circulated for another referendum vote on stringent regulation of trade unions."

Who is behind this move? The report states that it is Mrs. Edwin Selvin and Women of the Pacific, an organization of "housewives" which she heads. She is referred to as a person who has "fought vigorously for what she terms the 'American plan of the open shop,' ever since she arrived in Los Angeles from Seattle in 1936 afire with zeal to save the city from unionization."

This is certainly a strange occupation for an innocent "housewife." But it is obvious from the description of the lady and her activities that she is merely the front for the more sinister big business forces on the West Coast who have for years carried on organized warfare against labor and its organizations.

Evidently these gentlemen of industry and finance (not to mention the murderous crew which heads Associated Farmers) think their aims

might better be projected under the disguised leadership of a women's organization. How far has this new drive gone?

Well, Women of the Pacific started work on the new measure months ago and it was certified two weeks ago by Attorney General Kenny of California as being qualified for circulation. The bill needs over 111,000 signatures in order to be put before the Legislature on January 8 of the coming year.

Representatives of labor have characterized the new bill as "a hundred times worse" than the "right-to-work" amendment which sought to bar the closed shop. The new measure, according to Business Week, "seeks to regulate almost every phase of union activities, specifies how union elections shall be held, demands a quarterly accounting of funds, limits picketing."

It is already clear from the foregoing that the trade union movement, every section of it, needs to organize the widest campaign of struggle against this measure and all others that are certain to follow the recent elections. LABOR ACTION, in forthcoming issues, will carry detailed analyses of the bill and its significance for labor, as well as material disclosing the forces behind it.

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WHY THE AMERICAN PEOPLE DON'T HAVE PLENTY FOR ALL

By WALTER WEISS

The graph which is printed with this article deserves the most careful study. It raises questions of the utmost importance for American workers.

Question 1: Does the government really own ninety per cent of the synthetic rubber, ninety per cent of the aircraft production, ninety-six per cent of the magnesium capacity and other industry as shown on the graph?

Yes, that and more besides. These are staggering figures, but they are official. They are admitted facts. Since private corporations operate the plants, either on leases or as managers on a fee basis, most people don't realize the true situation. The companies regularly talk about the great accomplishments of "their" plants for the war effort.

The government owns the plants. The big corporations nevertheless rake in the profits, which in some cases are called "fees." Whatever they are called, they are certainly large profits and keep getting larger—again by official figures.

The same corporations which monopolized pre-war industry are operating these new plants. Swollen U. S. Steel runs, besides its own tremendous empire, forty per cent of the government's steel holdings. Four-fifths of all government plants are operated by 150 big corporations. Monopoly grows stronger.

In no sense do the companies help to pay for the government plants. The steel industry, which complains of doing poorly (and, by comparison with many others, the complaint is correct), shows profits, according to its own figures, fifty-six per cent above the 1936-39 level after all taxes. In other words, their earnings are enough to cover tax increases and still give them much higher profits. Workers, on the other hand, have to

pay their own taxes. They are the ones, therefore, who are really paying for the plants—by a reduced standard of living.

This situation promises to continue. There are all kinds of plans for reducing corporate taxes and personal income taxes in the higher brackets, but your taxes will be reduced little, if at all. Somebody's taxes will have to pay off the national debt. And, you see, there is no need to encourage you to invest your money (since you have none) by the incentive of lower tax rates.

Then, too, the corporations under present laws expect billions in post-war refunds on their excess profits taxes, which have not prevented excess profits.

Yes, the plants belong to the government. By every right they are yours and mine. One little question remains: Is the government "ours"? Does the government recognize the true owners of the plants?

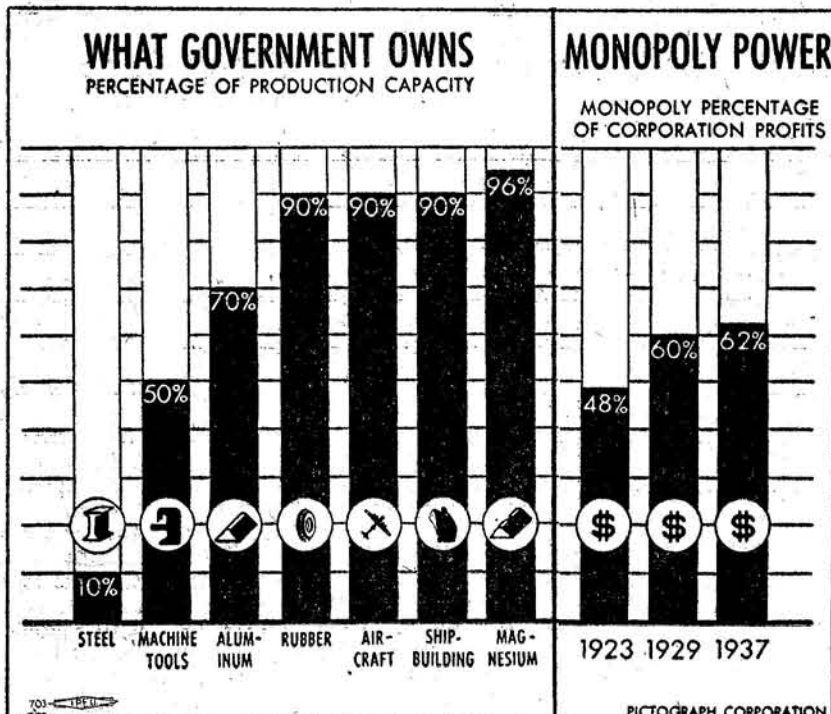
BUSINESS GOT A GIFT

Question 2: In this great land of free enterprise, how does the government come to own all these plants—over fifteen billion dollars in plants—one fifth of the total manufacturing capacity of the nation?

Because the big industrialists and bankers refused to take the risks involved in war expansion. They said: "Let the government furnish the capital. Let the government guarantee to buy the goods and to pay its good profits. We—well, we will furnish the 'know-how.'"

Of course, it was hired men—engineers and more humble workers—who furnished the technical "know-how." The great private enterprisers furnished nothing but an indecent willingness to rake in the profits. In that respect their "know-how" is truly beyond mere words.

Yet we hear plenty of boasting today about the accomplishments of



free American enterprise. "Public opinion," we are told, recognizes the heroic wartime deeds of the captains of industry. American business, says Eric Johnston, smooth spokesman of the U. S. Chamber of Commerce, is no longer in the dog house.

Look at the graph again. It tells the real story. The government's investment in new plants these last few years has been five times that of private capital. That is the truth, in a single sentence, about private initiative, free enterprise, and capitalist risk-taking.

WHO GETS THE PROPERTY?
Question 3: What is going to happen to all this government property? The big monopolists expect to take over some of it and have the rest scrapped. They expect the govern-

ment, "their" government, to do its duty by private enterprise.

Are they wrong? The President has not even seen fit to hide his intentions behind "liberal" names. The grand plans for "reconversion" are drawn up by Baruch and Hancock. The administration is turned over to Byrnes, to Clayton, to Jesse Jones, and to their friends. All of these gentlemen are undeniable agents of Wall Street.

Baruch-Hancock recommend outright sale of plants to private industry but state that leasing may sometimes be necessary. And then they add:

"This red flag of warning is raised. Leasing must not become a hidden device for the government to con-

pete with private plants." (Emphasis theirs—Ed.)

The big monopolists also expect that the prices for the government properties will be "right." Baruch and Hancock have ten rules for the disposal of surplus property. Number four reads as follows:

"Get fair market prices for the values."

This sounds good until the gentlemen inform us that the dollar cost to the government (that is, really, to you) is not a "true yardstick of their real value, since many of these plants were erected at high war costs which bear no relation to their potential value in use by industry." (Emphasis ours—Ed.)

In other words, you will continue to be taxed at wartime levels to pay for the inflated construction costs, but you mustn't expect hard-headed monopolists to help in sharing the burden. Having already drawn nice profits from your plants, they may be willing to take some of them off your hands—at bargain rates!

FULL EMPLOYMENT?

But perhaps full employment will be assured, if the corporations gobble up the plants? There's a new idea, that the monopolies will promote full employment and plenty of goods instead of their usual unemployment and plenty of goods instead of their usual unemployment, scarcity and plenty—of profits. The Department of Justice, reports the Journal of Commerce of November 9, hopes the Defense Plant Corporation will ask purchasers to sign statements signifying their intention to operate the plants which they buy. "However," says this journal, wise in the ways of capitalism, "it is admitted that there is no way to force a purchaser to keep a plant in operation if he claims that continuance would result in a loss." Assurance of full employment? In

recent hearings on the steel wage case, U. S. Steel and the rest of the industry fought tooth and nail against a guaranteed annual wage. Demand for steel is too uncertain, they said, and we would go bankrupt. The steel panel of the War Labor Board agreed with them wholeheartedly, of course.

Question 4: What does the program of the Workers Party say about these plants?

"No handing over of government-built and owned plants and facilities to private ownership!"

We go further: "Nationalize the banks, big industrial monopolies and transportation systems."

We go still further: "Operate all big industry for the welfare of the plain people, with workers' control of production through the unions and plant committees."

This program means that the productive capacity of America should be used to the full to furnish employment and plenty for all. Monopoly operates on the basis of scarcity, having no other end but profits.

Question 5: Why, in connection with the above program, does the Workers Party always insist on calling for a Labor Party and a workers' government?

Perhaps we can explain this by telling you about a very useful little pamphlet from which we reproduced our graph. The pamphlet, called "Let's Keep the Tools of Plenty," was written by Lewis Corey and was published this month by the Post-War World Council. It collects the facts about government-owned plants and exposes the claims of the free enterprisers simply and ably. It even offers a program in many respects like ours.

But then the question, the really big question, arises: How can we begin to bring all this about? Mr. Corey answers in his very last paragraph:

"Progressive management and independent business, farmers and workers, the professionals, must combine in a great popular demand to make government convert war plants into public enterprises..."

What does this mean? Postcards to Congress and the President? Passing resolutions? Putting ads in the papers? The unions have done all this and more in trying to break the Little Steel formula. You know the results.

A QUESTION OF POLITICS

It is a question of government action, a political question—that is certain. Well, the unions are in politics now. The CIO organized the Political Action Committee, a tremendous political force and backed Roosevelt with it—to achieve peace, higher wages, and full employment. The PAC vetoed the reactionary Byrnes as Vice-Presidential candidate. Roosevelt now begs Byrnes, who was supposedly determined to resign, to stay on the job and head the reconversion program, since he is by far the best man available. Byrnes consents to stay. The Senate rushes to confirm this hero of Wall Street. What a victory for the CIO!

Look once again at Mr. Corey's plan. He expects "good" capitalists to lead the popular demand; he mentions them first. Where are the workers and the unions? Buried among groups that, at best, are not sure what they want.

We say that the workers alone can furnish numbers, organization, and program. Their program, unlike that of the monopolists, can offer a truly generous share in the social wealth and an assurance of security to thousands of small business men and farmers, farm laborers, and professionals.

That's why we always call for a Labor Party and a workers' government.

Here's How Four Freedoms Work for "Liberated" Italians

We reprint herewith a resolution from the Italian Railwaymen's Union. It should cause every decent American worker to see red. In appealing to world labor to help fight the hunger which is driving Italian women and children into prostitution, the resolution of these working class brothers gives only a hint of the tragic plight of the Italian people today.

The railwaymen, the first free union constituted in Italy, submitted their resolution to the Bonomi Cabinet, asking "whether it was of any use for them to remain in a government prevented from protecting the most vital interests of the working masses."

Their action only confirms our socialist analysis of what is occurring in "liberated" Italy. The Bonomi government neither rests on nor represents the Italian people. Its authority derives from Allied military might. It does what AMG wants it to do.

In September, the Bonomi government made so bold as to decree an increase in the cost-of-living bonus which would have increased wages in the lower brackets forty per cent. But this was vetoed by the Allied Control Commission.

Foreign Commerce Weekly, a government magazine, informs us with official optimism and cheerfulness that Italian conditions have steadily improved since "steadily downgrade, pre-AMG days," due, of course, to kind, generous American supplies and ministrations. So far as food is concerned, they cite as the most improved area "the southern portion of liberated Italy" where "food conditions in rural districts are now relatively easy."

Contrast this with an AP dispatch from Rome on October 19 which reports that sixteen persons were slain and 104 wounded in street battles between mobs of civilians and Italian troops at Palermo. The troops were compelled to fire on the crowd during a demonstration against living conditions, according to the official announcement.

These are our class brothers. They are the genuine anti-fascists. They are the ones who lived crushed under the boot of Mussolini for twenty years, who rose against him at their first opportunity and overthrew his regime. They are fast learning that the distinction, for them, between Nazi and "democratic" capitalist government is meager. Their food conditions now are worse than under the Nazi occupation. They know that the Bonomi regime does not represent their interests.

The next step is the realization that only a genuine government of the working people, led by a working class party, can truly liberate them from hunger, oppression, fascism and war.

From this it can be seen why we do not agree with everything said in the resolution, which would seem to petition the Bonomi government for redress and remove all responsibility from its shoulders for the present situation. On the contrary, the Bonomi government, representing only the Allies and not the Italian masses, is one of the elements responsible for the plight of the people.

The full text of the resolution follows:

RESOLUTION OF ITALIAN RAILWAYMEN'S UNION

The General Council of the Italian Railwaymen's Union, comprising representatives of all sections of liberated Italy meeting in extraordinary session in Rome for the purpose of considering the tragic moral and material situation in which all railwaymen find themselves and considering:

That the continuation of the present famine conditions will inevitably lead to one definite result: the total breakdown of what is left of the will to make, by sacrifice and work, a new justification of life;

That it is no longer possible, and would be unjust and inhuman to remain deaf to the cries that rise up in ever sharper tones from all sides;

That children who tearfully beg for bread, only bread, cannot be put off with empty and misleading promises;

That the specter of hunger has taken material form and, repulsive and horrible, sinks into our homes, depriving them of the only thing they still possess, their honor;

That prostitution of the spirit and the body has

only one origin, hunger, because it is not, nor will ever be, possible to tackle social problems before having solved those of an economic character;

That everyone of us feels his hopes betrayed and himself mocked by lies;

That the position in which they find themselves has harmful repercussions on the traditional rectitude, dignity and loyalty of the railwaymen as a class;

The Italian Railwaymen's Union denounces to the civilized world the inhuman treatment which tends to place the worker below the slave, and appeals to the international working masses to intervene with active solidarity;

Decides to inform the government that the railwaymen, if they have to choose between hunger and fighting, will choose to fight;

Decides further to submit this resolution to the head of the government and to the ministers—without portfolio—who represent the parties in power, asking them whether it is of any use for them to remain in a government prevented from protecting the most vital interests of the working masses.

(Signed for the Central Committee of the Italian Railwaymen's Union)

CASANTI, General Secretary.

Copies of the above resolution may be obtained from the International Transport Workers Federation, 5 Beekman Street, New York City.

Getting Ready For Peacetime Militarism

The President, back to the business of ruling the country, has lost no time in stating where he stands on the subject of universal peacetime military training. And do you know why the benevolent President is in favor of this militaristic move? To prepare for the next war, maybe? Oh, no! Such an idea! The President is interested above all in the health of our sons. Military training is so good for boys of eighteen, don't you know!

But why not girls of eighteen also? Can it be perhaps that boys of eighteen are just right for soldiering?

And if it is your health the President is so concerned about, let it be remembered that it begins back in the home when the youth is born. The health of youth depends on healthy parents with a standard of living that includes first-class food, shelter and clothing, proper medical and dental care, fitting education and recreation.

The health of youth requires not universal military training but a universal minimum wage of \$5,000 a year for every worker—something which modern methods of production can make possible if the workers take control of the factories and run them for use—not profit.

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Big Business at Rye, N. Y., Plans for--

CARTELS AND RECONVERSION

By V. JENSEN

As the powerful winter offensive opens in Germany and Lorraine, doughboys battling death through mud, cold and snow will undoubtedly be cheered by the news that the post-war world has been carefully planned for them by those stalwarts of democracy, the big business men and international monopolists, comfortably assembled at Rye, N. Y. This is the international business conference called by the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, the National Association of Manufacturers, the National Foreign Trade Council and the American section of the International Chamber of Commerce.

What these gentlemen, meeting so secretly in Rye, are considering is nothing less than world economic reconversion. Before the blood has dried on the battlefields, the international cartellists are meeting to divide the spoils; to make agreements to regulate production, restrict competition, fix prices and divide world markets. In short, these men are busy shaping the post-war world.

Who are these men and what are their qualifications and recommendations?

GENTLEMEN AT RYE
A glance at the list of delegates reveals that here are the heads of the world's major shipping interests, the oil combines, the chemical companies, the steel corporations, the world's great financial interests. These gentlemen propose the organization of a "special constituted international body" to regulate and control cartels and to act as the "economic complement" of the Dumbarton Oaks organization.

Last week the Senate's Kilgore Committee on Cartels and National Security issued its report following an extensive investigation into cartels and international trade agreements. What did this report conclude?

To quote from the report: "The extensive testimony before this committee and the great mass of testimony adduced by other congressional committees have adduced beyond question that the international cartel system has been subversive of political security, full production and employment, and the expansion

of world trade. These effects have not been incidental to the operation of cartel system but have arisen out of their essential character.

"Private restrictive economic agreements designed to maximize profits inevitably minimize political security, jobs and world trade."

It points out how the German militarists could rearm after the last war, in spite of armistice restrictions, through undercover cartel ties in neutral countries. "The emergence of consolidated and powerful interests in American, British and French industry made it possible for Germany's cartel groups to strike a series of bargains and cartel agreements which resulted in virtual elimination of competition in vast segments of world industry while at the same time fortifying the spheres of influence which the German groups had regained."

These same Allied pay-riots, who contributed so much to the world-wide depression and limitation of production, who bolstered German capitalism and militarism in order to play Germany off against other capitalist countries, had to get together when the German monopolists grew to be too strong a threat to them. Now they are meeting again "to plan another 'brave new world'—this time a world dominated by the American and British cartel interests.

But this time it's going to be different, they swear. They'll have a "code of international economic behavior," a "world fair practices commission" to pass on trade agreements. A code of ethics for cartels. Honor among thieves, so to speak.

CONTROLLING THE WORLD

What this kind of agreement means has been very succinctly and aptly phrased in the Kilgore report: "A cartel system dominated by American or British interests will eventually produce the same undesirable results as one exploited by the Germans. It would jeopardize peace and jobs in the post-war world and soon bring us face to face with the possibility of a third and even more destructive war."

This then is the world that the international monopolists are

planning, not in the words of wild-eyed radicals but in the dignified language of the committee of the august Senate of the United States.

The United States comes out of this war replacing Britain as the key creditor, the prime trader, the big internationalist. It is preparing to finance European reconstruction—at a profit. At home, big business has successfully integrated itself in the major post-war reconversion and reconstruction agencies. There is a powerful undercover move for modification or suspension of anti-trust laws.

Section 12, a last-minute joker added to the smaller war plants corporation act in June, 1942, gave the chairman of the WPB the power, for the period of the duration plus six months, to grant certificates of exemption from the anti-trust laws to business combinations he considers necessary to the war effort. The ostensible purpose of this section was to permit little business men to form pools in order to enable them to handle larger war contracts. Its principal use actually has been to enable big business combinations to escape anti-trust prosecution during the war. There is a big move on to extend the section into the post-war period.

LABOR: TAKE OVER!

Abroad, American business interests support cartel interests, primarily out of fear of the democratic movements in such countries as France and Italy to nationalize key industries. As such, American business is and will be the bulwark not merely of economic reaction but of political reaction, supporting inevitably governments of "order" against the people.

World labor must take post-war "planning" out of the hands of the international business men at Rye and their more high-falutin', fancy-speaking representatives at Dumbarton Oaks. It is international capitalism that is responsible for misery, poverty and the holocaust of war. They have "planned" long enough. It is time now for international labor to plan; to put an end to international capitalism and its poverty and wars; to plan for international socialism, peace and plenty for all.

GREAT BRITAIN

Democracy at Work Under Churchill

By MIKE STEVENS

The English coal and textile committees that have been touring the United States studying these industries have returned to England. The textile report has been made public but the government refuses to publish the coal mining report.

The textile report attempts to prove that the textile workers in the United States are on a much faster speed-up than those in the English mills. The printing of this report is obviously intended to put pressure on the textile workers in England to yield extra work loads or, as the bosses say, "increase production per man-hour." English textile exports have been falling continuously for many years and the report says that the only way the mills can operate is by the workers accepting a speed-up and a reduction in the number of workers.

On the coal report, the committee could not very well do anything else but accuse the owners of the British mines for the present conditions. The owners have been draining the profits out of the mines without ever replacing the antiquated, inefficient machinery, or correcting the dangerous and disease-breeding conditions of the mines and mining communities. If this report is published, Churchill fears that everyone will see the real reasons why the miners continue to go on strike regularly, and the cry for nationalization of the mines would rise very high.

Although the press pays little attention to the English strikes these days, the government figures just issued announce that there were 144 stoppages in the coal mining industry during September, with a loss of 186,000 working days. This brings the total to 2,323,000 working days lost in the coal industry since January. Considering the miserable wages of the miners, you can bet your sweet life they have mountains of grievances when they continuously go on strike and stay out for such long periods of time.

The government's Bevin pit-boys' ballot is not very popular either with the boys or their parents. Under this law, two out of every ten boys have to go to the mines for \$12 a week for surface work and \$14 for underground work. In the past six months 300 pit boys have run away from the mines. Out of every hundred boys drafted for this work, one goes to jail for refusing.

Four thousand five hundred longshoremen at the docks of Bristol, Avonmouth and Portishead went out on strike twice within a twenty-four-hour period, when their union representative signed an unsatisfactory wage agreement with the bosses.

As soon as the longshoremen voted against the agreement, buses containing troops arrived on the docks and proceeded to break the workers' strike by unloading the ships.

The women in England have begun to put pressure on the government for their husbands to return home. Many of the soldiers have been out of the country for as long as five-year periods. One of the petitions sent to Churchill and bearing over 1000 signatures of wives of soldiers reads in part: "Many of us who wish to have children are haunted by the knowledge that a four or five years' separation greatly diminishes our chances and limits the size of the family for which we had hoped."

Great concern is being expressed over England's export trade by the government's Board of Trade. In 1938, the year before the war, her export trade was close to two billion dollars. Last year it dropped to less than one billion, and it is expected to drop to a lower figure this year. Last year the exports provided only 2.8 per cent of the net national income, compared with 10.2 per cent in 1938. The Daily Mail remarks that Lend-Lease "has helped ruin Britain's export trade."

WLB Doesn't Hear--

(Continued from page 1)

Dropping the pledge would mean the resumption of genuine collective bargaining. Then there would be no year-long and longer delays in handling demands for overdue increases. Employers would come to heel, and wages and conditions could be maintained not only for the mass of workers now in the shops, but for the returning veterans.

Philip Murray, at the top of the union, can see the employers' point of view more easily than the ranks of labor. Believing in the "principle" of the WLB and the "principle"

of the no-strike pledge, he is confined to speaking against the board policies.

We repeat: he's gone about as far as he can go. Action by the ranks of labor is necessary to rescind the pledge and get the labor men off the WLB.

High Wage Myth--

(Continued from page 1)

Their accuracy, then the War Labor Board has committed a crime of the lowest order against the American workers; it has cheated them of their due in wages and by that fact has aided in enriching an already profit-bloated capitalist class.

WLB CHEATING

Despite these facts, brought to light by its own study, the WLB blissfully takes no notice of the fact that it has added in cheating the workers out of billions of dollars in wages and merely concludes that it is necessary to keep the Little Steel formula and prevent "undue" wage increases.

Remember this, too: Whatever incomes the workers earn over and above the amounts shown, result from longer hours of work, Sundays and holidays, speed-ups and similar methods of increasing their production and exploitation, all have the same result of still greater profits to management.

Two Negroes: Labor Leader, Labor Traitor

By W. F. CARLTON

A. Philip Randolph has made the best and clearest statement so far from any well known labor leader about the organization and program of an independent Labor Party in the United States. His statement deserves repetition:

"Labor and liberals should not kid themselves into believing that it is possible to deal effectively with a post-war program of economic security and freedom within the framework of free enterprise, which is espoused by both Republican and Democratic Parties."

Randolph does not use the word "socialism," but rejection of free enterprise means the rejection of capitalism. The rejection of capitalism means, in political terms, recognition of the fact that the capitalist class can no longer guarantee reasonable employment and security to the large majority of the population. A new class must assume the direction of society. This class can only be the working class.

Now Philip Randolph, as everybody knows, is a Negro who has earned some reputation as a leader of the Negroes in their struggle for democratic rights. But Randolph is a labor leader. And he made his pronouncement as a labor leader. He was not speaking specifically about the rights of Negroes. He was speaking about the general economic and political situation in the United States and he offered a program for labor and its allies on a national scale.

It is an example which should be followed by other Negro leaders. So far most of them have confined themselves to seeking parties and organizations which would assist the Negro to gain his rights. The time for that narrowness of outlook is past. Negroes have every legitimate right to demand that the special oppression from which they suffer be given special attention, particularly by Negroes. But at the same time they have not only a right but a duty to go beyond their own difficulties and to propagandize and agitate for the kind of America in which Negroes would be able to gain and maintain the privileges which they are now deprived.

A man like Randolph with his great labor achievements and experience can play a crucial role in his dual capacity of labor leader and Negro leader. What Randolph will DO about this is one thing. For the moment, however, we are concerned with his analysis of the national scene and his program for labor as a whole.

RANDOLPH MAKES A BREAK

Randolph in this last election acted in accordance with the views which he expressed. He stated that he was going to vote neither for Dewey nor for Roosevelt. This was good but not good enough. The Workers Party and LABOR ACTION advocated repudiation of both the Republican and Democratic Parties. But we did not stop there. We not only advocated but actively propagandized and agitated for an independent Labor Party based on the idea of production for use and not for profit.

To say that the worker should not vote for the Republicans or the Democrats does not in the least mean that he should turn his back on politics. Not at all. What it means is that he should take advantage of the opportunities offered by the election, actively to interest the workers and to turn their attention to the only kind of political organization which can truly serve the interests of labor.

Randolph, however, has earned the condemnation of no less a person than the Negro Stalinist, Benjamin J. Davis, Jr. In the Daily Worker of November 19, Benjamin J. Davis finds that A. Philip Randolph in the last election presented "a sorry and tragic spectacle."

THE COMMUNIST POLICY

This is what Ben Davis thought of the election: "Here were the Negro people and the whole nation fighting for their lives in the most crucial election of our history, deciding the fate of human beings for generations to come..."

Every Negro should ask himself two questions. The first is: What fundamental difference has it made to the lives of my people now that Roosevelt has been rejected and Dewey rejected? Is the fate of the Negro people now settled for generations to come? Isn't this ridiculous? Furthermore, is the fate of the United States now settled for generations to come? Merely to pause for a moment and ask oneself this question is to recognize the utter stupidity of Ben Davis and his fellow Communists who blew up this election into a political event comparable to the Civil War.

The second question follows from the first: If Davis' ideas are so obviously stupid, why does he state them with such emphasis, with such boldness, with such brazenness? He must have some political reason.

His hostility to Randolph tells us why. Randolph (in his words at any rate) aims at the organization of labor for the purposes of labor to be achieved by the strength of labor. In his careful phrases, Randolph in reality is expressing the fundamental Marxist idea that the emancipation of the workers can be achieved only by the workers themselves.

THERE IS A WAY OUT

To this, Ben Davis, like all the Communists, is mortally opposed. Their whole policy over the past few years has been aimed at the subordination of labor to capital. The suppression of labor's independent activity, the restriction of labor to purely industrial organization so as to maintain Roosevelt's political influence in the labor movement, this is the policy of the party to which Ben Davis belongs. To them the idea of socialism and the struggle for socialism by workers is now as repellent as it is to the capitalist class!

Under the circumstances, it is impossible for Ben Davis to be otherwise than hostile to militant Negro struggles for Negro rights!

Whoever supports the independent organization of labor and the workers' militant struggle for socialism must of necessity see in the struggles of the Negroes an ally in the national struggle for the emancipation of the masses of the people as a whole. But whoever, for whatever reason, is opposed to the independent political struggle of labor must of necessity seek all ways and means to keep the Negroes subordinate to capitalist politics, in the same way that labor is to be kept subordinate to capitalist politics.

For our part, Randolph in the recent period has too often presented a "sorry and tragic spectacle." He presented a "sorry and tragic spectacle" when he called off the March on Washington. He presented a "sorry and tragic spectacle" when he consistently supported the imperialist world war and encouraged the Negro people and the labor movement to believe that in Roosevelt lay the hope of labor's future.

But he does not present a "sorry and tragic spectacle" when he rejects the Republican and Democratic Parties as parties of free enterprise, i.e., capitalism, and comes out for an independent political party of labor, a party which will have as its program production for use and not for profit. In this policy he expresses the true interests of the country as a whole and of the Negro people. Here, as in the idea of a March on Washington, Randolph shows himself an able analyst of contemporary politics. That he will probably backslide at the critical moment does not alter the fundamental soundness of his approach. This is not a quarrel between two Negroes. Two lines of political policy meet here. Negroes should study them carefully.

The Aftermath of the Elections --

What Should Be The Future of PAC?--II

By J. R. JOHNSON

Sidney Hillman and the CIO committee have declared that the PAC will continue. Thank you, gentlemen, thank you. But we were not really very much worried about the official continuation of the PAC. For to us the PAC represents something which Hillman & Co. only express. PAC represents a stage of development of the American working class and the American working class moves inevitably forward to its own independent party of organized labor.

Let us trace the stages as we have seen them during the last fifteen years.

FIVE STAGES

Stage 1. 1929—American labor is only moderately unionized. The chief unions are the unions of highly-skilled craft workers. They are unified in the AFL. Politically the workers do not think sharply in terms of class. They support the Democratic Party or the Republican Party. Millions of them associate the capitalist prosperity of 1920-28 with the Republican Party and their votes have given that party smashing victories in 1920 and 1928.

Stage 2—The crisis of 1929 and the great depression shocked American workers, for the first time, into serious consideration of what the future holds for them as workers. Out steps Roosevelt and promises a New Deal. Make no mistake. The New

Deal is primarily an appeal to labor. The great capitalists did not need any New Deal. The old deal of vest profits is good enough for them. No. The workers hear in the appeals and promises of Roosevelt a promise of jobs, security or at least relief for workers. Their support gives the New Deal a tremendous victory at the polls.

RISE OF THE CIO

Stage 3—The workers, however, are most sensitive at the point of production, at the point of struggle over wages and working conditions. The masses of the semi-skilled and unskilled feel the necessity for union organization. We get the tremendous mass upsurge which results in the formation of the CIO. John L. Lewis did fine work for the CIO. But he could only do it because the workers had reached a stage of development which imperatively demanded an extension of the existing union organizations.

Stage 4—The workers ignore the anti-Roosevelt press and in 1936 and 1940 overwhelmingly support Roosevelt. But dissatisfaction grows as the inadequacy of the New Deal is borne home to the millions of unemployed. The war, for a time, saves the situation (but only for a time).

Stage 5—Roosevelt partially recovers a declining prestige by presenting himself to the workers as the great organizer of victory against fascism. But the working class as a

whole is dissatisfied over the Little Steel formula and the no-strike pledge. It has the gravest doubts of what will happen to the United States in the post-war period. This is the soil in which the PAC springs up like a giant mushroom.

WHAT THE PAC IS

An independent Labor Party? The PAC is not that. But it is an independent organization acting as a pressure group on the Democratic Party.

Labor still thinks Roosevelt is the leader of what it calls "the progressives" in the country. But note that labor would have felt more satisfied if Vice-President Wallace had been renominated. In other words, it does not trust the President as much as before. Secondly, labor, as labor, fought to ensure the election of the man whom it considered its candidate. But thirdly, labor wanted its own organization so as to be sure that its demands would have organized backing. Hillman said as much at the foundation of the PAC.

Compare the workers today with the workers of 1929. They have learned plenty and have concrete organizational forms to show—the CIO and the PAC. What is the next stage?

The next stage is the recognition by the workers that the problems posed to them by a bankrupt society demand labor's own independent political organization with its own workers' program. PAC is not this.

PAC must cut itself clean from the Democratic Party.

The working class will sooner or later reach the stage where it will be unable to live the kind of life which is its due and which the economy can provide. It will be pushed to the final stage—the stage of independent political organization, free of capitalist control with a program for solving the problems which capitalism cannot solve.

That for us is the course of development of the working class in this period. Enough has happened since 1929 to make us confident of the future. But we state categorically that PAC represents a definitive stage of progress and is no accident. Labor may take some other road to political independence than the PAC. But the PAC is what we have now. The aim now must be to free it of capitalist control, to raise its program to the height of the great tasks which face American labor.

TASKS OF AMERICAN LABOR

But to do this as it ought to be done demands that we see American labor for what it is—a class called upon to solve the problems of American society; a class called upon to refashion an economic system which has served its purpose and now can produce only economic crises and imperialist war; a class which in the last fifteen years has shown that it can learn and take action to meet its needs.

Election of Roosevelt No Guarantee of Security for American Labor

By SUSAN GREEN

During the electioneering just ended, no words were tossed about more recklessly than the two words "full employment." To get the labor vote, all candidates beat their chests resoundingly and pledged themselves, first, last and all the time, to provide 60,000,000 jobs, more or less, for that many American workers.

Labor leaders accused Dewey of double-talk and lying—and, of course, they were right. But they threw all caution to the wind when they spoke about Roosevelt and the Democrats. CIO leaders especially filled their union papers with the most fantastic nonsense about a vote for Roosevelt meaning a vote for full employment; union halls echoed with loudly spoken dreams about Roosevelt and 60,000,000 jobs; the air waves carried the same absolutely unfounded promises by labor leaders.

The campaign fanfare being over, the sobering facts stand out once more with all their implications. What about the 2,000,000 workers now building ships, whose number will be cut down to 350,000 in a couple of years or less? What about the 2,500,000 workers in the automobile and aircraft field, whose number will be reduced to around 500,000 in the near future? What about similar drastic job-cutting all along the line? Will the hero of labor leaders, just returned to the White House for another four years, solve this vital problem—as per campaign promises?

BRETTON WOODS ENTERS GAME

Mr. Roosevelt, of course, does not carry on in a vacuum of good intentions. He carries on within the capitalist, private profit system—which throughout the campaign he took every occasion to endorse and pledge his allegiance to. Working thus within the limits set by the economic

masters, Mr. Roosevelt still claims certain great accomplishments. The Bretton Woods conference, for example, is supposed to be a giant step toward economic stability and prosperity—in fact, it has been described as a "basic discussion on how world trade can help make lots of jobs."

Yet at this very Bretton Woods conference, one of the delegations taking part—the Peruvian delegation—spoke these damning words: "When we came to compare the various measures advocated to assure prosperity and full employment permanently in the world, we are baffled not only by the disparity of the suggestions but also by the criticism which each one of them seems to imply, in one way or another, of the others. No one can be blamed for being afraid that too much perhaps may be taken for granted, that wishful thinking may be having the better of cold, reasoned analysis and that, if and when a depression sets in, it may prove almost as difficult to overcome as in the thirties."

Can there be a more clear-cut way of saying that the Bretton Woods conference—made so much of during the campaign as the groundwork of world prosperity—was really a huge fiasco and farce?

The reason why this and other conferences are only jabbering parties—from the point of view of the working people—is that the diplomats assembled represent the interests of their own groups of capitalists, and try to grab the biggest pieces of bacon to bring home to their respective master classes.

EMPLOYMENT WHERE?

This is the kind of politics that Roosevelt is engaged in. That is why the problem of unemployment will not be solved by him or by any other capitalist politician or capitalist party. That is why such a staunch pro-

Roosevelt man as the journalist, I. F. Stone, has been constrained to admit: "I see no evidence of any steps, private or public, that can insure anything like full employment."

Naturally so. The problem of unemployment can be solved only on the basis of production for human needs. Roosevelt has placed himself squarely on the other side of the fence—for the preservation of private profits and the capitalist system. Being a capitalist politician and the head of a capitalist party, he naturally can do nothing else. He is the servant of the master class.

And does the master class served by Roosevelt want the full employment he so glibly promised? A reading of their press in recent months leaves no doubts. A windy discussion goes on daily on—of all things—what "full employment" means. It is funny that no high-sounding definition of full employment had to be made when, at the peak of war production the entire unemployment slack was taken up. But when it comes to peacetime employment, the capitalist writers are anxious about definitions.

Thus the Saturday Evening Post writes: "Mechanical devices have been advanced as a result of manpower shortages, and we are quite likely to see another important revolution in the use of human labor in industry. But this does not mean that a man not needed at the kind of job he now has will be 'unemployed.'" What, pray, will he be?

And here is an anti-labor counsel-

er of the New York Sun, camouflaged as a babe in the woods, who wants to know: "Is a worker who works nine but not twelve months a year in a seasonal industry unemployed for three months?" That problem in kindergarten arithmetic is counterposed to the great problem of unemployment.

FDR OPERATES UNDER CAPITAL

Let no worker be deluded by the so-called liberalism handed out for election purposes. The capitalist class and the profit system have not changed their character. Neither have capitalist politicians changed theirs.

In this campaign the great mass of workers was misled by their leaders. Roosevelt has no solution for the unemployment problem. Unemployment is a problem for labor itself to tackle and defeat. The government that will bring full employment to the workers will have to be a WORKERS' government.

The power of labor, this year diverted through the PAC to back Roosevelt and other capitalist politicians, must be used now to build an independent Labor Party, free from all capitalist connections, with an employment program motivated by human needs—and ready to kick Mr. Roosevelt's dear system of private profit into the limbo where now rest the equally cruel systems of chattel slavery and feudalism of the past.

War Surplus Properties Go to Capitalists

By RUTH PHILLIPS

While American workers face the post-war prospect of mass unemployment, breadlines and the dole, big business, already swollen with wartime profits, plans, through the Surplus Property Board, to raid the property of the American people and reap post-war profits that in some cases would be larger than their inflated wartime gains.

Seventy billion dollars in war plants, twenty million acres of land and billions of dollars' worth of surplus commodities, paid for in taxes taken out of the workers' pay envelopes, will be in the hands of the government when he war is over. The disposal of this vast wealth is in the hands of the Surplus Property Board, headed by Will Clayton, who in a recent report indicated how surplus products will be disposed of after the war, if big business has its way.

A GIFT TO BIG BUSINESS

Clayton wants surplus machine tools handed over to the machine tool manufacturers, who will dispose of them as they see fit, at a sales commission of thirty per cent or more. That this method of disposal of all surplus commodities will be put into effect in the post-war period is strongly indicated by the fact that surplus aircraft parts are already being sold on a thirty per cent commission in Ohio by the Clayton-Jones Metal Reserves Corporation.

A thirty per cent sales commission in the post-war period would net manufacturers a higher profit than they made in 1943, when sales for twenty-eight leading machine tool manufacturers netted from 8.9 to 29.6 per cent. Obviously if manufacturers can get higher profits from the sale of surplus commodities than from selling their own products they will shut down or curtail production. That millions of workers will be thrown out of work as a result can hardly be expected to trouble them, especially when mass layoffs will break the back of many unions, now composed in large part by war workers.

The Clayton plan not only makes a present of surplus commodities to the big capitalists and provides for their post-war profits, it also conveniently arranges that surplus commodities shall not compete with the manufacturers' own products. Commenting on the plan, the Wall Street Journal wrote: "When it is deemed desirable the government indicates it will smile on the practice of a firm's holding back sales of federal goods and promoting sales of its own wares."

SURPLUS COULD WORK FOR THE PEOPLE

This great steal which big business is now planning must be the concern of every American working man. The huge wealth in surplus commodities which the government will have on its hands at the conclusion of the war, was produced and paid for by the sweat and taxes of American labor. It should be used for the benefit of the vast majority of the American people, not swindled by the pot-bellied minority.

Seventy billion dollars' worth of war plants can employ workers threatened with post-war unemployment; twenty million acres of land can be used by sharecroppers and farm workers; billions of dollars' worth of machine tools, trucks, tractors, engines, etc., can be used to produce food, homes, refrigerators, automobiles and do housework for the American people.

A FIGHT AT THE TOP

There is a sham battle now in progress in Washington over the Surplus Property Board. Clayton is to be replaced by a three-man administration. President Roosevelt originally intended to appoint Col. J. P. Lockwood, Sam Husbands and James Shepard to the board. Certain labor leaders and liberals raised the cry that the President was being duped into making these appointments by his "right wing" advisers, Jesse Jones and Judge Rosenman. According to these liberals, the "far-seeing," "indispensable" Roosevelt is always the "dupe" of the reactionaries when he does what they want.

The liberals won a "great victory" when the President changed his mind about appointing Lockwood and promised to think over the other two. But the American people won nothing. Essentially it doesn't matter which set of capitalist politicians mans the Surplus Property Board. So long as big business through its dominant economic position holds political sway in Washington, it will decide on the disposal of surplus commodities after the war, just as during the war it has forced the raising of price ceilings, prevented limitation on high incomes and made huge profits, despite the pressure and pleading of labor leaders.

WORKING PEOPLE SHOULD HAVE THEIR SAY

The American people can have their say on disposal of surplus commodities, as on all other problems of the post-war period, when there is a government in Washington whose main concern is the needs of the working people instead of the profits of the Sixty Ruling Families. Such a government, a workers' government, would use surplus property to provide the American people with the homes, food, clothing, medical care and education which they will need in the post-war period.

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Wage Stalling--

(Continued from page 1)

In response to this pressure by labor, the President directed the board to appoint a committee to investigate the rising cost of living. This committee horsed around for a long while and then produced a report which was completely refuted by the labor members of the WLB and countered by the latter's report.

The contrast between the two was clear. The WLB's report (compiled by the Bureau of Labor Statistics) on the cost of living showed a rise of only 23.5 per cent, while the labor report demonstrated beyond a shadow of a doubt that it was 45.3 per cent. Accepting the figures of the WLB report, it would show that the Little Steel formula should have been revised upward by 8.5 points. But the board did nothing; the President and his directors did nothing.

WLB COWARDICE

In more recent weeks, the dispute on the rise in the cost of living was again brought before the board as the pressure of labor increased and the ranks of the union movement began to press for rescinding the no-strike pledge. This time the board accepted part of the labor position on the cost of living and agreed that it had risen some additional three or four points to almost thirty per cent. That means the Little Steel formula needs to be revised upward by at least 15 per cent.

What did the WLB do? Nothing. It sent this report to the President without making a single recommendation!

Any way you look at it, that is, any figure you accept from the WLB, still demands a revision of the formula. But the board says no.

WHAT ABOUT FDR?

How do the President, his advisers and directors meet this situation? Director of Economic Stabilization Fred M. Vinson issues a statement that the Administration does not contemplate a general upward revision of the Little Steel formula. He accepts as accurate the false report of the WLB. He realizes that even this report calls for the aforementioned revision.

The lessons, however, are clear. Labor has been duped by the President and his Administration. His directors and the WLB, carrying out his policies, have cheated American labor out of its due wages—a wage bill amounting to eleven billion dollars, according to the AFL!

The lesson is: Quit the WLB! It is the graveyard of labor's wage demands! Rescind the no-strike pledge which has made labor the impotent captive of big business and the Administration! Restore genuine collective bargaining and the union movement to its former stature!

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