

LABOR ACTION

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More Jobless, Higher Profits For 1950 Due

There were more people out of work in the United States last February than at any time since the war, according to the Federal Reserve Board's monthly bulletin. At that time 4,700,000 were jobless, and despite a seasonal rise in employment there were still 3,500,000 out of work during April. It is probable that the actual number of people out of work was far greater than government figures show.

The reason for the steady growth of unemployment, despite very high levels of activity in most industries, is that American workers are too productive. Labor-saving machinery and murderous speedup have produced a situation in which production has increased faster than employment since last summer.

Both government and private economists believe that unemployment will continue to increase, while business profits mount steadily. These gentlemen seem to have made the startling discovery that from 800,000 to a million workers are being added to the labor force each year. Though they think government policies (armament production and so forth) may serve to keep the present labor force working for some time, they are very worried about what to do with these new workers.

CAPITALIST DISEASE

What do they propose to do about it? Nothing that can solve the problem. For this is the terrible sickness which gnaws at the very vitals of the capitalist system. Faster and more efficient production by the workers means fewer jobs. Labor-saving machinery, instead of leading to more leisure and a higher standard of living, leads to speedup and more unemployment.

But something will have to be done, whether the professors and government officials can think of an answer or not. The immediate demand of the unions in this situation could be for the 30-hour week with no decrease in take-home pay. As the corporations expect a profit of \$20 billion after taxes this year, they can well afford to pay the wage increases involved.

Truman's Formula

What's behind President Truman's cockiness about economic prospects? A formula on cold-war-equals-prosperity, say the editors of U. S. News & World Report in an exceedingly interesting article which will be reviewed next week.

Barkley's Slip Confirms Washington Aim to Garrison Europe and Whole World—

'WE MAY HAVE TO OCCUPY MORE COUNTRIES,' SAYS V.P.!

By HAL DRAPER

Vice-President Barkley probably put his foot in it, from the point of view of Washington's diplomats. Responsible government officials are not supposed to let cats out of bags. But what he said in his New Orleans speech at the Armed Forces Day dinner last Sunday, May 21, was the truth—the truth about the U. S. government's plans for a permanent garrison in Europe and all over the world.

He said: "There seems little prospect of a peace treaty, so we must maintain armed forces all over the world and we may have to occupy more countries before the cold war is ended."

This breathtakingly frank statement is a full confirmation of the charge which LABOR ACTION has twice made in lead-headlined articles which aroused some skepticism.

Only last week was once. We said so for the first time just over a year ago, April 18, 1948, under a headline which read: "Truman Waves A-Bomb; Leaders Plan U. S. Garrison in Europe."

Neither story was based on guess, rumor, or "inside information." Both were political conclusions based on press reports which, in our opinion, pointed unmistakably in that direction despite official doubletalk, protestations and denials.

It is easy to predict that Barkley's indiscretion (especially the blooper about occupying more countries "before the cold war is ended") will be shushed up as quickly as possible. But Barkley has some explaining to do!

Nor is it a question of Barkley personally. Everyone above the feeble-minded level must know that the vice-president was merely repeating what he had heard at

(Turn to last page)

While no doubt the State Department held its collective head and groaned, Barkley came up the next day with the explanation that "the wrong emphasis had been placed" on his statement, according to an AP dispatch. (He did not claim to have been misquoted by the press.)

He feebly explained that he did not mean "any extension" of U. S. occupation forces "with the possible exception that some of the countries in the North Atlantic Pact" might ask for U. S. troops to "help round out their defenses," and that he was speaking "primarily" of maintaining U. S. armed forces where they are already stationed.

Barkley is certainly correct in one thing: it was not he who laid emphasis on his "occupy more countries" boner. It merely slipped out with the rest.

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Labor Party Leaders' Parley Maps Timid Policy for Britain

By LARRY O'CONNOR

The leadership of the British Labor Party met last week in secret session to work out policies for the months ahead. It appears that the Attlee-Morrison right wing of the party retained its decisive majority for a policy of doing as little as possible (in order not to "rock the political boat") before the next elections.

Until the new party platform is worked out and published nothing positive can be said about the Labor Party's plans. But the fact that the conference ended with a vague statement to the press about the unity and determination of the

LP rather than with any statement of new social measures to be undertaken indicates that "caution" and "moderation" will be the watchwords.

The old guard in the party believes that the relative decline in the LP vote in the last elections was due to the fact that the party lost more middle-class votes than it could gain from the workers. Now, it seems, it hopes to woo back the middle-class vote by going easy on nationalization.

Yet one of the chief problems which besets the party is the restlessness of the working class un-

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Truman Boasts Fair Deal 'Saved' U.S. from Socialism

By MARY BELL

Why President Harry Truman's recent 6,000-mile "whistlestop" tour ever was called "non-political" belongs in the realm of either jasper or political psychopathia. It was universally recognized for what it was, the first round in the fight for a Fair Deal Congress in an off-year election that is traditionally hard on the party in power, and a build-up for Truman in preparation for the 1952 elections. As such, it was a preview of the issues and how they will be fought on the Democratic side.

From the whistlestops—Grand Island, Ravenna, Broken Bow, Snake River Valley, Ottumwa, Galesburg, etc.—with gifts galore, introductions of Mrs. Truman and Margaret and induction of the president into the Sioux tribe—Truman wound up with a gala political orgy in Chicago prepared by the well-oiled big-city Democratic machine noted for "weighting its ballots," complete with parade, balloons for the children and a TV showing of the cabinet in action.

Just as Senator Robert Taft has lived to regret the "whistlestop" appellation for the Truman barnstorming, he and Governor Dew-

ey, prime Republican presidential aspirants, may yet regret the appellation "socialism" for the Fair Deal program. A sample of Truman's replies:

"So you see that the cry of socialism is as old as the hills. They used it against woman suffrage, against the Federal Reserve, against social security. . . . [But] I am going to keep right on working for better houses, better schools. . . and I don't intend to be scared away by anybody who calls that program socialism."

Truman's argument closely resembles the type of speech Norman Thomas is accustomed to make in defense of socialism. Only Thomas calls all government reforms "socialism," whereas Truman realistically appraises the Fair Deal for what it is, "welfare state" or government assistance to the economy.

BOGIES AND CORN

Truman further replies to the "socialist" charge by saying: "All of us, I am sure, have heard many cries about government interference with business and about creeping socialism. I should like to remind the gentlemen who make the complaints that if events

had been allowed to continue as they were going prior to March 4, 1933, most of them would have had no business left. . . . to interfere with—and almost surely we would have had socialism in this country—real socialism."

This argument, while it has an element of truth, has a triple political purpose for the Democratic program: it is to frighten the people with the bogey of "socialism," as popularly and falsely identified with Stalinism, to place the blame for the depression on the opponent Republican Party ("the Hoover depression") and to take credit for the current prosperity period of the country.

The president does a little better, however, when he leaves political theory alone. His off-the-cuff speeches were loaded with the folksiness and hominess which are felt by some to be the basis of his political glamor: the reference to the "little men with acorn minds" who opposed the "great oak" of the Hoover Dam project; the regionally appealing remark about Mrs. Truman's uncle who graduated from Knox College; the "It's a real pleasure to be back here," said 50 times in 50 places the de-

'May Occupy More Countries'

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the very top of the government, right at Truman's elbow.

WHAT WILL BE PRETEXT?

What other countries will "we" have to occupy before the cold war is ended? TURKEY? IRAN? GREECE? Which of these or which other is the subject of the conversation behind the doors of the White House and the Pentagon building?

Have they gotten to the point of discussing what pretext will be used for public consumption if it becomes "necessary" to trample over the independence of some nation or nations whose sovereignty is supposedly the dearest concern of the paladins of Western democracy?

Have they figured out, in anticipation, what the United Nations is supposed to do while the operation takes place? Or is the UN, or mythical UN control, scheduled for the role of figleaf and camouflage for the international crime of which Barkley spoke so casually as a possibility?

Barkley's almost incredible words cannot be recalled now. They're in print. Washington can only hope that they will be forgotten by the next day's or week's headlines. But if the conscience of those who purport to be labor and liberal leaders has not become so calloused and atrophied under the strain of being "practical" and "hard-headed realists" that the Barkley threat passes unchallenged, here are two things to be remembered:

Let us suppose—just for an instant—that those words had been spoken by a top leader of Russian totalitarianism, one of the despots of the Kremlin—a Molotov, for example, to take Barkley's approximate governmental opposite number within the Moscow hierarchy.

Would not this be unanswerable, positive, irrefutable proof of the oppressive, aggressive, imperialistic and tyrannical policy of the Russian Stalinist dictatorship?

The only difference between the Russian leaders and Barkley in this respect is that it is doubtful whether the former would be so stupid as to frankly declare their intention and motivation in advance. They HAVE done precisely what Barkley talks about for the U. S., and have advanced just as "democratic" pretexts for their crimes as no doubt Washington would find for its own.

GIFT TO THE KREMLIN

A second thing to be remembered:

Barkley's statement, as we said, may be glossed over here. But in Europe and Asia and among the Moscow satellites it will be a boon to the Kremlin's propaganda and political offensive, a free gift to them.

And the Barkleys will continue to wonder why and how the Russian tyranny maintains its hold over the people under its heel. It is not ONLY through terrorism and police control, which have their limit of efficacy. It is also because the Russians can demonstrate, not only by their well-known lies but with a damning admixture of TRUTH, that the Western alternative to their rule is also an oppressive imperialism.

The Russian empire can perhaps be blown up along with the rest of the world with A-bombs and H-bombs, but it can be blown up from WITHIN only by the dynamic appeal of a force which fights for the socialist alternative to both imperialist war camps.

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That is why the socialist struggle is the only progressive road to peace and the overthrow of Stalinism, BECAUSE it is also the struggle for the abolition of capitalism and capitalist imperialism.

If the Barkley blooper is stupid, as it is, that is only because he told a TRUTH inconvenient for American editorial writers and preachers of peace-through-total-diplomacy. Its stupidity should concern Barkley's boss; its truth should concern the country's working people.

As we indicated, U. S. imperialism's desire to garrison the world popped its head out of the bag a year ago, in speeches from less highly placed sources which indicated at that time that there was at least a strong movement in top-level government circles in that direction.

THE MILITARY MEN WON

In a speech on April 5, 1949, Army Chief of Staff Omar Bradley made a fervent plea to "funnel the great strength of our new world to the ramparts of the old" and "thus challenge the enemy where he would transgress." (In this speech Bradley explicitly tied up his views with the State Department.)

Picking this up, the New York Times on April 7 dotted the 'i's: "we must funnel the great

strength of our new world to the ramparts of the old' by stationing in Europe a team of army, navy and air forces strong enough to keep any aggressor in check."

The next day Secretary of the Army Royall made a speech in Chicago which "was an obvious sequel to that delivered in New York last night by General Bradley," according to the AP. Speaking even more openly, since he was no longer encumbered by government responsibility, ex-Undersecretary of War William H. Draper "stressed the prospect that U. S. forces will have to stay in Europe for a long time after the occupation period is over in order to stand guard against any lightning aggression." (AP)

General Clay made a speech of similar implications as he stood reviewing U. S. troops in Germany at the same time.

This program of the military men is what was echoed by Barkley in New Orleans, not because he has been reading last year's papers but because he was repeating this year's total-cold-war strategy adopted by the Truman government.

This program for a U. S. permanent garrison in the world is represented as a guard against a Russian "lightning aggression." A moment's thought is sufficient to pose two alternatives for its real meaning.

"A team...strong enough to keep any aggressor in check," is what the N. Y. Times called for. If this means what it says, it means American forces in Europe at least as numerous as at the height of the Second World War. The Russians, by good report, can throw 170 divisions ("equal to most Western divisions in armor, artillery, heavy equipment") into the field, according to the U. S. News (May 26, 1950). "They are opposed by 43 Western divisions, of which only about 25 can be used in Western Europe."

TO DRAW BLOOD

It is, to say the least, doubtful whether the N. Y. Times, or even the most arms-mad militarist thinks that the U. S. can even dream of doing this as long as the war is cold. The talk about U. S. forces stopping a "lightning aggression" is fantastic.

More to the point, we suggested last year, is another purpose. In this war-weary world, for all of the whoop of propaganda for the next war to make the world safe for something or other (spelled capitalism), "the problem before the Washington war planners is in the first instance political and not military: how to make sure that the U. S. jumps into the war on the FIRST DAY—Atlantic Pact or no, the start of hostilities

between Russia and NORWAY is not going to stampede Congress into declaring war, at least not easily. As Professor Beard proved [in his completely documented "President Roosevelt and the Coming of the War"], Roosevelt deliberately set about drawing blood.

It took Pearl Harbor to accomplish what he had already decided: getting the country into the war once it had started. There were no U. S. troops then in Europe to be attacked.

As the N. Y. Times said in its editorial of last year already quoted: "our military frontiers are...at the Iron Curtain itself, which means Berlin, the Elbe, the Danube, and Trieste. They are there, for one reason, because that is where our occupation troops stand today."

We repeat our charge, now that its premise has been confirmed. We repeat also the conclusion from it. The U. S. screen of troops along the Iron Curtain is not Europe's defense against the Russian dictatorship. It is a cold invasion of Europe, threatening the national independence of the lands and resented by their people—feeding the troughs of Russian propaganda. Opposition to the Third World War means: Demand the withdrawal of Washington's garrison over the world!

Pres. Truman Boasts --

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scription of his "sashay" into politics; the "Old West" in Wyoming; potatoes in Idaho; corn in Iowa—and corn everywhere.

The appeal to backwardness and rural prejudice was not lacking. Praising Wyoming for its early recognition of women's suffrage, Truman said: "Can you imagine what some of the stuffy reactionary Easterners had to say? Listen—listen to this—you will like this, you will want to remember it. The editor of a prominent magazine published in New York said: 'This unblinking female socialism defies alike the Apostles and the Prophets...'" etc.

Yet, much as this type of demagoguery may make Easterners wince, the verdict of a New York Times correspondent was admirably to the effect that Truman can pare issues "to town size so any dirt farmer can understand them."

CRACKER-BARREL THEORY

But Truman is more than his style and more than a political father image with wife and daughter in tow. It is as the main exponent of the "welfare state" idea and the spokesman of American capitalism that we are interested in him and hence, above all, in his program. And most especially, since that program is so dear to the hearts of the labor leaders. It is the dominant program today in American political life, and indeed in the world—although the major foreign manifestations of the program at the time Truman was making his tour was the decision to aid the Bao Dai regime in Indo-China and support the French in what is widely known as the "dirty war" against Indo-Chinese nationalism.

What does the welfare program consist of? "International cooperation" against isolationism, federal spending, public power projects, the Brannan plan of assistance to agriculture, repeal of the Taft-Hartley Law, improved social-security laws, federal aid to education, better housing for low- and middle-income families, conservation of natural resources, aid to small business, equal rights legislation.

Inasmuch as Truman was speaking in what has been the heartland of American isolationism and which thus tends to produce isola-

tionist representatives in Congress, he struck hard against isolationists and "obstructionists" who would cut the military appropriations. He denounced them as abettors of Russia. "I am confident that we shall continue to defeat isolationism. This is the way to build a prosperous world," he said in one speech.

Since isolationism goes hand in hand with high tariffs, he "sashayed" into political theory at one point to allege that it was high tariffs that led to the last depression, which led to World War II—thus making it seem that World War II was a Republican-engineered conflict. This theory won't bear much examination, even around a cracker barrel.

He called for a kind of "new world order of free trade," a sort of "one world of international trade." It is implicit that high tariffs account for the cold war.

A-BOMB "PEACE"

Truman's allusions to the problem of atomic warfare, so closely linked with international relations and world affairs, were terse and strange. Of atomic energy for peacetime use, he said: "If we... have not the sense to do that... then I am here to tell you that we probably ought to be destroyed." The meaning in this speech is somewhat obscure. It seems to express a profound desire for peace and peaceful application of atomic energy and at the same time conceives possession of and maneuvers with the A-bomb as a means toward peace. Elsewhere he said the United States was determined to use the A-bomb again, if necessary for its "security." "I did it and I say to you I would do it again if I had to."

With A-bomb stockpiling going on all the while, H-bomb experimentation in the works, new "tactical" A-bombs for use against armies being developed, Truman enunciated a bigger peace slogan than ever before, not "peace in our time, but peace for all time."

The president likes to make predictions about the fate of the "welfare" economy. On this tour, he stated that his ten years' goal was an average family income of \$4,000 by 1960 and more prosperity than ever before. He expressed with a

note of regret that "everybody knows" that 70 per cent of the national income goes for wars, past and future, and only the remaining 30 per cent for national welfare. He did concede that the 30 per cent was very important.

So the expressed aims of the Democratic Party's chief boiled down to: maintenance of the high profits of the American capitalist system with government spending and controls to increase social security of the people, and heavy military expenditures to fortify this system and its Allies in the Western bloc against the Stalinist bloc. A little human welfare, some democracy, great armaments, peace. Yes, peace is part of the scheme even if the measure to achieve it is an ever mounting military budget.

As against the Republican program, the Fair Deal has a widespread appeal. It was the labor wing which revitalized the Democratic Party, gave it "grass roots" and helped to account for Truman's victory. Truman expressed the wish that the Republican Party would stand "for something" instead of just being "against." This is partly campaign oratory typical of the party in power; the Republicans who are "for something" are likely to be ignominiously labeled "me-tooers." But he likewise stated he was for the two-party system. We are sure he means this. For any important third party would be a party of labor and would inevitably captivate many who are now supporters of the Fair Deal program of the Democratic Party.

Can the U. S. economy—that is, private, unplanned, anarchic enterprise—bear a continued rise in the standard of living, the inflationary spiral, the 70 per cent military budget and maintain peace-through-an-arms-race? The danger signals are apparent. The system shows serious unemployment spots. There is a pronounced curtailment of civil liberties, toward thought-control. The Western European area, the depressed area of the democratic capitalist world, is in a permanent crisis and must be maintained in large part by U. S. assistance; at the same time it is not so sure it wants to be either an economic and political subdivision of the United States, or an atomic battleground, no matter who is dropping the bombs, Russia or the United States. The Third World War, given the division into two competitive, exploitive societies, is guaranteed. Only the date of the outbreak is unknown.

These factors are part of the counter-trend in welfare statism, capitalist variety. Left to operate by themselves, they could produce a world nightmare of war, totalitarianism and a blackout of culture and perhaps life itself. The only counter-trend to this, as yet small, is the tendency to independent and conscious activity on the part of labor, which could make of welfare a new, ringing cry that would herald a new civilization—a human civilization for the first time, of world brotherhood. Seen in this perspective, the political campaigning of President Truman is neither genial nor amusing.

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by Max Shachtman

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