

# OPM BUNGLING CAUSES NATIONAL CRISIS -- 400,000 WORKERS LOSE JOBS

## THE WORLD AT WAR

### Wavel Command in the Far East Is First Step Toward A Vast Allied Offensive

By SENTINEL  
Washington is making the important decisions for the Allied camp in this war. From Washington came the declaration of the 26 Allied or "United" powers.

Through the respective signatories of this declaration declare that they base themselves on the eight points of the Atlantic Charter, the real importance of this joint declaration is in two specific points: 1) fullest co-operation against the Axis powers and 2) agreement not to sign a separate peace.

Certain "liberal" optimists, who see life through rose colored glasses, see in this declaration the first manifestation of a new and real League of Nations. Such is not the case if only for the technical reason that half the world—the Axis powers—is not included.

But there is, of course, a much more important reason. History exhibits little evidence of international unity among capitalist nations during peacetime. During wartime it is somewhat different. If only in order to prosecute the war efficiently, the Allies are compelled to create a common strategy and establish some kind of unity among themselves. Otherwise they are fair game for the Axis powers who do operate on such a basis. Naturally it is a unity of unequals. Roosevelt, as the representative of the stronger American capitalism, dominates his side of the war, just as Hitler does in his.

The declaration of the "United Nations" is therefore a war measure and counters the recent similar agreement of Germany, Japan and

declaration, Roosevelt and Churchill their satellites. And now, after this announce the creation of a "united command" in the Southwest Pacific with General Wavell as the supreme commander of the United States, British, Netherlands and Dominion forces in this area. Two Americans, General Brett and Admiral Hart, are named as assistants to Wavell while Chiang Kai-shek accepts supreme command over all land and air forces operating in China, including initially such portions of Indo-China and Thailand as may become available to the troops of the "United Nations."

Two things are to be noted from an examination of this latest announcement. First of all, this decision reveals that the Allies intend to put up a big fight for Singapore, the Dutch East Indies, Australia and New Zealand. Secondly, China is a subordinate partner in this fight.

Australia, New Zealand and The Netherlands welcome this decision. The swift Japanese victories in the Southwest Pacific have filled them with a terrible anxiety. The speedy fall of Hongkong, Manila, Northern Borneo and the rapid Japanese advance on Singapore seemed to mark them as the next victims in the path of Japan. They were beginning to believe that perhaps Great Britain had decided to concentrate on the European fight at the expense of the Far East. In this state of mind they appealed to the United States to help them.

That appeal has not gone unheeded. (Continued on page 2)

## Soldiers of Democracy!

Negro youth may be forced to die on the battlefields in this war "for democracy" but they won't be allowed to enter the Philadelphia Hospitality Center, set up with USO funds, created for the recreation of the soldiers stationed in Philadelphia, according to a special dispatch appearing in PM, New York newspaper.

Although Philadelphia Negroes have contributed liberally to the funds gathered for the setting up of this Hospitality Center, the Negro boys who shiver in the cold streets and near the bridges of Philadelphia will not be able to enjoy it.

The Negro boys are OK for guard duty; they'll be OK for death on the battlefield tomorrow—but breaking down the Jim Crow straight-jacket in which they are forced to live? That, as an officer remarked to the PM reporter, "would be putting ideas into their heads."



## Nationalize the Auto Industry Under Control of the Workers

By JACK WILSON

The beginnings of a real national upset loomed in America as the disastrous costs of the bungs of the Roosevelt regime through its Office of Production Management in going over to war economy became painfully evident throughout the country.

For the American people, especially the workers, are learning through their own experience the results of the bankruptcy of the Roosevelt regime, whose mistakes go far beyond the ordinary dislocations or difficulties expected when war came.

Besides the military reverses, two brutal facts stood out like sore thumbs, burning up the people every time they think about them.

### OPM Labor Hostage



SIDNEY HILLMAN

### Jersey CIO Hits Minpls. Convictions

The New Jersey State Industrial Council of the CIO, representing more than 250,000 workers, has pledged its support to the 18 labor defendants convicted of violating the 1940 Smith "Gag" Law in the Minneapolis prosecution of members of Local 544-CIO and the Socialist Workers Party.

The resolution declared that the New Jersey CIO "condemns the convictions in the Minneapolis case and protests the use of the FBI to interfere in the democratic procedure of the labor movement."

The council declared that "this law is a dangerous weapon against labor and the democratic rights of the American people," and pledged its support to the appeal of this case to the Supreme Court.

(1) Over 400,000 auto workers are either jobless now or soon will be on the soup line, facing a hard winter with only meager and inadequate social security benefits to exist on temporarily. All their valuable manpower is going to waste at a time when the newspapers talk about a "shortage of labor."

And the CIO Economic Outlook predicts that even with triple war production, the number of unemployed will reach a total of 7,500,000 by October.

(2) While America's military forces are demanding a flood of war supplies and materials, the auto industry, which has to produce most of the planes and tanks and other equipment, is largely idle, its present facilities and plans unable to cope with the job!

Months of Stalling  
After months and months of stalling on these problems, the Roosevelt regime was forced to call a conference last week in Washington of CIO auto workers union officials, the auto barons and the Office of Production Management directors, William Knudsen and Sidney Hillman, to face the issue, because the unemployment crisis assumed the proportions of a national scandal.

Aware of the widespread resentment against its mismanagement, its pig-headed greed and its "business as usual" policies which meant profits at the expense of workers' interests the auto industry officials published full page advertisements in leading newspapers in which a violent attack on unionism was featured, and the CIO auto workers' leaders were declared to have plans to take control of the auto industry.

In reply, the CIO, as a national body, and the auto workers union, printed large advertisements which placed squarely on the shoulders of the OPM and the auto industry the blame for the present crisis in unemployment and production.

The CIO charges were a mild accusation based primarily on more serious charges recently hurled at the OPM boss, Knudsen by Walter P. Reuther, director of the General Motors division of the United Automobile Workers Union, and author of the "Reuther Plan" for plane production.

Reuther's Charges  
Reuther recently pointed out, in a national radio broadcast, that

(1) Knudsen sabotaged the Reuther Plan (for building 500 planes a day) without studying its merits because the auto magnates preferred "business as usual." (Knudsen, as former vice-president of General Motors, is the big business spearhead in Washington politics.)

(2) A high ranking cabinet member admitted that the plan was practical but warned Reuther it could not get a fair hearing from industry because "it comes from the wrong source." (The cabinet member was Henry Morgenthau, Secretary of the Treasury.)

(3) Nearly 94 small automotive parts plants in Detroit and scores of others like them in other areas have virtually no war work because Reuther's plan was pigeonholed. By January, as a result, over 150,000 auto workers in Michigan alone will be unemployed and thousands of others will be jobless in February.

For over a year Reuther has pressed his plan, bucking up against the Washington crowd without the slightest success, for President Roosevelt supported Knudsen and together they pampered the big business interests in their "business as usual" policies.

## Party Fund Is Near Its Goal!

By ALBERT GATES  
Director of Party Building Fund

The Workers Party Building Fund Drive has been extended to January 15 to permit several branches otherwise engaged to pitch in their share. There has been an excellent response in the past two weeks. The result has been a sharp rise in the standing of most of the branches and a place has been reached where the drive can be completed 100 per cent. That is our aim now.

The banner cities are Rochester and Akron, which have passed the 200 per cent mark. They are followed by Youngstown, Washington, Boston and Buffalo, which have all completed their quotas and gone beyond them.

Chicago, Los Angeles and the N. O. are pretty close to completing their quotas and we are sure they will do it before the drive is ended. The other cities are in position to accomplish the same! Let's get going. We haven't far to go to reach 100 per cent. We want to hear the gong ring!

Branch	Quota	Raised	Percentage
<b>YPSL</b>	<b>000.00</b>	<b>357.20</b>	
Nevada	000.00	15.00	
Wisconsin	000.00	15.00	
Rochester	25.00	60.00	240
Akron	100.00	223.56	223.56
Youngstown	30.00	43.00	143.6
Washington	200.00	241.50	120.75
Boston	50.00	56.00	112
Buffalo	300.00	317.25	105.7
Chicago	275.00	256.00	93.1
Los Angeles	300.00	277.00	92.3
National Office	500.00	432.25	86.4
New York	3,000.00	2,108.56	72.8
Philadelphia	200.00	140.00	70
San Francisco	150.00	88.25	58.8
Detroit	20.00	10.00	50
Worcester	50.00	20.00	40
Cleveland	50.00	20.00	40
Lynn	75.00	24.50	32.6
St. Louis	150.00	41.25	27.5
Columbus	100.00	00.00	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>5,575.00</b>	<b>4,747.31</b>	<b>85.1</b>

## Readers' Protests on Jingo War Stand Force American Guardian to Fold Up

By P. J.  
Taps has been sounded over the American Guardian, for many years America's most widely read labor paper.

The reasons for the Guardian's sudden end are of tremendous importance to the labor movement in general and the Marxist movement in particular. According to Stegfried Ameringer, son of Oscar Ameringer, founder and editor of the paper, publication of the Guardian was discontinued when its readers in droves cancelled their subscriptions. The cancellations poured in after the Guardian, in its December 15 issue, announced its complete support of World War II.

Those of us who have known Oscar Ameringer and remember his struggle in the 1914-1918 conflict, should be informed that Oscar has been a very sick man and his active connection with the paper ceased almost with the beginning of his illness.

The American Guardian was essentially a one-man affair—Oscar Ameringer's private medium to make his ideas known. His ideas were as personal as his means of circulating them. They were not Marxist and very often ran counter even to the reformist program of Norman Thomas. But Oscar was an artist at expressing his ideas, with a droll sense of humor so American as to belie his German nativity. The greatest surprise that came to his readers was to hear him on the lecture plat-

form for the first time. His pronounced foreign accent made them gasp—they were sure that no one but a native born American could write as he did.

Ameringer's readers were sold on his ideas by his humor and not by his logic. Those of his readers who questioned his ability in the field of economics often became ex-readers. Turned Down the Socialists

A number of instances can be cited to prove how difficult it is for a man as brilliant as Oscar Ameringer to retain his ability to analyze correctly in capitalistic environments. He was a fierce foe of individualism but the rugged sort of individualist himself. Several times he was

approached by the Socialist Party to co-operate in making the American Guardian the official Socialist Party paper. He turned a deaf ear to all such offers, as they meant subjecting himself to Socialist Party discipline, weak though it was.

He constantly admitted the inevitability of the social revolution and the natural consequence of American capitalism which would sidetrack it. He compared our social and economic structure to a boiler under high pressure. He predicted explosion of the boiler unless safety valves were installed. He would then diligently apply himself to design the safety valves.

ingers own confused political think-

just as constantly advocated panzing was confusion on the part of his readers. This writer enjoyed the acquaintance of hundreds of them. They all considered themselves Socialists, but each Guardian subscriber had his own particular brand.

### A Great Teacher

Yet Oscar Ameringer was a great teacher. One of the most important lessons he taught the labor movement was the importance of building a labor press and the technique of obtaining wide circulation.

One other lesson he taught his readers—and taught it well. They learned from Ameringer's American Guardian that war is the inevitable consequence of capitalist imperialism. Oscar never failed to point out that the rich man's war is the poor man's fight. His readers learned their lesson well—so well that they no longer cared to read the paper when the American Guardian gave the lie to its teachings on the subject of war by declaring its full support of the present conflict.

LABOR ACTION has not been—and will not be—confused on the war question. LABOR ACTION learned the causes and consequences of imperialist wars from Karl Marx, the truth of whose teachings are now evident even to those who are not politically conscious.

LABOR ACTION will continue to advocate the establishment of worldwide socialism through the power of the organized working class as the way to end war and insecurity.

### To American Guardian Readers--

We are glad to print in this issue of LABOR ACTION the comments on the passing of the American Guardian which were written for us by one of the oldest socialist militants in the territory where the Guardian exerted its greatest influence.

The Guardian was one of the children of what might be called native American socialism. Those who know their American labor history will therefore understand that the Guardian and its editorial policy were tinged from start to finish with the notions of that section of American populism which broke away to mingle with the current that made up much of what was pre-war socialism in this country. This meant that the Guardian and its renowned editor promoted more than one dubious enterprise and nostrum. But it often compensated for this by the sturdiness and healthy cynicism with which it hammered so many of the frauds of capitalism.

How many thousands put their faith in the weekly number of the Guardian that came through the mails? Not a few. Like the old, old Appeal to Reason, it had its loyal army of supporters, even if its ranks were not so numerous. And many in that army had, and still have, that hard-headed, not-so-easily-swayed, Midwestern and Southwestern habit of sticking by their convictions

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# News and Notes

from the Socialist Third Camp

The boss press is generally very timid about news of the underground struggle in Europe. Only insofar as such struggles are really tied up with the imperialist struggle of the Allies—or can be tied up by the journalists—are they given publicity. For there is nothing the capitalist classes of both camps fear so much as the possibility of independent working class, anti-capitalist action.

Beginning this week, we will publish regular news in this column of the World Third Camp—news of the working class struggle for liberation.

Our information is necessarily limited. Few letters or reports arrive from Europe. The work of the Gestapo, the GPU, as well as the more "democratic" means of control are very efficient. Nevertheless, news items manage to slip through.

Of course, the working class has had a terrific beating in these last years. There are no big organizations but small circles; no well known leaders, but anonymous fighters. Yet the struggle goes on, day in and day out.

## NEWS FROM UNDERGROUND GERMANY

The official German news agency announces that two death sentences have been meted out for listening to foreign broadcasts. We quote:

"Still, in spite of all the warnings, some of our compatriots allow themselves to listen to lying broadcasts from abroad and to spread information gained . . . these traitors and saboteurs of the struggle for the existence of the German nation . . . exclude themselves forever from the community and shall be dealt with by the law in all its severity. . . . Johann Wild of Nuernberg was active, both before and after the war, in Marxist organizations and also after the outbreak of the war hoped that the new Germany, which he hated, would be defeated. Therefore he lined himself up on the side of the enemies of the German people and regularly listened to their wild and lying radio broadcasts. Making use of the enemy broadcast he had heard, he wrote an inflammatory pamphlet, containing slander against the Fuehrer and other leading personalities as well as against the armed forces. . . . The special court ascertained that the accused has carried on conscious and intentional treason and therefore condemned him to death."

We do not know who Johann Wild was and what his opinions were. He emerged from the anonymous multitude of heroic working class fighters only by the announcement of his legal murder. The Nazis fear such hard and relentless anti-fascist fighters more than they fear England and America. They hope that with such executions they will keep others from listening to foreign broadcasts, but they do not succeed.

In every report we receive from Germany there is mention of the fact that despite heavy penalties every one listens to foreign broadcasts, including soldiers in the barracks.

They say: "Nobody can betray the other, we are all equally involved."

## GERMAN MORALE IS LOWER

German morale, which was rather good in the first year and a half, has completely changed recently. Many families have lost sons, brothers and fathers; the others fear such an announcement every day.

Everybody is uneasy and nervous and the speeches of Goebbels and Hitler which we have read in these last weeks are only a reflection of this sentiment and show an effort to shift the emphasis from the slogan of conquest to the slogan of hardship.

This is very clever propaganda and should not be underestimated since the only real cause for the resentment and anger which does exist, now taking a more violent form, is the universal fear of a new Versailles.

Of course, when they turn on the British radio they are only strengthened in their fear of the new Versailles. The British statements of war aims are disturbingly like those of World War I.

The internal broadcasts of the German News Service are demonstratively disturbed in the taverns and bars in South Germany and Austria. Nazi newspapers are protesting against this and the Nazi gauliteer has ordered that during broadcasts all loud conversations shall stop. The Stuttgarter Zeitung calls these workers "disrespectful swine," who if the radio is turned on louder talk still louder!

The Deutsche Rundschau, a Nazi newspaper in occupied Poland, complains of the passive resistance of Polish workers. It says that many workers have not registered for work and declares that there are Germans who are helping these "shirkers" to avoid the regulations. Many Poles are deliberately slow at their work "in order to harm Germany economically," the paper states.

Several reports from Switzerland indicate that deserters from different countries continue to arrive there in ever greater numbers. Italian laborers conscripted to work for Germany jump off the trains when they are in Swiss territory; French prisoners of war having succeeded in escaping from Nazi prison camps, arrive daily in Switzerland; but most important, German soldiers have arrived who've deserted from the front.

In one report it was stated that two young soldiers, both too young to have had any education in the working class movement, deserted to Switzerland from the Russian front. They said that they had succeeded in fooling the military police by stating that they had to accompany a train which left the front. So they succeeded in coming back to Germany and from there to Switzerland. They said: "Life on the Russian front is hell and since we would have been killed anyway (nobody is going to come from there alive), we decided to try to desert."

# The World At War--

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ed. More correctly, Washington acted upon it because it also happened to fall in with its world strategical outlook.

It is not because the Far East has suddenly become more important than Europe. If one were asked to answer which is more important, the reply would, of course, be the latter. The forces of the Allies, however, don't have to be concentrated only in one continent. Successful Russian resistance to the German armies has made a division of the Allied forces feasible. For this the Allies are grateful to Stalin.

Under Wavell the Allied forces in the Southwest Pacific will be built up for a huge offensive calculated to deny Japan the riches of the Dutch East Indies, Malaya and the key to that area, Singapore. The attempt will be made to outflank the Japanese in Thailand and Malaya by an Allied army attacking from Burma. A Chinese Expeditionary Force is already assembled there and will operate under Wavell's command.

## Role of China

This plan has altered the role of Chiang Kai-shek. Originally he was to assume the entire burden of Allied land operations. That was when the Allies believed that most of the land fighting would be done by the Chinese. But Japan's victories demonstrated that China plus Allied seapower were not enough to keep her at bay. The British are not so sure today of Singapore's impregnability.

The fall of Singapore would mean the end of the encirclement of Japan and might even threaten the Allied positions in Burma and India. This threat would become still graver if at the same time Germany were to burst out of Europe and march on through the Middle East in the direction of India. Such a meeting of the Eastern and Western ends of the Axis is the nightmare that the Allies hope to avoid.

The war effort that the Allies must now put forth in the Far East subordinates the Chinese struggle to the larger imperialistic combination of the United States, Great Britain and the Netherlands. Chiang Kai-shek's fight against Japan is no longer that of a colonial country fighting against Japanese imperialism. China fights now on one flank of the Allied line and will even be expected to participate in the main Allied offensive by an attack on Indo-China and Thailand. That is what Washington has decided through its decision to set up a "united command" in the Southwest Pacific.

## Mob Attacks Girl Organizers

PASCAGOULA, Miss.—On December 11, five girls, organizers for the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, were attacked by a mob here. The girls were distributing organization leaflets in front of the Jackson Woolen Co., a mill which the union is trying to organize.

One of the girls, Jo Lee Walden, received a knife wound requiring five stitches to close. Eulah Walden was injured internally. The three others were attacked less severely.

# Lest We Forget

by Tom Gilbert

## STILL TRUE TODAY?

About two years ago, Drew Pearson and Robert Allen reported as follows in their Washington Merry-Go-Round:

"In fact, there are reports of a certain amount of nazism in the United States Army. Also the average army officer has an intense admiration for the German military machine. . . . Perhaps it is also worth recalling that the man whom the Dies Committee branded as the leader of a fascist revolution in the United States, General George Van Hrbn Moseley, once was deputy chief of staff, second highest rank in the U. S. Army."

## SURE IS

"Socialism?" said a great statesman at his press conference, "that's a mere day-dream."

"I don't know about that," said a workingman reading it by candlelight in his blacked-out home, "but one thing is sure, capitalism is some nightmare."

## ASKING TOO MUCH?

Under democracy, we are told, every citizen has a voice in running the government. Isn't it funny that no one should think of giving us a voice in running the place where we spend most of our time and know something about—the shop we work in?

## NATIONAL DEFENSE

Argued a Roman liberal once with his mutinous slaves: "Do you want the terrible Gauls to take advantage of your mutiny and conquer Rome? Isn't it better to be the slave of a cultured Roman than of a barbarian Gaul?"

Answered a slave: "Abolish slavery and we will die in defense of Rome."

## CORRECTION

In last week's column, "Lest We Forget," the last item consisted of a quotation on the relation between India and the British Empire. Unfortunately, due to an oversight, the author of the statement was not given. He is Winston Churchill, Prime Minister of Great Britain.

# To American Guardian Readers--

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until they are given a very good reason for altering them.

The fact that the Guardian jumped over the fence at the crucial moment, doesn't mean that it took its army of followers over the fence with it. It had taught them for years that the coming war would be imperialistic on all sides; and the fact that Siegfried Ameringer, or even Oscar, did a flip-flop when the chips were down, didn't mean that everybody else would follow suit. The astonishing number of subscription cancellations demonstrates this.

To the former followers of the Guardian who remain stubbornly true to their convictions, who honor the best of the traditions of the socialist movement during the last World War, we of Labor Action say: "Welcome!" Welcome to the columns of a militant working-class socialist paper which has held fast to its principles and, by all that is sacred, will continue to hold fast in the future.

Old American Guardian readers, new LABOR ACTION readers, once more—Welcome!

## YES, MR. LABOR ACTION

I, as a former American Guardian reader, agree that LABOR ACTION is the kind of hard hitting paper which I want to read. I enclose 30 cents for a half year's subscription.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

## Maybe Workers Should Do Some Pinching

The following is clipped from the January 6 issue of Labor, organ of the Railroad Brotherhoods:

"Railroad stockholders must be pinching themselves nowadays to make sure their profits are not fantastic dreams.

The Southern's net profit, after paying all bond interest, will be more than \$17,000,000 in 1941, or two and one half times its \$7,352,072 net in 1940. . . .

After paying all taxes, interest and other fixed charges, the Burlington's net profit in the first 11 months of 1941 was \$9,612,112, or more than three times its \$3,135,303 net in the same period of 1940. . . .

The Great Western changed a loss of \$179,151 in the first 11 months of 1940 into a profit of \$1,634,914 in the same period of 1941. . . ."

# Pine Workers Notes from Feather River Canyon

By ROSS CARRINGTON

The far-sightedness of some of the militants in Local 6-28, International Woodworkers Association of Portola, Cal., is now bearing fruit. After repeated violations by the Feather River Lumber Co., of Delleker, Cal., of its contract, a strike was called in October.

It was called not only to enforce the provisions of the old contract but to iron out some seeming contradictions in it, and to gain a closed shop.

Under the old agreement arbitration was compulsory before either a strike or lockout could be called.

The company used this clause to stall settlement of most every grievance. Upon the closed shop issue, the general manager first agreed to arbitrate, then upon the arrival of a government man refused. Previous to the arrival of the arbitrator a militant group within the union had attempted to fortify its negotiations committee with a strike vote, but failed, due to appeasers within the union, who held positions of trust and influence. This failure to hold a strike vote no doubt influenced the manager in his refusal to arbitrate.

## Take Strike Vote

Immediately after this event, a strike vote was taken at Local 6-28 which carried, 5 to 1. Authority to call the strike was placed in a five-man committee, attempts to continue negotiations being continued but failing due to the difficulty of finding the general manager in sufficiently sober condition to do business. In the meantime a man who had been very active in the union was fired.

Finally the strike was called and the workers came out 100 per cent. The manager, seeing workers come streaming out of the yard, factory and mills, stood on the porch of his office and said: "I never thought they would ever do it."

The office of the U.S. Labor Department was called upon and a conciliator arrived the latter part of the week.

Conversations were immediately entered into with the general manager.

## A New Agreement

On Monday, October 27, a new agreement was submitted to the union membership. Parts of the pro-

## No Canines Without Fleas

Horace Cayton, labor editor of the Pittsburgh Courier, leading Negro paper, suggests that the Negro press and populace should not be overly critical of those Negro "leaders" in Washington, like William Pickens, who have gotten soft jobs in various governmental departments as "judas goats" to help entice the Negroes into war.

He states that the head of the departments never consult these Negro "leaders" on policy, fool around on race issues until the situation becomes "putrid" and then rush to the Negro "leaders" with the demand: "How about this mess?"

Well, all we can say about these Negro "leaders" and their relation to the Jim-Crow department heads is only this: "Yer jus' can't play around with canines and not expect to get fleas on yer."

posed contract were accepted while the committee was instructed to resume negotiations on the remainder. Another report which was accepted was made at 8 o'clock that night. Work was resumed on the different operations on October 28 and 29.

Net gains of the strike were reinstatement of the active union member, a closed shop and abrogation of the compulsory arbitration clause. Negotiations for a wage raise are to be entered into, upon the basis of a government survey of the price structure of the pine lumber industry.

The results secured convinced the few who at first had conscientiously opposed the move as coming too late in the season of a seasonal industry.

## Union Hiring

As it is, all the employees of the company must now be union men and all are hired through the union.

But with all the above gains, the struggle has only begun. However, we now have more of the tools with which our class must fight.

The enemy may be down but is never out so long as the means of production remain his private property. Already the general manager has renewed the attack by starting to snipe at individuals whom he has been unable to buy or intimidate. This is demonstrated by a recent incident where he accused an active unionist with the charge that he was a communist and that the FBI was investigating him but that he, the general manager, would call them off if the union man would come over to his side.

The union man answered with the contemptuous refusal this offer deserved.

# St. Louis Hotel Workers Out on Strike

By ROY GOULD

The New Year's revelries of the St. Louis wealthy were sadly disrupted by a CIO strike which crippled all leading hotels. Those Negro maids and servants who toil for \$12.50 per week and live in congested homes in order that the St. Louis rich may dwell in the luxurious surroundings of the exquisite Park Plaza, those hard working cooks and waiters who prepare the elegant menus consumed by the smart set at the Coronado, joined with hotel workers throughout the city and just before New Year's Eve they struck.

They struck against the St. Louis Hotel Association and with especial vehemence they revolted against the AFL bureaucracy which has held them in chains since their first strike against the bosses in 1937.

At that time 3,000 miscellaneous hotel workers were caught up in the CIO movement and strongly organized themselves by means of a swift, solid strike. Everyone was out and no truck passed their picket lines. Shortly after this organizing strike they were "turned over" to the AFL Hotel and Culinary Workers in a deal between the AFL and the CIO.

But the AFL union was very corrupt. Officers were appointed, union insurance funds are said to have been diverted to provide automobiles for the bureaucrats and all union democracy was systematically suppressed. Membership fell to 700 and discontent simmered in all hotels, until a filthy low-wage contract was signed last summer without even being read to the membership.

Then a revolt began. The entire membership voted to disaffiliate from the AFL and to form the CIO United Catering Workers Union—the organization which called the present strike.

## A Wonderful Spirit

The new strike is being waged with a wonderful spirit, but against great difficulties. Whereas in 1937 everyone came out together and the whole labor movement respected the picket lines, today the scabs inside are in many cases paid up members of various AFL unions, AFL business agents are actually running scabs through in AFL taxicabs, and AFL truck drivers are crossing the picket lines with all sorts of deliveries. The AFL is even trying to round up scabs from Kansas City. Fat AFL officials carrying pistols stand inside the lobbies alongside big cops and hotel managers looking out at the brave Negro pickets running back and forth in the high wind at near zero temperature.

On the other hand, the strikers know that most CIO unions are behind them—with the exception of the Stalinist and Hillman crowds who came out against this strike. They would sacrifice these workers in the name of national labor unity.

Whereas a week ago seven workers were fired from the Park Plaza upon the request of the AFL, today two hotels have signed with the CIO and the big hotel association is split wide open over the question of negotiating with the CIO. The prospect is for more hotels to be struck within a few days.

The strikers are determined and confident. In this struggle they are forging a democratic union which must learn how to fight for the rank and file.

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

## A Worker Writes On "National Unity"

Dear Editor:

The President, Congress, representatives of industry and finance, the press are calling for unity and sacrifice by the people of the nation in its war effort.

What is meant by unity and how does striving for unity actually affect us, the millions of working people in the United States?

If the people of this nation are to make sacrifices and achieve unity, what are the comparative sacrifices made by the two great classes of people, the rich and the poor?

To start with the smallest group, the rich, the so-called "Sixty Families," what sacrifices are expected of them? Does the rise in food prices affect them? No! Or not adversely, for the grocery bill, no matter how large, forms only an infinitesimal part of Mr. du Pont's budget.

The picture is the same in regard to rent. The rich capitalist does not pay rent. His class collects rent. Again it is a well known fact that the most profitable rental property is sium and poor class housing property, and that this property is largely owned by the rich. The poor, the workers, pay this rent, and increased cost of housing for the worker and his family is one of the expected sacrifices for his class. This is a real sacrifice, but is just increased income for his landlord, the wealthy property owner.

It is plain then that the general rise in the cost of living, occasioned by our participation in the World War, is a sacrifice of the poor class and a benefit to the owning class.

Of the great sacrifices the nation is called upon to make, the loss of the 40-hour week looms ominously near. This is the same story over again. The capitalist does not make a sacrifice in working his factory full blast; he is the employer of labor, and by being able to operate continuously his unit cost of production is decreased. The working people have fought valiantly for years to win the 40-hour week. Now this right is being laid in the employer's lap in the name of a "common sacrifice."

In all the tax legislation so far, the poorest classes and the low income brackets are the ones being hit the hardest.

Giving up the right to strike is not the small thing that the capitalist and his press would have the workers believe. If fair terms cannot be agreed upon, the capitalist can force the continuation of proceedings for the "duration," and the workers will be helpless, but with the right to strike the capitalist will realize that he is not the only player with an ace in the hole.

We, the working people, know that the present war boom will last only as long as the war itself lasts. For the past ten years we have seen shops filled with goods we needed, wanted and could not afford. Now that we have some chance of raising our living standard, we will not willingly give it away, for we know that the bread and soup lines will reappear across the country after this boom has passed and the lean years are back again. It seems to us that a discussion of unity should begin with the elimination of war profits rather than the standard of living of the people of this country. But now discussion of war profits is as

obsolete a subject as Peace on Earth, Good Will to Men.

L. R.

(Editor's Note: We wish to thank the worker who sent us the above letter. Unfortunately we could not print the entire letter because of its length. We very much want to get letters from our readers, expressing their point of view, but they must be short in order to be printed.)

## Railroad Workers On the Stalinists

Dear Editor:

As you were kind enough to print my last letter in your paper, I thought I might make some comments on further developments.

As you now know, my prediction on the plan cooked up by the bosses,

the government and the brotherhood officials to give us a raw deal worked to perfection. Dissatisfaction with the gains made has been to some extent muffled by the great interest in the war and by the fact that under the impetus of the war the labor movement throughout the country is at the moment comparatively inactive.

But I am sure this condition will not last long. The hard realities which face the working man on the job every day will soon sober him. He will see the boss trying to chisel on the union contract—he will see stern refusal to grant wage increases to even up for the rise in the cost of beans—he will see the closed shop denied or wrecked.

I am interested in what you have to write about the Stalinists and the railroads. I have seen none of their literature among the boys, but recently I have met two or three of them on the job. This makes me think that they have something

cooking. It is true that the conditions in the brotherhoods give them a fertile soil for gaining influence; just as it does to an honest union man. Further, railroad men have no experience with this vermin and under the prevailing patriotic mood may well let themselves become infected. It is up to every good union man to be on his guard! If we are to revitalize the unions only to come into the bloody iron claws of Stalinism, we would have little to be happy about.

J. L.

## A Working Stiff Tells His Woes

Dear Editor:

This being a New Year I can't help trying to look into the future to figure out what it will bring me. It will bring me income taxes which I don't want to pay. What's more, I don't see how I can pay them and not do without something that I need. I have paid out to the Community Chest and the Red Cross and now I'm having to pay five bucks extra to run my car until the tires wear out. Then I'll have to try and sell it to some guy who'll be able to get tires for it. There will be such people like that but it won't be me. That means I'll have to sell my car for perhaps one fourth what I paid for it. I'll then be back in the "boot and shoe line" just like during the depression. Now, FDR says we are all going to have to make sacrifices for defense. I can see right now that I'm just about going to be sacrificed out of a job if they smack any more priorities and taxes on me.

There's my kid, he's helping out on the grocery bill, etc., and now he's bound for the Army next month. After the last war, in which I was drafted, prices went sky high right after I got home and I sure had to hustle to stay on my feet. It was a losing fight. When my little pile of dough was allotted by Uncle Sam as a bonus for my army service, it went to the loan company that had made me a loan only because I was a veteran. Then came that long, temporary depression and I almost hit the bread line. Now I'm making a little dough again but I can see where it will be taken away from me just as before. Why can't I ever get ahead a little so a guy can drink a beer or go to a movie without worrying about spending money that ought to go on the grocery bill or to the election company?

When I look back and think of how I've been robbed in the past and how I'm going to be robbed in the future—how I'm getting older and can't stand the gaff on the job like I used to—I get sore at these guys who always start something that means dough out of my pocket. I want something to be done about it.

That's why I'm writing this letter to you. Your paper seems to know some things that I have thought about a lot of times but I just could not put it in words. You can publish this if you want to. Maybe there are some other guys who feel like me and don't quite understand what it is all about. Please tell me what's a guy going to do if things get much worse, which I believe they will.

Just a Working Guy.

## Chicago Lecture:

### Taxes, Priorities and Prices

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# Of Special Interest To Women

By Susan Green

There is a bill before the House of Representatives, endorsed by Secretary of War Stimson, for the creation of a Women's Army Auxiliary Corps.

Under the bill, women between 21 and 45 would be permitted to volunteer for the duration of the war. They would serve as clerks, machine operators, cooks and bakers, stewardesses, telephone and telegraph operators, pharmacists, dietitians, hygienists, hospital and laboratory technicians, hostesses, librarians, theater employees, welfare workers, post exchange employees and laundry workers. This is Mr. Stimson's enumeration of army jobs for women.

The bill, introduced by Representative Edith Rogers of Massachusetts, provides the same pay for women as for army men, namely, \$21 a month.

For the various types of skilled, semi-skilled and even unskilled work to be done by women, \$21 a month is ridiculously inadequate.

Nobody has yet produced an economic, moral or any other reason why soldiers and army workers, both men and women, should be on cooie wages.

To the argument that there is no money for higher army pay, there is this irrefutable counter argument:

There is money for everything else, including war profits, which in the case of Aviation Corporation, for example, have increased in 1941 by 1950 per cent over 1940.

## GATHERING DUST IN CONGRESSIONAL FILES

This once more brings to the fore the whole question of army pay.

When Congress amended the draft law extending the draft period for the duration of the war and after, to soften the blow, various bills to raise soldiers' pay—now gathering dust in congressional files—were also introduced.

At that time certain women's committees were putting pressure on Congress to get an increase for their drafted boys. Their reasons were strong ones. They argued that their family incomes had been too drastically cut. Their drafted boys, who had previously contributed, could send nothing at all out of \$21 a month. On the contrary, soldiers could not even provide for their own needs. In many cases the family had to send their boy money for miscellaneous needs as well as for an occasional trip home.

These are still facts.

The entry of the United States into the war has not bettered the conditions of the soldier and army worker on \$21 a month. Quite the contrary.

Neither has it lightened the burdens of the soldier's family. Again, quite the contrary.

War-time oratory should not be permitted to shout down crying injustices.

The needs of soldiers, army workers and their families make an increase in army pay the very next order of business.

## THE DEBUTANTES ARE GETTING ALONG

That permanent wrinkle of wartime worry is not marring the beauty of some members of the fair sex. These fortunate ones are in the social register where my name and yours are not to be found.

The resplendent annual pilgrimage to Palm Beach is well under way. The exclusive Everglades Club there is in constant demand for this and that ritzy social function.

Southern race tracks are thronged with the "smartest" people. Women—in stunning spectator clothes—have fun wasting money without stint.

On Long Island estates the holiday festivities reached a new high. Only one party was called off—not for lack of funds, I assure you. Rather because its sponsors thought it "unsuitable" to parade their wealth at this time when everyone is supposed to be "sacrificing."

Debutantes continue to have their coming-out parties. Ballrooms of the swellest hotels are all a-glitter. The dazzling decorations vie with the gorgeous gowns and jewels of the women. Flowers abound in such profusion as if nature intended them only for the rich.

Money flows like water from a faucet—the water-main being war profits.

Contrast this picture of lavishness and waste with the lives of working people. You will immediately see the point in the demand of LABOR ACTION that the rich be taxed to pay for the war.

The working people can't afford it.

## WOMEN WORKERS LOSE PROTECTION

There is a movement afoot—naturally started by the bosses—to suspend the hard-won labor laws protecting women in industry.

Under pretext of the war emergency the bosses are beginning to work women seven days a week, without the required day of rest. The working week for women is being extended beyond 48 hours. Night work—legally limited to 10 p.m.—is again being introduced.

Women workers, compelled by the mounting cost of living, half-heartedly agree to the extra work in order to earn more money and even more, to just keep their jobs. But that it not the way to meet war prices.

The working women will neglect their families and ruin their health. Furthermore, to allow suspension of labor laws today will mean complete annihilation in post-war depression.

The thing for women workers to remember is that, in most cases, they are not paid on the same scale as men for equivalent work. That makes it profitable for the bosses to employ women for inhuman hours rather than to put on more shifts of workers, including skilled male workers wherever possible.

Women workers must set up a hue and cry for the wages to which they are entitled. Why should the bosses profit at their expense!

To demand more wages is the way to do something about the shameful cost of living.

Workers only hurt themselves by allowing the bosses to suspend protective labor legislation.

## RICH GETTING OWN SHELTERS

A war emergency certainly underlines class distinctions, propaganda to the contrary notwithstanding.

While the Office of Civilian Defense is very busy talking about air raids and doing nothing at all to provide shelters for crowded city populations, there are those who are playing safe and not relying upon the OCD and its uncertain protection.

These favored few don't have to depend on the government which is in no hurry to spend a little of the huge war appropriations for mass shelters. They have enough money to build their own shelters.

The fact is not exactly being shouted from the housetops, but one gathers from inconspicuous newspaper items that the rich are providing themselves and their families with cozy underground homes and clubs, combining the element of safety with all modern conveniences.

Thus economic inequality translates itself into inequality all in favor of the members of the upper class—and against men, women and children belonging to the great mass.

## Crucial Battle of the Pacific:

# The Bitter Struggle for Singapore Involves Vast Imperialist Stakes

By HENRY JUDD

The largest battle in the Pacific area of the World War is now shaping up—the all-important struggle for Singapore.

On the one side the Japanese, having removed Hong Kong from their path, are concentrating tremendous forces in an effort to take this citadel of their "democratic" rivals.

On the other side, the Allied powers are desperately striving to strengthen the defenses of this key point—the kingpin in their Far Eastern strategy. The British are pouring in reserve forces and supplies from Australia, New Zealand and India; the Dutch are attempting to send reinforcements from the nearby East Indies; the Chinese are attempting to relieve the pressure of the Japanese attack by sending troops into Burma for a flank attack; the United States is likewise taking measures to prevent the fall of the "City of the Lion."

Why is Singapore so important from the standpoint of the rival imperialist powers now struggling for its mastery?

(1) Malaya—the peninsula at whose tip Singapore is located—is rich in rubber and tin. These are raw materials highly coveted by both imperialist war camps.

(2) Singapore is a great military and naval strategic location, commanding the entrance to the Indian Ocean and the gateway to the East Indies. Whoever controls Singapore controls the straits of Malacca, leading directly to Burma, Ceylon and India.

(3) Capture of Singapore would mean the certain fall of the Dutch East Indies into the hands of the Japanese. The islands of Java, Sumatra, Borneo, etc., would fall into the hands of the Japanese who would then obtain much needed supplies of oil, rubber, copra, quinine, tea. Loss of Malaya and the East Indies to the Empire of Japan would vastly strengthen that country and correspondingly weaken the Allied powers enormously.

(4) The Allied powers have commercial, trade and capital interests in these territories valued at several billions of dollars. It would all go up in smoke if the Japanese should win.

## A DESPERATE AND BITTER STRUGGLE

It is clear that a desperate and bitter struggle will be put up by both sides for the territory of Malaya. This struggle constitutes about the clearest example yet of what LABOR ACTION means when it says the war in the Pacific is an imperialist war—for wealth, for trade, for markets, for colonies, and for raw materials of all kinds. Hundreds of thousands of men from America, England, India, Australia, Japan, China, etc., will

be asked to sacrifice their lives so that the imperialist masters of the Great Powers can possess more territory to loot.

So far, the Japanese forces—descending on Singapore from their bases in Thailand and Indo-China—have made amazingly rapid and easy advances. They have overrun more than half of the country, including some of its most valuable rubber plantation areas. They appear to have gained mastery over the external sea approaches and the air. All military authorities concede that Singapore is in grave danger of falling into Japanese hands although, of course, fierce battles still remain to be fought before the fate of this rich prize is decided.

At the same time, the so-called American military specialists and commentators are filling the press and radio waves with innumerable misstatements and misconceptions about the entire struggle for Singapore. Ignoring the important POLITICAL factors involved in the battle—that is, the existence and opinions of the 16,000,000 native people of Malaya—they talk as though it were solely a MILITARY problem; a matter of guns, tanks and planes.

For the imperialists this is quite natural since they have no interest in the fate or opinions of the native colonial population of these countries. They seek only to retain them in colonial servitude, in the case of the British; or to take the place of the old masters, as in the case of the Japanese. But neither side cares one bit about the colonial people who are the decisive element in the war.

Who are these colonials? They are about 95 per cent of the population, to begin with. They are divided almost evenly between Chinese who came originally from South China; Tamils and Indians who migrated from Ceylon and India; the original native Malaysians. They are the workers—and peasants, the shop keepers and merchants of the country. They are the dock laborers in the ports and piers; they are the miners and factory workers in the tin mines and smelting factories; they are the rubber workers on the plantations; they are the peddlars and food merchants.

They are the ones who unload the ships, who bring down the rubber on footpaths from the plantations, who tap the trees, who mine the tin, who run all the services of the cities and villages, who are made to wait hand and foot on the white colonial masters and mistresses. They are the nine out of ten; the ones who say: "This is a war between two sets of robber bandits who want the right to exploit me—a plague on both your houses!"

Why have the Japanese been able to advance

so rapidly? Because they have come through rubber and tin country, where the population has suffered 100 years of British imperialism and will therefore not lift a finger to help the British. The British, lacking forces and supplies, have no alternative but to retreat. They cannot mobilize the native population on their side "in the name of democracy"—any more than the Japanese can mobilize the natives on their side "in the name of liberation."

Both are liars, and the Chinese, Malaysians and Indians know it—so they run off into the hills or hide in their homes until the fighting is over. To them, there is no choice—either side is equally bad and not worth fighting for. And this is a thousand times more important in the battle for Singapore than "unified commands," airplanes, tanks, etc. If the British rulers could mobilize the natives—to the number of 16,000,000—on their side, the Japanese would vainly batter their heads against the stone wall of guerilla warfare, mass opposition and fighting in which each native village and city would be a citadel.

But imperialist rule in Malaya—as everywhere else—is based on exploitation. This means forbidding of unions, forbidding of any democratic liberties, no factory legislation, pitifully low wages, indefinite hours of work, coolie living standards, etc. It means rule of the people by a foreign power, in the best Hitler manner.

## FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE

For the British to win over the native people they must give them freedom and independence—the right of self-determination and self-rule. They must do away with everything they have done for the last 100 years.

There is as little possibility of this happening as there is of Hitler becoming a democrat or the Japanese withdrawing from China. So the great masses of Malaya will remain neutral in the war, cursing BOTH sides for bringing the horror of war to their country.

But the people of Malaya—the nine out of ten—are interested neither in Japanese victories, nor explanations about "democratic" defeats. They are interested now and in the future in a way of winning their freedom from ALL imperialisms—white or yellow—and in bettering their unfortunate lot. The fact that the leaders of the Malayan Communist Party (Stalinists) have openly offered themselves to the British imperialists will not deter these people from still insisting that their genuine interests lie not with either of the warring capitalist camps, but with the struggle of the colonial people for freedom and the right of self-determination.

## Spilled Beans and Crystal Gazing:

# The British Tories and Hitlerism

By PAUL TEMPLE

A lot of people don't look very far ahead before jumping into something. This explains, for instance, (1) why installment-payment companies make money on defaults; (2) why some people get married, and—

(3) Why there is about 99 per cent more enthusiasm for this war now than there probably will be by the time it's over.

So when you see that dot-dot-dot-dash around you, you might ask: "Victory—for what?" For democracy, or for profit?

A case of spilled beans is sometimes as good as a crystal ball to enable you to catch a glimpse into the future of this war. We've got two cases this week, one of democracy and one on profit.

Anthony Eden, Foreign Secretary in the Churchill Tory government, came home this week from his talks with Stalin and told the press:

"The trouble with Hitler was not that he was a Nazi at home. The trouble with him was that he would not stay at home."

## The Excess Profits Tax

Take the Powers-That-Be in the United States. What THEY would do with a victory won by the blood and heroism of young men is pretty clear from what they ARE doing

right now. LABOR ACTION has carried facts and figures on the enormous war profits being by the same patriotic corporations. Several months ago, however, Congress passed an excess profits tax law which was supposed to prevent extra war profits from rolling into the coffers of the rich.

That it hasn't done anything of the sort can be read on the financial page of the New York Times. More than that: the government knew in advance that it would not; they were playing the same game as in 1917!

About half way between the First World War and this one, Congress was informed in an official report that the war experience had shown that the excess profits tax not only did not prevent profits but actually INCREASED them! They were so informed by the head of the War Industries Board, Bernard Baruch. He told them:

"Excess profits taxes—standing alone—have no effect whatever to check inflation. Their only effect is to increase it. . . . One way to increase \$500,000 profit to \$1,000,000 profit without increased risk or effort is to double prices—and therefore profits—under an 80 per cent excess profits tax than there is without it. Indeed, the main result of such a system is to induce rapid price increases to absorb the tax."

That's simple enough even for a congressman to understand. The tax was passed along to the consumer.

## A Mess of Spilled Beans

Now a mess of spilled beans comes along to prove that exactly the same thing is happening right now. The American Banker reports Tax Ex-

## Auto Industry Layoffs-

(Continued from page 1)

Like all other CIO officials, Reuther fails to mention that direct orders by Roosevelt could at any time have placed the Reuther Plan in operation and the crisis could have been avoided.

Big Business Stranglehold

So today, because big business has a stranglehold on Washington, because the President is their ally and because the CIO officials didn't put up a nation-wide struggle against the Washington-Wall Street combination, the crisis is here.

The unemployed auto workers in Detroit, sizzling at the incompetence of the war machinery, sore

at the loss of their jobs, are demanding that the government take over the auto industry. Resolutions to this effect have been adopted by the West Side Local.

The rank and file auto workers are displaying the right instincts in their demands for nationalization of the auto industry, as against the top CIO officials who, once again, joined in another advisory board, following the Washington conference, which has power only to give suggestions.

This new ten-man board, five from the industry and five from labor, can take under its consideration such proposals as the Reuther Plan. But it has no power, it is merely an adjunct of the big business controlled Office of Production Management. Even if it had power, it would be dominated by the very force which has proved to be out-moded and unnecessary for production, namely, the industrial magnates.

If the auto workers combined their demand that the government nationalize the auto industry with the vital demand for union control of the nationalized industry, then they would be one step forward, and a big one at that, toward the solution of their problems.

The need of the hour in Detroit and other auto centers is for the militant workers to raise the cry and mobilize to fight for "Conscription of the Auto Industry under workers' control."

## Half of New York Hasn't Enough Milk

Half the people of New York City are receiving insufficient milk, the Mayor's Milk Committee declared in a 96-page report to Mayor LaGuardia recently.

"An increase of 26 per cent in the consumption of milk by undernourished children would have an almost incalculable value for the future well-being of the city," the report declared.

The committee avoided a direct attack upon the milk trust, but harped upon "very costly distribution methods."

# A Negro Has Own Freedom To Fight For

By Paul Harris

Negroes are among the stakes in this war.

Negroes are very valuable. It doesn't cost much to get them. In all parts of the world—in Africa, most of all—they are worth much to the rulers of the world.

They can be made to work hard at wages just high enough to allow them to exist and reproduce. And if they become rebellious, a few can be killed to teach the others the virtues of living under the rule of a democratic empire.

One of the big reasons for this war is the question of who shall own and control those areas of the world in which the black and brown slaves live—Africa, parts of Asia, the Pacific islands.

They were stakes in the last war and when the war was over they remained slaves. They are stakes in this way and the rulers of the world intend to keep them as slaves. That is what the war is about, that is what the next war will be about. As long as the hundreds of millions of workers and farmers all over the world, black, white, yellow and brown, continue to be chips in the hands of their masters.

Tell me, Negro steel worker in Buffalo, and you, sharecropper in Arkansas; you, Harlem elevator operator, tell me: do any of you believe that the American politicians and bosses with Winston Churchill and the Queen of Holland are in this war to preserve democracy for YOU?

Do you believe that the government and the masters of this country are carrying on a war in the Pacific Ocean to help you and your children?

## WE KNOW WHO OUR ENEMIES ARE

A black man has his own freedom to fight for. We know who makes us suffer. Hitler keeps Jews in ghettos in Europe, but it isn't Hitler who keeps Negroes segregated in this country. Negroes were trampled down and lynched in this country long before Hitler was born. And if Hitler were destroyed tomorrow, 13,000,000 Negroes would still be outcasts in the country where they were born, 120,000,000 Negroes would still be slaves in Africa and 2,000,000 Negroes would still sweat from sunup to sundown in the British Empire.

Today Negroes can be compelled to make sacrifices for which they will reap nothing, but you cannot be compelled to blind your eyes and black out your minds. We know what the war is not. It is not a war for democracy. It is not a war for a better life.

It is a war for imperialist plunder. It is a war for the rich to keep their riches and get more.

What is Britain doing in Hong Kong? Or Japan in China? Or Holland in the Dutch East Indies? Or America in China?

Why are they fighting in the Pacific? To give liberty to the Chinese? Why are all of them fighting in North Africa? To free Africans? Any Negro who believes that is a double slave, a slave in body and a slave in mind.

Listen, however, to some who call themselves leaders of the Negro people, who presume to speak in their name. Listen to the Pittsburgh Courier, the largest Negro paper in the country, of December 13, 1941:

"And now that OUR country is at war, forgotten are the differences under which we have labored. Buried deep in the recesses of our minds are the injustices to which we have been subjected."

In 30 minutes they bury the oppression of 300 years. Isn't this an invitation to every Negro-hater and every capitalist to kick and keep on kicking the Negro? Listen to some more:

"The Army of the United States is OUR ARMY. The Navy of the United States is OUR NAVY."

Let any Negro walk into the Navy office anywhere and say that the Navy is his Navy. Let the editor of the Pittsburgh Courier go. He will find that the differences he has so quickly forgotten have not been forgotten by the Navy. They will offer him a job as a messboy, and if he says anything rude, will throw him out. And his Army will lock him up.

The Courier goes on:

"This soil belongs to the 13,000,000 black Americans as certainly and securely as it does to any white Southerner, any white Northerner, any white Westerner."

What runs in the veins of a man who can write so stupidly, so dishonestly? Let him go down South and tell the Negro sharecroppers that they own the land! They will laugh at him and say he is either a scoundrel or a fool.

## THIS IS OUR CAUSE

And then the Courier tells us how terrible Hitler is. Of course!

Hitler is an enemy of the human race, so is Mussolini, so is the Japanese Emperor. To our brothers in the fascist countries, our hearts and hands go out in international solidarity of labor.

We say to them: our skins are different. But you, like us, are merely chips in the struggle for power that is tearing the world to pieces. Fight Hitler, Mussolini, the Japanese Emperor and conquer them and make a better world; and we Negroes here and in Africa and in the West Indies will also fight those who sit on our backs.

That is the road to Negro freedom.

## Mr. Davies Is at It Again

Joseph Davies, ex-envoy to Russia, is at it again. Last week we commented on his whitewash of the Moscow trials and the fact that he seems to have made his special task of late the glorification of the internal regime of Stalinism.

In an interview with Publishers' Weekly, Mr. Davies tells at length of the great achievements of Stalinism in the field of literature. Most of his rhapsody—as befits an American man of business—is in statistics about the number of books published in Russia.

As the old saying goes, figures don't lie—but liars sure can figure!

What Mr. Davies neglects to mention is that the overwhelming majority of these books, published in such vast editions, consists of Stalinist propaganda works and propaganda novels.

A true index of cultural achievement would be in terms, not merely in the mass of books read, but in the intellectual level reached, and in the freedom of ideas existing.

Who can take this talk about cultural achievement in Stalinist Russia seriously when the possession of Trotsky's History of the Russian Revolution makes one liable to a prison sentence or when the utterance of a word of criticism against the "beloved leader" means the ending of a literary or political career?

Mr. Davies is obviously not at home in the field of culture. He had better stick to whitewashing that field of Stalinism with which he is more familiar—political frame-ups.

## Chicago Lecture:

### Who Will Pay the War Bill?

High Prices, More and Higher Taxes, While the Bosses' Profits Keep Increasing.

Guest Speaker: P. PICQUET

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# Their Tax Program and Ours

## An Editorial

The most vital question confronting the American people today is: "WHO SHALL PAY FOR THE WAR?"

Last Wednesday, President Roosevelt presented his annual budget to Congress. He has announced his intention of requesting a war appropriation of 56 billion dollars for 1942, equal to one half of the total national income, and a total war outlay of 150 billion dollars, of which 78 billion dollars has already been appropriated. This will mean that one half of all the goods produced in the United States next year, one half of all hours worked, one half of all income earned, directly or indirectly will go toward the war effort.

Although a sum as tremendous as 150 billion dollars is really too vast to appreciate readily, everyone understands that the money will ultimately come out of the pocketbooks of the masses of the people—the workers. In his budget, the President has decided to request new taxes to bring an additional nine billion dollars into the Treasury next year. This will be only the beginning and it is a safe bet that taxes will grow progressively heavier as the war goes on.

What primarily concerns us here is what the nature of the new war taxes should be. Will they be equitable taxes, that is, based upon ability to pay and therefore of necessity "soaking the rich," or will they be the same kind of taxes, "soaking the poor," which Congress passed last year? Administration officials have already dropped sufficient hints to indicate that THEIR program will be the boss program of taxing the workers while leaving profits virtually untouched. It is probable that the Administration and/or Congress will propose the following, or similar, taxes:

- 1. Heavily increased federal excise taxes (taxes on internally produced products—at present cigarette and liquor taxes).

- 2. A general federal sales tax.
- 3. A payroll tax on workers' wages.
- 4. An increase in the social security tax.

Every one of these taxes is reactionary because it violates the basic principle of ability to pay. Each one places the heaviest burden on those least able to pay. Excise and sales taxes are passed on to the consumer in the form of higher prices for the necessities of life. The lowest income groups suffer most heavily from such taxes because most of their income is spent on necessities and therefore subject to tax. Sales taxes are supposed to be democratic because both John Doe and J. P. Morgan pay the same percentage tax, but they are in reality the most unfair of all possible taxes because of the difference in ability to pay between John Doe and J. P. Morgan. At the present time, according to a TNEC report, state and local excise and sales taxes take one dollar out of every five earned by the low income groups (representing two thirds of the population). If new federal excise and sales taxes are passed by Congress, it is estimated that one dollar out of every three will be taken from low income earnings in the form of taxes.

While the President in his message specified his objections to a federal sales tax, that by no means guarantees that Congress will not pass one nonetheless. He made only one concrete proposal, an increase of three billion dollars in social security taxes, and requested Congress to make up its own mind on how to raise the additional seven billion dollars in new taxes. Unless labor vigorously intervenes, Congress can be expected to enact new taxes as reactionary as the social security tax proposed by the President.

Proposals for payroll and increased social security taxes strike directly at the living standard of the working class. They are indirect wage cuts. They are especially vicious at present, when the rising cost of living has all but nullified

recent wage gains and is expected to reduce the purchasing power of the dollar to 88 cents by spring, according to federal officials.

In contrast to these "soak the poor" tax proposals, we propose to pay for the war by "soaking the rich." Our tax program is very simple; we propose to get the money from those who can afford it, i.e., the rich bosses. WE PROPOSE:

- 1. A 100 per cent tax on all war profits.
- 2. A 100 per cent tax on all income over \$20,000 a year.
- 3. A stiff tax on all corporate undivided profits.
- 4. A capital levy on accumulated capital.

Every one of our proposals is progressive because it places the heaviest burden on those best able to pay. There is nothing unreasonable about our first proposal, a 100 per cent tax on all war profits. The present excess profits tax is a meaningless farce. For the year 1940 it brought a total revenue of 100 million dollars; for 1941, 400 million dollars. These are insignificant amounts compared to the colossal war profits being made by big business or even compared to the excess profits tax of World War I which yielded 1,639 million dollars in 1917. It is merely necessary to cite a recent report by the Federal Reserve Board, showing a 76 per cent increase in profits, after deducting all taxes, of 633 large industrial corporations since 1939, to show how the bosses are profiteering from the war.

Our second tax proposal would take away all income over \$20,000 a year. It is based on the simple proposition that \$20,000 a year is just a little more than enough for any one person to live on comfortably.

Our third proposal would eliminate a favorite device now used by big corporations to escape paying taxes. These "patriotic" companies frequently lay aside vast sums as undivided profits in

the form of a reserve and contingency fund, which fund is not subject to taxation. It is estimated that the total of undivided profits of American corporations amounts to 60 billion dollars, more than next year's total proposed war expenditure.

The only way the government can reach this idle money is through a tax on undistributed profits, such as was enacted early in the depression and repealed a year later when big business and its journalistic mouthpiece squawked too loudly.

Where is the wealth of the country now? Ninety per cent of it is in the hands of three per cent of the people, that handful of financial dynasties known as "America's Sixty Families." The only taxes these plutocrats pay now are the taxes on their yearly INCOMES. A capital levy would tax the accumulated wealth and fortunes of America's Sixty Families. In other words, it would tax what they have as well as what they make. A capital levy would be the most lucrative source of revenue because the fortunes of the plutocrats are so tremendous. The House of Morgan was estimated by the National Resources Committee to control corporations and banks worth 31 billion dollars. Henry Ford's personal wealth was set at 760 million dollars by this committee.

Giant corporations, such as the American Telephone Co., the Chase National Bank and the New York Life Insurance Co. have total assets in excess of three billion dollars. The country's 200 largest companies have total assets of 81 billion dollars. A 20 per cent capital levy on this wealth, for example, would produce 16 billion dollars, more than what the additional taxes for 1942 are expected to yield. A capital levy would pay for the war without hurting the living standards of the people.

In a word, our slogan is: "MAKE THE RICH PAY FOR THEIR WAR."

## Editorials

### LABOR ACTION'S PLATFORM

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

#### LABOR MUST DEFEND ITSELF!

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

#### SOAK THE RICH—LET THEM PAY FOR THEIR WAR!

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

#### DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS TO THE DRAFTEES!

- 9. The right of free speech, free press and free assembly for the men in the armed forces!
- 10. \$60 a month minimum for draftees.

#### SMASH JIM CROW!

- 11. Down with Jim Crow and anti-Semitism! All discrimination against Negroes in the Army and Navy, or by employers in industry, must be made a criminal offense!
- 12. For full social, economic and political equality for Negroes!

#### BE PREPARED!

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

self—one cannot make deals with mortal enemies of everything one is supposed to stand for. Instead, it will mean that the Congress leaders promise to give up their fight for independence and give all their support to the Anglo-American war camp. It will mean that the Congress has betrayed its nationalist principles in exchange for nothing—or empty promises, at best.

Even if this happens—and it will, in all likelihood—the fight will continue as long as India remains a colony of imperialism. The workers and peasants still want freedom, even if their leaders have found it convenient to sell out their principles. An excellent illustration of what such a bargain will mean is shown by the fact that although there are 12,000 political prisoners in the jails of India (admitted by the British) only 500 of the big shots (officials and conservative nationalists) have been freed. Less than 5 per cent! And it is this 5 per cent who are trying to make a bargain with the British. Smells to us like a dirty deal all around!

## A Welcome Step Forward

Dispatches from Russia report that the Stalinist press has removed from its masthead the slogan, "Proletarians of all countries, unite!" and substituted the phrase, "Death to the German invaders!" The change is a welcome one to all who are interested in reducing if not eliminating altogether the confusion that exists in the working class.

The famous and noble war-cry of international socialism uttered by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels almost a hundred years ago was stolen by the Stalinist counter-revolution when it began its march to power. As it usurped the rule of the Russian workers and peasants, so it usurped their banner. Nationalistic and reactionary to the marrow of its bones, the Stalinist bureaucracy nevertheless found it expedient to march under the flag of internationalism and progress. But even so, the Marxian slogan never meant anything to it except: Proletarians of the world, unite to keep the Kremlin autocracy fastened on the necks of the Russian masses.

Now that even this slogan has been replaced by one worthy of any imperialist ruler, the pretensions of the Stalinist gang to any kinship with the working class are more easily dispelled. Every time the Kremlin divests itself of its false garb and appears in its true colors, it takes a step forward so far as the interests of labor and socialist clarity are concerned.

The latest step forward is welcome. Masquerades, like any other form of deceit, have only pernicious effects upon the labor movement and the class struggle.

## Hill-Billy Fuehrer Says: No Strikes Allowed in Texas

By JOHN DEHNER

Prior to last summer's senatorial election, Texas' senator, Lee O'Daniel, was the cowboy music governor of the state. O'Daniel submitted to the state legislature last spring a vicious anti-strike law. The act is by no means confined to defense industries.

While apparently designed to prevent violence in labor disputes, the actual result of the law is to curtail the right of collective bargaining by hanging over the heads of unions and their members the actual threat of prosecution and imprisonment in the penitentiary for two years for such a simple act as "interfering" with a person who is working.

People down in Texas either are all for O'Daniel and his hill-billy methods or are all-out against him. Those who know him well and those who observe his dictatorial policies see in O'Daniel another Huey Long. But let us now consider the proposals he has made, and in particular the Texas anti-strike law and its effects upon the people of Texas, in order that we may be better able to judge the rising new senator.

The act as written states in its emergency clause that it is designed to "protect industries of this state from strikes." The act thereby sets forth its very purpose—to prevent strikes. Yet everyone knows that the right to organize, strike and peacefully picket is one many times declared a fundamental right by the courts throughout the land. The Texas law does not say that it is designed solely to protect persons or property or prevent the free movement of commerce or encourage collective bargaining, but says outright that it is designed to protect industries from strikes.

By the terms of the act it is a felony for any person to interfere with another person while working, or to congregate at a place where a labor dispute exists and threaten or engage in force, the purpose of which is to prevent any person from working.

Under this infamous law, several Houston Negro garbage workers who were on strike were charged with violation of this law because they hoisted at some of the scabs manning vehicles they were accustomed to drive.

The law does not require any intent on the part of the accused to do the very act which it denounces; that is, the law does not require any

## Construction Bosses Are in On Gravy, Too

The war profiteering splurge now going on is not confined to any one type of industry. The corporations producing war goods are, of course, profiteering most heavily, but the other capitalists are doing very well for themselves too, thank you.

They're all working on the idea of—grab while you can and grab a lot. So that the grabbing is going all the way from war industries to bread companies to construction companies. Take the construction companies. For the nine months ending on September 30, 1941, profits were \$130,742,119—an increase over the corresponding period in 1940 of 19 per cent when these same companies made a mere \$109,813,133.

Twelve office equipment companies more than doubled their earnings for the third quarter of 1941 as compared with the third quarter of 1940, showing an increase from \$4,314,681 to \$8,861,365.

animus, as do all other penal laws. For instance:

Suppose A and B are sitting in a cafe drinking beer. Then enters C (a man on his way to make deliveries to the cafe) and also D, who comes in with C. D is not working, but is merely a friend of C. For some reason, say a dislike of the ties the entering men wear, A and B provoke an argument with C and D. Then A hits C and B hits D. Under this new law, A is subjected to prosecution for a felony and subjected to a two-year penitentiary sentence for interfering with a man while working, while B, who hits D—a non-working man—is only subject to a very small fine of several dollars for simple fighting. The result of this would be the same, even though neither A nor B knew whether C or D were or were not working.

When the act is applied to actual situations (as the above) the result is absurd. But employers and the police are quick to take hold of the opportunities permitted by the law to break strikes as soon as they arise. If a company guard on duty provoked a picket and the picket

did so much as curse the guard, then the picket would be punishable under the law for interfering with a man (the guard) while working. This opens untold opportunities for the company to provoke slight disturbances and secure the arrest of the entire picket line and all the union members in the neighborhood.

O'Daniel thus succeeded in doing what the law says it is designed to do: protect industries from strikes. Fortunately, the union men in Texas—and there are thousands of them—are determined to fight this law until the bitter end. Money has been and is being raised to take a test case to the United States Supreme Court so that the law will be declared unconstitutional and stricken from the books.

The first test case has arisen in Houston, where, on September 12, Ted Sanford, 40-year-old refinery workers, was indicted and charged with interfering with a worker at a cafe near Houston. Sanford had no connection with the cafe and no interest in any labor controversy. Nevertheless, he was arrested and held for trial under the anti-strike law.

## The Strange Silence of the Militant

Immediately after the declaration of war in this country, the National Committee of the Workers Party made public a statement of its opinion, which appeared in Labor Action. In doing so, it merely complied with the elementary duty of a working-class socialist organization. With the outbreak of the war, it acquitted itself of its first responsibility—the solemn and unambiguous reaffirmation of its internationalist stand against imperialist war. The Thomasite Socialist Party issued a statement at about the same time, according to its lights. Even the ghost of the Socialist Labor Party let itself be heard from in an official declaration on the war.

The Socialist Workers Party, however, made no statement of its position, either when the war broke out or in the more than four weeks period that has elapsed since then. Neither has The Militant, spokesman of the Cannonites, had a single word to say about its position on the war in the past month. In fact, it has talked about everything else except what every radical worker has rightfully looked for it to say.

What is the explanation of this strange silence? What does it mean? Unofficially, it seems, spokesmen of the SWP have stated that its position is too well known to require another statement and that, besides, its position was already stated in the course of the Minneapolis trial. This is true in so far as its position BEFORE the declaration of war is concerned. But that is not the point. What is involved is precisely the question of its position AFTER the declaration of war, NOW that the war is a fact in this country and not merely a prospect.

Another thing that remains unexplained is the failure of the SWP to reply to a communication sent it by the Workers Party. On December 11, 1941 the Workers Party wrote the National Committee of the SWP proposing the drafting of a joint statement against the imperialist war, to be signed by the two organizations. The letter said: "It is neither necessary nor possible, as you know, for us to arrive at an agreement on all the aspects of the Second World War. However, it is our opinion that sufficient agreement does exist between us on the decisive questions of the United States in the Second World War, to make both possible and urgently necessary, a joint declaration..."

This letter, as stated, has not been answered; not even its receipt has been acknowledged. The strained and haughty attempts of the Cannonites to "ignore" our existence, so pathetically comical in the past, are not a sufficient explanation for their failure to respond this time. There is more than this involved, and not a few comrades—supporters of the SWP—are insistent on establishing just what is involved.

Can there be any connection between the singular silence of the SWP on the one side and the notorious theory advanced months ago by its leader, according to which the SWP would "telescope" the two tasks of fighting for socialism and at the same time defending the capitalist fatherland?

M. S.

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### New York Lecture:

## LABOR AND THE WAR

Speaker: MAX SHACHTMAN

PLACE AND DATE TO BE ANNOUNCED

Watch for Details in Next Week's Issue of Labor Action

Auspices: Workers Party, Local New York

### PHILADELPHIA LECTURE:

## Labor and the War

Speaker: MAX SHACHTMAN  
National Secretary of the Workers Party

SUNDAY, January 18, at 8:15 P. M.

810 LOCUST STREET, PHILADELPHIA