

Will the Soldiers Be Disfranchised in 1944 Elections?

The fight around the Green-Lucas bill displays an arrogant disregard by the Houses of Congress of the interests of the people at large. Feeling secure in their power, the reactionary senatorial bloc dared—while mouthing glib phrases about the war for “democracy”—to withhold from the men drafted to fight that war, the elementary right to vote. For this is exactly what they did by refusing to provide the machinery for soldiers to participate in the 1944 elections.

Not that the provisions of the Green-Lucas bill are the essence of democracy. The bill does not, for instance, extend the right to vote to all men deemed old enough to fight. The qualifications for voting would be the same as if the men had stayed peacefully in their voting districts instead of risking their lives on the battlefields—with one outstanding exception. **To cast their votes for federal officials, nobody in the armed forces would be required to pay a poll-tax if the Green-Lucas bill had been passed.**

The poll-tax Democrats of the South didn't like that. The Southern bourgeois who maintain political control by disfranchising millions of citizens will not give up their weapon. Not even for the duration, and not even to the soldiers, will they relinquish the poll-tax.

The Republicans also did not like the idea of the Democratic Party supervising the soldier vote. Even the provision for a bipartisan committee of Democrats and Republicans to administer the law did not placate the Republicans. Knowing that they would do to influence the soldier vote if they were the top dogs with the machinery of government in their hands, they are sure the Democrats would do the same.

So these elements in both the major political parties united to pass an “amendment” instead of the bill. The amendment simply recommends that the states enact legislation to allow the soldiers to vote. This is simply by way of suggestion. There is nothing compulsory about it. At any rate, imagine the terrible confusion entailed in carrying out the different provisions of forty-eight different states, in case they do enact legislation.

The question is now out of the Senate and before the House of Representatives. What is the labor movement doing to make known its indignation at this shameful spectacle of playing political football with the elementary rights of millions of their brothers shedding their blood for “democracy”?

It is true that the labor movement has demanded the passage of the soldier-vote bill. But this has been done in a routine way. What is needed now is a whirlwind campaign against the activities of the reactionaries in Washington and the fascist racial doctrines of Representative Rankin of Mississippi and his buddies.

The issue over the soldiers' vote, like so many others that have come before the House and Senate, merely show how absolutely essential it is for the labor movement to go full-speed ahead toward the organization of an independent Labor Party.

Such a party could halt the anti-labor plans of the big business representatives in the Houses of Congress. It would truly represent the real interests, not only of the soldiers, who, in their majority, come from the working people, but all who labor!

POOR EDESEL FORD DIED ALMOST PENNILESS

Life of Bitter Toil, and Very Little to Show for It LEAVES ONLY A LOUSY \$66,000,000 ESTATE

Gloom spread throughout the great Ford dynasty as the news appeared that the late Edsel Ford, only son of Henry Ford, died last May almost a pauper.

An affidavit filed with his will by his widow in Maine showed that poor Edsel left an estate valued at a miserable \$66,000,000. The property valuations listed as personal estate not in Maine, \$84,980,000; real estate in Maine, \$150,000; real estate not in Maine, \$850,000.

Edsel worked pretty near like a galley slave all his life, while the Ford workers were leading the life of Riley and accumulating vast fortunes at the expense of poor Edsel and poor Henry. How Edsel managed to keep body and soul together all his life is a mystery. Maybe he took in his father's washing. Or maybe he took a little flier on the ponies once in a while. Evidently, that didn't do him much good, because all he had to show for it when he passed on to a better world was a lousy \$66,000,000. How pitiful a trifle that is may be judged from the fact that the United States government alone is spending One Billion Dollars every eighty hours for the war alone.

What his bereaved widow is going to do now, heaven alone knows. The rumor that she is applying for city poor relief benefits has not been confirmed officially. Neither has the rumor that the United Automobile Workers Union, which found a warm-hearted and enthusiastic friend in Edsel Ford from the very day of his birth, is going to declare a one-day stoppage of work for all its members to commemorate the passing of this great, if penniless, American.

Meanwhile, capitalists all over the land are bitterly wondering what the hell this country is coming to when a man devotes all his life and energy to hard work and all he has to show for it after his death is a lousy \$66,000,000!

Meeting Protests Jailing of “Minneapolis Case” Detendants

Over three hundred persons crowded the hall at New York's Manhattan Center last Thursday, December 16, to protest the refusal of the United States Supreme Court to hear the appeal of the eighteen Minneapolis defendants who have been sentenced, some to one year and others to sixteen months imprisonment under the provisions of the notorious Smith “Gag” Act.

The meeting, organized by the Civil Rights Defense Committee, was addressed by representatives of various organizations, the Civil Liberties Union, the Workers Defense League, the New Leader, the Socialist Call, Max Shachtman, national secretary of the Workers Party, spoke in its behalf, and Albert Goldman, attorney and one of the eighteen defendants, spoke for them.

The Minneapolis case is the first nationally recognized test case of the war. It arose out of the conflict between the militant leaders of Minneapolis Teamsters Union, Local 544,

and Daniel Tobin, international president. When the local leaders refused to yield to the dictates of Dan Tobin, and the majority of the local voted to affiliate to the CIO, Tobin telegraphed for help to President Roosevelt.

In June, 1941, Stephen Early, secretary to President Roosevelt, stated to the press: “When I advised the President of Tobin's representations this morning, he asked me to immediately have the government departments and agencies interested in the matter notified.” In this way, Roosevelt was repaying his friend Tobin for his help in tying labor to the Democratic political machine in the 1936 election.

Raids followed on the offices of the Socialist Workers Party and the Minneapolis Motor Transport Workers Union, Local 544, CIO. Twenty-nine arrests were made and, after a five-week trial, eighteen defendants were found guilty of violating the (Continued on page 4)

LABOR ACTION

DECEMBER 27, 1943

A PAPER IN THE INTERESTS OF LABOR

ONE CENT

RAIL LABOR STRIKE VOTE BLASTS THE WAGE FREEZE

“They want to trade us a jackrabbit for a thoroughbred,” said Alexander F. Whitney, head of the trainmen's union, after being offered a compromise settlement of the railroad wage dispute to avert a strike called by a ninety-seven per cent favorable vote of the operating railway unions.

The operating railroad workers' unions have now been joined by the 1,100,000 workers in the non-operating unions. The latter have taken a strike vote and decided to join any walkout which the Big Four Brotherhoods call on the date set—December 30.

At the time of this writing, President Roosevelt has been meeting with the representatives of the Brotherhoods in an effort to reach a settlement of the wage dispute and avert a strike. But the offers already made have met the above answer of Mr. Whitney.

The Brotherhoods are thoroughly fed up with the run-around which they have received from the railroad companies and Economic Stabilizer Fred M. Vinson. The agreement reach for an 8 cents an hour increase was rejected by Vinson and up to now the Administration has gone along with the ruling of its appointee.

In their statement on the strike vote and the actions of the Administration, the Railroad Brotherhoods declared of the railroad workers that:

“Specifically, they do not believe that swollen railroad earnings, larcenous profiteering, soaring prices and depressed real wages are necessities of the war effort.

“All frantic and cheap appeals to patriotism issued by the Office of War Mobilization and War Stabilization cannot obscure this issue.

“While the average citizen toils and pays taxes and buys bonds and budgets his diminishing real earnings, while their sons and brothers risk their lives on foreign battlefields, under alien skies and on distant seas, these gentlemen will not sacrifice a campaign nickel or risk the loss of a single vote in the performance of their duty at home.

“It is a matter of official record that the basic wage rates of all but standard wage earners have been practically frozen for more than a year. It is a further fact that prices have continued upward.

“We do not believe that American boys are fighting to defend politicians in office and profiteers in business and industry who are plundering their fathers and mothers and wives and children while they are away in uniform.

“When they return and find that this is what they have been fighting for, they will express their anger and resentment in a manner that will make any strike in protest now, look like a minor incident.”

The non-operating unions were similarly militant in their statement against the run-around given them in Washington. In commenting on this situation they stated:

“For more than fifteen months these employees have patiently sought to secure reasonable and long overdue increases in wages but have been unable to effect an adjustment.”

These unions and the workers who belong to them have learned from the long struggle carried on by the miners that there remains only one way in which to get redress for their demands: namely, to fight for them, to use the power of the strike, and to strike if necessary. Had they sat quietly by and pleaded they would not now be receiving even the attention given to them by the President and his Administration.

“The company's flat refusal to bargain with Local 20 for all of the Chicago mail order and retail store (Continued on page 3)

No Shortage of Profits for Big Meat Packing Firms

The “People's Lobby Bulletin,” which obtained the suppressed OPA reports on profits, published those findings in its December issue. The People's Lobby asked Price Administrator Chester Bowles for the OPA reports on profits of “meat packers and canners of fruits and vegetables.” Mr. Bowles refused to send the reports but permitted the organization to “see them.”

The People's Lobby thereafter sent a summary of its findings to Senators Gillette and Aiken, suggesting that they request copies of the OPA reports. Mr. Bowles sent a copy to Gillette marked “strictly confidential.” Bowles also wrote the People's Lobby in his effort to suppress the reports of profits by saying:

“We request you please not to quote from it or use it in any way except for purely background purposes.”

The suppressed OPA report revealed that: “Compared with average earnings in 1936-39, profits before income taxes have risen more for meat packers than for most other food groups.

“Aggregate profits in 1942 of fifty-three companies were over four times the pre-war level, on only eighty-three per cent higher sales.”

The report reveals further that: Meat packers' profits on each dollar sale more than doubled in 1942.

Meat packers' returns on each dollar of invested capital was three and a half times higher in 1942 than in the 1936-39 average.

Fifty-three leading packers had combined sales equal to eighty-five per cent of the total production of meat and by-products.

Breaking down these percentages, the report

shows the following profits for these fifty-three leading companies:

Average sales for 1936-39	\$2,485,399,000
Average profits before income taxes	24,971,000
Average sales for 1942	4,551,869,000
Average profits before income taxes	108,613,000

Thus the meat packers had

An eighty-three per cent increase in sales. A three hundred and thirty-five per cent increase in profits.

But of these fifty-three companies, the nine biggest outfits monopolized the show and got the hog's share of sales and profits. The report shows that these nine companies had the following sales and profits:

Average sales for 1936-39	\$2,295,081,000
Average profits before income taxes	23,476,000
Average sales for 1942	4,189,389,000
Average profits before income taxes	102,322,000

Thus the nine biggest meat packers had

An eighty-three per cent increase in sales. A three hundred and thirty-six per cent increase in profits.

With all this in mind remember that profits and sales were higher in 1943. Remember, too, what a big fraud is the fight over subsidies. Granting subsidies, the government merely guarantees a profit to the food profiteers. No subsidies and you will have even greater profits.

We say: Take the profit out of war! No subsidies to the food profiteers! A one hundred per cent tax on their war profits in food. They have made their big haul already by robbing the people through high prices.

Next week we will take up fruit and vegetable canners' profits.

Congress Eases Taxes on Rich

Who Will Pay Ten Billion?

By GERTRUDE SHAW

Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau wants \$10,500,000,000 more taxes in the year 1944 than were collected in the year 1943.

The tax bill recently approved by the House of Representatives provides for only \$2,240,000,000 additional taxes. The bill just agreed on by the Senate Finance Committee would add \$2,284,000,000 to 1943 taxes.

The Threatened Sales Tax When the House was discussing taxes, a general sales tax was considered a possibility, and the capitalist press was jubilant at the prospect of the working people paying that \$10,500,000,000 on top of what they are already paying—and can ill afford.

When the matter came before the Senate, Mr. Morgenthau appeared and assured the members of the Senate Finance Committee that he still wants that \$10,500,000,000 above present taxes. He also stated that he is not exactly opposed to a sales tax, though he would prefer to raise the revenue some other way.

However, talk about the sales tax has died down. And it is not because the capitalists and their politicians have suddenly acquired the milk of human kindness toward the working people. It is because organized labor has put on its fighting mitts. Labor

is demanding some relief from the burdens of war so heavily piled on it, as evidenced in the widespread demands for higher wages. With elections coming, Congress does not dare now to put more fuel on the smoldering fire of labor discontent by passing a sales tax.



HENRY MORGENTHAU

Yet, to the extent that Congress did try to raise more taxes for 1944, the bills of both the House and Senate represent in the main another raid on the little man.

Another Squeeze

The House bill increases the normal income tax from six to ten per cent, proposes repeal of the five per cent Victory tax, but imposes a three per cent special tax on the nine million workers making up the low income group. The Senate bill does not increase the normal tax and favors the continuance of the Victory tax for all groups at the reduced rate of three per cent.

But this leniency is a mirage. The Senate bill disallows the post-war refund of any part of the Victory tax. And both bills don't let you deduct that ten per cent credit for earned income nor do they let you take anything off for the innumerable taxes you pay on entertainment, services and commodities. So that the two per cent reduction in the Victory tax in the Senate bill is made up for with a vengeance.

Of the innumerable taxes you pay on entertainment, services and commodities, there will be more and heavier levies in many cases.

Furthermore, both bills contain a (Continued on page 3)

Big Business Makes Plans for a “Free U. S.”

By DAN BERGER

A few weeks ago, the National Association of Manufacturers, representing eighty per cent of American industry, convened quietly in a New York hotel. In Washington's legislative and executive chambers, in newspaper offices and radio broadcasting rooms throughout the country, the “hired help” took on new strength each day for the eternal hollering of hallelujahs for the new post-war world. In New York the bosses calmly laid the plans.

These plans, formulated by the owners of America's industries, of its political machines, of the press and radio, give the lie to the deafening propaganda which has been everlastingly dinned into the ears of the American workers and soldiers. These plans are the only true prophecy of the life that peace will bring to those who are working and fighting for it.

If the industrialists have their way,

gain their objectives, there will be no new world; there will be, instead, the old misery of depressions and recessions, and perhaps the new misery of American fascism.

Aims of Big Business

Foremost amongst the objectives outlined by the NAM convention is the ageless battletory of the slave-masters, “freedom of enterprise.” No longer, however, is this merely a demand for freedom from governmental interference, such as it is. It is now more than ever a threat to the organized laboring masses. The NAM is determined to give to the American worker the “freedom to work” in place of his unions. The worker has learned by cruel experience that this is the freedom of the scab and the strike-breaker, the freedom of the sweated pieceworker, the freedom of the unemployed.

Now the NAM proposes to set loose a huge whirlwind of propaganda to

“sweep free enterprise into public favor,” and to make it palatable to the hungry masses. Advertising on an immense scale, utilizing not only the press and radio but also the schools and churches, will prove to the “free American” that the system of unrestrained monopolies will bring them “economic salvation.” (In the 1930's, the monopolies burned and dumped and plowed under whatever they could not sell at a profit to the “free American worker.”)

Presumably as a first step, H. W. Prentiss, a former NAM president, wisely urged an end to the researches of bodies such as Senator O'Mahoney's Temporary National Economic Committee. In the period before the war, the studies of this senate subcommittee revealed factually the overwhelmingly monopolistic control of American business, widespread, all-embracing, all-powerful. The work of this “save capitalism” committee left little doubt as to the

meaning of “free enterprise” and no doubt at all as to the identity of “the rulers of the Republic.”

“Key to Freedom”

The rulers intend to keep on ruling. And they see in the coming hard days an opportunity to wrest from the people all the little power they have gained by constant struggle. The NAM asks for unspecified modifications of the tax laws, perhaps for the twenty-five per cent maximum income tax which is embodied in a new constitutional amendment quietly going through the legislative mills. It hints too at measures to be taken against the employers' social security taxes. But chiefly, the bosses are determined to put an end to the New Deal, the whole system of half-conciliations which the fighting workers won during the dark years of the last decade.

Just what lies ahead for the workers was well expressed in a speech

by NAM's chairman, Frederick C. Crawford, at the Bankers Club, after the convention. Crawford said that the “inefficient habits” of workers in war industries would not be provided for those who want to work—Crawford's way. He also solved the problem of maldistribution of American wealth by showing it to be due to lack of productivity on the part of the worker. There apparently isn't enough to go around—at a big enough profit. (The New York Times headlined this story: “...The Key to Freedom from Want.”)

If these words, like many others uttered by the business leaders in the NAM, seemed mere wishful boss thinking, the new development in wartime industry is enough to give weight to the quiet threats of the bosses.

Declarations by industrial and government executives have indicated that war production has passed (Continued on page 3)

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE LABOR FRONT

Ford Instrument Militants Win Union Election

NEW YORK CITY—On December 14 and 15, the membership of Local 425 of the United Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers of America, CIO, went out to the election polls of their union and by a landslide majority elected a new executive board which pledged to fight the wage freeze of the WLB, the incentive wage plans of the Ford Instrument company and the Communist Party followers in the UE and for the strengthening of the local by building a stronger shop steward system and grievance machinery.

Committee and the management in laying all the blame for the shortcomings and mismanagement on the union and its leadership. Then, between other planks, they once more came out for piecework schemes, "increased wages for increased production." Last but not least, in their mad rush to get votes wherever they could, they included on their slate of candidates several outright reactionaries, Christian Fronters.

The election of all their officers, executive board members and district council members of the "Face the Facts" slate provides the local with a leadership that is more cognizant of the union's problems, even though it omitted reference to many important questions, the most important of which is the need to speak out for independent labor political action.

Burning Issue Before Union

The wage issue in all of its manifestations is not going to be settled

by the Ford local alone. In the contract negotiations, difficulties were encountered because of the War Labor Board's Little Steel formula. The recently signed contract has as yet not been approved by the War Labor Board and may be rejected by it, as it has already done to thousands of other contracts. Then the local's new leadership will have to consider what to do.

With labor's no-strike pledge in effect, the hands of the local are tied and as long as it maintains this pledge it will have nothing effective with which to obtain the increased wages and better conditions that are contained in the new contract.

It should be understood by all trade unionists that no one is in favor of calling strikes every week, even in peacetime. Trade unionists know that before any strike is called every other means of settlement are

tried and if a strike is called, the reasons for it are good.

But if labor has beforehand given its pledge not to strike under any circumstances, then it will be stepped on and kicked around, as it has been for several years. Without the strike weapon, labor has no means of self-protection.

The Ford local has a path cut out for it by the miners and the railway workers and it should be heard together with every other local in the country calling for the repeal of the no-strike pledge, taking back labor's only effective weapon to win its demands.

If the Ford local came out for an independent party of labor, it would find many friends throughout the union movement, especially in the UAW. A good way for it to begin is to join hands with such locals in the common fight for labor.

WORLD EVENTS

By Europacus

Big Business Rules AMG in Italy

A number of items which appear in recent papers throw some light on the situation in Italy. For the first time the names of some of the American officials now operating with AMG in Naples have been revealed. They are: Ralph I. Straus, former secretary of R. H. Macy & Co.; Lieut.-Col. Robert T. Barrett of the Guaranty Trust Co., Lieut.-Col. David J. Nielson of the Chase National Bank and Col. Orlando Wilson, former police chief of Los Angeles... a choice assortment indeed.

American big business is well entrenched in AMG. There's no danger of any "left wing" experiments with these pillars of "free enterprise" in charge. Big business is playing safe. Its "dollar-a-year" men not only sit in all important Washington offices, but they are also well represented in the foreign outposts of American "interests."

Matthew Woll's Proposal

On the very same day that the above names were made public, Matthew Woll, vice-president of the American Federation of Labor, voiced a demand that American labor have a voice in determining the Allied Military Government's labor policy. Woll seems to be laboring under some very funny illusions, to say the least.

True, Italian labor desperately

needs its American working brothers to support it in its fight against Badoglio and for freedom. Nothing would be more important than the reestablishment of contacts between the American and the reappearing Italian labor movement.

But can this be done by having some labor representatives in the AMG? AMG is rapidly becoming the hated symbol of oppression in Italy. If American labor were to be represented on that body, it would imply that the Italian working class would feel that the American labor movement agrees to take a part in its oppression!

The papers reported that leaders of the moderate "Italian Committee of National Liberation," a united front of a number of Italian antifascist parties, has protested very strongly to the AMG, charging that it has become "the tool of neo-fascism." The AMG—on order from higher authorities—has just forbidden a political meeting of these parties in Naples. Even this committee of moderates is beginning to see that the promises of free speech and free assembly made at Moscow for Italy are nothing less than a mockery; that, in fact, AMG is doing everything in its power to support Badoglio and his rotten clique against the desires of the masses of the Italian people.

Who Was in the Fight?

The issues raised in this election by those who supported the leaflets entitled "Face the Facts" were mainly questions dealing with the wage policy of the local and the wage policies of the national office of the UERWMA. The answers to these problems in the "Face the Facts" leaflets were correct, even though the leaflets failed to present a position on other equally burning questions before the local and national unions such as the no-strike pledge and the need for labor political action.

The local's election campaign began with the issuance of programmatic leaflets by two contending groups. The Stalinist Communist Party followers, in their usual fashion, let out with a burst of slander. They attacked the negotiating committee, which had been elected on a program of smashing the wage freeze and the WLB and not permitting incentive (piecework) schemes to be substituted for real and deserved wage increases.

They attacked this committee in spite of the fact that it had already done admirable work, as admitted by all, having brought back "one of the best collective bargaining agreements in the entire electrical and machine industry." This contract is now in the hands of the War Labor Board and what they do with it depends not alone on Local 425 but on the fight of all the trade unions to smash the WLB's policies.

The Stalinist Line

The Stalinists, parading as the Committee for the Election of pro-CIO Candidates, yelled loud for union unity and then proceeded in their first leaflet to attack vigorously a sister CIO local, Brewster Aircraft Local 365, UAW, adopting the attitude of the Vinson Naval Affairs

Stalinists Licked at U. S. Rubber

DETROIT—The Stalinist-supported administration of Local 101, United Rubber Workers (U. S. Rubber) was swept out of office in the run-off elections held here two weeks ago. Final results of the election show that the Marmon-Stalinist group succeeded in electing only its candidates for treasurer and secretary. All other officers were won by the adherent of the former American Party, a coalition of all types of anti-Stalinist elements in the local. The president, vice-president and all seven posts on the executive board are not held by the anti-Stalinists.

This defeat of the Marmon group was made possible by the fact that all the opponents of the Stalinists united around a common list of candidates in the run-off elections.

The elimination of the Stalinists from control of the local make it POSSIBLE to make the union a real fighting force in the interests of the membership, but whether this possibility becomes a reality depends upon the policies and program adopted by the new administration and above all by its supporters who put it into office.

What the Local Needs

One of the most important jobs in the local is the restoration of the greatest possible unity among the membership split wide open by the years of Stalinist misrule. This unity is possible on the basis of two necessary conditions:

1. Genuine democratic procedure in the local. No more frame-up campaigns, suspensions and firing of members on various pretexts because they happen to disagree with the leadership.

2. A sincere effort to establish genuine equality in the local and in the shop between Negro and white brothers; for a system of upgrading without discrimination and based upon seniority.

A Fighting Program

A democratic, fighting local union is very important. But we must realize the limitations of what can be accomplished on a local scale to raise the standards of the working people.

The real assault against the standards of the people come from the halls of Congress, from the White House, the War Labor Board, rising prices, etc. We must do everything in our power in the local and in the shop to better conditions. But equally important are the policies the local supports in the international, and in the CIO as a whole. Labor must put an end to the nation-wide offensive against its standards.

Real collective bargaining must be

restored. Collective bargaining remains a mockery so long as the no-strike pledge remains in effect and labor accepts the dictates of the War Labor Board.

For the revocation of the no-strike pledge.

Labor representatives must resign from the "War Bosses' Board."

For a Labor Party

Labor must enter politics. What is needed is not the fake "labor political action" of Sidney Hillman and the national leaders of the CIO. They support so-called "friends of labor" in the two old capitalist parties, Republican and Democratic, who, when elected, continue the offensive against labor. This is the policy which supports Jeffries for Mayor of Detroit one year as a great friend of labor and two years later discovers that he is a tool of the big corporations and of the Ku Klux Klan.

What we need is GENUINE labor political action, and that means:

A fighting independent Labor Party with no ties to the Democratic and Republican parties of the capitalists.

(Another article will appear next week.)

New York Readers! You Can Buy L. A.

At the newsstands on 42nd Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues.

A Few Questions to John Marmon Of Rubber Workers Local 101

- 1. Were you not FOUND GUILTY by a trial board of Local 101, chosen by lot, of "publishing or circulating among the membership or among local unions false reports or misrepresentations" concerning George Bass, president of Goodrich Local 5?
2. Are you not now engaged in circulating similar false reports and misrepresentations about the labor paper, LABOR ACTION?
3. LABOR ACTION carries on a consistent campaign in every issue against discrimination in all forms and for complete social, political and economic equality for Negroes. Are you circulating these false reports and misrepresentations to conceal this fact?
4. You say you are against Negro-baiting. When you ran for convention delegate in August your platform called for "Equality in the CIO." Why was this plank dropped from the literature published by your supporters in the recent elections? Was this not a publication to Negro-baiting?
5. Is it not true that Negroes in Local 101 are, by and large, employed at the most disagreeable and thankless jobs? What serious attempt did you make in the two years of your administration of Local 101 to facilitate the upgrading of Negroes of the local to skilled occupations?
6. Is the real reason why you attack LABOR ACTION the fact that it exposes the attempts by the Stalinist Communist Party to appear as "a friend of labor" and as "a friend of the Negro," while in reality it opposes any serious fight for the betterment of all labor and for Negro rights?

Hudson Local Contract Wins Partial Victory

DETROIT—The Hudson unit of Local 154, UAW-CIO, met last week to discuss and vote on its new contract. The contract, which was accepted at a poorly attended meeting, has been the subject of much discussion in the shops mainly because of the union's demand for an increase of the bonus money (given in lieu of vacation pay), as well as such points as smoking on the job and seniority recognition being granted after three months.

In the main, the contract remains the same. The gains may seem small to some, but the fact that a number of practices of the union grievance procedure have been incorporated into the contract is in itself a victory. However, the contract is far from the best that could have been obtained from the company, considering the feelings of the rank and file in the shop.

The union has had, to all intents and purposes, a maintenance-of-membership agreement. That is, although the contract formerly read that "it is important that they (the members) remain in good standing," it was interpreted to mean that any person

who became delinquent in his dues would not be allowed to work by the company.

The wording of the new contract reads that they "should retain their membership therein and shall remain in good standing." This actually is an admission that maintenance of membership does exist. While this is to be considered a victory, it has nothing near the concreteness of the contract signed by the Westinghouse Unit of Local 154 with the management of the Centerline Naval Ordnance Plant, which reads that members "must" retain their membership in the union.

The Old and New Contracts

Formerly the contract read that employees and the chief steward would be notified of layoffs twenty-four hours before they took place. The new contract reads that they shall have forty-eight hours' notice. Layoffs, which are the bane of the existence of the workers in the automotive industry, always have been subjects for controversy. With forty-eight hours, the stewards and the workers will have sufficient time to see that no favoritism takes place

during a layoff, and that the layoff is strictly in accordance with the seniority lists.

Similarly, provisions have been added to the contract to allow for shift preference of high seniority employees, as well as job preference. The contract agrees that the foreman may make the selection of people for the better paying jobs, but in the event that the person selected is not a high seniority employee, the foreman must prove why a high seniority employee is not qualified and, failing to satisfy the steward, the regular grievance machinery shall be used to get the better job for the high seniority man.

Two notable gains of the new contract are the following: agreement by the company to allow the union to set up a three-man safety committee to represent the workers on matters of safety, accident prevention, health and insurance; the second is permission for the workers to smoke on the job except in certain restricted areas. Smoking has been a bone of contention between the company and the workers for years. The no-smoking rule in safe zones has long been recognized as an absurdity by everyone but the company.

The Bogey of the WLB

Finally on the bonus question, the union agreed to accept the same rates as last year, namely, \$45 to workers with one to five years of seniority, \$90 to workers with five years or more of seniority. Here the contract was sadly lacking. While the Westinghouse management (a different unit of the same local covers this) was forced to agree to \$54 and \$90, and while General Motors has agreed to pay 48 hours and 96 hours pay in lieu of vacations, the Hudson workers are to receive only the same amount as last year.

The cost of living has skyrocketed and the wages of the workers have consistently been lowered by deductions. The workers felt an increased bonus would be in keeping with the high cost of living and the reduction in real wages, but the management would not agree. Obviously they dangled before the noses of the negotiating committee the specter of the War Labor Board, saying that an increase in the bonus now is not in keeping with the Little Steel formula and in effect taunting the union

with "what are you going to do about it?"

A letter of protest was sent by the negotiating committee to the WLB, but that body is notorious as the graveyard of union demands. The workers in the shop were told that they would get the stipulated \$45 and \$90 bonuses before Christmas and if the WLB okayed an increase, they would get the remainder after Christmas. Why the WLB should grant an increase in the bonus when only a letter of protest has been filed has not been explained. Revocation of the no-strike pledge would put teeth in such "requests." Only the professional optimists expect anything from the WLB.

One Union—Two Contracts

Three clauses which the Westinghouse unit gained and which are notably lacking in the contract of the Hudson unit are: (1) seniority recognition after three months employment, (2) permission to quit five minutes before quitting time to prepare to leave and (3) the inclusion of Executive Order 8802 against discrimination of Negroes.

The Hudson unit did get the management to agree to pay the top rate for a job after ninety days. Heretofore top rate did not have to be paid until a worker worked in the plant for six months. Seniority begins after six months. The Westinghouse contract puts employees on the seniority lists after three months. Workers get filthy on company time and there is no earthly reason why they should not have the right to clean themselves up on company time. The Hudson negotiating committee couldn't even get five minutes for this into the contract.

The inclusion of Executive Order 8802 into the contract of the Westinghouse unit is a big victory for the union. While this order, on ces-

sation of discrimination against Negroes in war industries, is actually meaningless unless backed up by union action, the inclusion of it into the contract is a victory because it can be given life by the grievance committee in the plant.

Local 154 has had a wildcat "hate" strike against the upgrading of Negroes, and the Ku Klux Klan is reputed to have some strength and following in this local. While a number of Negroes have obtained jobs on machines, to which they were legitimately entitled by ability and seniority, the overwhelming majority of them continue to push brooms and swab toilets. The Negroes at the Westinghouse unit will really have an opportunity now to get off the brooms and onto the machines.

Leadership and Apathy

A contract is only as strong as its negotiating committee makes it. The Hudson negotiating committee was negligent in many respects, not the least of which was its reluctance to go to bat for the Negro members of the local, who pay the same dues and are entitled to the same benefits as any other member.

Only one hundred and fifty members accepted the meeting at which the contract was accepted. This was a disgraceful turnout for a local unit of some eleven thousand members. Inadequate as the contract is, no member has the right to beef about it if he or she displays so little interest in union matters of such vital importance to the daily living conditions in the shop.

On the other hand, the local and UAW leadership itself are responsible for the greater portion of this apathy by their slavish attachment to the Roosevelt Administration and its various boss-dominated boards, such as the WLB.

An International "WLB"

But let's come back to Matthew Woll. He suggests that "trained American trade unionists now serving with the armed forces in Italy be permitted to aid in the formation of a free trade union movement in that country and in others as they are freed."

Of course, we wholeheartedly agree with Woll's interest in "a free, democratic trade union movement" in Italy—but to propose to accomplish this through the benevolent aid of the American army of occupation is absolutely fantastic.

AMG was not created to hasten the development of free political and trade union activity in the Allied

occupied countries. Quite the contrary! Woll's proposal is, to put it mildly, extremely naive. AMG holds the lid on political activity in Italy; it is established to maintain "law and order" and to help bolster "legitimate," i.e., semi-fascist, rule.

Free trade unions, independent political rights, can only be conquered in fighting oppressive rule, no matter where it comes from, and stuffing AMG with some well meaning but powerless "friends of labor" is no help whatever.

Woll, apparently, wants to establish an international "WLB." We are certain that Italian labor will not appreciate very much Mr. Woll's well-meant suggestions.

Sperry Progressives Make Good Fight in Local Elections

By ROCCO

NEW YORK CITY — Sperry Local 450, United Electrical Workers, has just had an election. And a most peculiar election it was. It would be sufficient to indicate the character of the whole business to know that any employee of the company could vote —union member or not! The company pass—not a union book—entitled anyone to vote. There was nothing to prevent anyone from voting in every polling place.

But an analysis would be nonetheless instructive.

After almost a year in office, the "temporary" executive committee decided to run for re-election according to the constitution which they had proposed only a few weeks before. This arrangement, constitutional though it was, made for an extremely short period for campaigning in the shop. Consequently, the opposition which arose during the election was handicapped.

Bureaucrats Use Their Power

Fully expecting this development, the creation of an opposition, the administration laid its plans accordingly. The election was poorly publicized until just a few days before the voting. Then, "Shop News," the official union paper, was used to reply to the charges of the opposition. A leaflet was issued, a different one to each building, depending on the situation, in which all kinds of slurs were cast at all critics.

Finally, the day before balloting, the union let out the announcement of the long-awaited two cents an hour raise. All day and night, the two days of election, the machine which had been built over the last couple of years was busy getting out the vote and slandering the opposition.

Despite all this, those militant stewards and union members who had banded together to create a "Better Local 450," made an extremely

good showing. Though they started late and moved slowly, they accumulated great strength. So great that they elected two men to office and rolled up strong votes for many of their candidates—though not all. But the administration is afraid to publish the complete figures.

The Progressive Program

These opponents of the administration carried on their fight for a three-point program:

- 1. Against any lowering of wage standards.
2. Against the Little Steel formula—for a cost of living wage.
3. For a strong and democratic union.

Their success in large measure was due to the tremendous dissatisfaction of the members with what the union is doing, and in the correctness of this program.

Their failure to accomplish more against an administration which is far from solidly entrenched was due to their lack of experience. They issued only a statement of program and candidates, and permitted the union leadership to slander them without reply.

This group of union men bent on building their union the right way shows great promise. They have only to realize two things:

- 1. They must carry on their struggle all year long, not just at election time.
2. They must consolidate their forces and remedy their weaknesses. They must continue to spread their program and its meaning throughout the shop.

Just this and long before next year's elections the union will show the fruit of these efforts.

Next Week--

The situation in Yugoslavia, by Max Shachtman, national secretary of the Workers Party.

New York, Attention! THE AFFAIR OF THE SEASON! Labor Action New Year's Eve Party Dancing Refreshments Music Drinks MOVIES CARAVAN HALL 110 East 59th Street DECEMBER 31ST 9:00 P.M. Admission \$1.00 Including Tax

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Exposé by WLB Official

American Capitalists Embrace Fascism

By SUSAN GREEN

Charles E. Wilson, No. 2 man of the War Production Board, has not been headline news. But all at once he becomes a much talked about man. He is being quoted, approved of, disapproved of. He certainly started something. It happened at the recent convention of the National Association of Manufacturers in New York.

You would expect a man like Wilson to be a get-together of capitalists both as a capitalist who heads the great General Electric Company combine and at the No. 2 man of the WPB. But it was no routine speech that Mr. Wilson made. He surprised the august body of industrial masters when he, as one of them, began to bawl them out. He did so on two counts.

He accused them of working for their own private interests and ambitions. He minced no words about the cliques and special interests wanting to win complete victory for themselves regardless of the consequences. He berated the industrialists "trying to position themselves for the post-war period long before the country is out of danger and long before our fighting men have any chance to position themselves."

But it was not merely on this score of grabbing war profits unprecedented in history by means fair and foul—and already maneuvering for post-war profits—that Mr. Wilson flayed his class.

If Words Have a Meaning

He told them also: "I am deeply alarmed today over the possibility that a right wing reaction may draw some sections of capital so far away from our traditions as to imperil the

entire structure of American life as we know it." He upbraided the "American breed of maggot" ready to spread the poison of hate. He warned the moguls of industry "to withhold encouragement from dangerous men who preach disunity."

If words have any meaning, Mr. Wilson was accusing the American industrial masters of fascist tendencies. He is alarmed at their drawing away from "American life as we know it" toward fascism. By implication he said that they are encouraging the "little Hitlers" of the country who are peddling the poison of anti-Semite, anti-Negro, anti-labor propaganda. The "encouragement" most needed by these fascistic elements is, of course, money. This is, obviously, being supplied them by those who have it.

In a nutshell, Mr. Wilson sees sections of his fellow capitalists not only ruthlessly determined to get more and more pelf and power. He sees them making preparations to retain their mastery by the same methods of race hate and labor suppression employed by Hitler, Mussolini and the whole breed of fascists.

Could Be Profits Are Too High

The reactions in the capitalist press to Mr. Wilson's accusations are most interesting. Especially noteworthy are the comments of two very conservative, very pro-capitalist columnists, namely, David Lawrence in the New York Sun, and Arthur Krock in the New York Times.

Both show a little fear. Both indicate that maybe it would be better for the capitalists to allow the government to shave off some of their bulging war profits under the renegotiation of war contracts law—

out of which the teeth are being pulled by Congress under big business pressure.

Says Mr. Lawrence: "Business men, to be sure, do not want arbitrary action in renegotiation procedures, but, at the same time, any system that results in the earning of large profits will not stand public scrutiny.... When the service men get back home and read the headlines of congressional inquiries into war profits, they will wonder what was done back home when they were at war—how much indeed was charged up against the taxpayers by a Congress that didn't look out for the broad public interest."

Mr. Krock goes even further. He warns against war corporate profits "at levels that, when spotlighted after the war, as they are sure to be, may infuriate the country, produce a reckless and destructive backswing against industry and start all over again the cycle of pacifism and 'merchants-of-death' propaganda...."

But this is exactly what the industrialists who encourage and subsidize fascism in this country are preparing for. They will offer to the disoriented a couple of scapegoats, namely, the Jews and the Negroes. In the ensuing strife the fascist hordes will try to demolish the labor movement which alone can take organized action against the capitalists and their encroaching fascism.

This, of course, is the familiar pattern designed by Hitler. Yet of the fascist tendencies of American capitalism exposed by Mr. Wilson, Krock has nothing to say except that it is a New Deal invention.

Fascism and "Liberal" Capitalists

The question naturally arises as to why Mr. Wilson, himself a top capi-

talist, is not with the sections of the capitalist class that are hell bent for fascism.

There always are divisions within a class. In the capitalist class there are more reactionary and more liberal elements, depending on how they consider their class interests will be best served. Mr. Wilson belongs to the group that thinks it can serve the ultimate interests of capitalism and the capitalist class by practicing a little moderation now, by softening up labor through collaboration, by trying to pepper-and-salt the evils of the capitalist system.

But the liberal elements of the capitalist class cannot be trusted by labor in its fight against fascism. This has been proved to the hilt in Germany. Every element of the capitalist class recognizes the working people as their social enemies. When fascism is on one side and militant labor on the other, every capitalist knows which side he wants to win.

By its own basic interests the working class is the only force that can fight fascism. Upon the working class also depends the fate of all those other sections of the population that would be the victims of fascism. The Jews, the Negroes, the petty business men, the small independent farmers, the struggling professional people—these would all be ground down by the iron heel of fascism, along with the working class.

Mr. Wilson's exposé of the fascist trend in the capitalist class can be taken by organized labor as nothing less than a warning to be prepared. Educational and organizational measures are urgently needed.

Labor—On Guard Now!

Lynn Case Decision by Court Due in Three Weeks

NEW YORK CITY — The National Citizens' Committee for Winfred Lynn has sent out the following release:

The Winfred Lynn case, only court test made to date of the legality of the segregated Jim Crow quota method of selecting men for the armed forces, has advanced another step toward the Supreme Court today. The case was heard by Justices Swan, Hand and Clark of the U. S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. From there it will go direct to the Supreme Court.

The luxuriously furnished courtroom was crowded with reporters and spectators as Arthur Garfield Hays presented his argument to the judges. Hays told the court: "A man's right is to be called in his turn. There is just as much discrimination against you if you're called later as if you're called earlier."

Vine H. Smith, assistant U. S. attorney, argued that it was not Congress's intent, in the 1940 Draft Act, to abolish segregation by race in either the training or the selection of draftees. The act reads: "In the selection and training of men... there shall be no discrimination against any person on account of race or color." A decision on the case is expected in three weeks.

The Lynn case began almost two years ago, when Winfred Lynn, a Negro gardener of Jamaica, L. I., was ordered by his draft board to report for service. He at once wrote them a letter which has become a classic: "Gentlemen—I am in receipt of my draft-classification notice. Please be informed that I am ready to serve in any unit of the armed forces of my country which is not segregated by race. Unless I am assured that I can serve in a mixed regiment and that I will not be compelled to serve in a unit undemocratically selected as a Negro group, I will refuse to report for induction. Yours respectfully, Winfred W. Lynn."

Later on, in order to make a court test, Lynn allowed himself to be inducted. His brother, Conrad, a lawyer, prepared the original brief and handled the case until he himself was drafted.

There are now three Lynn brothers in the Army, Winfred, Conrad and Samuel. Last week, Conrad traveled to Tuskegee, Ala., to see his brother Sam graduate as a medium bomber pilot. En route, he got a taste of military Jim Crow. In a letter just received by a friend, Conrad writes:

"Yesterday morning in Richmond a conductor, backed up by an armed MP, forced me to jump from a mov-

ing train on the pretext that I was on the wrong train. Another Negro soldier had been previously ejected for the same reason. (Actually the Jim Crow car was overcrowded so it was necessary to get rid of the excess.) I waited for nine hours in Richmond, so I didn't arrive here until after the ceremony. Incidentally, Sam was graduated No. 1 in the class."

Winfred Lynn is now a corporal in training at a West Coast camp. He is still a vigorous fighter against Jim Crow practices, judging from a letter he wrote recently to some friends here: "I have been in two camps in California and they are pretty good, although there is a lot of room for improvement. We can go into any service clubs here but they have one for Negroes and they don't like you to go into the others. Everything in my company is Negro except the officers and they are white. Before I came to California, I was in Camp Sibert, Ala. That place is a hellhole for Negroes. When I was there they had signs on Army trucks 'Colored' and 'White.' Whenever there was a show for the soldiers we Negroes could go providing we sat on the side to ourselves. When I started to do something about the segregation there, I was shipped out."

Big Business Plans --

(Continued from page 1)

its peak and has sloped off into a decline involving a number of "cutbacks." Like "recession," "cutback" is a sweet-sounding word for a nasty thing. Thus far, cutbacks have resulted in the laying off of thousands of workers throughout the United States. The manpower shortage has been ended, according to Donald M. Nelson. (Workers are still frozen to their jobs, though!)

Freedom and Profit

Unemployment, the bosses' weapon par excellence, is already at hand. And it is being used. Note the case of Brewster Aircraft and its militant local, reported in LABOR ACTION.

And war, the great destroyer—and also the great builder of American fortunes... American business has no intention of relinquishing the profit interests which bring war after war into a world already torn by the economic struggles of peacetime.

The NAM's board chairman, William P. Witherow, took to heart Churchill's credo of imperialist government. In a speech in which he derided subtly the fantastic promises of the Roosevelt Administration of Four Freedoms for all the world, he quoted the English war lord as follows:

"I have not become the King's First Minister to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire."

Slavery and starvation for the European workers transferred from Hitler's failing grasp to the clutch of Anglo-American business capital is

the program of the good American business man.

Business as usual, peace or war,

at home or abroad. Long live free enterprise and long live incentive pay!

Who Will Pay Over Ten Billion? --

(Continued from page 1)

weapon against organized labor. They would require labor unions to file financial statements with the Treasury Department. Though the unions would still be tax exempt, to make public the financial strength of unions is to make known to labor's enemies—if they want the information—what the fighting resources of unions are.

Lentient to the Rich

In contrast to the way the House and Senate bills lay it on where it can be least borne, they are very nice indeed to the rich corporations. They make a gesture of taking more from big business by increasing the excess profits tax from ninety to ninety-five per cent. But the methods of calculating excess profits taxes make this a mere nothing. The important thing is the basic corporation tax. This was not touched. The fact that this year big business will make \$8,000,000,000 in war profits, AFTER DEDUCTING ALL TAXES and other deductibles, did not make any difference to the congressional tax makers.

Furthermore, the Senate bill makes sure that in the renegotiation of war contracts the big corporations be given every possible credit for taxes and every benefit of every doubt—including the exemption from renegotiation of "standard products."

When the tax question was before the House Ways and Means Committee, eight organizations, including the CIO, the Railroad Brotherhoods, the National Farmers Union and others, presented a list of tax demands. They included the following:

Restoration of personal exemptions to \$750 for single persons and \$1,500 for married couples, with \$400 dependent exemptions.

Increase in personal taxes on income above \$3,000, with a \$25,000 ceiling on salaries.

Increase in the basic corporation tax from forty per cent to fifty per cent.

Increase in estate taxes.

Elimination of the phony method of computing excess profits taxes.

Taxation of tax-exempt securities.

Elimination of depletion and other allowances to oil, mining and other corporations, which permit them to get away with murder.

This tax program of the CIO, the Brotherhoods and other workers' organizations has many good points. However, just why should the little man earning less than \$3,000 a year pay any taxes at all, with big business making a war profit haul of \$8,000,000,000 in 1943? In view of such tremendous war profits, why should

any working man or woman, who needs every cent of earnings to live on, pay war taxes?

LABOR ACTION and the Workers Party agree with all tax demands which would make the rich pay for the war, but we go further and say that, in all justice, the working people should not pay any war taxes at

all. Let there be, besides the limit of \$25,000 on salaries, a 100 per cent tax on war profits—no profits out of the holocaust of war. If that doesn't suffice, let the government put a capital tax on the huge fortunes of America's "Sixty Families"—this is wealth of which the American working class has already been robbed.

Union Fights for a Free Press--

(Continued from page 1)

workers who had overwhelmingly voted in an NLRB election for the union as its bargaining representative, coming as it does from a close associate of the J. P. Morgan interests, indicates an all-out attack of powerful industrialists against labor.

"The subterfuge of Ward Attorney John A. Barr stating his willingness to negotiate for a small fraction of the union membership has been correctly branded by the union as 'subterfuge and trickery,' and wisely rejected by them.

"The Workers Defense League calls on Americans who believe in justice to give all-out support to the Montgomery Ward workers in their fight for the fundamental rights of all the people. All possible aid should

be rallied and sent to the Montgomery Ward Workers Defense Committee to Protect Labor's Rights, Myrna Siegfendor, chairman, 30 North Dearborn Street, Chicago."

India in Revolt

By Henry Judd
25 Cents Postpaid

WORKERS PARTY

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Resolution of the Workers Party

The Struggle for an Independent Labor Party in U. S.

The following document is the first half of a resolution adopted by a plenary meeting of the National Committee of the Workers Party. The concluding half will appear next week. It deals with the all-important question of independent political action of the labor movement and the necessity for the establishment of a Labor Party.—The Editor.

The working class of the United States faces the gravest responsibilities in its history. Already it is compelled to meet the offensive against its economic standards and its political rights which American capitalism has launched in the very midst of the war. Tomorrow it will be faced with the crisis of the post-war period and the life-and-death problems that the crisis will pose. Powerful though it is, the United States cannot escape the mounting effects of the general decay of world capitalism. All it can hope to accomplish is to delay the appearance of the most malevolent of these effects, but even then only by accelerating their advent in other countries; to mitigate the violence with which they strike the country, but only by increasing the ruinousness of the coming crisis in other lands. Sooner or later, less violently at first or more violently, the fury of the fundamental crisis of decay will nevertheless be felt in the United States. No country today can escape making the basic choice of society—barbarism or socialism. At best, it can postpone the decision.

The development of a new barbarism is most spectacularly visible in the triumph of fascism in Germany and its works, both before and during the war. But this development is inherent not in the mythical "Aryanism" of the Germans, nor in their equally mythical "racial soul," it is a product of capitalism at a certain stage of evolution, or rather, of its decline. If the United States is not the very next order after Germany, it is, nevertheless—barring the victory of socialism—somewhere on the list.

The decay of capitalism into a new barbarism simply means an unprecedentedly intensive exploitation and disfranchisement of the working class, mass suffering unknown in modern times, and permanent war interrupted only by short periods of truce. The long-lasting crisis of 1929 and the devastating war that began in 1939 are only harbingers of what decaying capitalism has in store for society.

The American working class, by and large, has lost its confidence in the ability of the ruling class to establish a peaceful, secure, orderly and prosperous regime after the war. It greets all the words but hollow "post-war plans" for social and economic stabilization and reconstruction put forward by the defenders of the old order with the skepticism and even cynicism which they

merit. However, while its faith in the old has waned considerably, even if not with a fully conscious understanding of the reason for this lack of confidence, the working class in the United States has not yet acquired either understanding of or confidence in a new, or socialist order.

In a word, the American working class is most inadequately situated at the present time to meet the deepening crisis.

Between its state of economic organization and its state of political organization and class consciousness, there is today a more striking contrast than ever before, and this at a time when the contrast is more striking than ever before, and this at a time when the contrast is more striking than ever before.

In the trade union field, the American working class is today better and more numerously organized than ever in its history, or even in the history of the international working class. There are now almost thirteen million workers organized in the trade union movement. This is not only more than there have ever been, but the type and composition of its organization is more significant and promising than ever before. Not only are almost half the trade unionists in the country organized for the first time on an industrial basis, but they cover industries which were citadels of open-shopism in the past—the basic, key, heavy, mass production industries. The tone of the labor movement in this country is set today not so much by the "aristocracy of labor," the highly skilled and highly paid craftsmen, but by the most important and basic sections of the American proletariat.

From the standpoint of organization and, even more important, from the standpoint of militancy and determination to safeguard their economic standards regardless of any other consideration, including demagogical appeals directed to them about the "war for democracy," the American workers are today undoubtedly the vanguard of the international working class.

On the political field, however, the American working class only brings up the rear. In no important country of the world is labor without a mass party of its own, and even in the countries ruled by reactionary dictatorships there are hundreds of thousands of workers who feel an allegiance to the old working class parties that are now outlawed. The outstanding exception is the United States.

In the United States the masses continue to follow the political path of bourgeois reformism, exemplified by Rooseveltian New Dealism. If they look upon it today, in the light of bitter experience, with reserve and with greater skepticism and even disillusionment, the modifications in their attitude have not yet expressed themselves in a mass movement for a party and a program

of their own. The parties that stand openly on the program of revolutionary socialism are still a tiny minority of the working class; the proponents of a Labor Party with a reformist program are not organized and are themselves a small minority; and even such timid steps in the direction of independent political organization as the formation of the American Labor Party in New York represents are not only far, far from adequate but are still isolated phenomena standing on the platform of the New Deal.

This does not signify that the working class is politically content. In the very nature of the situation in the United States today, where economic and political institutions, economic and political life, are so closely, if not inseparably, intertwined, every important economic struggle of the workers is at the same time a political struggle. Like all other classes, the American proletariat, too, looks more and more to the government in negotiating or solving its economic problems and less and less to the individual employer. The increase of governmental intervention and direct participation in every sphere of economic life, and in social life in general, is calculated to heighten the political consciousness of the American worker to an ever greater extent. The more openly class character of the government's intervention in economic and social life is calculated to heighten the class-consciousness of the American worker.

However, the growth of the class-consciousness and independent political organization and activity of the working class is not automatically and arithmetically guaranteed by economic and political activities of the capitalist class or its regime. The political thinking and action of the American workers must be stimulated and promoted inside the labor movement itself on the basis of both the needs and the experiences of the working class.

These experiences and needs make the formation of an independent working class party in the United States the problem of the day that most urgently demands solution. The formation of a Labor Party is the most important forward step that the working class can take in this country. That makes the struggle for a Labor Party the most important and most urgent political task of the revolutionary vanguard.

The workers today cannot give political leadership to the widespread discontentment of the people today. In the absence of a radically different and progressive working class party, the masses have no alternative to Rooseveltism except political indifference or the time-worn American practice of punishing the Democratic incumbent by voting for the Republican aspirant (and vice versa).

The working class will be unable to maintain itself politically, much less rally the masses of the people in general, in the big crisis

of tomorrow, if it does not have a party of its own with a bold program for the solution of the crisis at the expense of the monopoly-capitalist minority. In the absence of such a party, which offers a progressive alternative to the status quo, the masses of the people, the lower middle classes in town and country, that enormously important section of the people that will be represented by the homecoming war veterans, and even large sections of the working class itself—all these will tend to accept a reactionary alternative and fall victim to the social demagoguery of this or that fascist or semi-fascist clique.

Even now, millions hope for and tomorrow will be ready to fight for, what they vaguely call a "change." In the post-war crisis, they will number tens of millions. The bourgeois-reformist politicians to whom labor is now attached will seek to maintain, more or less, the status quo—that is, precisely the situation which generated the crisis as well as the demand for a "change." If labor then tries to maintain the unworkable status quo by remaining the tail of a bourgeois political kite, it will easily fall as the victim of those who exploit the popular demand for a "change" for reactionary and anti-working class purposes. If labor puts forward, on the contrary, a bold political program for social reorganization in behalf of all the "little people," it can crush the reaction and move to the leadership of the country with the support of the masses.

The organization of a Labor Party by the powerful trade union movement would be an immense step forward by the American working class—its declaration of political independence, its most important proclamation hitherto of its separation from capitalist politics and capitalist political parties. However, this step would be vitiated in the long run and the working class demand doomed to defeat if the program of such a party (and correspondingly, its leadership) were imbued with the reformist conceptions, platforms and practices which have paralyzed the traditional parties of the working class in other countries and brought about such disasters in many. To be effective in the highest degree, an independent Labor Party must not take capitalism as its basis and seek to hold it together with repairs at this or that point. It must rather put forward such a program as disregards entirely the interests of capitalism and the class which is its beneficiary, disregards entirely the "sacred right of private property" which is only the right of the monopoly capitalists and imperialists to exploit and oppress the masses, and directs itself exclusively to defending and promoting the class interests of the proletariat and those sections of society who are its allies in the struggle against the monopolists and their reaction.

Editorials

Nationalize The Railroads

The railroad workers are getting the same kind of run-around as the coal miners got. They're getting a run-around from the railroad owners, who are fattening themselves with the greatest profits the industry has ever enjoyed. They are hanging on to those profits with the grip of madmen.

While the million and more railroad men are fighting to make ends meet in a situation where their wages have been frozen and the cost of living continues to rise, the men have been told by the Administration that their just demands cannot be met because it would upset the stabilization order and threaten the country with inflation.

As a matter of fact, the only thing a wage increase would do is lower the sky-high profits of the railroad profiteers.

It is clear from the whole situation that not only must these men get their wage demands, but that the railroads should be nationalized under workers' control.

By eliminating the hundreds of parasites who take the fattest salaries and dividends out of the earnings of the railroads, by eliminating the waste and bungling in an industry top-heavy with officials, by organizing transportation for use, the workers could get their just due without any difficulties.

The railroad unions once had the demand for the nationalization of the roads. It is now more necessary than ever to raise this demand. The whole labor movement must join in with such a struggle.

NATIONALIZE THE RAILROADS UNDER WORKERS' CONTROL!

We Ask PM A Question

The New York newspaper, PM, claims to be a liberal paper and is especially proud of its activity in behalf of civil liberties. Very well. We shall not now discuss the general nature of the newspaper. We merely want to raise one question which PM has to answer if anyone is to take ANY of its liberal pretensions seriously.

PM has been conducting a campaign in behalf of Morris Schappes, a New York school teacher and also a leader of the Stalinist movement, who was kicked out of the school system because of his political beliefs and then railroaded to jail in a "perjury" case. PM demands his liberty. Good.

But, we ask PM, why haven't you had a word—not one solitary word—in behalf of the eighteen Trotskyists convicted in Minneapolis in what has been described by the American Civil Liberties Union as a grave

threat to civil liberties? Why does PM speak up in behalf of so many other victims of lynch law and violations of civil liberties—yet remains quiet about the most important case of all?

Could it be that the numerous Stalinists on PM's staff have prevented it from speaking up in behalf of civil liberties in the Minneapolis case? Or is it that the spokesmen for the Roosevelt Administration are a little embarrassed at this crude frame-up and and believe discretion to be the better part of valor? Or is it because the Minneapolis defendants were persecuted on remaining true to the ideal of socialism?

PM had better speak up on this question. Its liberal pretensions are shallow enough, but if it refuses to aid in the defense of the eighteen Minneapolis defendants, then it clearly shows that all its prattle about civil liberties is just so much opportunist hogwash.

Support for India

Last week LABOR ACTION wrote about the continued starvation of India and the continued failure of the British Empire and United Nations to do anything substantial to relieve the plight of the Indian people.

We referred to the offers made by the Australian and Canadian governments and the rejections of their offer to send surplus wheat to India by Leopold Amery. It is also necessary to recall that the UNRRA also refused to consider relief for India on the ground that it was part of the United Nations!

But the hunger goes on. It is necessary that the American labor movement insist that the Administration act immediately to relieve the plight of the Indian people. The labor movement, through its great organizations, should immediately set up Relief for India Committees! But even more than that, India needs its freedom and independence. Support the Indian people in their fight for freedom!

AMG in Italy

The recent news coming from Italy reporting on the activities of AMG merely confirms the opinions we expressed when that body was formed, namely, that such an organization could not and would not reflect the desires and practical aims of the Italian people.

In the many months since the occupation of Sicily, Sardinia and Southern Italy, no important steps have been taken to permit the intervention of the Italian masses to establish their own rule. On the contrary, everything has been done to stifle independent action and initiative on the part of the people and the organizations which have sprung up since the resignation

of Mussolini and the retreat of the German army.

AMG has taken its fine time about permitting the existence of "free trade unions" which are an indispensable link in the rebirth of the political activities of the Italian working class. But how "free" can unions be under the supervision of the capitalist dominated AMG?

In place of Mussolini and the King, we have Marshal Badoglio and the King. Yet without the support of AMG (America, Britain and Russia) this so-called government could not last out a day.

The world is now fully informed that no important section of the Italian population wants anything to do with the moronic little monarch and his infamous marshal.

But AMG bans all political meetings in Naples. AMG extends the rule of the Badoglio government. AMG permits the extension of the royalist propaganda and agitation among the people. Yet it stifles the labor movement and the desires of the people to control and decide their own destinies.

The warnings handed out by the liberal-democratic Italian National Committee of Liberation that the further North the Allies go, the more difficult it will be for them to carry out their present policy, merely emphasize the fact that the closer the Allies get to the industrial centers the more resistance they will encounter from the real Italy, its heroic working class.

What AMG is really worried about is that the extension of democracy would permit working class activity, and working class activity would be anti-capitalist!

Small wonder! Who occupies important posts in AMG in Italy? Representatives of R. H. Macy & Co., Guaranty Trust Co., Chase National Bank and the former police chief of Los Angeles. Big business and a police chief! And if you want to know how they feel about the Italian workers, just remember how they feel about labor back here at home. And not only about labor, but about genuine democracy as a whole.

The answer is clear: Hands off the rights of the Italian people!

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Meeting Protests "Gag" Law --

(Continued from page 1)
Smith Act, which makes it a crime to THINK or speak against government policies.

The prosecution's case consisted of allegations, publications of the SWP and well known writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. No act or intention to act was proved against the defendants!

After the Court of Appeals upheld

the convictions, the case was brought before the Supreme Court in order to test the constitutionality of the Smith Act (authored by the same Smith of the Smith-Connelly anti-strike act). On November 22 the Supreme Court handed down its decision that it would not rehear the case. This meant that eighteen men and women must go to jail for the single "crime" of having defended the in-

terests of labor and for having expressed socialist views.
This takes place in the midst of a war which is purported to be fought to make the world safe for democracy, the most elementary rights of which are freedom of thought and expression.

While the Houses of Congress are full of admirers of fascism, who are not only at liberty, but who are put in charge of the conduct of this war, socialists like Cannon, Dunne, Goldman, Morrow and others, with a life-long record of struggle against fascism and reaction, must go to jail for the "crime" of having fought for workers' rights and for having expressed socialist views.

A Threat to Labor
The protest meeting clearly recognized that what is involved here is not merely the persecution of one union or one political party, but rather that the whole labor movement was threatened by this attack. Shachtman expressed the point of view and sentiments of the Workers Party when he stated:

"This is not only an attack upon the SWP, but upon every one of us in the labor movement and upon the labor movement itself. If it is the SWP today, it can and will be anyone else in the labor movement tomorrow. We have had too many bitter experiences, in our own generation alone, and too many martyrs who cannot be called back to life, to place any serious reliance upon the government and the institutions which exist for the purpose of persecuting and imprisoning working class militants.

"But our experience also teaches us that we can restore these comrades to freedom, and enable them to resume active duty in the cause of labor, if we organize a powerful, well knit and united protest move-

ment and pressure so that the government will find it wiser to release them than to keep them incarcerated."

Together with the other organizations, the Workers Party pledged itself to participate to the full in any movement to obtain the release of the eighteen prisoners. All workers should understand that this is necessary in the interests of self-defense of the entire labor movement, which is the real sufferer when any one of its sections is attacked.

Note on the OPA

Drew Pearson, in his syndicated column of December 12, points out that since its administrator, Chester Bowles, cleaned out the "professors" from his organization, it has fallen completely into the hands of big business-minded individuals.

A notorious example is that of Frank E. Marsh, former West Coast regional administrator, who is now "a close assistant to Bowles."

What is the record of this Mr. Marsh? Here it is summarized:

1. He opposed participation of consumers in price control. He blocked all programs for "enlisting volunteers from each neighborhood as price panel assistants."
2. He opposed membership in the CIO Federal Workers Union by members of his staff, using the old anti-labor argument, to wit: "I'm not against unions, but I'm against Reds."
3. He discharged officials who attempted rigid enforcements, "especially in rent control."

Says Pearson: "Marsh is in a key position to control policy nationally in regional offices, is supposed to 'revitalize' district offices."

Stalin Drops "International"

Stalin has banned the "International," the traditional song of the militant working class through the world for generations past. Hitler banned it before him in Germany.

In place of the "International," which has voiced the aspirations of the oppressed and exploited since the modern socialist movement came into being, and which was the song under which the Russian Revolution was made and which became the official anthem of the revolutionary Soviet government under Lenin and Trotsky, Stalin has ordered the adoption of a new national anthem.

The new national anthem has been ordered because, you see, the "International" is outdated, and "does not express the socialist essence of the soviet state," according to the official announcement. Reading the verses that have been published in the press discloses that there is not a word about socialism in them, any more than there is any socialism in Russia; and there is no more of the spirit of socialism or internationalism in the new anthem than there is in Hitler's "Horst Wessel" song.

It reminds the people of the so-called "Soviet Union" that "Great Russia has forged forever the indestructible union of free republics." In other words, the Stalin-Russian imperialists rule over the other peoples of their empire in about the

same way that the British rule the peoples of their empire, or the Germans theirs.

It sings the praises of Stalin, who "reared us to be true to the people," in the same religious, monarchical spirit that the old Czarist national hymn sang the praises of the Emperor Nicholas Romanov. It is drenched with the spirit of national chauvinism. There never was and there never will be a SOCIALIST song or anthem that sounds like Stalin's new hymn.

Yet it is fitting and proper. For the Stalinists to claim the "International" as their anthem was an insult and a mockery, an offense to the name of socialism and the working class and to the legions who have fought for their cause for generations past. We can only be grateful that Stalin is shedding, little by little, all pretense of being a revolutionist or a socialist.

There is nothing to wonder at in the banning of the "International" in Stalin's Russia. All you have to do is to read its words and you will understand why Stalin does not want to have it sung:

**"Arise, ye prisoners of starvation!
Arise, ye wretched of the earth!
For justice thunders condemnation,
A better world's in birth.
No more traditions' chains shall bind us,**

**Arise, ye slaves, no more in thrall!
The earth shall rise on new foundations,**

We have been naught, we shall be all.

'Tis the final conflict, let each stand in his place.

The International Soviet shall be the human race."

The Stalinist bureaucracy wants anything but an appeal to the prisoners of starvation and the wretched of the earth to rise. It is doing all it can to abort the better world that is in birth. The only earth it wants to rest on new foundations is one that rests on the foundation of Stalinist oppression and exploitation. The masses must remain naught, so that the bureaucracy may be all. As for internationalism, it hates the very word; as for soviets, it has wiped them out in Russia.

For once, the Stalinist counter-revolution has done the right and proper and decent thing in repudiating its claims to the "Internationale." The substitute it has worked out suits its reactionary tastes and rule to a T.

As for us, who continue to sing the "International" as the song of revolutionary socialism, we are happy at no longer feeling the shame brought to it when it passed the lips of Stalin and his gang.

Why Unemployment Exists In the Capitalist System

Part I of a Series
By EVERETT WESTON

No question is of more fundamental importance to the average working man, whether in uniform or out of it, than post-war employment. What will be the chances of getting a job? Will he have to sell apples again? Or, this time, won't he have enough cash on hand even to buy a box of apples?

Capitalist spokesmen recognize the importance of the issue, and hardly a day passes without a speech or editorial somewhere telling us that we need only have confidence in free enterprise. Trust the captains of industry, and everything will be all right. This, on the face of it, is rather suspect, for it was these same captains of industry who led us right into the last depression, which only the most gigantic war in the world's history could end. And they come now with no new ideas, without even a new slogan. But mere words, theirs or ours, will not be decisive. Let us examine the possibilities.

Capitalist apologists usually emphasize two points, one unfavorable and one favorable. The first is that there will be a certain amount of technological unemployment immediately following the war, caused by the changeover from war to peace production, and that nothing much fundamental can be done about this. The second is that once this changeover is completed there will be a boom period, based on the many shortages of consumers' goods.

Both these points are in general true, and we will withhold our reservations concerning them to a later article. But both of these points are also relatively unimportant, for they deal with the immediate post-war only. Let us start here where most of the articles stop: after the boom has set in and run a year or two.

Present production of goods in the United States is now at the rate of about a hundred and fifty billion dollars a year. This is almost double the pre-war rate and represents an increase both in the number of men employed and in the output per man.

It is worth noting, too, that this production, or something very close to it, was technologically possible all during the depression. No outstanding inventions of the last fifteen years have made it possible. But capitalism cannot produce to raise the standard of living of the people. Its peak production can come only in time of war, only in order to destroy. As we will see, it is the very size of this productive power—which, under a more rational system would allow men to live as kings—that under capitalism makes a depression more inevitable.

The capitalist theory is this: After the war everybody will need goods, and this demand will start industry going. On the basis of this initial very large demand for consumers' goods, everyone will be able to get a job. And with everyone working, everyone will be buying still more, and the money will circulate through a circle of business-market-business, etc. What goes out as profits to the bosses or wages to the workers will come back as money paid for purchases, and a cycle will be started that will end only in Utopia.

What is the catch? For the theory as it is stated sounds reasonable, and if we added nothing more it would work. Here is the flaw: not all the money is spent. Part of it is saved—that is to say, from another point of view, invested. For even direct savings, in a bank or insurance company, are indirect investments via those institutions.

Only workers at the lowest level of income cannot afford to save at all, and as we go up the scale of income the percentage of savings also rises. A very wealthy man would find it difficult to spend his entire in-

come even if he wanted to, for the living costs of a single family, even on the most luxurious and wasteful scale, are only a small part of the take of our captains of industry. Thus the present unequal distribution of wealth means that much more of the national income will be invested than otherwise.

This portion of the national income that is invested is taken out of the cycle the economists speak of, and unless it is brought back into the system this will very soon get out of kilter. It can be brought back in only one way, by building so-called producers' goods, that is, factories, lathes, railroads, etc.—goods that are used to make or transport consumers' goods. For if our millionaire uses his excess income to build a factory, the money he so invests will return to the market system in the form of wages for the workers or profits for the contractors. But this is the only way it can return: through building producers' goods.

Why not, then, build producers' goods, you will say. Let us see. Present production is, as we have noted, at the rate of one hundred and fifty billion dollars a year, and for the moment let us assume that with full post-war employment that figure will remain constant. A certain portion of that money will be invested; what portion, depends on many things and can only be guessed. But it will be in the neighborhood of thirty billion dollars, more or less. In order to keep the system from breaking down, thirty billion dollars will have to be invested every year in producers' goods.

Let us for a moment examine what would happen if every year thirty billion dollars worth of factories are NOT built. The national costs, including profit, will amount to one

hundred and fifty billion dollars. National income, again including both wages and profits, will also amount to one hundred and fifty billion dollars. So long as prices remain at a total of a hundred and fifty billion dollars, the system is in balance and will continue without crisis. But with thirty billion dollars taken out of the market, the prices will not hold. There will be one hundred and fifty billion dollars' worth of goods, and only one hundred and twenty billion dollars' worth of money to buy them. Once again there will be "overproduction"—while people starve.

The possibility of investing thirty billion dollars a year for any considerable period is—nil. We read so often these days of astronomical figures that the size of this one is lost on us. At that rate of investment, the entire American industrial plant could be replaced in three years. In ten or twenty years the entire world could be brought up to the level of American industrialization. Where will the Wall Street financier find a market for so much money?

He will not find it. But he will look for it; he is already looking for it. When we read that Henry Luce (who publishes Time and Life and Fortune magazines, and who is no socialist) or Wendell Willkie or Henry A. Wallace is in favor of Indian "dependence," we must remember that part of that thirty billion dollars could be invested much more readily in an India free of British domination. The explosive nature of that much money looking for a market cannot be overestimated, and promises of a world free from war must be considered in light of that.

Have the capitalists no answer to this problem? Let us examine, next week, what some of their representative spokesmen have to say.

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