

# THE FIGHTING WORKER

**1 Cent**

## WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE!

Organ of the Revolutionary Workers League of the U. S.

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## French Shake-Up and Italian Defeats Show Mass Unrest

**NEED REVOLUTIONARY PARTIES TO LEAD STRUGGLES**

**December 24** — Recent developments in Italy and France indicate that all is not going well with Hitler's plans for a "New Europe". We here briefly summarize the high-lights of recent days:

In France, the ouster of Laval from the Petain regime and the subsequent conversations with A-betz, Hitler's agent, give further evidence of the instability of the Petain semi-fascist regime. Contrary to the beliefs of some people that, with the defeat of France, Hitler established a complete fascist regime, the R.W.L. pointed out months ago that the Petain government was only a semi-fascist regime, resting on German bayonets against the workers, but completely devoid of any internal stability to consolidate even in the interests of the bourgeoisie of France.

### HITLER'S HANDS FULL

It is evident that Hitler recognizes the necessity of occupying the now-unoccupied section of France. But at the present moment, he has his hands too full with other, pressing matters; for instance, he has to send still further troops into Rumania in order to consolidate his foot-hold there; moreover Hitler is sending aid to Mussolini. And another important factor that prevents his occupation of the rest of France now is the attitude of the French colonies who would almost certainly swing over to Britain if the Vichy regime were liquidated. (General Weygand's sojourn in Africa is obviously for the purpose of consolidating French sentiment there for such a contingency.) These are the factors that stay Hitler's hand.

Meanwhile, it is again admitted by French spokesmen that they dare not put arms in the hands of the French workers, that the misery and hunger in France may easily precipitate a workers' upris-

ing. This means that behind the Petain-Laval conflict, the real issue is how to stifle the workers who, though unorganized and bewildered, are grumbling and dis-

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## «Defend America» Groups Tools of Rival Capitalist Interests and Blocs

**WORKERS MUST DEFEND THEIR OWN INTEREST AGAINST ALL WAR PLANS**

In the United States the first important nation-wide committee to lay down a clear policy of its aims was the "White Committee" to "Defend America By Aiding the Allies". This committee represents

a bloc between two powerful American groups and the British group of capitalists. Its aim is to involve us as rapidly as possible more actively in the World War through greater aid to England. Both Roosevelt and Wilkie presented this line in the election campaign, although in concealed form.

The most powerful of the groups in this committee is the Morgan-DuPont bloc. Behind them are the capitalists of heavy industry. In the main they supported Wilkie in the last elections. The next powerful group having its representatives in this committee is the Rockefeller group. The main group of exploiters of light industry are in this grouping. In the main, they supported Roosevelt in the last election.

The third force in this bloc are the open agents of British Imperialism and their sub-agents in this country. This group is a minority in the committee. The first two groups demand parallel action with British Imperialism UNDER THE DOMINATION OF AMERICAN IMPERIALISM. The third group is working for a bloc with the British Imperialists LEADING THE BLOC.

### AMERICA FIRST COMMITTEE

A new committee that started some months ago, but which is now gaining momentum, is the "America First Committee". This committee represents a bloc of two secondary groups of American capitalists and secret German agents. The first group within this committee are the Isolationists, mainly of the Midwest and West, whose sphere of exploitation is limited to North and South America, and who therefore see no need to be involved in Asia, Europe or Africa. Hence they are sectional groups of capitalists who

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## WALLER GAINS CHAIR REPRIEVE

**ATTORNEYS PLAN APPEAL AS DEFENSE CAMPAIGN GROWS**

The shadow of death was temporarily removed from the head of Odell Waller, Negro sharecropper framed in Virginia on the charge of murdering his white landlord.

Attorney Thomas H. Stone of Richmond, who has handled the case — with many others — for the Richmond Waller Defense Committee (Provisional) and for the RWL originally, announced a few days ago that a reprieve has been granted to Waller from December 27th to March 14, 1941.

It is Mr. Stone's opinion that the appeal to the Virginia Court of Appeals will result in a new trial for Waller.

### SOUTHERN JUSTICE

The defense contends that Waller, being a Negro in the Jim-Crow South and arguing with a white landowner who reached for his "gun-pocket" during the dispute, was justified in shooting Oscar Davis, white landlord, in self-defense. The appeal also claims that poor Negro and white sharecroppers were eliminated by the usual Southern "justice" from the jury. The jury which convicted

Waller was composed of ten white landowners who themselves employ tenants and croppers and two white business men.

In a letter to the Richmond Committee dated December 18th, Odell writes:

"I can't begin to tell you how much I appreciate you're trying to help me and I feel that I will never cause these people to be sorry for so helping me."

The Richmond committee has established an office at 1103 East Main St. Another significant event was the addition of John Finerty, well-known labor lawyer to the defense.

Funds are badly needed to carry the case through the Virginia state appeal court and finally through the United States Supreme Court. The R.W.L. urges all its friends to contribute to the defense of this class-war prisoner.

Send all funds to:

**Paula Subienne, Treasurer,  
Richmond Waller Defense  
Committee,  
Room 429, 1103 E. Main St.  
Richmond, Va.**

## French Shake-Up and Italian Defeats Show Mass Unrest

### NEED REVOLUTIONARY PARTIES TO LEAD STRUGGLES

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contented; in short, the French situation is loaded with dynamite.

In relation to Italy's disastrous defeats in Greece and Africa, the basic weakness of Italian economy and the Fascist rule is clearly revealed. As we pointed out long ago, the relative backwardness of Italian economy is a decisive factor which destines Italy to a secondary imperialist role, and foredooms all Mussolini's grandiose plans. There is more than an alibi in Marshall Graziani's report to Il Duce that the failures against the British are due to a lack of mechanized equipment.

#### REVOLTS BREWING

These **military defeats**, subsequent to years of semi-starvation for the Italian workers, are brewing revolts. So weak is Mussolini's rule that the old Fascist hooligan squads are being reorganized to deal with emerging class struggles.

This is further grist in Hitler's mill in the sense that he wants to subordinate Italy as merely another puppet-state in his "new-order" — if he wins; but the present developments, signifying the first

stages of workers revolutions, are the biggest factors why he will not win.

The decisive point is that the military defeats of Italy are causing riots and preparing for workers' revolts; that **MILITARY DEFEATS DO FACILITATE REVOLUTION**, that the work for the defeat of one's "own" boss class is the surest and only road to workers victory.

#### PEACE POSSIBLE BY OVERTHROWING CAPITALISM

Churchill, the watchdog of British imperialism today tells the Italian workers to "overthrow Mussolini" and establish peace. But the kind of "revolution" Churchill wants is a milk-and-water bourgeois one that would ensure the dominance of British Imperialism, that would retain, in a different form, the capitalist dictatorship over the workers, that would not end in "peace", but only a lull in the imperialist bloodbath.

Yes, the workers of Italy AND Britain and the other imperialist countries must overthrow their oppressors by smashing capitalism and its wars and dictatorship. That is the only way to get a real peace and a victory of the working class.

## «Defend America» Groups Tools of Rival Capitalist Interests and Blocs

### WORKERS MUST DEFEND THEIR OWN INTEREST AGAINST ALL WAR PLANS

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are "satisfied" with exploitation in the United States and the Western Hemisphere.

The second group in the "America First Committee" are the Appeasers. In this camp can be found more out-spoken anti-British capitalists than in the White Committee. They are of the opinion that Germany will dominate Europe and that the United States must therefore prepare now to do business with the Nazi-Fascist Axis. Others in the group say that Hitler may lose, but if the workers are defeated, then Fascism will still be dominant, no matter which country has the key position in Europe, and hence we must do business with Nazi-Fascist countries. Like the British agents in the White Committee, so too there are German agents in this committee.

#### WHAT SHALL WE DO?

No doubt, both committees have fooled and won over many sincere and honest, but misled persons and groups... but the workers must not support either of these committees. It must be remembered that both groups have as

their **MAIN OBJECTIVE** the defense of **AMERICAN IMPERIALISM**. And it must be remembered by the working class and all progressive thinking persons that the main enemy of any and every working class is **ITS OWN EXPLOITERS, ITS OWN IMPERIALISTS**.

#### OUR MAIN ENEMY AT HOME—THE AMERICAN IMPERIALISTS

The dispute among these exploiters is primarily over how to best serve the interests of American Imperialism, not only against the Axis on the one hand, and England on the other, but above all against the danger of the proletarian revolution that this war will usher in.

The working class has no interest in defending American Imperialism. The only interest of the working class is to defend the workers and oppressed masses of the United States and the workers of the world. To do this, the workers must fight their own exploiters. National unity means the subordination of the working class to the profiteers. Class unity means the unity of the working class **AGAINST** our own exploiters and their allies in other countries.

## FIVE YEARS of the R.W.L.

The fifth anniversary of the foundation of the Revolutionary Workers' League, U. S., has just passed. The last five years have seen Marxism and the class struggle shamefully distorted by our historical predecessors — the Stalinists and the Trotskyites. Both these tendencies, like Social Democracy and Anarchism, have wilted in the intense heat of the rapid-fire events occurring since the RWL began to struggle. The events of Spain revealed once for all the depths to which Stalinism could sink as a result of making the working class throughout the world a tail to Soviet foreign policy — a policy which in Stalin's hands has become one of support

to one or another imperialist camp. The same Spanish war revealed Trotskyism as a supporter of the capitalist class in its "democratic" form — material aid with political criticism of the Peoples Front — at the very moment when the "democrats" were butchering the Spanish revolution.

For a year and a half we have been in the midst of a rapidly spreading imperialist world war. This has been the acid-test for working-class organizations. And Stalinism has showed itself lending a hand to the Fascist butchers in their work. Trotskyism has exhibited its decay in the form of deep splits, ambiguous declarations

on the fight against imperialist war, support of the Labor Party in America, etc.

#### INTERNATIONAL MARXIST FORCES

Only the Revolutionary Workers' League of the tendencies in the U.S. labor movement has continued the Marxist struggle. The same five years that have seen increasing defection from Marxism in all the other organizations have seen the RWL presenting class struggle policies on all the serious problems that have confronted us.

In these five years the R.W.L. has taken part in major class struggles in the U.S., has particip-

ated in the Spanish Civil War, and has helped to establish the International Contact Commission which is of key importance today.

All sections of the I.C.C. are at present active in their respective countries against the imperialist war.

The R.W.L. and the International Contact Commission for the New Communist (4th) International pledge to go on with their fight, fully aware that their responsibility will be great in the coming period of imperialist intervention by Uncle Sam; in the coming period which will see the growth of revolution in every corner of the globe.

**THE FIGHTING WORKER**

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**F.D.R. AID SUBORDINATES  
GREAT BRITAIN TO  
UNCLE SAM**

Mr. Roosevelt's proposed "gift" of 3 billion dollars in armaments to Great Britain isn't a matter of philanthropy. It is a pure and simple business investment.

In the struggle of the "democracies" to check the growth of German Imperialism, Britain has been doing all the military fighting, spending more than 85% of her yearly income on war, losing one economic foothold after another in Latin America and Asia; while her "ally" — Uncle Sam waxes fat and rich. Profits of the big corporations in America were over 50% higher this year than last. The favorable balance of trade — the excess of exports over imports — grew by 600 million dollars, almost double last year's.

The British Empire still has tremendous resources at its command; it still has enough dollar reserves to keep buying armaments in the U.S. for some time. The request for credits at this stage is a reminder that the Anglo-American antagonism still exists in all its fury. Britain is unwilling to continue the battle, making all the monetary sacrifices, while America proceeds to break up the Empire FROM WITHIN, proceeds to systematically undermine the economic position of her "ally" by taking over her markets and spheres of influence. John Bull therefore demands that Uncle Sam, too, "kick in".

**BUSINESS AND BARTER**

Mr. Roosevelt's 3 billion dollar "gift" is the first answer — a necessary business investment. After all the proposed 3 billion dollars will go back to "our" business leaders in the form of war orders for Britain.

Roosevelt eliminates the dollar sign in the negotiations and speaks of trade in kind — barter. On this basis the United States would try to collect by taking over colonies, etc. If England loses, Uncle Shylock would take even more "in barter".

Meanwhile, the United States builds up a gigantic armaments industry, in preparation for her own active intervention in the war.

**WANT MORE PROFITS**

America has much to gain by staying out of the military phase as long as she can. With the exception of the Soviet Union the U. S. is the only great power out of the military war. If she can keep the contending sides fighting a stalemate battle — each exhausting the other — AND if she can keep the proletarian revolution in check, she can scoop up the economic victory everywhere. The American Imperialists realized before the war even began that they would have to subsidize the falling powers everywhere in order to avert revolution and to keep the world capitalist structure afloat. The 3 billion dollar subsidy is merely the biggest of these political "loans". Five hundred million are being given out in Latin America to accomplish the same purpose. More will follow.

But the money is not being spent to "save democracy". Its aim is to maintain the stalemate in Europe so that American business can prosper and to check the proletarian revolution.

**«PAY-TRITOTISM» VERSUS  
LABOR'S RIGHTS AND  
FUTURE**

From every side the wails and laments of the rulers of America fill the air. Wages are too high, hours too short, taxes too steep. Sky-rocketing profits could be doubled, tripled, quadrupled — if only labor were not so obstinate. Chambers of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers, gigantic corporations, the Navy, Army, and Labor Departments of the U. S. Government, and the Government as a whole — all are united in the swelling chorus.

One day we read the speech of Alfred P. Sloan, Jr., chairman of General Motors Corporation, for a six day week, no overtime penalty, and increased speedup. Hard on his heels comes the statement of Admiral Spear of the Navy Department that labor and taxes are responsible for the refusal of the big steel and iron companies to bid on government contracts. The Sun Shipbuilding and Drydock Co. of Philadelphia, a \$39 million corporation owned by the Pew family, refuses to accept a Navy contract unless the Government postpones action on the wage-hour law. The Navy supports the stinking request.

In flat violation of their own laws, contracts are handed out to Ford, to Bethlehem Steel and other violators of the national labor relations and wage hour acts. Roosevelt has affixed his stamp of approval. Sidney Hillman has given "labor's" consent.

All in the name of national defense, pay-tritotism, and the democratic way of life.

**SMASHING LABOR STANDARDS**

The boss class is using its self-created war hysteria to smash down the standards of labor. The labor movement, strangling in the iron grip of its corrupt racketeer officialdom, Lewis and Green and co., has gone along or in incidental, sporadic cases offered resistance. But the need of the hour is a national counter-offensive on the part of labor. In the giant conspiracy against it, labor can depend on no one but itself. It has left only its traditional weapon, proven and true — STRIKE.

The basis for the counter-offensive is here. Government spending and war economy have boomed industrial production, so that production in October 1940 was 18% higher than in 1929. Profits run high in the millions, more than 50% above last year. But in 1929, 92% of all workers were employed. In October 1940, only 83%! Machinery and speed-up have displaced the rest. They are the unemployed, for whom industry has no jobs.

**REAL WAGES SINKING**

Total wages have gone up. But speed-up and the cost of living have gone up faster and higher. And profits have rung the bell.

In order to keep labor under control, Roosevelt is smart enough not to go too fast, too soon. His stooge, Col. Fleming, administrator of the wage hour act, still talks of retaining the 40 hour week. But neither he, nor any of the boss class, find anything to say about union conditions, decent wages to meet increasing costs, the intolerable speed-up, relaxing overtime penalties. The speed-up alone will cancel out the increased taxes on the bosses, so that the net profit will be still higher.

Now, today, is labor's opportunity. His very conditions will force the workingman to strike. We can expect to see a mounting wave of strikes in the next period, in spite of the crumbs Roosevelt has left to offer. But what is necessary is a national militant progressive force, active in all unions, fighting, not merely to keep the present standards of labor, but to raise them. Lower the working hours per man, cut down the speed-up, improve working conditions, put more unemployed to work, increase the bosses' taxes. It is his war, let him pay for it.

Demand control of hiring and firing, and the right to inspect the books. Assert the rights of the working man to take over and run the society which is the product of his labor.

**Documents  
Of The  
R.W.L.**The Workers Answer to Boss War  
Trade Unionism Today

Workers Rights or Democracy

Uncle Sam's Stake in the War

Stalin-Hitler Pact

American Imperialism—The Main  
Driving Force for War

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Is At Home**

# Worker Persecuted for W.P.A. Unionizing Activities

## JOINT ACTION NEEDED TO FIGHT CASE

**Kansas City, December 17, 1940.** 23 years ago Harold T. Williamson enlisted in the U. S. Marines and went across to fight in the war for "democracy, freedom and equal opportunity"; — the war out of which Morgan gained millions, and Williamson got — a W.P.A. job.

A structural iron worker by trade, Williamson was able and qualified to handle his job. He was made foreman in spite of his open activities to organize WPA workers.

Of course, his supervisors demanded that in return for the foremanship, Williamson give up his organizing efforts. He refused.

### POLICE FRAME-UP

Last January Williamson and three others were arrested for the "crime" of distributing a Workers Alliance leaflet against the abuses in the relief and WPA set up in Jackson county.

This, according to Judge Anderson, was Fifth Columnism, red activity, inciting to riots...

The discrimination, abuses, red tape and callousness of the relief authorities are of course "Americanism". They do not incite to riots. So said the Judge.

In court, the police finks produced some stalinist literature which they claimed but could not prove, was "found" in Williamson's house.

The flimsiness of the whole frame-up was thoroly exposed when an appeal brought the release of Williamson and the dropping of all charges.

The attempt to intimidate and prevent organization of the WPA men was smashed. But the legal acquittal meant nothing to Craig, Williams, Rittersbacker and the rest of the relief set-up.

### CONDEMNED BY MACHINE

When Williamson's 6 month old daughter, Frances, fell ill on February 18, the doctors of the Catholic Mercy (!) Hospital refused to accept the child. "There is nothing wrong with her". Two days later the child died in the General Hospital.

The father paid the funeral expenses on the installment plan out of his meager WPA earnings.

On August 28 Williamson was laid off on the ground that his project was completed. The project continued, needless to say.

Williamson twice handed in his name to the "K C Star" as a "needy family" in its annual Christmas Fund drive. The name never appeared in the paper.

K C has been "cleaned up"? Yes — one gang cleaned out another. But the machine is as powerful, as vicious and brutal, as ever.

Altho Williamson's wife is now expectant with child, within a few weeks; altho the family has repeatedly had to move because rent could not be raised; altho he himself is a veteran and as such has preferential status; altho no one has questioned his ability or qualifications; altho he has brought his case to the local, state and national bodies; — Williamson has been unable to get on WPA or even to get relief.

### INHUMAN PERSECUTION

On Saturday, December 14, 1940, Williamson and his wife were called to the hospital where she was to get an X-ray examination. They were detained for 3 hours but no examination was given! On returning home they found the house had been raided! Correspondence on his case and the treasured picture of the dead baby had been taken. Thoroly cowed, the landlady refuses to speak. But from the nature of the things stolen, it is quite clear who engineered the raid.

The Workers Alliance, controlled by the Stalinists, has confined the case to purely legal moves in the most approved belly-crawling fashion.

The Project Workers Union of K C is now undertaking a campaign for the full reinstatement of Williamson to foremanship, and an end to the inhuman persecution and discrimination. The newly organized Industrial Workers Club, along with many others, such as the Council of Churches, Associated Charities, Human Rights Club, and numerous individuals have given support.

But the Project Workers Union and Industrial Workers Club are entirely correct in seeking the

strong backing of the trade unions and the entire K C labor movement.

### LABOR'S CASE

This case is not merely that of Williamson. It is the case of the unemployed worker, persecuted and driven by the hunger system, to ask direct and work relief. It is the case of labor against capital and its political government stooges.

It is primarily up to the Kansas City labor movement to wipe out this blot of shame.

## NOTES ON THE NEWS

All does not go smoothly in American consolidation of the Caribbean as an American lake. The wanton murder of a Cuban worker by a U.S. naval officer clearly revealed the mass unrest seething on the surface. The Cuban workers immediately declared a strike, and demonstrated so pointedly against American bosses that Batista, Roosevelt's stooge dictator, had to mobilize the armed forces. Cuba, you will recall, is famous as the scene of the conference between the "western democracies" only a little while ago...

### PROFITS RISE BUT NO JOBS

But even in the United States it is not hard to notice discrepancies between the fairy tales of equality and the facts of misery and oppression. Two stories released in the past week show this. The Chicago Tribune reveals that while employment is now within twelve thousand or so of 1929 levels, payrolls are seven or eight million dollars below 1929 levels. And there are still hundreds of thousands on WPA and relief rolls. Bury these "unemployables", is the implication of the Tribune. The statistics fail to point out that the "unemployables" have been made unemployable precisely by capitalism. These victims of capitalism cannot be employed today — at a profit to the bosses....

### LYNCHING AND BOSS RULE

Georgetown, South Carolina, was recently taken over by an armed mob of 200, hunting for a Negro accused of attacking a white woman. The law-enforcement agencies as usual did little to resist the mob of "leading" citizens. The mob were severely beat-

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

JANUARY, 1941

Uncensored Reports of the I.C.C.  
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The War Furthers Economic  
Dislocation

I.C.C. Faces 1941

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## INTERNATIONALE NACHRICHTEN

JANUAR, 1941

Der Kampf Um Asien

Korrespondenz der Roten Front

Ueber der Objektiven Voraussetzungen der Deutschen Revolution

**FOR WORKERS CONTROL OF PRODUCTION**

**FOR USE UNDER A WORKERS COUNCIL**

**GOVERNMENT**