

THE FIGHTING WORKER

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STOP THE WAGE-CUT DRIVE!

The forty-hour week is threatened again. Led by the National Association of Manufacturers and other reactionary groups, a wave of "public opinion" against time and a half pay for overtime over 40 hours is being built up. An Oklahoma paper is reported publishing coupons to be mailed to Congressmen, demanding abolition of the 40 hour week.

What is the meaning of Representative Smith's latest brainstorm? It means a wage cut pure and simple, of about \$3 or \$4 a week for the average worker in the war industry. Workers now working 48 hours get paid for 52 hours work. The new legislation would cut out the extra 4 hours pay, the bonus for working long hours. It would greatly increase the profits

of the financiers, under a smoke-screen of "limiting profits."

The storm for this legislation is rising. Possibly it will be defeated once again; most likely it will make a stronger showing. The significance of the whole thing, however, lies in the trend in Congress, as a reflection of the aggressive mood of the capitalists.

The labor leaders, the Greens and Murrays, who gave up the right to strike for the duration of the war, hoped by this measure to gain a certain measure of relief from reactionary legislation against labor. On the contrary, however, as was to be expected the restrictions against labor are increasing and will continue to increase. By giving up the right to

strike, labor is absolutely powerless to stem this tide.

Abolition of the 40 hour week is only part of the scheme. The rest of it includes drafting workers at scab wages, forced savings, longer hours, complete government control of hiring, and the freezing of all jobs so that workers may not quit, and many other such moves. Mr. Roosevelt opposes just a part of this scheme, the 40-hour week abolition, and only for **the present**. The rest of the plot he not only favors but he has himself hatched.

The squabble in Congress, the "dispute" between Roosevelt and the House of Representatives is

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«LABOR» GOVERNMENT OR WORKERS COUNCIL GOVERNMENT?

At a workers meeting in England recently, at which Soviet trade union delegates appealed for greater production, voices from the floor cried out: "Sack the Government! For a Workers Government!"

This is no accident, no mere cry in the wilderness. It shows the need to consider seriously the question of the road to working-class power for the British proletariat. Under the crisis engendered by the blows of the Second Imperialist War, the growing revolt in the colonies, the military attacks by the Axis and the no-less dangerous flank economic and political attack by Wall Street, the Imperialist rule of Great Britain begins to quiver at home.

BRITISH CRISIS GROWS

More and more signs point to a developing internal crisis. Sir Stafford Cripps, expelled from the Labor Party in 1939 as "too left," proposing a People's Front "collective security" policy vs. Chamberlain's appeasement — now becomes Lord Privy Seal in the War Cabinet of arch-Conservative Churchill. His task is not only to bargain with the Nehru-Ghandis of the Indian exploiters, to keep the colonial masses in the imperialist war, but also to help restrain the working-class at home.

The Labor Party, which made a truce with the Conservative Party in 1939 not to challenge the political status-quo, stirs uneasily; 30 members of Parliament criticize the official LP policy on "conscription of wealth;" two join the "left" (i. e. the centrist) Independent Labor Party. The ILP shows signs of growing influence in its campaign for "peace through Socialism," it wins 29% of the vote in one area, 15% in another, etc. Despite no-strike agreement of the labor-fakers, strikes continue.

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Flash!

Labors' Protests Win New Stay for Waller

As we go to press, we receive word of a new victory for Odell Waller. Gov. Colgate W. Darden, as a result of widespread pressure, has granted a new stay of execution for the Virginia Negro sharecropper, until May 19. He had been scheduled to die on March 20.

The Chicago Federation of Labor (A.F. of L.) and the Chicago Industrial Union Council (C.I.O.) have gone on record protesting Waller's conviction. The C. F. of L. sent a telegram asking for a new trial.

We welcome this support for the defense of Odell Waller, as a recognition of the need for solidarity of Negro and white workers, and of the workers of the North with the workers, sharecroppers and oppressed toilers of the South.

It is the duty of all thinking workers to intensify the fight for Odell Waller's freedom, as a blow against all the capitalist and reactionary forces now attacking labor.

Waller Conference

Expressing renewed determination to win the unconditional freedom of Odell Waller, young Virginia Negro sharecropper sentenced to die on March 20, delegates from Waller Defense Committees throughout the country, and representatives of workers and students groups met in Richmond, Va., on March 1st, at a "Save Odell Waller Conference."

Waller was convicted over a year and a half ago by an all-white landlord poll-tax jury, for the self-defense shooting of his landlord, Oscar Davis, in a dispute over the latter's refusal to give Waller his share of a wheat and tobacco crop. Twice before, the young sharecropper has been sentenced to the electric chair, but each time his execution has been prevented by the nation-wide activity of the Waller Defense Committees and other working-class organizations protesting in his behalf.

MASS PRESSURE NEEDED

The Conference laid the basis for extending the fight for Waller's freedom to the U. S. Supreme Court, as well as other labor defense work. The immediate legal issue involved is the vicious poll-tax system, through which millions of Southern white and Negro workers and sharecroppers, are disfranchised and excluded from the right of jury service. Delegates at the Conference emphasized the point made by Mr. Thomas H. Stone, Waller's senior defense counsel, that although the legal aspects and the vital needs for finances are important, organized mass pressure is decisive to win the case.

Mr. Allan Willis, chairman of the Chicago Waller Defense Committee, pointed out that the same reactionary forces which seek Odell Waller's execution, are among the leading anti-labor forces nationally. The poll-tax Congressmen, such as Howard Smith of Virginia, who seek to maintain the disfranchisement and oppression of the toilers of their "own" state, are the chief sponsors of anti-strike measures, and many similar slave-labor measures to oppress the workers of all the other

states. In self-defense, therefore, workers everywhere should rally to defense of Odell Waller, as a blow against these ultra-reactionary forces.

Recognizing the burning need for a labor defense organization

based on militant policies, today when the workers rights are under attack as never before, the Conference set up an organizing committee for a **Labor Defense Congress**.

A meeting open to all workers, individual and groups who are willing to work to build such an
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«Labor» Government

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In this situation, the call for a Workers Government in England takes on new importance. But such a slogan is not enough. It is necessary to clarify what is meant by it; and above all, how to achieve it. In short, WHAT ROAD TO POWER?

The Independent Labor Party, and the Trotskyites of Great Britain, as well as the American Trotskyites (both the Cannon and Shachtman groups) do not deal with this. Instead, they merely attack Churchill & Co., attack the Labor Party for its coalition policy and call for the abstract slogan of "Workers Government" and "Socialism."

A close analysis of their position, however, reveals they are merely preparing a NEW PEOPLE'S FRONT GOVERNMENT, UNDER A "LEFT" SLOGAN! That is all.

We can already hear their protests. Don't we "know" they have always opposed the Stalinites on People's Frontism? Didn't they attack it in France, Spain? How dare we distort them? and so on.

Unfortunately, politics has its own dynamics.

History has known many "Workers Governments:" governments of the bourgeois dictatorship with radical and "revolutionary" politicians acting as a cover. In Germany, in 1923, there was the "Workers Government" in Saxony, the Social-Democrat, Communist coalition, including Brandler. In 1936-37 in the Spanish civil war, Catalonia had a "Workers Government" of the POUM, Anarchists, Left-Republicans, Catalan Nationalists, etc., in the Generality of Barcelona. Other and more crass examples of betrayal readily come to the reader's mind, and need not be given here; these are only some of the more "left" examples.

Then there is the example of the real Workers Government, the Workers, Soldiers, Sailors and Peasants Council (Soviet) Government under Lenin. This was the democracy of the oppressed, the proletarian dictatorship, against the democracy of the exploiters, the bourgeois dictatorship.

Which do our "r-r-revolutionary" friends mean?

They have already answered. The British Independent Labor

Party oppose revolutionary defeatism, and openly call for taking power by winning "a series of by-elections," and, together with the Labor Party, or independently (they have not yet said which) assuming complete power — in the bourgeois military state of British imperialism.

And the Trotskyists?

"The British **Socialist Appeal**, organ of the Workers International League, a Trotskyist group, demands that the Labor Party **end the coalition with the Tories and strive for power upon a program of socialist demands.**" (Latter emphasis ours.—Ed.)

Thus reports the Militant, March 7th, p. 3, without any comment by the Cannonite author on this point. Neither does the editorial column of that or following issues, comment on this. We can only assume that they are in full agreement especially since Cannon AND Shachtman both call on the American workers "For An Independent Labor Party and A Workers Government." (See their List of Slogans).

But, we can hear Trotskyist wiseacres say, doesn't the RWL

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WORKERS' GOV'T

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know they are for the proletarian dictatorship?

Of course, of course.

Said Dimitroff, at the Seventh World Congress of the Stalinist International: While "we tell (the masses) openly, as did the Thirteenth Congress of the British Communist Party, that we Communists are in favor of a Soviet Government, as the only form of government capable of emancipating the workers from the yoke of capital..." nevertheless "we are prepared to support your fight for the formation of a new Labor government, in spite of the fact that both the previous Labor governments did not fulfill the promises made to the working class by the Labor Party.

"We do not expect this government to carry out Socialist measures. But we shall present it with the demand... that it defend the most essential economic and political interests of the working class and all the toilers." Thus the Stalinists developed the People's Front policy.

Is the Trotskyist demand any different, except that they demand the Labor government take SOCIALIST measures, whereas Stalinism merely had more modest demands (against wage-cuts, fascism, war, etc., etc.)?

No, despite their subjective desires, their position "for a Workers Government" **objectively** makes them supporters of the bourgeois state and the imperialist war in time of extreme crisis. As their pamphlet or the "Peoples Front, the New Betrayal" (written by their former comrade James Burnham when they were in the Socialist Party) says:

"There is no avoiding the harsh logic of history. When the workers parties enter a coalition government, or form a labor government on the basis of the bourgeois state, they thereby necessarily become the administrators of capitalism... It must uphold the imperialist war policy of the bour-

geoisie. And, against the threat of the proletarian revolution, it must take steps to smash the revolution."

This is 100% correct.

Yes, the British workers need a Workers Government, to defend their rights and interests, to help the Soviet Union, to grant the right of self determination to the colonial millions, to help the German and other workers now groaning under Hitler's heel.

But it can only come along the road indicated by Marx and Lenin, by the example of the Paris Commune and the October Revolution — not through the reactionary military state of British Imperialism, but a democratic state of Workers, Soldiers and Sailors Councils.

For the building of the Dual Power of the councils of the toilers!

For the smashing of bourgeois reaction!

For all power to the Workers Council Government of England!

Against reformist and centrist treachery —

For the new Marxist Party of Great Britain, and the New Communist (4th) International!

Long live the International Contact Commission!

IN COMMEMORATION OF

MARX AND THE PARIS COMMUNE

March is the month of commemoration of two great contributions to world history: Karl Marx, the revolutionary scientist, and the Paris Commune, the first attempt of the proletariat to establish its own power as the ruling class.

Despite every effort by the bourgeoisie of the world, and their agents in the ranks of the proletariat to cover up or deny its revolutionary, scientific content, Marxism today stands as the only guide to an understanding of world events, as well as to actions to change the world.

The history of surplus value; the accumulation of wealth at one pole of society, and of poverty at the other; the inescapable anarchy of capitalist production; the necessity of the proletarian dictatorship as the only road to a solution to the problems of society, socialism: all are confirmed

today.

And the Paris Commune! That first great attempt of the working-class, which arose in 1871 after the Franco-Prussian war, marked the end of the period when the bourgeoisie could carry through progressive national wars. As Lenin pointed out later, only a bourgeois lackey could excuse support of the present imperialist war by pointing to Marx and Engels position in THAT period. Today, the world over, the bourgeoisie can only play a reactionary role, in the colonies as capitulating comprador bourgeoisie, as well as in the advanced countries as powerful imperialists.

The handing over by Thiers, head of the French Republic, of the Paris Commune to be butchered by the "national enemy", the German Bismarck, only foreshadowed the actions of the present

Vichy government. "Appeasement" is nothing new; always and everywhere, when the capitalists can not themselves smash the proletarian threat, they will call in or allow the "enemy" exploiters to suppress "their" working-class. The only way out is not support of the exploiters; (look at Blum's fate!) but the road of Lenin.

Today the scientific theory of Marx, and the lessons of the Paris Commune can best be commemorated by building a new Marxist Party in the U. S., and a new Communist (4th) International.

These lessons are embodied not in the program of the Socialists, Stalinists or centrist Trotskyists — but in the Program of the Revolutionary Workers League, U. S.; in the 14 Points of the (Provisional) International Contact Commission. Support our work! Remember Marx and the Paris Commune! Down with support of the bourgeoisie, with pessimism! The future is ours!

Wage Cut Drive

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just a sham battle. On **fundamentals** there is complete unity, although there are differences in tactics.

SHAM BATTLE

The time to stop this whole swindle is now! Despite the labor fakers, the Murrays, Lewis', Tobins and Greens who have hidden these facts from the working class, labor must take matters into its own hands NOW. If we give up the 40 hour week now, when seven millions are unemployed, and more are losing their jobs daily as a result of war priority and re-tooling, at a time when we should be fighting for the 30 hour week to absorb these unemployed, and prepare for the post-war depression — if we give up the 40 hour week now, then the rest of the oppressive dictatorship being hatched in the White House and Congress will follow in swift order.

Now is the time to put a stop to all this. The right to strike is the only weapon available to stop the Smiths, Vinsons, Roosevelts. A national one hour or one day strike would serve as a resounding warning to the capitalist war dictators. If the forty hour week is abolished, the working class will have to go still further, to save itself from giving up rights that it took literally hundreds of years to gain.

BOSSSES ON PROFIT RAMPAGE

The war is being used as an excuse for all sorts of reactionary measures that could be fought adequately in peacetime. Robbed of the right to strike, labor can easily be vanquished during the war hysteria. The capitalists have been sabotaging their own war effort until assured of "adequate" profits. They still are working for profits and profits only. Mr. Guthrie, who recently resigned from the War Production Board, has charged that Big Business has its \$1-a-year men in the WPB see to it that **they** get enough supplies, enough orders and enough profits.

Failure to fight back now means a serious defeat for months to come.

Waller Conference

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organization, is to take place shortly in Chicago. Tentatively May 1st has been set as the date. The organizing committee will shortly publicize further details, as to time, address, etc.

The conference expressed its solidarity with all class-war prisoners, by electing at its outset, an honorary presiding committee at its sessions, of Odell Waller, those Scottsboro boys still jailed, the Minneapolis frame-up victims, the Porto Rican Nationalists languishing in a Federal jail, and imprisoned workers of other countries.

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED

Resolutions were passed supporting the case of Howard Carwile, young Virginia worker seeking restitution for grievances suffered at a state sanatorium; opposing the poll-tax; for workers guards to defend labor's rights against reactionary forces; for land to those who till it by mass action; for solidarity with the workers of the underground labor movement of Germany and other European countries; and other important resolutions. Telegrams

CORNELIUS O'KENNARD

We announce with deepest regret the death of comrade Cornelius O'Kennard, a member of the Revolutionary Workers League in Chicago. Comrade O'Kennard recently left the Shachtman Trotskyites to join our organization. Unfortunately, his ill health and the usual negligent treatment received in the Hines Veterans' Hospital, made it impossible for him to be very active.

Comrade O'Kennard, a veteran of the first world war, was a leading figure in the Workers' Ex-Servicemen's League, a former member of the Communist Party, and generally active in the Negro and labor movement for more than twenty years.

We salute a loyal and capable fighter of the Proletarian Revolution.

were sent to the British embassy demanding the unconditional release of imprisoned colonials, and to the Soviet embassy demanding freedom for imprisoned proletarian revolutionists.

A successful mass meeting was held after the conference, which climaxed a number of previous meetings held in different parts of the city of Richmond.

WORKERS DEFENSE LEAGUE "ACTS"

Unfortunately, Messrs. John F. Finerty and Morris Shapiro of New York, legal defense counsel of the Workers Defense League in their work in Waller's behalf, saw fit to rush into public print denouncing the conference after it received some publicity. They demanded that Mr. Thomas Stone, senior defense counsel for Waller, add his signature to their telegram to Governor Darden disassociating themselves from the Waller Defense Committees and the conference. He publicly refused, in a statement published in the daily press, and pointed out they were injuring Waller's defense by such tactics. He stated that, as Senior Defense Counsel for Waller, he was willing to work with all forces interested in Waller's freedom.

The Richmond Waller Defense Committee issued a public statement pointing out that Messrs. Finerty and Shapiro did not have to disavow the stand of the Conference, as they had no responsibility to it; nor could they dictate its withdrawal from the case. Also, the allegation that the Defense Committees intervened in the case was an outright distortion of facts, as it was the Waller Defense Committees who initiated the fight, and the WDL who came in afterwards, (only after much urging by the Committees).

The defense of Odell Waller must be furthered by a serious effort to extend the campaign, accepting all help, but opposing every attempt of the "liberals" whoever they may be, to "appease" reaction. Waller can be freed only on a militant policy, based on support of all workers organizations.