

## Food Shortages and Price Rises Spell Hunger!

# WE MUST CONTROL FOOD PRODUCTION!

## Anti-Labor Bills Multiply!

From many states in the Union comes evidence that American capitalism is taking the totalitarian path of labor suppression.

In TEXAS legislation is under consideration outlawing the closed shop, limiting union membership and compelling registration of labor groups.

In CALIFORNIA there are bills pending to outlaw strikes, ban the closed shop and require the incorporation of unions.

In IOWA laws are sought to make picketing illegal and to forbid workers to seek redress of grievances except through the capitalist courts.

In KANSAS measures have been introduced prohibiting the use of union funds in political campaigns, outlawing the closed shop, and preventing picketing.

In OHIO legislation would establish a commission to guarantee workers' rights "to refrain from joining labor organizations," would require registration of unions and their officers, would regulate union dues, would ban the closed shop except where it is voted by 80 per cent of the employees.

The above, together with the Hobbs anti-labor bill, the Austin-Wadsworth labor-draft bill, the drive to abolish the

forty-hour week and all the other anti-labor moves in Washington make the conclusion imperative that American capitalism is preparing to become the greatest power on earth—BY TIGHTENING ITS STRANGLEHOLD ON AMERICAN LABOR.

Every anti-labor bill introduced in the national and state law-making bodies by the boss politicians on behalf of the bosses, is an irrefutable argument to end the folly of supporting the boss parties and politicians—to start independent working class politics through an INDEPENDENT LABOR PARTY.

## Labor and Working Farmers Must Control Rationing, Prices and Food Production

By GERTRUDE SHAW,

With the rationing of canned and dried foods beginning March 1, we get a realistic idea of the extent of the food shortage.

The consumption of items which have been the backbone of the American diet will be cut down to 43 per cent of normal. From 30,000,000 cases of canned fruits and vegetables each month, civilian consumption will be slashed to 13,000,000 cases.

Back in November, 1942, James F. Byrnes, economic stabilization director, was very reassuring. "A POSITIVE PROGRAM THAT WILL GUARANTEE OUR PEOPLE THE BASIC LIVING ESSENTIALS THAT THEY MUST HAVE AT PRICES THEY CAN PAY," is what he promised.

That was only sand thrown in the eyes of the worried people. From March 1 on an individual will get for his 48 points a month one small No. 1 can of peas, one small can of tomatoes, one large can of peaches—and that is all of such vegetables and fruits as are so extensively used—THAT IS ALL FOR A WHOLE MONTH.

The housewife is told not to be panicky. She is assured that the stores are bursting with fresh fruits and vegetables that she can buy instead of the rationed canned foods. But can she?

Realizing the cynical humor implied in the advice to housewives to buy fresh fruits and vegetables at prices beyond her capacity to pay, the OPA hurriedly placed "emergency price ceilings" on fresh tomatoes, snap beans, carrots, cabbage and peas.

Why "emergency ceilings" were put on these five vegetables alone, only the great minds in the OPA know. IT HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH THAT HUMBLED CALLED PARITY.

That is why such common vegetables only as far as Washington.

## Gandhi's Fast - - And the Cause of Indian Freedom

AN EDITORIAL

Gandhi is, as we write, in the fifteenth day of his fast. He is perilously near death. But, still, the British refuse to yield.

His doctors report that Gandhi may die before the twenty-one day fast he imposed on himself ends. His condition is seriously weakened. The British fear the repercussions of his death. Still, they refuse to yield.

They could end his fast by decreeing his release from internment. That Gandhi is interned in an elegant palace is not important. His internment is a symbol of British authority in India.

Gandhi undertook his fast to secure his release. The British government in India stands firm. It will not release Gandhi. It courts insurrection, rather than concede to Indian nationalism.

Gandhi is not the best spokesman for the Indian people. He has, in many respects and on many occasions, been the best servant of British imperialism in holding back the turbulence and pressure of the Indian people.

However, Gandhi today stands at the head of a large movement for Indian independence. That aspiration is born of the deepest feelings of the Indian people. It is the aspiration of the overwhelming millions of tyrannized Indians.

Four years ago, John Gunther, a well known journalist, wrote: "The British will view it as a catastrophe when Gandhi dies... His death... will almost certainly liberate the forces tending to increase the strength of Indian independence."

And there is no doubt that Gandhi has acted as a check on the power and strength of the Indian masses. But Gandhi is himself subject to that pressure. He is impelled by the irresistible urgings of the Indian people. They want their independence—and they want it NOW.

It would appear that today, when the British Empire has most to gain by bargaining for the greatest amount of mass support, it would liberate India. But that is only the logic of weak-minded liberals. The British authorities are hard-headed, realistic imperialists.

India is the most precious jewel in the crown of empire. British imperialists have grown fat on the exploitation of India through the centuries. They have no intention of relinquishing that prized possession—the richest colonial possession in the world. Their spokesman, Churchill, was not chosen to "preside over the liquidation of the British Empire," by his own admission.

Yes, they fear Gandhi's death and the irrepressible forces, it would liberate. But they also fear the consequences of a nationalist victory over smug and stand-pat imperialism—Gandhi's release.

They know that however much he may have helped them in the past, Gandhi knows that this is the moment to strike for Indian independence. They know that Gandhi's popularity is great. And, just as Gandhi knows that Indian independence cannot rest there—that the masses will press forward toward social liberation as well—so the British know that any concession to Indian nationalism cannot rest there, but will speed the momentum of the independence movement.

A few months ago, when the British faced the peril of Japanese invasion in India, they were willing to make a few concessions to India. That is to say, they were willing to offer a few crumbs dressed up as concessions. The Indian people refused to participate in the pretense. The time has long past for piddling concessions. Nevertheless, the British were, in the miserable Cripps mission, willing to offer a lie and a pretense.

Today, they are again the hard-boiled, brass masters of old. The fortunes of war have turned in their favor. The Japanese threat is no longer as pressing. They have won victories in North Africa. They are again the self-confident, unyielding tyrants who make it plain that India is their property and they intend to keep it so.

Gandhi's death will loose torrents of mass action. But Gandhi's release will do the same as the people of India press for greater advantage in the situation. And the British rulers are evidently prepared to crush the upsurge—to crush it in the same way that they sought to crush it before: bullets, cannon and blood.

They have murdered hundreds of Indians in the last year. They will murder more. They will train their machine guns on the insurgents. By force and butchery they will seek to destroy the movement.

But this is where they err. They could not be by bloodshed and violence—the only "arguments" they are capable of employing—crush the movement up to now! The masses of India are aware of what they face. Bullets haven't scared them before. It won't scare them now. There is a cause worth dying for!

Gandhi alive, or Gandhi dead—the movement will swell and grow in anger. This angry tide will engulf the machine gun nests and pointed bayonets; and it will burst the seals of British rule!

The cause of nationalist India is an international cause. Gandhi's release is a symbol of British authority. And, by the same token, his release would be a symbol of victory over imperialism. We must therefore join the Indian people in demanding:

FREE GANDHI!  
FULL AND COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE FOR INDIA!

## Hue and Cry Over "Absenteeism" Covers Vicious Drive Against Labor

By MIKE STEVENS

The tremendous campaign unleashed by every anti-labor force in the country on the subject of absenteeism by war workers has a four-fold purpose:

1. To create the impression that the war workers are paid such fantastically high wages that they can afford to take days off from work, and that they take these days off to squander their enormous salaries. This, of course, is part of the hogwash that is being used by the capitalists and their congressmen in the anti-labor legislation drive now in full swing. It is an attempt to destroy overtime wages and working standards.

2. To make labor the scapegoat for the bungling and mismanagement of the various dollar-a-year men who in their efforts to take care of their own particular companies or industries have made a mess of production and manpower problems.

3. To hold the draft as a threat over the head of any worker who is not giving "full production." This would include any worker who takes a day off to rest or to look for another job—or anyone who cannot be speeded up, any militant in the shop, or anyone involved in a slow-down or a strike.

4. To attempt to get it across to the workers that they are no longer free agents of their labor-power, but that they are henceforth to be considered as much a part of the mili-

tary machine as the soldier at the front.

The readers of LABOR ACTION are all workers (with the exception of the post office authorities who read LABOR ACTION to see if there is anything they can pounce on.) And our readers know that NO worker can AFFORD to take one or more days off. Wages are low, and with the cost of food, clothing and shelter rising daily, additional taxes, more members of the family being drafted so that fewer people are bringing money into the house—all this means that a worker needs every penny he can get to try and make both ends meet.

The Real Reason

The working day is now extremely long. In addition, the new war factories that have sprung up or the old ones that have expanded do not have adequate housing facilities nearby. Many war workers have to travel four to six hours daily in order to get to work and back home. Quite often a mile or two of walking is necessary before reaching the plant. The buses are fewer and the number of passengers greater. It is not unusual for a number of buses to go by before one with room will stop to pick up waiting workers.

The long hours of work, including time lost in transportation, leave very little opportunity for adequate sleep and health protection. These cause over-fatigue and illness. Even in the states where ventilation and sanitation laws

were previously enforced they are now being neglected. The inadequate canteen facilities in most of the factories provide neither good food nor speed in serving, during the terribly short lunch periods. Senator Desmond of the New York Legislative Committee on Nutrition in a recent report affirmed the above by saying: "Much of the absenteeism in war factories can be blamed on poor, improper and insufficient food for the workers."

Many workers take days off in search for other jobs. They are discouraged with their present jobs because of insufficient pay, unsatisfactory working conditions and unsettled grievances. With the signing away of the right to strike by the union leaders, the companies drag out endlessly the settlement of even the most minute grievances.

Outside of his sleeping hours the only time a worker has to attend to his personal needs is during working hours. And in order to buy clothing or tools, visit a doctor or a dentist, obtain his ration book or gasoline card he must take time off from work.

The women war workers have the same problems as the men, only two-fold. Problems of marketing are becoming greater every day, due to the scarcity of goods, and more time is required to shop around. Household duties, lack of nurseries for care of children, laundry, and family illnesses—all conflict with their work.

The reason why production is not up to schedule is not the fault of absentee workers, but because the absentee owners have removed themselves only as far as Washington.

## Profits Are Not Restrained By Any Little Steel Formula

By EVERETT WESTON

While the attack on the living standard of the workers continues at an increased pace, the profits of the bosses continue to rise.

The figures in the accompanying table, again, speak for themselves. They are all from recent issues of the New York Times. Profits given are after all taxes, local and federal, regular and excess-profit.

As for the table last week, it is possible to include other companies—if we look behind the false front of the bare figures given in their reports. For example, consider the five-and-ten-cent stores of Barbara Hutton, the poor little rich girl. We quote from the Times' story:

"Sales of the F. W. Woolworth Co. and its Canadian subsidiary rose last year to the highest volume on record, but taxes reduced earnings to the lowest level since 1932, the annual report for 1942 disclosed."

This is the standard line of the Times and of every boss paper, for that matter. "Business is good, but the taxes! We're losing money." Take a minute to plow through some figures, just to test the statement this one time.

Reported profit for 1942 was \$25,538,739, which is admittedly lower than the \$26,114,372 "earned" in 1941. But

Company	"Earnings" for		
	Recent Period	Same Period Year Before	Per Cent Increase
Phoenix Hosiery Co.	\$369,864	\$246,113	50.2
Westmoreland Coal Co.	1,049,788	565,399	86.6
Consolidated Aircraft Corp.	10,223,779	8,024,882	26.6
Vultee Aircraft, Inc.	4,291,140	3,100,735	38.4
Canadian Breweries, Ltd.	777,564	570,570	36.3
Chicago Stadium Corp.	99,288	—52,335*	—
Dresser Mfg. Co.	1,728,517	1,212,738†	42.5
Rutland Railroad	196,161	—70,791	—
Ward Baking Co.	1,241,333‡	150,821	722.1
Atl. Gulf & West Indies SS Lines	3,575,471	2,816,177	26.9
Trunz, Inc.	110,425	77,694	42.3
Arundel Corp.	1,217,796	950,435	26.1
Mississippi Power & Light Co.	656,531	479,005	37.1
Texas Electric Service Co.	1,685,968	1,222,659	37.9
E. W. Bliss Co.	2,712,328	2,051,206	32.2
Van Norman Machine Tool Co.	1,960,668*	735,185	166.7

\*The second figure given is a net loss, so that the per cent of increase cannot be computed.

†The actual figure given by the company is \$1,010,615 profit for ten months. This has been prorated for a year so that it could be compared with the current profit.

‡These figures are for 1942 versus 1941. In 1940 the company suffered a net LOSS of \$46,745.

§This did not seem a large enough increase for a munitions manufacturer. On looking further we find it was indeed larger. Counting the difference in "reserve for contingencies" (\$2,000,000 in 1942 versus \$500,000 in 1941), the increase is 105.4 per cent.

¶This figure is divided in the report into "net income" of \$815,603, and "net profit transferred to surplus" of \$1,145,065.

make it any the less a plus for that year. But such simple logic has very little to do with the high mysteries of corporation accounting.

If we add these two figures to the 1942 profit—which is where they belong—we get a total for 1942 of \$38,245,776. This is an increase of 46.4 per cent over 1941. And this is the company that the New York Times chose to editorialize around on the subject of high taxes and alleged low income.



## Rickenbacker--A Sinister Spokesman for Big Business

By V. JENSEN

The bosses are grooming a new savior, Captain Eddie Rickenbacker. That they are boosting one of the country's most reactionary and fascist-minded industrialists, a bosom pal of Ford, Kettering, Wilson and the other motor magnates, the Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers, a man supported by America First—all this is no accident. It is part of a huge campaign against labor and labor's rights.

Since his return, Rickenbacker has been barnstorming the country with a series of violent and vicious speeches against labor, its unions, its rights and its social gains to the accompaniment of fanfare and hosannas by the boss press.

With unprecedented arrogance and impudence the campaign was first launched in Rickenbacker's home town and the citadel of unionism, Detroit. For two weeks before Rickenbacker's speech, the Detroit Free Press ran a thrilling serialization of Eddie's twenty-one days on a raft, the whole point of which was that Eddie had received a revelation straight from Providence which he would share with the world in his speech at the sumptuous luncheon of the American Society of Automotive Engineers.

But his speech was no revelation either to Ford, Wilson or the other magnates and industrialists flank-

ing Eddie at the luncheon—or to the Detroit workers who had for many years fought Rickenbacker and his friends in a hard-won fight against exploitation and terror. That speech was old stuff to them. It was a vicious attack against the working men and women of America. It slandered the unions as racketeers, sniped against foreign elements in the city and attacked seniority, time and a half and other union gains.

Most vicious of all was Rickenbacker's attempt to pit soldiers against the workers by picturing the workers lolling in the lap of luxury, loafing on the job while the soldiers on Guadalcanal (where he spent all of forty hours) died in their foxholes.

The United Automobile Workers in an official statement cautiously called Rickenbacker to order, pointing out that it had been the unions who had to fight the bosses in order to protect seniority for soldiers, etc. Philip Murray issued a pious statement asking the Lord to forgive Rickenbacker because he knew not what he said. (He knows too well!)

Ira Wolfert, correspondent for The Nation, who was in Guadalcanal for months, gave the lie to Rickenbacker's assertions, calling them "wrong and misrepresenting grotesquely the opinions of the men I knew there." Wolfert pointed out that the soldiers

(Continued on page 2)



# Europe in Revolt

News from the Socialist Camp

## A STALINIST SCOUNDREL AND THE GERMAN WORKERS

Ilya Ehrenburg, chief Stalinist propaganda agent, has recently written a piece of slander against the German workers called "A Travesty of Man" (Soviet War News) in which he says, among other disgusting things: "The Germans outwardly resemble civilized Europeans. But actually any inhabitant of the Sandwisch Islands would be mortally offended if he were compared with them... War has not only bred hatred but contempt for the Germans... We know that German cities... are breeding grounds of crude and repulsive barbarism..."

Even in reactionary capitalist countries, some people still hold that a distinction must be made between the German people and the Nazi clique which wields the whip over them. But these considerations do not enter into the minds of the despotic valets of Stalin. This "most distinguished Russian journalist" (New York Times) was chosen to picture the accused of the Moscow witch hunts as fascists and traitors for the benefit of the "distinguished" foreign press. He was again appointed to slander the Spanish revolutionaries of the POUM and the CNT as "fascist-Trotskyist vipers." Now he is chosen to slander the German workers, chosen to "prove" that they represent barbarism as against the "spiritual wealth" of Stalin's gang of murderers.

But recent news from Germany gives the lie to Ehrenburg's assertions that the German people can in any way be identified with Hitler. Here is what a recent dispatch to the New York Times reports: "Hostility against Adolph Hitler and defiance against the Nazi Party is said to be growing. Workers' delegates are reported to have 'advised' party inspectors, who are attached to every war plant, that

they had better make themselves scarce and move to some place way out of sight of the factory just for their own good." Anti-Nazi inscriptions on walls are reported more frequent."

Another report which reaches us through Social-Democratic channels states the following:

"A workman of Hamburg, a man of sound political training, writes: 'The workers are definitely weary of the war. Contrary to those who stand to lose by defeat, they do not worry about the question: What is going to happen if we lose the war? Air raids are apt to wear down the morale of the population. (Assuming that anything of the kind should ever have existed in Hamburg.)'

"The workers, compelled to spend their night in the shelters instead of in their beds often ten or twelve hours work at the factory, are embittered and on the whole inclined to lay the blame for their discomfort on the Nazi gang. It is rather unfortunate that in a comparatively high number of cases bombs fell on residential houses in the working class districts of Hamburg, a fact which the Nazis are endeavoring to exploit for their own purposes through their block wardens, who make every effort to divert the anger of the people from themselves to the wicked English."

While we do not think that workers in Germany are indifferent to what is going to happen, we imagine that this report pictures the state of mind of the more backward part of the German working class rather accurately. The Nazis may try to divert the anger of the people against the English, but we have the impression that even without this the anger of the people is very likely distributed toward both the British and the Nazis.

## STALINISM CANNOT MAKE REVOLUTIONARY APPEAL

These and many other reports that camps for German deserters have been established all over Europe, are proof that the spokesmen for Stalin's "workers state" lie from beginning to end. Recently some shamefaced fellow travellers told me that: "After all, according to recent newspaper reports, Stalinists DID appeal to the German soldiers in their propaganda at the front." But with what slogans do they appeal to them? "Man thousands of German soldiers and officers have saved their lives by imprisonment. Follow their example." Or, "German soldier, heed this advice: Call to the Russian from afar; I give up comrade, don't shoot." That is, the Russian propaganda does not vary a bit from the usual line of propaganda which has been used in many wars. It does not call for the fraternization of Russian and German workers in uniform. It does not call for fraternity and for international solidarity against Hitler. It just tells the German soldiers to surrender in order to be made prisoners.

And how could it be otherwise? This is not an accident, or just stupidity on the part of Stalin, as some well-intentioned idiots want to make us believe. It flows directly from the reactionary anti-labor character of Stalin's regime. He cannot use the powerful weapon of revolutionary propaganda which was used in 1917-18 because his regime has long since assumed a counter-revolutionary, anti-labor character. He cannot use this weapon because it would turn itself against him.

The recent successes of the Red Army can partly be explained by a decisive weakening of the spirit of the German soldiers, by a growing protest of the German workers. But these protests occur in spite of Stalin's and Ehrenburg's propaganda, not because of them. Rather, Stalin's propaganda plays into the hands of Hitler.

Europaean.

## News and Views from the Labor Front

# Akron CIO Recalls Its WMC Members

AKRON, Feb. 23—With job-freezing only six weeks old in this boom town, the Akron Industrial Union Council last night voted overwhelmingly to withdraw the two CIO delegates from the War Manpower Commission. This action of the CIO Council, representing more than 50,000 CIO workers in Akron, is regarded here as an important test of how far the CIO can be "coordinated" into the war machinery.

The CIO Council at the same time denounced the local War Manpower Commission as being anti-labor, partial to management and discriminatory in the issuance of certificates of availability. It charged the Washington-appointed WMC director, Harry Markle, former corporation lawyer, with being a "little dictator."

The immediate issue causing the CIO's break from the WMC is reported to be the action of Markle in breaking a deadlocked vote over the question of granting a certificate of availability to a woman applicant in favor of the employers. But this is only the last straw that broke the camel's back.

**Dobbins Asked to Resign**  
Job-freezing was installed in Akron by a vote of seven-to-one of the WMC on January 11, 1943, in direct opposition to a prior denunciation of

At the council meeting following the installation of the "plan," the delegates had tumultuously demanded that Harry Dobbins, supposedly representing the CIO, but who had violated labor's express demand in voting with the employers, public and AFL representatives for the plan, resign. Dobbins refused to resign, attacking his CIO brothers as "vultures picking his carcass."

But last night's meeting should take care of Dobbins, according to Palu Peasenden, council secretary, who explained that Dobbins will be left without voting authority if he refuses still to resign.

**Next Step Up to CIO**  
According to today's Beacon Journal, manpower dictator Markle indicates that his future policy will be against the CIO's boycott. Says he: "The War Manpower Commission will not be frustrated in its program by the unilateral action of any one group." In other words, those tens of thousands of organized workers who are most affected by the job-freezing have not the slightest thing

done on a strictly closed-shop basis, but Hodgson's would already have been hanged in a court of union justice.

Unfortunately, the union has made a late start; but in the last few weeks its backbone has begun to stiffen: the shop stewards' system has begun to work. There have been elections in all departments. There are regular meetings for shop stewards. A drive has begun to enforce the closed shop, a drive to make every man sign up and pay up. The stewards are now fighting grievances, doing their best to establish decent union conditions in the yard, and have won many beefs for the men and gotten wage reclassifications.

To give the men protection and make a fight against a company which shows no regard for a contract, the union as a whole must be strong and militant. You would turn in vain, however, to Walter Pollard, administrative director of Local 9, who, as a "benevolent" dictator, is benevolent toward the company and dictatorial to the union. At the present time, Pollard has the power to enforce the stabilization agreement, remove the major grievances that exist in the yard and negotiate for a new and better contract.

But what is to be expected of a man who has praised the company for being "easy to get along with," has done nothing about contract violation except give excuses and make promises, and has mentioned in passing, but not discussed, the new contract that must come up very soon?

Unless a tremendous pressure is put on Pollard from the rank and file, it is safe to say that little will be done. The shop stewards must continue to fight grievances, make the men union-conscious by showing, in word and action, what it means to have a union. The men must turn out to union meetings in greater and greater numbers, insist on open discussion of the new contract, fight to get back their voice in making union policy. Before that, they will not have a democratic union.

iq say regarding their present and future status, if Markle's words mean anything. Fortunately, though, they do have their strong unions and at the moment appear to be determined to see that their wishes will not be cast aside.

Just what concrete steps the CIO will take next to enforce its boycott of the job-freezing ruling and the War Manpower Commission remain to be seen. Predictions are free, though, among militant elements that only an extension of their strong action can bring success in this situation too, as in so many instances in the past.

The CIO charges that thirty-two of the fifty-four cases appealed to the WMC were decided in favor of the employers.

Markle's authority has just been extended to include neighboring industrial cities by Big Chief Manpower Commissioner McNutt. Speculation here runs that perhaps he is being eased out of the Akron situation because of the tremendous resentment against him. Among the many reasons for the resentment is the fact that his wife holds down a \$5,000 job at Goodyear Aircraft here as women's personnel director, where she devotes her time to persuading women from joining the UAW local there.

ing distinguished for their self-sacrificing foxhole fighting. Introduced as America's "No. 1 hero and No. 1 spiritual leader," he proceeds immediately to a demand that time and a half for overtime be repealed and in the same breath attacks the \$5,000 ceiling on salaries as "limiting incentive."

And so Rickenbacker proceeds his merry way, much touted by the bosses and the boss press, spreading his vicious anti-union propaganda through banquet hall to legislative hall, boomed by America First, Gerald Smith's fascist party, as a presidential candidate—a noisy and incapable reminder of the bosses' real war aims. It is time labor put a stop to Rickenbacker's mouthings!

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# Bosses Boom Rickenbacker - -

(Continued from page 1)

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## Sperry Worker Answers for Union Brother

Dear Jim: I was glad to read your letter to a Sperry worker in the February 15 LABOR ACTION.

We here at Sperry sort of look to you fellows in Ford to show the way in some respects. Of course we'll have to fight our own battles, but when it comes to unionism you were the ones who cracked the Sperry Corporation first.

I'm sure there isn't a steward who wouldn't get better than 11 per cent in raises. We'd all like nothing better than to break the reactionary "Little Steel formula." But, after all, our union is a young UE local and we lack the experience. So how about telling us about some of the things you have learned in dealing with the Sperry Corporation.

How is your union organized? Ours isn't yet, you know—no by-laws, no contract, only a few elected stewards, etc.

How do you draw up your contract? When did you vote? How did you bargain?

Let us at Sperry profit from your knowledge.  
For a strong and militant UE,  
Your union brother,  
Johnny.

# Baltimore Transit Workers Want Union Contract

## By JAMES O'BRIEN

After a full year of struggle against the Baltimore Transit Co., the Amalgamated Association of Street & Electric Railway & Motor Coach Employees, Division 1300, AFL, held a meeting this week, drew up a union agreement and presented it to the company. This action brings matters to a head and the developments that are to follow will be of great interest to the entire labor movement.

The National Labor Relations Board and the War Labor Board are on the scene. There is also a company union, inspired by the reactionary company. All of these confront workers who are determined to fight it out and who know that negotiations for an agreement are the paramount issue.

With the exception of the labor press, which in part reported on the vicious tactics of the company's attempts to prevent organization among the workers, and the capitalist press

of Baltimore, which dished out the lies of the company, there has been very little mention of this long-drawn-out struggle.

## Workers Organize

The workers began organizing themselves over a year ago. As soon as the company got wind of it, they began firing every worker suspected of belonging to the union. The union, not yet strong enough to call for strike action, appealed to the NLRB to force the company to stop its firings. After four months of continuous pressure from the union the NLRB called hearings which lasted over three months. By prolonging these hearings the company had hoped to demoralize and weaken the union. Instead the union grew rapidly.

While awaiting the decision from these hearings, the union asked the company for a conference to discuss a number of other grievances that had developed. The company re-

fused to meet with the representatives of the union.

This refusal and the continued delay by the NLRB in handing down a decision on the hearings aroused the workers to the point where they set a date for a strike vote. The union officials were against striking and called in the Department of Labor to "iron out" the difficulties. The Department of Labor mediator saw that the situation was deeper than he expected, and hurriedly turned the case over to the War Labor Board.

On September 23, the NLRB decision was handed down by the trial judge. It ordered the company to reinstate all of the discharged workers with all back pay lost while unemployed and to dissolve the dummy union it had set up.

The company refused to comply with this decision, and knowing that the facts of the case were so obvious that the Washington office of the NLRB would uphold the trial judge

in case of an appeal, it began a long period of run-around and delay. Its excuse was that its chief counsel, Senator Logan, was dead and that its new attorney needed time to study the case.

## Sixteen-Hour Strike

This was too much for the workers to take. On Monday, December 14, the workers began their strike. The international officers of the union did everything in their power to prevent the strike. But the workers knew that only a few weeks previously they had forced a favorable decision to be handed down in a hurry, only when they had threatened to strike. Now they were going to get the company to comply with the decision by striking.

The strike began with a couple of hundred workers. In a few hours one thousand were out, and over 2,500 were on strike when the workers voted to go back to work after sixteen hours of striking. Ac-

ording to the Labor Herald (which has contributed a great deal to the growth of this union) the strike was still growing when it was called off under pressure from the WLB.

On January 7 the NLRB held the final hearings in Washington and two weeks ago handed down its decision, which is substantially the same as the previous one. The company has already announced that it will not comply with this decision. In other words, it will not rehire the workers or pay them their back salaries, nor will it cease and desist from discouraging membership in the union, nor will it throw out the dummy outfit.

The War Labor Board is still in the picture, doing its part to keep down the resistance against the company. The board seems to think that if the union members are given a few pennies increase in wages they will forget all their other demands and grievances. The WLB is doing the same thing in Baltimore that it

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

## Companies Won't Hire Negro Woman

Dear Editor:  
For the last three weeks I have been receiving LABOR ACTION and have been very interested in the topic, "What's in the Proposed Sperry Contract?" I read it very thoroughly. My point to you is that I filed an application with this company and many others, and are yet to hear from them. That's how they treat the poor colored girls.  
I am a married colored girl, 22 years old and a mother of a baby 18 months old. My husband is serving in the United States Army.  
I don't think it is fair for the colored girls. They give you an application to fill out. And that's just as good as being dead. I would like to know what LABOR ACTION can do about this situation. I would really appreciate your looking into this.

am willing to work for a decent living wage to support my child.  
E. M.

## Longshoreman Writes On Bridges Decision

Dear Editor:  
Again the capitalist courts have come through with a decision against labor. I am referring to the recent decision of Federal Judge Martin I. Welsh refusing to grant a writ of habeas corpus in the deportation case of Harry Bridges.  
Although Bridges is now one of the best boot-lickers the bosses have, this decision against him was a blow at civil rights and at labor. The judge reduced the narrow field of prosecution witnesses to Harry Lundeberg, secretary of the Sailors Union of the Pacific. Starting with

eighteen witnesses giving testimony as to Bridges' membership in the Communist Party, one by one their evidence has been thrown out until now only Lundeberg's evidence stands.

It is one of the tragedies of the labor movement that Harry Lundeberg, whose fight for conditions for the sailors equals that of Bridges' FORMER fight for the longshoremen, forgot his former "Wobbly" background and testified in a capitalist court against a labor opponent. No matter how bitter the hate between Lundeberg and Bridges—a feud that has brought nothing but harm to the maritime workers from both sides, Lundeberg should have kept his fight within the ranks of labor.

Lundeberg right now is following a fairly militant policy, while Bridges tries to appease the bosses and the government. Bridges has

turned the longshoremen over to the mercy of government boards, while Lundeberg has resisted the encroachment of the government bureaucrats. But Lundeberg will have a hard time among waterfront workers living down the fact that he once played stoolpigeon.

As for Bridges, it will be bitter irony if the Circuit Court and the Supreme Court should uphold Attorney General Biddle's ruling that Bridges be deported. For no more staunch supporter of the American capitalist system and the war can be found now. Unless Roosevelt intervenes, it is quite possible that the reactionary courts may uphold Biddle.

In the meantime, it is up to every workman to support the fight against Bridges' deportation, no matter what he thinks of him. The way to get rid of Bridges and his present policy is through the rank and file

of labor and no other way.  
West Coast Longshoreman.

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## Highlights of a Workers Party Resolution on the Trade Union Situation

# Here Is a Fighting Political and Economic Program for Labor

We publish below important excerpts from a resolution on "The Situation in the Trade Union Movement," recently adopted by the National Committee of the Workers Party.

The period since the entry of the United States into the Second World Imperialist War is especially marked as a year of steady retreat by organized labor from its former position of militant organizational action to one of subservience to the Roosevelt government and the bourgeoisie. Under the leadership of the bureaucracy of both the AFL and CIO, the proletariat of the nation has been persuaded not only to yield its economic gains but to give guarantees that it will not seek to recover its losses during the course of the imperialist conflict....

In collaboration with the trade union leadership, the bourgeoisie began its offensive against labor with the demand for a no-strike agreement. This demand of the ruling class and the Roosevelt government was agreed to by the union bureaucracy without the consent of the unions and behind the backs of organized labor. Thus the bourgeoisie sought with one blow to

render organized labor impotent by taking away from the trade unions their most powerful weapon of persuasion.

This was followed by the demand of the bourgeoisie that labor yield the "premium pay" and that the act of Congress establishing the forty-hour week be rescinded in favor of a forty-eight-hour week.

The standard of living of the workers was attacked by the ruling of the National War Labor Board in the Little Steel decision, where the board ruled that the standard of living would be pegged as of January 1, 1941. This ruling would make it totally impossible for the working class to raise its standard of living. This decision was quietly accepted by the trade union bureaucracy until recently.

The trade union bureaucracy with utter complacency accepted the proposal of Donald Nelson of the War Production Board for the establishment of "Management-Labor Committees" whose function was to organize and promote increase in production, develop harmony between industry and labor and perform any other functions that would tend to fasten the attention of labor solely on the quantitative aspects of the problem of production.

## Why the Campaign Against Labor's Living Standard

A leading phase of the assault of the bourgeoisie against the working class is the various fiscal measures which have been instituted either by act of Congress, by decree of the President or the administrative boards, or by unofficial actions and threat.

First in this field is the tremendous increase in the income taxes that labor will be forced to pay. These increased taxes have been levied on the working class, not so much to avoid an alleged inflation, but at the behest of the ruling class that seeks by every possible device to lighten the burden on itself and to hold labor in check by reducing its economic resources.

These back-breaking taxes, bond buying, soaring prices on the necessities of life, and the demand for contributions to the various war welfare drives, combined with the no-strike agreement are calculated to place the working class completely at the mercy of the bourgeoisie.

This campaign of the ruling class against the living standards of the workers is not a simple, ordinary, anti-labor campaign. This is the way it is interpreted by a stupid and class-collaborationist union leadership and a politically immature proletariat. This offensive against labor is directed at labor by the whole of the bourgeoisie, and is conscious, planned and deliberate. The struggle of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat is dictated by the perils inherent in the life and death struggle of United States democratic imperialism against fascist imperialism. The imperialists of all countries demand "national unity," which in practice is a demand for the complete subjection of the proletariat to the ruling class.

The bourgeoisie in the United States, as is the case with the bourgeoisie in every capitalist country, carries on a struggle for the defense of its national existence. Its rule over its own proletariat is being challenged and imperiled by the fascist imperialism of the Axis powers.

## All Sections of Boss Class Fundamentally the Same

These are the problems that confront the labor movement in the United States today. The ruling class is not engaged in a simple labor-baiting campaign. There are of course bourgeois of this type. There are financiers, industrialists and congressmen who are "anti-labor" and who would be under any and all conditions. There are capitalists and "statesmen" who are chronic pure and simple anti-unionists. These are the Girdlers, Fords, Graces, Smiths, Byrds et al. These are the "anti-labor" men the trade union leaders thunder against. These are the real "enemies of labor." But the labor bureaucracy does not see and understand that these men are not by themselves the real danger. They are only the jackal fringe of the bourgeoisie who yelp in season and out, against any concessions to labor; who are only the most extreme and the most irrecusable.

This does not mean, however, that these "tories," these "economic royalists," are in any fundamental sense different from the so-called "enlightened" capitalists and law-makers for whom Roosevelt is the chief spokesman and representative. The Girdlers and the Byrds are not more nor less class-conscious than the others. They are only tougher and cruder at a

In the concrete circumstances today it is not enough for American capitalism to hold on to what it already has. To assure the continuation of the exploitation of the masses of the people at home it is necessary to place United States capitalism in a dominant position throughout the world. The American bourgeoisie seeks to establish its prestige and its rule over a far wider area and over greater millions than exist within the confines of continental United States. This essentially national phase of the development of American capitalism has long ago passed away.

Another consideration is the necessity for planning now to provide for the economic necessities of the people of the United States after the war. This might be accomplished by the American ruling class becoming merchants to the nations of Europe and especially to the millions in the various colonial countries. As the leading creditor nation, the granary of the world, the chief supplier of capital goods and consumer goods, the United States might for many years satisfy the needs of the people and lessen the intensity of the class struggle.

The possibility of this development holds great danger for the American working class and the organized labor movement. Through such a consummation, labor in the United States might temporarily secure economic advantages that are not possessed by labor in other capitalist countries. And advantages might be secured in a way that would hamper the development of the colonial peoples and intensify their slave status.

In the long run it would be no advantage to labor in the United States if its income, as well as the social services and the concessions it might receive from the bourgeoisie, should be paid, even in part, with the blood money wrung from the sweat, toil and exploitation of the European and colonial workers.

particular time and in particular circumstances. Any of them can change places from time to time and for reasons of his own. The "reactionary" Hoover sent the army against the bonus marchers and the "liberal" Roosevelt sent the army against the North American strikers. The "reactionary" Hutton Sumners talks about electrocuting coal miners and the "liberal" Wayne Morse warns that strikers may be charged with treason.

Concentration of the attention of the labor movement on the deeds of the so-called anti-labor bourgeoisie, while giving support to the ruling class "friends of labor" has led the entire trade union movement into a trap.

This trap was deliberately and consciously set by the ruling class. It seeks world hegemony not only for the reasons given above (counter-offensive to German plans for world domination and the danger of being subordinated to German imperialism), but also because, faced with the many vicissitudes accompanying the decline of capitalism and its death agony, all of their plans for the rejuvenation of capitalist production and of bourgeois democracy have failed.

The trade union leadership, Murray, Green and Lewis, bear the

main part of the responsibility for the success of the attack on labor. Roosevelt, the chief deputy of the bourgeoisie, entered into a virtual conspiracy with the trade union bureaucrats against labor. The aim of this conspiracy were to bring the labor movement into complete harmony with the imperialist interests of the bourgeoisie; to gain complete control over the movement; and to make Roosevelt, as their representative, the arbiter of the trade union movement. This would guarantee that the interests of the ruling class would be served.

The trade union leaders were to have one function and one function only: to act as the labor lieutenants of the bosses inside the trade unions. Today, every big trade union leader, without exception, plays this role.

Under class-collaborationist leadership, the unions have been forced to capitulate on every point. No progress has been made even on the burning need of trade-union unity, the accomplishment of which would present the capitalist class of this country with an imposing labor front of between twelve and thirteen million organized men. The craft-union bureaucracy of the AFL thinks only in terms of the infection of its ranks by the industrial unionism of the CIO and the wider fields of activity that unity might give to the Stalinists. In the CIO the Stalinist wing hampers unity out of fear that it would be sacrificed on the altar of union between Green and Murray; and the latter's wing of the CIO stalls on the question of unity out of fear of what would happen to its bureaucratic positions as well as out of doubt as to the reaction of the CIO

ranks against the kind of unity that the conservative officialdom of the two groups would probably establish. Unable to achieve unity on a healthy working-class basis, on the basis of considerations dictated by the best interests of organized labor, the bureaucrats of the two union centers fall back upon disgraceful public wranglings over jurisdiction, upon the arbitrament of Roosevelt and of the War Labor Board.

Bureaucratic interests also determined the departure of the UMWA from the CIO. No problem existed between the two that could not have been adjudicated within the united CIO. The Lewis group could not gain control of the CIO because the bulk of its leadership is actively supporting the war machine and the Roosevelt policy and would not turn over the CIO to a group which had more or less followed the isolationist line in the past. Whatever the bureaucratic considerations prompting Lewis may be, the fact remains that the UMWA is not as closely bound to the war machine as are the AFL and the CIO. For its own reasons, the Lewis group is steadily branching out into new and even unorganized fields. It sometimes goes so far as to present and pursue a more militant policy of action, a bolder program of demands, than do the other bureaucrats. This course of vying with Green and Murray for leadership of the organized workers does, however, make possible in many instances the advancement of working-class interests. It is important for trade-union militants to take advantage of the possibilities without falling victim to or sowing any illusions about the fundamentally class-collaborationist and bureaucratic policy pursued by Lewis no less than by the others.

## Unions Need Militant, Class-Conscious Leadership

Despite the official victories won by the bourgeoisie, and their apparent taming of the unions, neither the rank and file nor even the officialdom of the unions have capitulated completely. The weight of the war burden falling increasingly upon the workers, plus the gradual disillusionment of many workers with the democratic pretenses of imperialism, is creating a growing restlessness and demand for action among the ranks of the unions. Fear of being left without any mass base whatsoever and being completely at the mercy of the bourgeoisie, is prompting the union bureaucracy to raise their voices in protest once more against the injustices done the workers.

Contrary to the perspective outlined by the opportunists who want to "dig in" and hibernate during the war, the American workers are not complacent and paralyzed and disinclined to act in their class interests. The official statistics on strikes do not tell anything like the whole, or truthful, story. The fact is that thousands of workers are held back every week from action against capitalist iniquities only by the most desperate efforts of union officials. All indications are that far from having a perspective of increasing acquiescence by the workers, the militants must have a perspective of increasing militancy and activity by the workers.

By and large, these struggles will be DEFENSIVE in character, i.e., not struggles for better conditions as much as struggles against conditions and standards being worsened. But the fact that these struggles will be defensive does not mean that there will not be any struggles, as the Cannonite line has it. The militants must prepare for these fights, must organize themselves and their fellows in such a way as to prevent these struggles from exhausting or discouraging the workers, and seek to influence their course in such a direction as will bring greatest immediate benefit to the workers and their organizations and lead most speedily to their going over to the offensive again.

These considerations only serve to stress once more the key to the situation, which lies in the unpostponable need for a militant, class-conscious, resolute leadership in the trade unions. The combative moods and activities of the workers today can easily be frittered away, leaving the masses in a state of helplessness, if they continue to operate on the basis of the present half-baked, timid, covering policies and leadership of the unions. Until the militants organize to take the lead in the unions, the fighting spirit of the rank and file will fall to reach its rich fruition in victory.

## Economic Program for a Fighting Labor Movement

Organized labor in this period of the Second World Imperialist War, in this epoch of the death agony of capitalism and the threat of world fascism, really stands at the crossroads. It can sink under totalitarian subjection, or it can rise from its supine position, stand on its feet, face its class enemy, and move on to proletarian victory.

For this consummation the full political and organizational re-orientation of the entire working class is necessary. Its economic vanguard, the industrial union movement, whether CIO or the new movement of the UMWA, must be oriented and inspired toward the fulfillment of the promise of its youth. This means:

Militant action of the unions against any and all attempts on labor's rights and standards, from whatever source they come; from the bosses directly, or from the government as representative of the ruling class.

Unification of the entire labor movement for defense, and for an all-out offensive against further aggression from the bosses.

Repudiation of the no-strike agreement.

Lowering of the income taxes on the poor and increase of the taxes on the rich. The purchase of war bonds to be volun-

tary; no pay-roll deductions; no intimidation.

Reject the WLB Little Steel wage formula; demand a return to the "premium pay."

Reject all demands for a longer work week. Demand a base week of 40 hours at \$1.00 per hour; maximum week of 48 hours with eight hours at time and a half, Sundays, Saturdays and holidays at former "premium pay."

This is a realistic economic program for a militant labor movement. But not even such a program can be carried through without the political organization of the proletariat. It is only the revolutionary Marxist party that can assist the working class in the accomplishment of this goal. The Marxist revolutionaries alone have the necessary theoretical and organizational equipment for this task.

The first practical step for the trade unions on the political field is to break with and from the Republican and Democratic Parties and establish a class party of workers based on the trade unions. The unions must press toward this goal with the utmost vigor and speed. The proletariat has had experience enough with the two old parties, the parties of the capitalist ruling class....

## WHAT IS A WORKERS GOVERNMENT?

# How Does Workers' Government Differ from "Labor Government"?

By SUSAN GREEN

We present below the first in a series of articles on "What Is a Workers' Government?"

Is it puzzling, this distinction between a workers' government and a labor government? Surely, labor means workers. Then, what's the difference?

History has taught us that if the workers are to go forward out of the mire of capitalist chaos, unemployment and war—to a socialist society—they must use the instrument of a workers' government.

History has likewise taught us that what has come to be known as a labor government is an instrument of the capitalist class for maintaining its power over labor.

The next article in this series will deal with the historic examples of workers' governments, what they were able to do and what promise they hold for today. In the present article labor governments as tools of the ruling class are on parade.

### MACDONALD RULED FOR BRITISH BOSSES

The most perfect example of a labor government was the Ramsay MacDonald government in England in the early 1920's. MacDonald was head of the then powerful British Labor Party, was appointed Prime Minister and created a so-called Labor Cabinet. You would think that the scene was all set for marvellous strides forward—that the control of the capitalists over British society would be undermined and way made for the control by the workers of their own destiny.

The exact opposite happened. As Leon Trotsky wrote in his highly recommended little book, "Whither England?", MacDonald, as Prime Minister, "brings to bear all the methods of capitalist oppression and heads over these instruments of force intact to his Conservative successor in office."

As a matter of cold fact, the labor government ruled as stooges for the

British imperialist gang whose oppression the workers no longer wanted to tolerate. The First World War left British imperialism one of the military victors, but staggering economically. Its empire was badly shaken and its markets with it. So that the British workers were suffering from unemployment. To maintain profits, wages were being cut right and left. There was a series of tremendous strikes, and workers flocked into the Labor Party for redress through political action. The influence of the Russian Revolution was strong and gave the British workers a revolutionary outlook and hope for a socialist society.

The British ruling class was incapable of stemming this tide of working class rebellion single-handed. It, therefore, called in its lieutenants in labor's own ranks—the misleading labor leaders—to do the dirty work. THAT WAS THE MACDONALD GOVERNMENT.

The Conservatives had passed many laws against labor—which the labor government proceeded to enforce. To make it easier for British capitalists to compete in the world textile market, it permitted the miserable wages of the textile workers to be cut. It sanctioned a law providing for the lengthening of hours in the mines—also to assist the capitalists in world competition. It upheld the extreme Tory policy of oppression in India. And continued to build battlehips to prepare British imperialism for the present World War. And, the biggest plume in his bonnet, is the credit history gives MacDonald for crushing the general strike of 1926.

To be sure, MacDonald made "socialist" speeches, of a kind—as all misleading demagogues do—but not one step was taken in the direction of socialism. On the contrary, the MacDonald government did everything in its power to bolster and strengthen imperialism at home and abroad. It used its influence with the workers to run their discontent into

the ground and to dissipate their revolutionary energy—WHICH IS EXACTLY WHAT THE RULING CLASS REQUIRED FROM MACDONALD.

### "LABOR GOVERNMENT" CRUSHED GERMAN REVOLUTION

Another outstanding illustration of "labor government" betrayal of labor comes from Germany. In January, 1919, the German revolutionary movement, involving the broad mass of workers, was crushed in blood. The murderous business was carried out by a government of so-called "socialists"—Ebert, Scheidemann, Bauer, Noske. The frightened ruling class invited these labor turncoats to take over the reins of government, and from that vantage point to use their influence over the masses to get them to give up their revolutionary activities. When persuasion failed, these blood-hounds for the German Junkers used the armed forces of the capitalist state—outdoing the Junkers in Junkerism—to decapitate the revolutionary movement, jail thousands of workers, destroy their press and meeting halls.

At the juncture when the German workers had already formed their Councils of Workers and Soldiers as the basis for a true workers' government—the German ruling class pulled out of its hat the Ebert-Scheidemann "labor" government to destroy the embryo workers' government.

### AND IN FRANCE—THE PEOPLE'S FRONT

Almost two decades later, in the spring of 1936, a government of "socialists," Stalinists and radicals came into power in France—forming that ill-fated and ill-famed People's Front government—another so-called labor government with "socialist" Blum at its head. Just like the MacDonald government and the Ebert-Scheidemann government before it, it came into being to act as stooges for the capitalist class against the workers who were taking revolutionary action to overthrow the capitalist class.

Leon Trotsky wrote a remarkably lucid analysis of this period in French history in his pamphlet "Whither France?" This revolutionary period reached its height in the wonderful, strike movement of 1935. Not only were the workers taking over the factories, they were setting up committees to carry on in the place of the existing agencies of capitalist government. All the workers needed was honest, clear-headed, purposeful revolutionary leadership to guide them toward the socialist goal. They got the Blum sell-out government.

### WITH THE COMPLIMENTS OF THE FRENCH IMPERIALISTS.

The first thing it did was to placate the workers with a few reforms such as the 40-hour week and vacations with pay. But these reforms became meaningless in view of the widespread unemployment, the increase in the cost of living and all the other evils brought on the workers by the crisis in French capitalism.

Like any capitalist government, the Blum government began to mend the unmendable fences of French imperialism. It undertook an unprecedented armament program. It blocked aid to the Spanish workers in their fight against fascism because it feared workers' power. At home, it sent the Mobile Guards against striking workers—WHILE THE FRENCH FASCISTS THUMBED THEIR NOSES AT IT AND FLOURISHED LIKE STINK WEEDS.

The "socialists" and Stalinists in the People's Front government, together with the radicals, did signal service in saving French capitalism—for the time being—from overthrow by the workers. That was what they were put there for—even at the expense of strengthening the fascist elements.

### THE BRITISH COALITION WAR CABINET TODAY

Today there is nowhere in the world a labor government like the

MacDonald set-up, the Ebert-Scheidemann-Noske counter-revolutionary government or the People's anti-labor Front. But there is in England today a war coalition government. That is, so-called labor leaders have entered into the capitalist war cabinet to work with the ministers of the propertied classes. These so-called labor leaders are Bevin, Morrison and Attlee.

Professor Harold J. Laski, of the University of London, recently wrote an article for the New York Times Magazine—printed in part in last week's LABOR ACTION—in which he showed that British big business runs the British government, including the "labor" members thereof, namely, Bevin, Morrison and Attlee. The role of these three servitors of the British ruling class has been to sell the reluctant British workers an unpalatable bill of goods, i.e., the maintenance of British imperialism at home and abroad.

"All pivotal positions—economic, political and diplomatic—remain in the hands of the old ruling class," writes Professor Laski. The laborites in the government are doing their share to keep the workers from upsetting this status quo. That is what they were put there for. How much longer they will succeed in their work of betrayal, remains to be seen.

In the United States, where labor has not developed along the same political lines as in England and where there has been no powerful nation-wide Labor Party, there has never been a labor government. Even today the ruling class here does not find it necessary to include labor in a war coalition cabinet as in England. Perhaps American labor is backward only to develop along more advanced class-conscious and revolutionary lines.

But the American ruling class has drawn labor leaders into the agencies of government, into the various war boards to do here the job that Bevin, Morrison and Attlee do in England. The function of

the Murrays and Reuthers, the Greens and Tobins, has been to get labor to "cooperate" in making all the war sacrifices the ruling class demands from it.

The management-public-labor trio is a two-to-one arrangement under which the labor leaders buckle under to the pressure of capitalist interests represented by management directly and by the "public" indirectly. The same thing is happening here as happened everywhere and every time labor leaders enter into the capitalist government. In cooperating with the capitalist class, they serve the interests of that class against the interests of the working class.

For instance, the War Labor Board more and more makes unanimous decisions. In the case of the New York City transit workers, management, labor and the public all agreed that the transit workers are orphans without even the right to place their case for a wage increase before the WLB—perfect unanimity behind Boss LaGuardia.

Again, not only do labor leaders utilize the conventions of labor unions to ram down labor's throat the no-strike pledge, the relinquishment of double time for Sunday work, the Little Steel deal, etc.—but these leaders shamelessly turn over the rostrum of workers' conventions to capitalist politicians and officials of the capitalist government to propagandize the workers against their own interests.

Neither the MacDonald government in England nor the Ebert-Scheidemann government in Germany nor the People's Front in

France nor today's war coalition cabinet nor management-public-labor representation on government boards in this country—none of these have even a remote relation to a workers' government that can emancipate the workers from capitalism and lead on toward socialism. As shown above, they are all instruments for preserving capitalist class rule—for betraying working class interests. This is the historic pattern and purpose every time so-called labor leaders take over and run the government—AS IT EXISTS IN CAPITALIST SOCIETY. The same is true when so-called labor leaders or "socialists" enter the government in coalition with capitalist politicians.

In the next article you will read an explanation of why a real workers' government cannot be formed within the framework of the existing capitalist governmental structure. As stated above, the next article will also review the historic examples of a workers' government, what they accomplished, what promise they hold for the future.

## 'India in Revolt'

If you haven't yet ordered and read Henry Judd's magnificent pamphlet, "India in Revolt," do so immediately. Order your copy from the Workers Party, 114 West 14th Street, New York City. Twenty-five cents per copy; twenty cents in bundles of five or more.

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# Editorials

## Another Kind Of Absenteeism

On page one of this issue you will find an article on the causes of absenteeism in factories. Briefly, the point of the article is this: overwork, long hours, fatigue are the principal causes of absenteeism. Anyone who has ever spent a day in a factory working eight, ten or more hours, knows this. With workers consistently putting in a ten-hour day, six or seven days a week, they break down every so often. There is a limit to human endurance.

It is not our intention, however, to elaborate on the causes of absenteeism in this editorial. That is, of absenteeism in the factories. We here intend to speak of an absenteeism which, in percentage figures, is many times over factory absenteeism figures. We speak of Congress.

For example: on February 14, absenteeism in the House ranged during the day from a high of 80 per cent to a low of 14.5 per cent.

We do not say that "our" congressmen are sabotaging the war effort. Each of them, we are sure, is solidly behind the war and doing all he can for it. It is, you might say, their war. Nor do we accuse them of laziness. The congressman who absents himself from a session is surely kicking around the hallways of Congress or the caucus rooms of Washington.

No, the congressmen who do not turn up for roll call on a vote are not resting from their arduous labors. They are as ready as any man to stick at their job six or even eight hours a day.

What then is the cause? Well, examine the congressmen who stay away on any given bill. They are for the most part the "friends of the people"—the Roosevelt and "city" Democrats who are afraid to get in wrong with their constituencies by voting for reactionary legislation, but accomplish the same by playing possum.

It is a fact that the House is controlled by poll-tax legislators, anti-labor spokesmen and farm lobby representatives. This is a sign of the growing reaction which penetrates every nook and cranny of Washington—from the halls of Congress to the offices of the Administration.

Formally the Roosevelt congressmen, the "pro-New Deal" representatives, hold a slim majority. But they themselves are part of this growing reaction. However, they prefer to contribute to it in indirect ways in order to keep up appearances. What happens when a bill which is generally anti-labor in implication comes before the House? The avowedly reactionary congressmen show up in full force. Those who do not wish to acknowledge that they are going along with the trend play a rubber of bridge or go to the movies.

Not much was transacted on February 14. There were days and roll calls of greater importance. But what happened on this day is typical enough. A bill came up to increase the price of peanuts raised for

oil. (We are not here discussing the merits of the bill—only the way it was acted upon.) The farm bloc is against it because it would split their forces. Their object is to force higher prices on ALL farm commodities for the benefit of the rich farmers, processors and distributors who get the gravy from higher prices. About 30 per cent of the House was present for the discussion and vote. Almost the entire farm bloc was present. Not so the city congressmen. It so happened that the debate was postponed—possibly because the farm bloc itself couldn't agree. But those who were absent didn't anticipate this.

That is only a small illustration out of many. The "champions of the people" for the present, string along with outright reaction in such a way as they hope will leave as little mud as possible on their skirts. Tomorrow, as reaction becomes increasingly entrenched, they will turn up to cast their votes unashamedly.

What is indicated by all this? The answer is plain. What we need are representatives of an Independent Labor Party. They may not be able to control legislation in this fundamentally BOSS institution—Congress. But they will, at least, blast the schemes and connivings of the anti-labor forces, and thereby rally THEIR class, labor, to greater and more sweeping political action.

## Quit the WLB!

In a dissenting opinion signed by the four labor members of the WLB, the denial of a general wage increase to employees of the "Big Four" packing companies was called "discriminatory and inequitable." That's putting it mildly! However, we won't quibble with the delicacy of language employed by labor's representatives in this august body. All we ask is: what are they doing on the board?

From the very first, when the WLB enunciated its Little Steel formula, the labor members have been dissenting on important decisions. Almost all of these have been against labor. They have been "dissenting" . . . and the board has been acting. It is now high time that the labor members quit "dissenting" and get down to the business of DOING!

The entire rank and file of the union movement is fed up with the WLB. There have been repeated demands that the labor members get off the board and initiate action for the redress of labor's grievances.

No representative of labor has any business being on the WLB. If the labor members were to resign from the WLB and initiate independent labor action, they would accomplish what a barrelful of dissents couldn't possibly do. John L. Lewis broke up one government board that refused to see things labor's way by withdrawing the CIO's representatives from the board. Result: the anthracite miners won a dollar-a-day increase.

The same thing can be done now. THE FIRST THING IS TO GET OFF THE BOARD!

# Labor and Working Farmers Must Control Production - -

(Continued from page 3)

tables as lettuce and sweet potatoes are excluded from the "emergency ceilings." Others, like broccoli and spinach, aren't covered because they are limited in quantity anyway at this season of the year—so why not let the prices go merrily up?

But even with the "emergency ceilings" which are effective from February 23, the prices of the five favored vegetables are exorbitant. String beans cost 23 cents a pound, cabbage nine cents a pound, tomatoes 27 cents a pound, anemic carrots 10 cents a bunch, half-empty green peas 15 cents a pound. These are A&P Supermarket prices in New York City.

No wonder the housewife is panicky. AT SUCH PRICES SHE MUST LET THE NICE FRESH VEGETABLES REMAIN IN THE STORE BINS.

Just what is a working class family going to eat?

Meat is almost unobtainable and when obtainable, unobtainable because of price. Fish is very dear. Butter and fats are scarce. Supplies of dried beans and dried peas are already 20 per cent below normal. The high point values of ordinary prunes and raisins—so indispensable for certain minerals and vitamins—will make them prohibitive.

Mr. Byrnes' "positive program that will guarantee our people the basic living essentials that they must have at prices they can pay"—has gone the way of all such official "guarantees."

The Kiplinger Washington Agency, circulating its weekly letter privately to business men, made a most interesting disclosure about the food shortage in its letter of February 6. Mr. Kiplinger informed his paying clients that even if there were no lend-lease demand and no drain into the armed forces, the USA could not supply the 1943 food requirements, because food production in this land of plenty HAS BEEN GEARED ON THE BASIS THAT ONE-THIRD OF THE NATION NORMALLY GOES HUNGRY.

Increased employment for war production has put wages into the hands of wageless millions, placing them in the market for food. Without the demands of the armed forces and lend-lease, the government estimates it would require the cultivation of 30,000,000 more acres of land to be able to feed all three-thirds of the nation. But food production has shrunk while war production has expanded. And there IS the drain of lend-lease and of the armed forces.

The Roosevelt Administration has known right along about the peacetime curtailment of food production. But instead of doing something to get more food produced, it issued false and frequent assurances to the people. The only perceptible food policy that the government has consistently followed is to yield to the demands of the rich farm corporations growing richer on the war.

The menacing mess of food short-

ages, outrageous prices, black market cornering of scarce goods, is the result of government bungling plus aiding and abetting private-profit manipulations. The present food emergency is an unequivocal condemnation of the government, its agencies and big-business-farming corporations.

This is only the second year of war for the American people and already hunger lurks around the corner. All the signs point to a long war. What will another year of war bring if food control is allowed to remain in the hands of big-business-farming corporations with the government in their tow!

The working people must take certain urgent measures on their own and in their own behalf. Committees of workers, farmers and housewives just have to get into action.

These committees are a crying need to expose and smash the black markets that get the cream and half the milk of available supplies, thus making a mockery of rationing. Such committees must start functioning not only to keep prices from rising but to effect price cuts so that working people can buy what there is to buy.

Furthermore, committees of small farmers and workers must get in on the ground floor, contest the profit manipulations of the big-farm bloc, and get people's control of the production of food as an elementary step for self-preservation.

## SOCIALISM:-

### Its Victory Must Be Labor's Goal

By Ruth Stone

(In the February Reader's Digest, and reprinted in full page ads in newspapers all over the country, is an article by Eric Johnston, president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, entitled "Your Stake in Capitalism." Henry Kaiser's endorsement of this article as something "America needs just as much as ships" (!) challenges every worker to understand and make the socialist answer.)

American industry has come out with its manifesto. The American bosses are fighting for capitalism and they state it "without apology." Gathering into their ranks all those labor "leaders" who see no alternative to the profit system, they seek to delude workers into the belief that swelling profits is the way to bring heaven on earth to labor and not merely to business.

#### WHO SHOULD GET LABOR'S PRODUCT?

Mr. Johnston, citing William Green for his authority, demands for the bosses a "fair and just return upon their investments." Labor, says he, "cannot get anywhere by starving capital." But why should the bosses get a return on "THEIR capital"? What do they mean when they say "their"?

Such capital is "theirs" only by virtue of property "rights"—"rights" written into law by themselves to maintain the fiction of justice for their confiscation of the produce of labor. The source of such capital is no mystery. Capital represents the stored-up labor of millions of workers accumulated in the hands of the bosses. Nor is the role of such capital any mystery. "Capital," the great teacher of socialism, Karl Marx, said, "is dead labor that vampire-like only lives by sucking living labor and lives the more, the more labor it sucks."

Mr. Johnston would have us believe that the bosses should not only continue to own the already-amassed labor which they have confiscated. With the greed of every capitalist, he also believes that the additional labor daily stored up in machines by the sweat and toil of the workers should "return" to the bosses.

Once workers realize, however, that the "return" should be to them instead of to the bosses, they will have begun to see the socialist solution.

Mr. Johnston warns business that it "can get nowhere by starving labor. When it starves labor, it is starving the purchasers of its own product" (emphasis mine—R.S.). How smugly he takes for granted that the product belongs to the boss. And how cleverly he ignores the fact that capitalism, by its very nature, moves toward an actual curtailment of the consuming power of the masses at the same time that it unfolds limitless potentialities for consumption.

It is the very essence of capitalism to keep labor at a minimum point, just sufficiently above the starving point so that it can continue to produce—never enough above this point so that the worker could save for a period of not working. The boss has no other interest in the worker. Meanwhile, however, all the accumulated labor of the workers, stored up in machines, becomes ever more potentially productive of goods which, utilized for the workers, would unfold possibilities of unlimited development.

But, capitalism, no matter how it plans and hopes and prays, would never actually be able to do more than drive the worker to the bedrock of subsistence—although there is plenty to provide a featherbed of luxury for all.

Only socialism, where the stored-up labor is utilized for the social good, can realize the potentialities of human productivity and spiritual development. Only when accumulated labor belongs to those who produce it—to the worker who turns the wheels, instead of to the capitalist who clips the coupons—will men parallel in their human daily life the physical grandeur of a Boulder Dam.

#### LABOR HAS NO STAKE IN CAPITALISM

Mr. Johnston would also have us believe that government bureaucracy is the only alternative to capitalism. Because the government occasionally interferes with individualist excesses and profiting (e.g., ceding prices to keep the sky from being the limit, indictment of Anaconda, etc.), the bosses are often annoyed by its actions and forget that these annoyances protect the profit system by postponing mass indignation at its root evils. And so, Johnston would have labor believe that the government is a third party, standing above the class conflict and tending toward totalitarian rule in the interests of neither the bosses nor the worker.

What Johnston refuses to admit is that the government, while the bosses own the means of production, can only rule in the interests of the bosses' system. Likewise, if the workers owned the means of production, the government would rule in their interests.

Johnston urges the cooperation of labor and business, but claims that by cooperation he does not mean "surrender, either by business to labor or by labor to business." However, as has been so clearly illustrated in Vichy France, cooperation with a dominant group can only be collaboration in its interests. With this in mind, workers should close ranks and cooperate only with its own brothers to achieve socialism, spurning the pleas of the Johnstons and the Kaisers to take out a stake in capitalism.

## LABOR ACTION

A Paper in the Interest of Labor  
Published Weekly by the  
Labor Action Publishing Company  
114 WEST 14th STREET, NEW YORK, N. Y.  
(3rd Floor)  
Vol. 7, No. 9 March 1, 1943  
Editor: Emanuel Garrett  
Subscription Rate: 60 Cents a Year.  
75 Cents for Canada, New York and Foreign  
Re-entered as second-class matter May 24, 1939,  
at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the  
Act of March 3, 1979.

## Sparks in the News

By Everett Weston

"The line between seditious utterance and legitimate criticism is often a difficult one to draw. The 'clear and present danger doctrine' enunciated by Mr. Justice Holmes has frequently been quoted as constituting the criterion for seditious prosecutions. As a statement of policy or general objective it is still valid. As a guide for determination of action in specific cases, it falls short. . . . When concerned with waiting for a danger to become clear and present, the test may enforce the risk of meeting it too late."—Wendell Berge, Department of Justice official.

"Two billion acres (about five per cent of the earth's land area, and 42 per cent of the present area under cultivation) would, under scientific agricultural methods, provide an optimum food supply for the entire population of the globe. . . . No account is taken of increased yields we may confidently expect from continued research by agronomists, plant geneticists, entomologists, experts in animal husbandry, forage crops, and soils."—1940 Yearbook of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

"The sharp expansion of New York transactions . . . swelled the volume of bank clearings for this city and the country at large to the highest level for any week during the past twelve years."—New York Times.

"A conversation between a Naval Intelligence investigator and a government employee. The investigator was a woman, and finally got to the question, 'What is his racial extraction?' 'I don't know what you mean,' was the answer. 'Well, you know,' the investigator replied, 'is he Italian or Spanish or Jewish or anything like that?' 'I never asked about his parents' nationality,' was the reply; 'naturally he himself is American.' 'Come now,' the investigator said impatiently, 'you know what I mean. Is he Anglo-Saxon?'—The Nation.

"Mrs. Mabel K. Staupers, executive secretary of the National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses, . . . said the Army, notwithstanding its need for nurses, still accepted Negro nurses on a quota basis and that the 200 who were serving the Army had been assigned on a segregated basis, all with Negro units. No Negro nurse has been admitted to the Navy, she declared."—New York Times.

Mussolini's newspaper, Popolo d'Italia, has discarded its slogan "Vinceremo" (We will win) and substituted "Non vinceranno" (They shall not win).

"Today's Pravda announced the removal from office of a thirty-year-old woman commissar for social services in the Russian Federated Socialist Republic, A. P. Grishakova, who was said to have tolerated officials under her charge who employed heartlessly bureaucratic methods toward the dependents of fighting men."—New York Times.

"Ten per cent for compulsory savings is the lowest figure mentioned in the discussion of that program. . . . (If adopted) here is what an employer would have to deduct from his workers' wages . . . every payday:

- For pay-as-you-go . . . 19 pct.
- For victory tax . . . 5 pct.
- For social security . . . 1 pct.
- For forced savings . . . 10 pct.

"In other words, a 10 per cent compulsory savings program combined with a pay-as-you-go tax plan would mean a deduction every payday of 35 per cent—more than one-third—of each worker's pay in excess of a small exemption that probably would average about \$12 a week."—U.S. News.

"More than that; there are plans to raise the victory tax to 10 per cent or higher, and to raise the social security tax by several per cent.

"After more than seven years since the passage of the Public Utility Holding Company Act, calling for stringent regulation and integration of public utility holding companies, the Securities and Exchange Commission has still to effect its so-called 'death sentence' program against a major holding company system. . . . A bill has been introduced into the House . . . calling for suspension of the operations of the 'death sentence'."—New York Times.

"Judge Charles E. Wyzanski . . . pressed all four indictments returned last week against Armour & Co. of Boston and four district managers in an investigation of a 'black market' in meat and butter in Massachusetts. The indictments, nullified because of a legal technicality involving the firm's location, charged conspiracy to violate price ceilings."—New York Times.

"Forty-eight Russian generals . . . were given one of two orders, either the Order of Kutusov, in memory of the Russian general who retreated before Napoleon in 1812, or the Order of Suvarov, who fought the French at the end of the eighteenth century and carried out many brilliant campaigns. Each order bears the likeness of the czarist general."—New Leader.

"The nation's Class I railroads had a net operating income of \$1,480,940,760 in 1942, the Interstate Commerce Commission reported today, 48.3 per cent more than the \$998,286,708 earned in 1941."—New York Times.

"Which class of society do you think Class I represents?"

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### WORKERS PARTY PLATFORM

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

**LABOR MUST DEFEND ITSELF!**

1. Hands off the right to strike! For the defense of civil rights and all workers' rights! Against any wartime dictatorship measures!
2. \$1.00-an-hour minimum pay! Time and a half for overtime; double time for Sunday and holiday work.
3. Wage increases to meet rising costs. No wage or job freezing! Equal pay for equal work!
4. For a greater share of the increasing national income. For a higher standard of living!
5. No sales tax on consumer goods! No tax on wages! Against forced savings!
6. For control of price fixing and rationing by committees of working class organizations, housewives and farmers' organizations. Freeze rents and consumer goods prices at the 1940 level to stop the rise in the cost of living.
7. No government contract without a union contract! The closed shop in all war industries!
8. Maintain and increase all government social services!

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

9. A government levy on capital to cover the cost of the imperialist war. Confiscate all war profits!
10. Conscript all war industries under workers' control!
11. Expropriate the "Sixty Families"—the three percent of the people who own 96 per cent of the national wealth!

**DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS TO THE DRAFTEES!**

12. The right of free speech, free press and free assembly for the men in the armed forces.
13. The right of soldiers to vote in all elections.
14. The right of all youth, male or female, to vote at the age of eighteen. Old enough to fight; old enough to work; old enough to vote!
15. For adequate dependency allowances paid by the government with NO deductions from the soldier's pay.

**SMASH JIM CROW!**

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

**BE PREPARED!**

18. For Workers' Defense Guards, trained and controlled by the unions, against vigilantes and fascist attacks!
19. For an Independent Labor Party and a Workers' Government! No political support to the Roosevelt government!
20. For Peace Through Socialism! For the independence of all colonies!
21. For a World Socialist Federation! Only a socialist world will destroy capitalist imperialism and fascist barbarism!

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