

# Labor Must Act To Free The 18 Gag Law Victims

By The Editors

When Roosevelt and Biddle in July 1941 indicted the Minneapolis Truckdrivers Local 544-CIO and Trotskyist leaders under the Smith "Gag" Act, many labor leaders preferred to view this as an exceptional and isolated case. They treated the Minneapolis trial as a private conflict between the defendants and government which did not affect them or the rest of the labor movement. Their chief concern was to uphold Roosevelt's reputation as a "friend of labor" and guardian of civil liberties.

Events since the trial have cut the ground from under such illusions and have served to demonstrate the far-reaching significance of the Minneapolis prosecutions and convictions. In wielding the Smith Act club against the Trotskyists, the government launched the initial attack of an all-out offensive by Big Business and its political agents to smash the entire union movement and destroy the democratic rights of the American people.

The Minneapolis prosecutions and convictions were deliberately conceived and carried through as an essential part of that offensive. In planning their campaign for undermining the unions and enslaving the workers, the capitalist rulers of America sought to forge powerful legal weapons with which to strike down organized labor. The Smith "Gag" Law, passed by Congress and signed by Roosevelt, was the first of such weapons. That law, strengthened by the precedent established through the imprisonment of the 18, now serves as a cornerstone in the structure of repressive legislation erected in the past three years to deprive labor of its rights and liberties and safeguard the wealth and privileges of America's Sixty Families.

Big Business and the government, emboldened by the effectiveness of their new reactionary legal weapon, have since added other deadly ones to their arsenal. The Smith "Gag" Law has been supplemented by the Smith-Connelly anti-strike law. And now as a climax Roosevelt has demanded a forced labor law.

It is true that these repressive laws are designed primarily for use against labor militants who dare to stand up and defend the interests of the workers. But the anti-labor offensive is mounting to such a pitch that no labor leader, however servile, can consider himself immune from the fury of the reactionary forces. Attorney-General Biddle has given prompt proof of this by his use of the Smith "Gag" Act and the imprisonment of the 18 as a precedent in the deportation proceedings against the CIO Longshoremen's Union leader, Harry Bridges, one of the most grovelling supporters of Roosevelt.

Thus it has become clear that the fight to free the 18 Trotskyists and to repeal the Smith "Gag" Act is an inseparable part of labor's struggle against the present Roosevelt-Wall Street anti-labor drive.

Just as the Smith "Gag" Act was the forerunner of a host of repressive anti-labor laws, so the imprisoned Trotskyists and Local 544-CIO leaders are only the first of many other militants who will be framed up and jailed unless the labor movement puts up a determined fight to free the 18. An aroused labor movement, fully aware of the danger to its own existence contained in this violation of democratic rights, can compel Roosevelt to release the Smith "Gag" Act's first victims. The fight to liberate the 18 is thus a primary task and duty of organized labor in its struggle for self-preservation.

## LOCAL CRDC BRANCHES ACTIVE IN CAMPAIGN TO FREE THE 18

The Civil Rights Defense Committee reports progress in its national campaign to win the release of the eighteen class-war prisoners in the Minneapolis Labor case. In the past few weeks the New York Committee has secured over 1000 signatures from workers throughout the city on petitions urging President Roosevelt to grant unconditional pardon to the Minneapolis prisoners. Similar petitions are now being circulated by local CRDC branches among trade unions and progressive groups all over the country.

The New York Local of the Civil Rights Defense Committee presented a Musical at Carnegie Chamber Music Hall on February 26. An overflow audience responded with enthusiasm to excellent performances by a violinist, pianist, and Spanish dancer. Swelled by contributions from local unions, the proceeds of the affair totaled well over \$300.

**SAN FRANCISCO**  
In San Francisco an assemblage of members and friends of the local Civil Rights Defense Committee attended a performance of "Trial by Jury," musical satire of the Minneapolis Labor trial, presented on February 20. A cash collection of \$119 was forwarded for the Minneapolis Prisoners' Pardon and Relief Fund, and a number of pledges for the period of the imprisonment

of the eighteen were made by CRDC supporters. The audience sent President Roosevelt a telegram urging unconditional pardon for the 18 victims of the Smith "Gag" Act, calling their conviction a violation of the Bill of Rights that "challenges every supporter of civil liberties."

The National Office of the Civil Rights Defense Committee this week moved into new quarters in the same building at 160 Fifth Avenue, New York. Three volunteer Field Representatives have been added to the staff. "This expansion is necessary," stated Evelyn Anderson, Acting Secretary, "because of the intensification of our national campaign to mobilize all liberal and labor forces behind our fight to free the 18 and to secure the repeal of the Smith 'Gag' Act."

Among the prominent union leaders who have protested the frameup and imprisonment of the 18 are Tucker P. Smith, Executive Director of the Detroit Joint Board, URWSEA-CIO; William Schaffer, President of Cramp Shipyard Local 42, IUMSWA-CIO; Thomas DeLorenzo, President of Brewster Local 365, UAW-CIO; Louis Nelson, Manager-Secretary of Local 155, ILGWU; and Irving Abramson, President of the New Jersey State CIO Council.

The Civil Rights Defense Committee is greatly in need of funds to carry out its work as well as to aid the 18 prisoners and their families. All contributions should be sent to James T. Farrell, Chairman, Civil Rights Defense Committee, at 160 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

# THE MILITANT

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## Baruch Plan Devised To Pave Way For A Wall Street Grab Of Billions

### CIO Publishes Its First Edition of Servicemen's News

The first number of the Servicemen's Edition of the CIO News was published last week. The publication of a miniature overseas edition by the CIO is a step in the right direction. The organized labor movement in this country has over 2,000,000 members in the armed services. These union men and women have the right to know what labor is doing to safeguard their interests at home. Equally important is the need to provide them with an antidote to the poisonous propaganda disseminated by the capitalist press. The next step is to see that the Servicemen's Edition is available for distribution at all the post exchanges and other avenues of distribution provided by the Army and Navy.

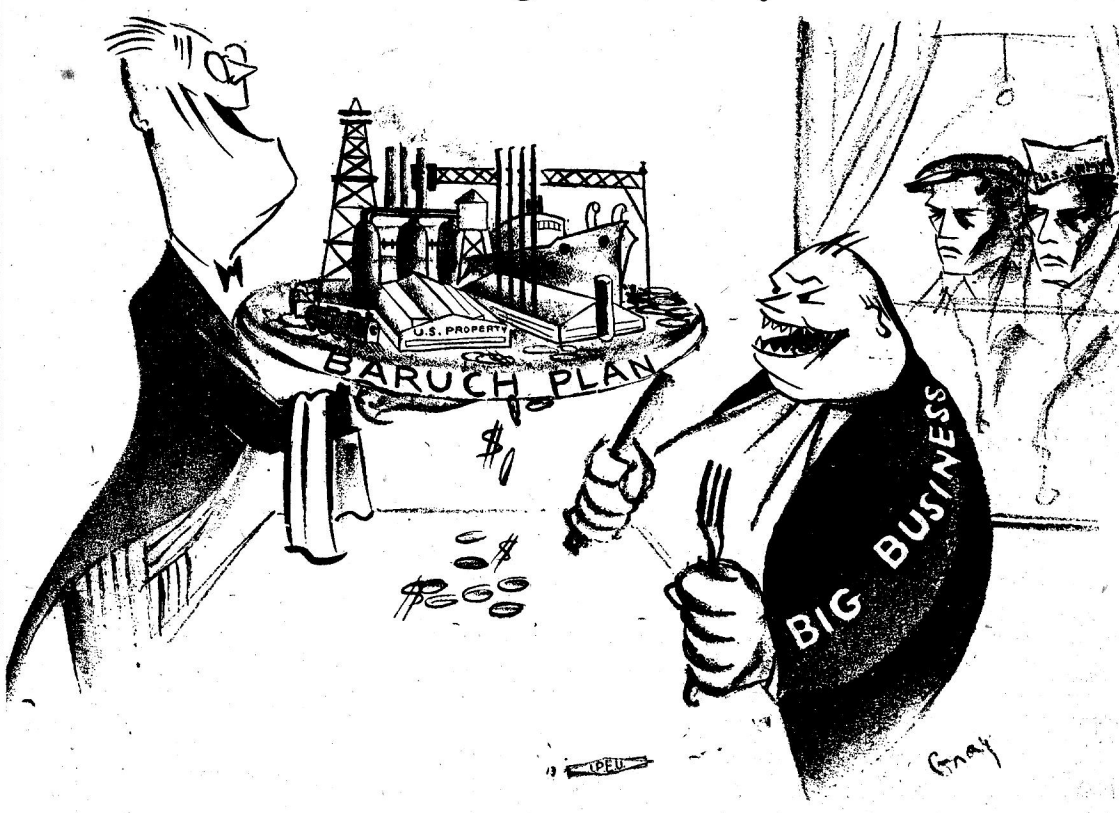
#### LIMIT DISTRIBUTION

So far the Army and Navy have made their facilities available only to a limited number of capitalist papers, such as the New York Times, the Chicago Tribune and the Chicago Sun. The Army has indicated that the right to distribute miniature overseas editions of American newspapers through Army post exchanges may be made available to other newspapers "provided there was a sufficient demand from the troops." The Servicemen's Edition of the CIO News has been denied these facilities and must now be sent by first class mail addressed to individuals in the armed forces. By the use of this primitive method only a very limited number of servicemen will get to read the CIO paper.

The CIO claims over 1,000,000 members in the armed forces. There are probably as many and

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### Serving The Greedy



## WLB Squabble Over Procedure Exposes Real Nature Of Board

By C. Thomas

The steel wage dispute, referred to the War Labor Board after negotiations with the employers bogged down, has precipitated a major squabble among members of the board. This dissension has further served to expose the real function of the WLB as an instrument to enforce Roosevelt's wage freeze.

The United Steel Workers, CIO, are demanding an increase of 17 cents per hour. Under Roosevelt's Executive Order No. 9328, the so-called "hold the line" order, the WLB was instructed to limit wage increases to the Little Steel formula. As any wage increase granted the

Upon certification of the steel wage dispute to the WLB, the

AFL members petitioned the board on Feb. 9 to ask Roosevelt to modify the Little Steel formula in line with the actual increase in the cost of living. The petition to "ask Roosevelt" to abandon his wage freezing Executive Order was rejected by the board. The union's wage demands were then referred to a six-man panel which was instructed to hold hearings on "procedure." The conflict now raging is over what "procedure" the six-man panel will adopt.

The AFL representatives contend that if the panel recommends taking testimony on a change in the administration's "wage stabilization policy" it could not be done on the basis of the wage demands of one union or one group of employers. Under such circumstances, they insist, the panel must invite the testimony of all unions and employers' associations interested in the question of a change in the "wage stabilization" policy. The crux of the dispute between the AFL and CIO members on the WLB was presented by a labor reporter for the New York Times, Feb. 24:

"The AFL members favor the direct approach to the President as the most practicable one, since the hearings before the steel panel or any other machinery setup may take weeks and a decision delayed for months."  
**CIO POLICY**  
"The CIO members of the board feel that the steel wage case, started four months ago, should be the criterion on which the wage stabilization policy should be changed."  
The employer members on the board take the position that the panel must recommend that the board has no authority to hear arguments in favor of abandoning the Little Steel formula. They insist that any change in wage policy is up to Congress and that the WLB should carry out its "duty" by promptly rejecting the wage demands of the steel workers as a violation of Roosevelt's wage policy.  
The attitude of the members of the WLB supposedly representing the "public" is that the steel panel, in line with instructions, will segregate the data obtained in the hearings into two parts. One part will deal with adjustments that fall within the Little Steel formula and the other with testimony bearing on the abandonment of the formula. "The public members may then take the position," says the Times reporter, "that it is for the Presi-

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## Government Schemes To Give New Plants To Corporations

Huge Profits Guaranteed in Reconversion; But Jobs Not Assured to Workers, Veterans

By Art Preis

Wall Street's conspiracy to make a grand-slam profits-steal on all war contracts terminations and swindle the American people out of government-owned plants and equipment worth tens of billions has been endorsed and set in motion by Roosevelt through the administration-sponsored Baruch-Hancock plan for "post-war adjustment."

Heralded by the entire Big Business press as capitalism's "Blueprint for Post-War Prosperity," this scheme for industrial "demobilization and reconversion," as one press commentator observed, contains nothing which the ruling monopolists "might have asked and which has not been given them." There is no mention of organized labor in the entire report.

#### WALL ST. AUTHORS

This so-called "prosperity blueprint" was drafted at the instigation of Roosevelt, acting through his Director of the Office of War Mobilization, Southern poll-tax Democrat James M. Byrnes. To head the OWM unit drafting the plan Byrnes last November assigned Bernard M. Baruch, multimillionaire stock market manipulator, agent of the House of Morgan and Roosevelt's personal consultant. John M. Hancock, associate of the Lehman international banking interests, was selected as Baruch's assistant.

The real flesh and bones of the plan is an elaborate and explicit program to protect the profits and monopoly interests of Big Business and give Wall Street an even greater share of America's economy.

To this end, the plan contains two major provisions. So that the corporations may realize full profits on government contracts regardless of the cessation of military hostilities, a provision is made to "assure quick cash, pending settlement" on all terminated war contracts. This ensures "the immediate payment—the full 100 per cent" on all completed contracts and from 90 to 100 per cent on the "uncompleted portion of the contract."

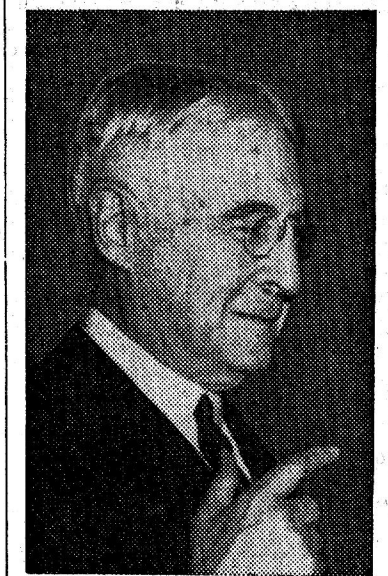
#### QUICK SETTLEMENT

Profit is guaranteed even on the costs of unfabricated raw materials. The government contracting agencies which have already showered billions in war profits upon the corporations are authorized to "make the settle-

## Big Business Men Chosen To Direct Reconversion Plan

Wall Street could scarcely have picked more dependable men to serve its interests in drafting and executing its "plan for post-war adjustments" than Bernard M. Baruch, William L. Clayton and Brig. Gen. Frank T. Hines.

Baruch, chief author of the Big Business "post-war grab-all"



BERNARD BARUCH

plan, is included in the official list of "America's Sixty Families", with a private fortune estimated at around \$40,000,000.

His fortune was garnered through slick stock market manipulations, particularly in copper stocks. He got his start in the brokerage business with the aid of James Keene, confidential broker for J. P. Morgan and Company. He made his first big money through assisting the

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## Proposed URW Wage Revision Falls Far Short Of Increase In Cost Of Living

By Joe Andrews

AKRON, Feb. 27. — The officials of the United Rubber Workers of America, CIO, after a general wage conference, have demanded an industry-wide general wage increase of 12 cents an hour. This 12-cent an hour demand represents a surrender of the CIO principle that wages must meet the rising cost of living. Although it sounds like a sizeable increase, as a matter of fact it lags far behind the climb in living costs.

Last year the WLB set up a rubber panel to recommend a decision on URW wage demands. The panel found that, according to the Little Steel formula, the rubber workers were entitled to an 8-cent general wage increase.

#### WLB ACTION

But in the rubber case the WLB did not abide even by the Little Steel wage-freeze formula. It granted a three-cent an hour increase, thus provoking the May strike of 50,000 rubber workers in Akron, which ended without any change in the WLB decision. The rubber workers remained there-

22-cent an hour general increase to meet the 25% rise in living costs since January 1, 1941 admitted by this government bureau.

#### URWA LEADERS GIVE IN

The URWA leadership, however, arbitrarily chose the 12-cent figure instead of asking for a 40-cent an hour increase to meet the real rise in living costs, for fear their demands would sound "unreasonable."

By this capitulation to the employers' propaganda that the workers' standard of living must fall while war-profits are skyrocketing, the URW leaders have admittedly given up the fight to keep wages on a par with rising prices. This is a cowardly surrender of the repeated principle of the CIO that wages should rise as living costs go up. It is the direct result of the failure of the CIO leadership to fight for an automatic escalator clause in all wage agreements — the

only protection against constantly rising living costs.

The 12-cent demand represents a voluntary acceptance by the URW heads of a cut in real wages. Even if the rubber union should win the 12-cent general increase, this would mean that rubber workers since January 1, 1941 have increased their wages about 15%. That would still be 28% below the cost of living rise estimated by AFL and CIO statistics. The rubber leaders by accepting this 28 percent lag of wages behind prices, have actually acquiesced in a 28 percent real wage cut.

Meanwhile the rubber corporations have more than doubled their profits since the beginning of the war. Only a resolute struggle for the automatic rising scale of wages to meet soaring living costs can protect the rubber workers from steady reductions in their living standards.

#### "NO COMPULSION"

Here is how Senator Warren R. Austin, co-author of the Austin-Wadsworth national service act, replied to critics who contended that the measure, if adopted, would constitute forced labor.

"The Senator maintained steadfastly that there was no compulsion involved in his bill. 'Nobody would be compelled to work,' he said. However, if any one refused to, after losing the various appeals provided in the measure, he would go to jail." (N. Y. Herald-Tribune, Feb. 17.)

are under its jurisdiction. Referring back this fundamental question, the full board may find that it has no authority to consider some issues of this case at all, in which event it will have to ask the President what to do next, resulting in a stalemate all around."

#### WLB RUNAROUND

The whole record of the WLB, especially since the wage dispute of the coal miners, confirms the opinion that the BEST that can

(Continued on page 3)



### The Negro Struggle

By Charles Jackson

#### The Army Marches On

The Army marches on and by its side, marching step for step, marches old Jim Crow who strives to crush the Negro soldier in our separate Negro Army under an oppressive burden of mistreatment at the hands of both Army officers and civilians, of intolerable transportation conditions and of inequalities in the ordinary facilities of army life. A few of the latest steps in this march are discussed below.

states that have such laws but it is spreading these same practices throughout many Northern States such as Michigan that actually have laws on their statute books making it illegal to enforce this practice in public places. The Army policy is obviously to abide by state law in the backward South and violate state law in the more progressive North.

#### JIM CROW ABROAD

Negroes must also wake up to the serious world-wide consequences of this policy and take militant action now. This policy is at present being carried east and west and the slander of racial inferiority spreads with every new invasion front. In England, according to the New York Times, a new British war order was issued forbidding members of the ATS, the English "WACS", from speaking to Negro American soldiers except in the presence of white persons. This was obviously at the request of the prejudiced American Officers Staff.

Also in combat areas Negro troops are almost invariably branded as inferiors by the type of duty to which they are assigned. According to a recent issue of Time Magazine, "the high command has trouble finding combat jobs for them. There is no lack of work to be done by Negroes as labor and engineering troops — the Army's dirty work."

Negro Medical officers, Mr. Boyd says, had pronounced several of the men physically unfit to fly but were overruled by white medical officers. He openly charges that "this fact should explain some of the many fatal plane crashes at this base in which colored pilots have lost their lives."

One of the most frequent subjects of complaint by Negro soldiers is the persecution to which they are subjected while being transported from camp to camp. Such an example happened last week near Bristol, Tenn. when Negro soldiers who had not eaten in over 24 hours were preparing to be seated and fed in the end of a Pullman diner legally set aside for the "colored race".

In the rush that accompanies the "war effort" the curtain was forgotten but they were not too rushed to forget the Jim Crow State law just because there were hungry soldiers waiting. The Army is not only giving silent sanction to segregation in those

All of us with relatives or friends in the Army who have written home or been back on furlough are well acquainted with the type of facts enumerated above — and with some portraying even worse conditions. The question now on all our lips is what can we here at home do in a practical way that will really carry us on toward the goal of putting an end to such home-grown atrocities that invariably accompany Jimcrowsism in the Army or elsewhere? Next week we will discuss the only course of action that can logically do that job.

#### PIONEER PARAGRAPHS

### PROLETARIAN DISCIPLINE IN THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT

"For us the party must be a combat organization which leads a determined struggle for power. The Bolshevik party which leads the struggle for power needs not only internal democracy. It also requires an imperious centralism and an iron discipline in action. It requires a proletarian composition conforming to its proletarian program. The Bolshevik party cannot be led by dilettantes whose real interests and real lives are in another and alien world. It requires an active professional leadership, composed of individuals democratically selected and democratically controlled, who devote their entire lives to the party, and who find in the party and in its multifarious activities in a proletarian environment, complete personal satisfaction.

The proletarian revolutionist is a disciplined man, since the party cannot exist as a combat organization without discipline. When he finds himself in the minority, he loyally submits to the decision of the party and carries out its decisions, while he awaits new events to verify the disputes or new opportunities to discuss... "The petty-bourgeois intellectual, who wants to teach and guide the labor movement without participating in it, feels only loose ties to the party and is always full of 'grievances' against it. The moment his toes are stepped on, or he is rebuffed, he forgets all about the interests of the movement and remembers only that his feelings have been hurt; the revolution may be important, but the wounded vanity of a petty-bourgeois intellectual is more important. He is all for discipline when he is laying down the law to others, but as soon as he finds himself in a minority, he begins to deliver ultimatums and threats of split."

From "The Struggle for a Proletarian Party" pages 14-15, by James P. Cannon. Published 1943 by Pioneer Publishers, 302 pages, cloth \$2, paper \$1.50; order from Pioneer Publishers, 116 University Pl., N. Y. 3, N. Y.)

# Why All Labor Must Support Our Fight To Free The 18

(The following article written by its Chairman and reprinted by permission of the Civil Rights Defense Committee, is the foreword to a new pamphlet on the 18 prisoners in the Minneapolis Labor Case, being published by the CRDC. Copies of this 32-page pamphlet can be obtained at 10 cents each from the CRDC National Office, 160 Fifth Ave., New York 10, New York.)

By JAMES T. FARRELL, NOTED NOVELIST

The Minneapolis Labor Case is the major case of the present war period involving the rights of labor and freedom of speech. The 18 defendants, now serving their periods of imprisonment in federal jails, have been made convicts by the United States Government merely because of their opinions. The Smith "Gag" Act under which they were convicted is in flagrant contradiction with the Bill of Rights which states unconditionally that "Congress shall pass no laws... abridging freedom of speech."

Despite this flat contradiction between the provisions of the Smith Act and those in the Bill of Rights, the Supreme Court of the United States has, on three occasions now, refused even to hear the appeal of the defendants. IMPERILS FREEDOM

The menace involved in these actions by the government and the federal courts should be clearly seen by all who have concern with the rights of labor and of freedom of speech. The history of fascism teaches us that the first attacks made by reaction are against the labor movement, and usually against its extreme left wing. The 18 prisoners in the Minneapolis Case belong to the Socialist Workers Party and to Minneapolis Truckdrivers Local 544-CIO. As their indictments specifically state, they have been put behind bars because they propagated the ideas of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky, because they believe in the principles of the "Communist Manifesto."

Now the force of law and the police power of the state, instead of reason, argument and debate, have become weapons used to combat the ideas of these defenders of Marxian socialism. Whether or not one agrees with the program and perspectives of this working-class political movement, it cannot be denied that Marxian socialists have consistently been in the forefront of the struggle for the advancement of labor and the defense of democratic rights. They have pledged the sincerity of their convictions, not merely by words, but by deeds. In many countries and for generations they have suffered jailing, torture and death at the hands of reaction in loyalty to their ideas.

The facts of this case plainly demonstrate that one can become a criminal here today in the United States if one defends these ideas. For, it must be repeated, these men have been imprisoned not for any overt action, but merely because of the views which they have presented openly and publicly. PREPARES FASCISM

This attack upon labor, this suppression of socialist ideas and imprisonment of socialists paves the way toward fascist reaction even if it is taken by a government which proclaims itself the enemy of fascism. This is the way that fascism undermined democracy and seized power in other countries. Will we permit this to be repeated in the United States? Is it going to happen here?

Now we see this pattern, which ultimately led to fascism elsewhere, unfolding in this country. The government has promptly used the precedent established in the Minneapolis Case for another attack upon labor in its latest effort to deport Harry Bridges, CIO Longshoremen union leader, even although he is a staunch supporter of the administration's policies. This should demonstrate

## One of the Eighteen



Grace Carlson, only woman among the eighteen Minneapolis class-war prisoners, is serving a sixteen-month sentence in the penitentiary at Alderson, West Virginia, separated from all her comrades. In 1940 Grace resigned her post as Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor to the Minnesota State Department of Education to run as Socialist Workers Party candidate for the United States Senate. In 1942 she ran for mayor of Saint Paul, and although already convicted, received 3 percent of the total vote cast. At the time of her imprisonment, she was New York City organizer for the SWP.

—if further demonstration is needed—that it is not only the 18, not only opponents of the administration's policies, whose rights and liberties are endangered by the Smith "Gag" Act. The entire labor movement, the cherished democratic rights of the American people are directly threatened.

### "DANGEROUS THOUGHTS"

Free speech is most important for those who have something new, important and vital to say. It means little to those who agree with prevailing opinion, supported by the powers that be. The fundamental significance of the rights of free speech and free press is that they permit those sponsoring other views to express them openly and in public. Where such guarantees of free expression exist, men are enabled to think honestly.

If the minds of men are not free, if they are made to feel that thoughts alone are dangerous and criminal, then the seeds of cowardice are implanted in the midst of society. Cultivate this seed by establishing precedents such as this, based upon the Mikado's doctrine of "dangerous thoughts," and you will have established one of the most important prerequisites for a police state, based on force and fear.

#### OUR DUTY

This pamphlet contains a summary of the salient facts in the Minneapolis Labor Case and brief biographies of the 18 prisoners. The story of their lives shows how they have fought for the interests of labor, for their ideas, and for a better world. They have not given up that cause, even at the price of jailing. Today behind prison bars they remain loyal to their principles. It is the duty of those of us who are outside the prison walls and can speak and act, who understand the importance of this case, who realize the dangers it can lead to, it is our duty to devote ourselves to the campaign for their freedom. It is our duty to fight for the repeal of the vicious Smith "Gag" Act. Unless we do this and do it vigorously, there may be many more than these 18 behind bars.

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## Labor Organizations And Parties In Argentina

By A. Roland

Argentina has been built up by the immigrants who flocked there before the war from southern Europe. The large numbers of Italians and Spaniards settled down for the most part in the cities and towns. Conditions on the farms were not such as to attract European workers. Today the Argentine presents somewhat of a paradox for a semi-colonial country, in that 74% of the population live in the urban centers and only 26% are rural.

In a land of wide spaces where there could be land for all, the masses live in wretched housing, in overcrowded cities and towns. The condition of the working class is reflected first of all in the low level of pay. The lower paid white collar workers receive about \$16 per month. A grocery clerk may receive \$21 per month, a stenographer \$30. The best paid workers are the railwaymen who earn \$50 a month. The cost of living has been rising rapidly in the recent period so that inflation threatens at the very time when Argentine warehouses bulge with farm commodities that cannot be shipped out.

#### UNION ORGANIZATION

Textiles form the largest industry in Argentina, with 320 cotton mills, 20 spinning mills, and 30 weaving mills. Shoe factories employ 30,000 workers. The 150,000 railwaymen make up just under 20% of the industrial proletariat. This proletariat is well organized in trade unions. In 1939 sixty-six percent of all industrial workers were organized.

It must be remembered that the largest enterprises are foreign-owned, so that a strike is directed immediately against the imperialists. The government often found it politically expedient in the past war to tolerate the trade unions and the strikes of workers so long as these were directed against foreign business. As in Mexico, the government has maintained a firm hold on the trade unions, their leaders accommodating themselves to government policies. But in the present period the ruling class feels a threat to its own power in the labor movement.

Little attempt has been made towards the organizing of the agricultural laborers. The farm workers in the sugar cane fields, the workers who produce yerba mate, the lumber and quebracho laborers—these represent contract labor at its worst, worse even than in the deep South of the United States. The same evils arising from company stores, company scrip, exorbitant prices for everything, terrible housing, bad food, exist in the rural hinterland as in the backward areas of the USA. The pay is a few cents a day, very rarely as much as 50 cents. There are 200,000 such workers who still live in virtual peonage.

#### ANARCHIST INFLUENCE

The organizing of workers into trade unions goes back to the period of German immigration in 1882. The Germans brought with them the ideas of social democracy, so that the earliest unions came under socialist influence. But the later influx of workers from Italy and Spain changed the complexion of the trade unions. In 1901 the first big dock strikes occurred in Buenos Aires under the leadership of the Anarchist Regional Labor Federation.

These strikes were bloodily suppressed and led to the wholesale expulsion in 1902 of Spanish and Italian trade union leaders. The movement was broken, but

## Steel Demands Buried In WLB Wage Graveyard

(Continued from page 1)

granted a retroactive clause after their Christmas eve walkout. The retroactive clause, framed by Roosevelt to glue the workers back into the plants, contains the tricky formulation that: "If any wage adjustments are made they must be made in accordance with the act of Congress of Oct. 2, 1942 (the Stabilization Act) and executive orders numbers 9250 and 9328, and the policy directive of May 12, 1943." All of which means that any wage adjustment made must be within the Little Steel formula!

The steel wage dispute is the number one wage controversy involving labor's struggle against the administration's wage freeze. The New York Times speaks for Big Business when its editors write: "WLB's decision in the pending case on steel wages will be crucial... WLB must hold the line." The steel worker's struggle for higher wages is indeed crucial for

it did lead to social legislation granting concessions to the workers in the matter of hours and conditions of work. These followed the organization of the General Confederation of Labor, the CGT, much like the AFL. But the anarchists again built up their own trade union movement, and there has been a constant tug of war between the two.

The Socialist Party was organized as far back as 1896. In the defeats of the early strike movement the idea of political action gained among the Buenos Aires working class, so that in 1904 the first socialist deputy was elected to the lower house. The trade union question, the opposition between moderate and revolutionary trade unions, led to a split in the Socialist Party as early as 1906. During the first world war when the first great political crisis struck Argentina, the socialists managed to elect as many as 43 deputies to the lower house. This was in the administration of the Radical President Irigoyen. The socialists then held the balance of power for they had twenty percent of the deputies, the Radicals having forty percent and the Conservatives the other forty.

#### SOCIALIST PARTY

That was the high point of socialist influence. Its middle class outlook, its toadying to the Radical Party in power, its counter-revolutionary attitude towards the Soviet Union, quickly alienated the workers. Even in the world economic crisis of 1929 it did not regain the ground it had lost. Its representation fell to one or two in Congress.

The second World War has brought about a situation strikingly like that during the first war. The Socialist Party has revived, not in outlook, but in working class strength. It once more wields the balance of power in Congress.

This was brought about in the tense situation that arose when Castillo took over power from Ortiz. Opposition to the completely reactionary policies of Castillo led to the election of seventeen socialist deputies. No majority existed in the House. The Radicals pursued a policy of obstructionism to the National Democrats. But Americo Ghioldi, socialist leader, declared that the party was opposed to mere obstructionism (except when "principles" were involved) and that it would support the government. The socialists too stand for entry into the war on the side of the Allies. In short, in a tense crisis, the socialists again prove that they have no real solution for the workers.

#### UNION MOVEMENT

The trade union movement, now under attack by the reaction, forms a powerful force. The largest union organization today is the CGT with over 300,000 members. The syndicalists in the Union Sindical Argentina (USA) have 27,000. These are mostly public employees, maritime workers, telephone workers. The Catholic Unions exist among the women workers in the needle trades with about 20,000 (in the FACE). Then there are autonomous unions with about 120,000 workers. The railroad men (90,000) form the backbone of the CGT. Its leaders incline to the SP, with a few Stalinists. This movement must now come to grips with its future under the threat of a military reaction.

The organizing of workers into trade unions goes back to the period of German immigration in 1882. The Germans brought with them the ideas of social democracy, so that the earliest unions came under socialist influence. But the later influx of workers from Italy and Spain changed the complexion of the trade unions. In 1901 the first big dock strikes occurred in Buenos Aires under the leadership of the Anarchist Regional Labor Federation.

These strikes were bloodily suppressed and led to the wholesale expulsion in 1902 of Spanish and Italian trade union leaders. The movement was broken, but

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