

Workers! This Is Not Our War!  
It Is a War for Boss Profits!  
Join Hands in Independent  
Labor Action Against the War!

# LABOR ACTION

We Say—  
Let the People Vote on War!  
Make Congress Pass the  
Ludlow War Referendum Bill!

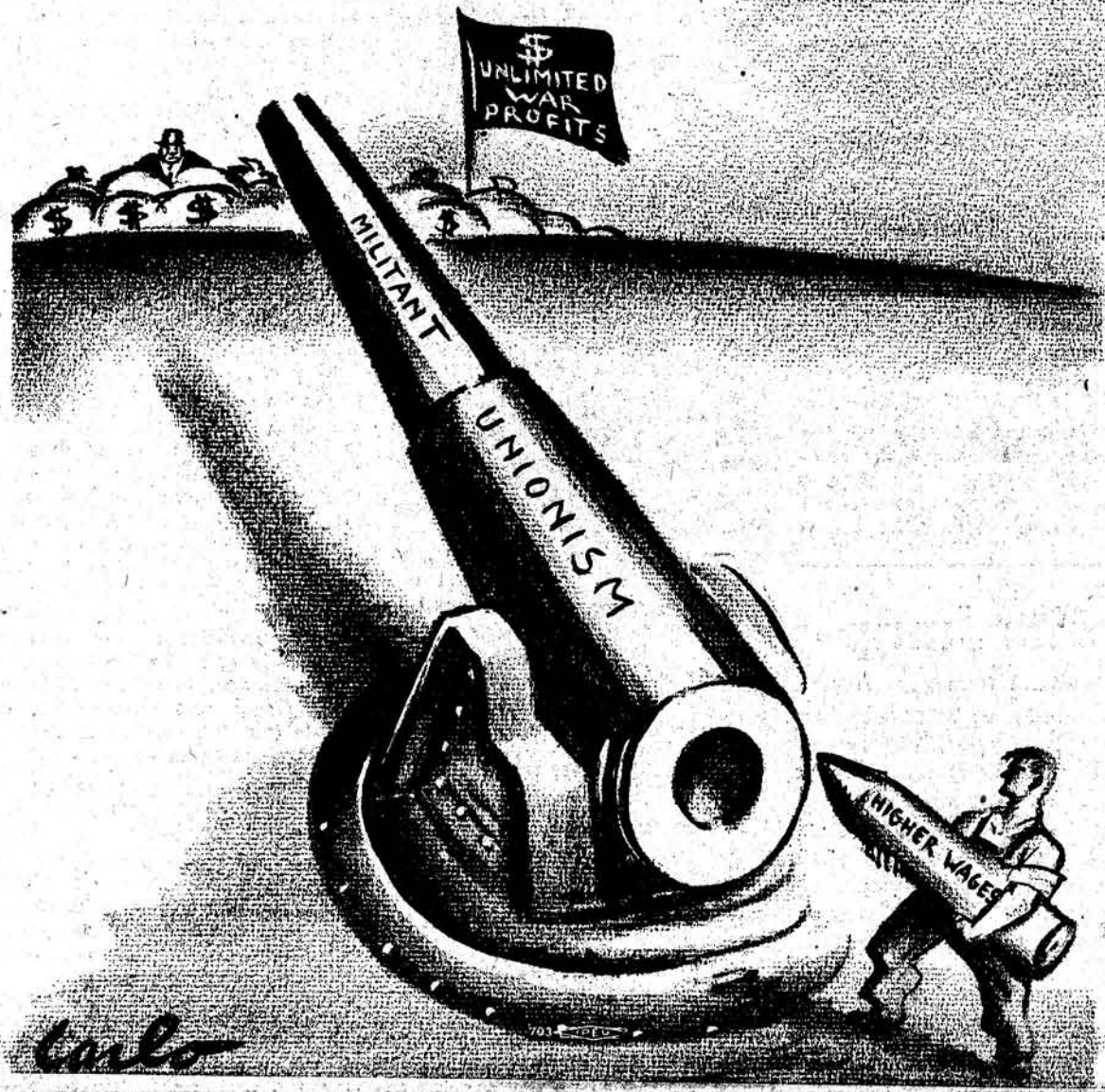
MARCH 24, 1941

ORGAN OF THE WORKERS PARTY OF THE UNITED STATES

THREE CENTS

# PROFITS JUMP—RICH GET RICHER!

Protecting OUR Way of Life!



## How Profits Have Jumped!

	1940	1939	Increase
Kennecott Copper	\$43,837,330	\$33,947,443	\$9,889,887
General Motors	195,621,721	183,290,222	12,331,499
Union Carbide	42,247,274	35,847,399	6,399,875
American Radiator	7,349,011	3,712,193	3,636,818
Western Electric	32,787,030	16,476,086	16,310,944
American Rolling Mills	7,642,713	4,011,909	3,630,804
Pittsburgh Plate Glass	13,793,937	10,766,412	3,027,525
Crucible Steel	6,230,179	2,803,596	3,426,583
A. T. & T.	210,497,453	190,280,877	20,216,576
General Electric	56,242,083	41,235,644	15,006,439

By DAVID COOLIDGE  
The workers in the war industries are pouring billions of dollars into the cash boxes of the rich loafers, idle stockholders and useless coupon clippers. The wealth created by labor piles higher and higher. The Sixty Families have found a veritable gold mine. A glance at the profits of a few corporations taken at random will demonstrate this to any worker. (See adjoining column.)

## Bus Strike Ranks Hold Solid Despite Mayor's Scab Threat

NEW YORK, Mar. 18—Well into its second week, the New York bus strike still sees 3,500 men out and not a single bus belonging to the struck companies on the streets. Thirty-five hundred men and their families, their wives and children roar defiance at the massed attack of the companies, the mayor, and the rotten attacks of the boss press—a press coining nice sums through advertisements paid for by these same companies which claim they can't pay higher wages.

The campaign of misrepresentation continues. The press tries to make it seem as though the strikers are unreasonable because they won't arbitrate. What is not pointed out, however, is that what they are refusing are wage CUTS and the elimination

of sick leaves and paid vacations. On those issues there can be not the slightest compromise, for, at the very best, the union gains nothing, and at the worst they lose much of what they have previously won.

### Families Cheer Men On

The real enthusiasm of the men was shown at a large mass meeting on Sunday where not only they, but also members of their immediate families, were present. Women and children yelled out their thoughts about the companies and about the Little Flower who is so openly taking the side of the well paid bosses.

Here the union gave advance warning of its attitude toward scabs. The strike has been peaceful, without the slightest sign of disorder. The union president, Michael Quill, said to the audience: "There is some talk of operating busses on Tuesday. What do you do if a thief comes into your home to steal your food? If the company attempts to operate coaches with scabs we will expect you to see that they do not steal your wages. . . . The operation of busses with scabs can only result in trouble. . . . We know what would happen if the busses roll and we do not want any trouble to come to the public. . . . This is a sufficient warning and an honest warning. We do not want trouble. Should they start trouble one of our men might be killed and we might have a public funeral attended by all of organized labor. God help our enemies if they give us such a public funeral of one of our members."

Police Threat  
Yet Police Commissioner Valentine has already promised police protection to scabs who would try to help the companies smash the attempt of workmen to better their conditions. If the companies do try to put the busses on the street, all the force of organized labor throughout the city and outside, will be applied to win this strike.

A fine example of labor solidarity has been manifested by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 3, with 18,000 members, the largest AFL local in the

city. This although the Transport Workers Union is CIO. The Electrical Workers know what it is to carry on a fight against a powerful corporation. They are now in the seventh month of their strike against the Leviton Manufacturing Co., and Valantine and La Guardia have been unable to break it even though they

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**We Must Answer This Challenge!**

ON GUARD, LABOR!  
War Department officials have threatened to use soldiers as scabs in a strike caused by a dispute between the AFL and CIO at the Wright Air Field.

We are not interested here in the nature or validity of the dispute. That is something for the unions, for labor, to solve in their own way.

Right now we are interested only in the Army's strike-breaking threat. In the face of that threat, all labor must stand together and unitedly smash the vicious scheme—EVEN IF IT MEANS TAKING TO THE PICKET LINE IN WIDER STRIKE ACTION.

Every single step taken, no matter where or when, by the boss government to break a strike must be resisted with all the strength and energy we can muster.

That goes for the Army. It also goes for the threat of Pennsylvania's Governor Evans to use police in opening the struck Vanadium Aluminum plant.

This is a matter of vital concern to every man and woman who

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## With March Issue, The New International Becomes a 32 Page Monthly Magazine

The editorial board of The New International has announced that beginning with the March issue this monthly periodical will be increased in size from 16 pages to 32 pages. This means that each month The New International will be able to print more and longer theoretical articles hitherto excluded because of lack of space.

Though financially this project will be a tremendous burden, it is hoped that the additional income from the increased price (20 cents per copy) and a large number of new subscribers (subscription rate remains \$1.50 per year) will help toward defraying the additional expense which is almost twice as much as 16 pages.

The following articles will appear in the March issue:

- EDITORIALS on England and America in the war; on Stalin, Hitler and Japan; on the decline of the radical intelligentsia.
- LABOR FACES THE WAR, by Max Shachtman, an article on the strike wave, labor patriotism and prospects for struggles in the U.S.A.
- THE ANTI-WAR STALINISTS, an analysis of the C.P. position on the World War, its meaning, and the fundamental reasons for it.
- ELITE ARMY AND REVOLUTION, by C.D.E., an article on the important question: Does the new ultra-mechanized Blitz-army, with its aristocracy of air and tanks, rule out the possibility of successful revolution?
- FASCISM AS A NEW SOCIAL ORDER, by Albert Gates, a criticism and reply to a previous article by Dwight Macdonald in which he put forward the thesis that fascism represented a new and anti-capitalist social order.
- THE SOVIET UNION—A FASCIST STATE, by J. R. Johnson, another in the series of articles discussing the class character of the Soviet Union, which argues that Russia is today a fascist capitalist state.
- OUT OF THE NIGHT—A critical review of the American best-seller by Henry Foster.
- NEHRU'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY—Reviewed by Sherman Stanley, recently returned from a visit to India, where he interviewed Nehru.
- TO THE FINLAND STATION—Edmund Wilson's book on the development of Marxism submitted to a critique by J. R. Johnson.
- ARCHIVES OF THE REVOLUTION—This long-popular feature of The New International is restored with this issue, which prints some of the writings of Leon Trotsky never before published in English.

The demand for a 32 page N.I. has been met. It is hoped that all branches of the Workers Party and its sympathizers will do their utmost to support the N.I., find new subscribers and increase bundle orders.

## "Everyone" Must Sacrifice: Specially, Every Worker

Wall Street's Government Agents Look About for Ways and Means of Unloading the War Cost on the People

By FRANK DEMBY

As soon as the ink was dry on the President's message to Congress last week asking for seven billion dollars to implement the "all-out aid to England" program, the proposals as to how this money should be raised came thick and fast. Rumor has it that they boil down to two main propositions. Either or both is being given serious attention by those "patriots" who measure the extent of their patriotism by the degree to which they can increase their bank accounts. One is a 5 per cent payroll tax to be levied each week on all those earning \$25 a week or more. This tax would be deducted at the source. That is, the employer will deduct it from your paycheck and you will get your regular weekly pittance minus the 5 per cent. In the course of a year, it is estimated that such a tax can raise several billion dollars. The other proposal is for a national sales tax to be placed on all articles that enter into commerce. A two or three per cent sales tax on everything you buy could also raise several billion dollars.

### Very Noticeable Inconveniences

If either or both of these measures is adopted, the government's credit will be maintained in a sound position, industry can go ahead and "pay-tritically" produce the munitions required to save democracy without worrying about its incentive to produce being destroyed, for there will no longer be any necessity to talk about higher taxes on corporations and excess profits taxes and such annoying things. Isn't this a small sacrifice to

maintain our way of life? Besides, you won't even notice it. This argument of the reactionaries was given sharp emphasis by the President in his "Aid to Democracies" speech on March 15, when he said, in speaking about everybody sacrificing: "Yes, you will feel the impact of this gigantic effort in your daily lives. You will feel it in a way that will cause to you many inconveniences."

And these "inconveniences" will be very, very noticeable. A worker making \$25 a week would have \$1.25 deducted from his payroll every week, if the payroll tax goes through. If the national sales tax should also be passed, that will place an additional burden on the worker, who is already having a hard enough struggle to feed, clothe and shelter his wife and children. Assuming that \$20 out of a worker's \$25 weekly income is spent on goods and services that would be subject to a sales tax, that would mean (on the basis of a 2 per cent sales tax) an additional 40 cents a week cut in wages. \$1.65 a week, or more, in new taxes may not sound very much, but for a worker getting only \$25 a week, this is a tremendous sum. Someone getting \$125 a week or a corporation executive receiving the measly stipend of \$2,500 a week can very easily afford to pay five times, or 100 times, what the worker making \$25 a week can afford to pay. Both a payroll tax and a sales tax are vicious, reactionary types of taxes. The burden falls most heavily on those who can least afford to pay them. This is in direct violation of the accepted principle of taxation, that taxes should be based on ability to pay.

Moreover, this does not take into account at all the fact that prices are rising and promise to rise much more rapidly in the future. Wholesale commodity prices are already more than 29 per cent higher than they were at the outbreak of World War II on Sept. 1, 1939. Retail prices are beginning to catch up to wholesale prices. Meat prices have risen, in some cases, more than 25 per cent in the same period. The cost of living on the average throughout the country has gone up more than 3 per cent and will now start to rise in earnestness. To which must be added the fact that with the establishment of priorities in aluminum and other metals, we will just begin to feel the impact of the war economy in coming months in the form of shortages of many things that the consumer needs.

Some will grant that these new taxes are very unfair, but, they want to know, how else can we pay for the cost of the war program? The answer is very simple. The big corporations in 1940 made the highest profits they have made since 1929, even after making deductions for higher taxes. Why not, Mr. President, take these billions of dollars of profits and use them to pay for the cost of your and their "Aid to England" program? And if the 60 families that run this country and control the lion's share of the wealth won't turn out munitions to preserve "democracy" unless they can make their 8, 10 and more per cent profit, WHY NOT, MR. PRESIDENT, HAVE THE GOVERNMENT TAKE OVER THEIR FACTORIES AND PLACE THEM UNDER THE MANAGEMENT OF THE WORKERS?

You won't do this, Mr. Roosevelt, for the simple reason that your desire to defeat Hitler is, and must be, subordinated to your desire to maintain the profit system. If you dared to take any steps against profits, your real bosses—not the American people, but Wall Street and the 60 families—wouldn't like it. They might even get rid of you as no longer useful to them. We say that you can't preserve democracy and profits, Mr. President. One or the other will have to go.

And, by the way, did you know that while you were

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The total profit for 20 companies for 1940 was \$642,559,048. This was an increase of over 31 million dollars over their profit for 1939. These huge profits are the money that the corporations use to pay dividends with. These 20 corporations alone had 31 million dollars more this year for dividends than last year.

In January and February of this year, 1,005 corporations gave the rich, who do no useful work, 625 million dollars in dividends. This was 26 million dollars more than these same people got for January and February last year. These payments, of course, do not include the millions of dollars paid to the rich on corporation bonds that the rich have locked away in their safe deposit boxes. The Standard Oil Companies alone gave the Rockefellers and other wealthy oil people over 22 million dollars in dividends.

General Motors made a net profit of \$977 on each of its employees! American Telephone & Telegraph (Bell System) gobbled up \$528 on each of its workers! General Electric took \$826 per employee and U. S. Steel, \$420. But Standard Oil of N. J. made \$2,000 on each worker and du Pont gouged \$2,200 out of each! All of this for 1940 alone.

The Federal Trade Commission reports that 10 companies in the vegetable canning industry made 13 per cent on the stockholders' investment in 1939. The individual companies made all the way from 1 1/2 to 24 per cent on the capital investment.

Does any appreciable amount of these millions of dollars go to worker-stockholders in these corporations? Of course not. This is a lie comparable to the lie that all the workers have automobiles. Senator O'Mahoney, chairman of the Senate Monopoly Committee, reported that "about 35 per cent of the dividends paid by American corporations go to only 25,000 individuals. It is estimated that between 60 and 70 per cent of the total goes to persons with incomes of \$50,000 or over."

How about wage increases among the workers? Here we have an easier task and less work. The figures are not so big. We only have to deal in pennies. The average hourly wages of workers in manufacturing increased about 2 cents an hour since December, 1939, says the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The increase was about 4 per cent. Many corporations increased their profits over 100 per cent. The average weekly wage was \$27.89 in December, 1940. This was an increase of \$1.63 over December, 1939.

Despite the fact that the workers are only getting the

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# Of Special Interest to Women

By Susan Green

A few days ago a woman of forty-seven leaped to her death from a fire escape on the fifteenth floor of the Cotton Exchange Building in New York City.

Though she had excellent qualifications and could correspond in English, French and German, she was out of a job. She had been out of a job for some time, owed money for her room rent, and did not even have the price for the postage on some letters which she left with a note for the police.

You see, she was forty-seven—and therefore shoved onto the human scrap heap.

She started to write her suicide note last November. For all the intervening months she clung to the hope that something would turn up. Finally she finished the note and her life. She wrote that "office girls are no longer wanted when they grow older."

The day after this tragedy a wise-Alec known in this life as Mrs. Grace Oakley, holding down a lucrative job in the New York Skin and Cancer Hospital, heaped insult upon injury on the heads of the thousands of women in the predicament of this poor suicide. At a meeting at which "considered counsel" was supposed to be dispensed to middle-aged job seekers, she insultingly gave out the following:

"The average woman over forty does not use her head—cannot be induced to use her head. Of course, if she has a head to use, she need not despair. Why complain that classified ads in newspapers discriminate against you on the subject of age? No one who was not completely naive would look in such a section for a job after passing forty. She must have friends who will help her find a career—and anyone who is not feeble-minded must have made friends."

Even feeble-minded people make friends. But there are friends—and FRIENDS. This Mrs. Oakley doesn't mean friends in the sense that we usually use that word. Most of us use that word to describe people whom we have come to like for their qualities, to whom our hearts go out, whom we help in the ordinary troubles of life, from whom we accept such help. She means not friends but PULL. Pull may have gotten Mrs. Oakley her hospital job, but the fact remains that pull is as rare as a job for a woman of forty.

Mrs. Oakley's caustic, insulting and stupid speech comes from her own flagrant inability to say anything pertinent on the subject of jobs for women of forty.

The solution of the job problem for women of forty is the same as the solution of the job problem for the whole working class: TO ABOLISH THE OWNERSHIP OF THE MEANS OF LIFE BY A BOSS CLASS.

Pending this ultimate solution, powerful unionism is the only thing that will give the workers some control over their jobs under the capitalist system.

In the field of office work, unionism has lagged behind pitifully, due in large measure to the fact that office workers have for a long time foolishly clung to the untruth that they are not members of the working class.

Office workers in factories and plants must join the union of all the other workers of their factory or plant; must strike, picket, fight with their fellow workers; and in turn get from the union protection from the arbitrary hiring and firing practices of the bosses.

Office workers in the professions must build a mighty office workers union, able to make and enforce its demands, including protection for workers of middle age.

Not individual pull, but WORKERS' COLLECTIVE POWER is the basis for solving the job problem in all its phases.

Talking about unionism reminds me that the other day Mrs. Roosevelt devoted her entire column, "My Day," to that subject. Though that august lady does

most of her traveling by deluxe airplane, she still knows how to ride two horses at the same time—as well as any other straddling politician.

She, of course, believes that labor unions are necessary for the protection of the workers. But at the same time she is sure that labor unions should be of benefit to the bosses.

She does not believe that every man and woman should be forced to join a union—which puts her on the right side of Ford, that union-buster who claims that the United Automobile Workers are "forcing" the "contented" Ford workers to organize. But she stands for the right of a worker "to join with his fellows in a union if he feels it will help OTHERS and, incidentally, himself."

So altruism is supposed to motivate the workers to join unions! What "others" are the workers supposed to help by joining a union? The bosses? The so-called public?—that cloak for a multitude of capitalist sins? Obviously Mrs. Roosevelt's line will sell no tickets for unionism—which she professes to support.

If workers were dumb enough to use the test laid down by the first lady, there would not now be even a first union. Workers join unions PRIMARILY to help themselves—but after they have learned that they cannot help themselves except by following the working-class principle: ALL FOR EACH—EACH FOR ALL!

And talking of the first lady brings me around to a little story about society women of Mrs. Roosevelt's class.

Since American imperialism has definitely allied itself with its British brother in this robbers' war, dowagers and debutantes have something to do. Some of them have been giving their support to the American Fund for British War Aid, one of the groups engaged in the business of collecting money for Britain. They fuss around organizing benefits and dinners and dances and what-not.

It seems that the mountain has labored and brought forth a wee mouse. For this group of benefactors has turned over to the British war chest the tiny mite of three cents out of each dollar collected.

Class-conscious working women have enough to do strengthening their own class and the cause of socialism without worrying about the war chests of the British imperialists or the German imperialists or the American imperialists. But curiosity impels the question: "Just what happened to the other 97 cents out of each dollar collected?"

I would not hint that dowagers and debutantes—those feminine, if not always graceful, pillars of top society—are dishonest. But they certainly have been keeping bad company!

## Take Your Choice!

One \$100,000 bomber given away to England equals 50 COMFORTABLE NEW HOMES in the South for Negroes and white folks now living in horrible shacks.

One \$25,000 torpedo given away to England equals one NICE BRICK RURAL SCHOOLHOUSE in one of the hundreds of school districts in the South that have no school buildings for colored pupils.

One \$50,000 tank given away to England equals a small NEW APARTMENT HOUSE in the congested slums of the Black Belt in one of our larger cities.

One \$5,000 ambulance given away to England equals a MUCH NEEDED CLINIC in one of our Negro districts where mortality and morbidity rates are high.—From an editorial in the Pittsburgh Courier of February 8.

## Sacrifice—

(Continued from page 1)

speaking about all of us sacrificing to help 'the cause of democracy (read: American imperialism), your Congress is considering ways and means of lightening the burden of the excess profits tax? Yes, this same excess profits tax that was such a swindle last October that you couldn't count on it to raise more than a little chicken feed in a year when corporations were making huge profits, is now to be reduced. New exemptions and deductions are to be allowed.

If the meaning of this isn't clear to you, Mr. Roosevelt, it certainly will be clear to the workers of this country. When you speak of sacrifice, what you mean is that the workers should sacrifice. They should pay for the cost of your war; they should stop striking to improve their conditions so that nothing will interfere with your program of making American imperialism supreme throughout the world. This is pure hypocrisy and we are confident that the workers of this country will recognize it for what it is and will act accordingly.

# A Letter on Brewster Reclassification

Worker Correspondent Says Union Leader Must Act to Forestall Company Tricks

Dear Editor:

I read your news item on reclassification at Brewster. Since there is a great deal of interest concerning reclassifications here at Brewster, I thought I might write you some more about it, for a lot of the fellows read the articles and letters on Brewster published in LABOR ACTION.

As you fellows know, reclassification is the opportunity that the union has to bargain with the company in order to raise the wages of all the men in the plant who have shown by their ability, tenure, etc., that they should receive a raise. After the union concludes its negotiations with the company, the raises go into effect as of April 1.

There has always been a great deal of confusion concerning classifications and reclassifications here at Brewster. The company for its part has done its best to confuse and take advantage of the men on classifications. The company has a deliberate policy of no set standards of classification for a job or a particular occupation such as riveting, painting, assembly work, power press work and the like. Exactly what does that mean? It can mean that when a new man, an A-1 mechanic, applies for a job, the company can and will try to browbeat him into taking the job at the minimum level, 55 cents an hour. The company generally succeeds in browbeating some guy who needs the job badly and as a result the wage level for that particular job skill is considerably lowered.

This company practice of cheating the men on classifications has led to other practices. The company plays off department against department, gang against gang, fellow against fellow, and the Long Island plants against the Newark plant. It is a fact that certain occupations get higher pay in Newark than in Long Island. It is a fact that the company pays the same experienced men in Long Island wages ranging from 55 cents to 80 cents for exactly the same skilled job. It is a fact that this policy has resulted in a policy of favoritism to stooges of the foremen and discrimination to those who won't lick the boots of the foremen. I could mention many other things, but the fellows who read this letter know what I mean.

At present the company is trying some more shenanigans. It is introducing some more divisions into the classifications. The company is smart. It knows that the more divisions there are, the harder it is for a man to get that raise he deserves and needs so badly. After all, the Brewster millionaire bosses have to make a living also. Not content with that, they are trying to reclassify the men on the basis of the money received. That means, if a man is classified as an A mechanic and only receives 66 cents an hour, they will make him a C man instead of paying him 80 cents an hour as an A man. You see, then he won't have to kick that he isn't getting the wage that he deserves.

What is the rôle of the union officials in this whole mess? If the company bears nine-tenths of the responsibility for this situation, the past administration and all the officials connected with it share the remaining responsibility. In the first place, a good deal of this could have been straightened out if in the last two contracts drawn up there had been the following (this incidentally was proposed for the present contract, but it was turned down by the leadership of the union):

1. A statement of policy in regard to the classification of men. This would include set standards of work for the classifications of A, B, etc.

2. A statement on promotions and wage raises.
3. A statement on minimum rates to be paid for each classification or job.
4. A policy on hiring.
5. These policies to be uniformly applied throughout the plant and effectively enforced by the stewards and men.

Instead, the past administration demonstrated its incompetence and stupidity by leaving it out of the contract. Not only that, but they rushed through all the reclassifications. Reclassification delegates were kept uninformed of conditions throughout the plant and as a result were poorly equipped to out-argue the foreman and management.

What is the new administration headed by Tommy DeLorenzo, president of the union, doing about reclassifications?

While it is still too early to tell definitely about the results of their efforts, some of the union officials are running around like chickens without heads. They call meeting after meeting without adequate preparation or organization. As a result, much time has been lost and a lot of men are being run ragged. Some of the motions agreed upon are either violated or not carried out. On the other hand, they are making an effort to get some organization and plan worked out of the chaos that they helped to create with the past administration.

What Has to Be Done?

1. The union must take all the steps necessary to compel the company to pay our boys the rightful money coming to them as a result of their classification. That means

## Profits Jump—

(Continued from page 1)

misers' share of the fabulous wealth they create, the bosses are not satisfied; they want more. The workers are not sacrificing enough. They should not ask for more wages; they are getting enough, according to the rich. What we should do this year is work seven days a week—and at present wages, so that the Sixty Families can draw even higher salaries, dividends and interest next year.

All of these millions that the rich take in dividends and interest come from the sweat and toil of labor. Under capitalism every ton of coal that labor takes from the earth, every load of steel, every automobile that comes off the production line, every pound of cotton picked, adds to the wealth and luxury of the leisure class and to the misery and degradation of the working class.

Yet the workers can put a stop to all of this. They can stop the rich from grabbing these millions in dividends, interest and big salaries. We can take over the industries and run them ourselves. Why should we permit a small minority of rich parasites to grab the wealth of the country and the product of our toil? They are only a few thousands. We are many millions.

if a mechanic is getting helper's pay he should receive mechanic's pay. The men must be on guard against any attempt by the company to base classifications merely on the rate of pay that a man gets.

2. Our union must reduce to a minimum all the classifications. That means for the majority of the plants there should be three classifications: A, B and helper. Of course, there will be exceptions. Don't let the company introduce more classifications!

3. The union should try to reach an agreement with the company that men hired who are not beginners should be put in their proper classifications and paid the necessary rate.

4. The union should set down on paper with the company the standards of classifications for the various occupations and skills. We're tired of the bunk that each foreman tells us when he starts talking about classifications.

5. All committees dealing with reclassifications must be informed about rate conditions in the plant. They

should meet beforehand and have a uniform and agreed-upon policy before going in to see the management.

6. Keep the men informed about developments. All delegates should ask the opinions of the men and encourage them to discuss the problems of reclassification.

A word to the delegates and union officials. Remember, when you're in the office negotiating for your men that our wages have been cut by a third. Prices of food, pots and pans, rent, etc., are steadily rising. Every man needs a raise. Fight for that raise. You'll make the union stronger and the men happier.

I want to thank LABOR ACTION for printing the various letters. Many of the men certainly appreciate your carrying so much information about our problems and troubles. I hope you continue the good work of distributing the paper at the plants, and that the men help you.

I'll write more as soon as new developments take place.

Fraternally,

A Brewster Worker.

# CCNY Teachers Face Ouster

Teachers and Students Must Unite in Protest

NEW YORK, Mar. 17.—Following a series of red-baiting and witch-hunting sessions held by the Rapp-Coudert Committee last week, in which fifty-odd teachers at the College of the City of New York were named as members of the Communist Party, Dr. Harry Wright, acting president of the college, moved to oust from their teaching posts all teachers and college employees alleged to be Stalinists. (We are informed that Dr. Wright is the same man who used to go around to student rallies with a camera, taking pictures of the "agitators.") Morris Schappes, a teacher who admitted membership in the CP, has already been suspended, pending hearings before the Board of Higher Education, which will undoubtedly expel him.

In directing its fire at CCNY, the Rapp-Coudert Committee is actually striking at free and adequate higher education in New York. The city colleges have long been attacked by budget-cutters and reactionary legislators as useless frills because workers' children do not need that much higher education. The Coudert Committee, whose real function is to provide a pretext for budget-cutting and union-busting, is no doubt going to move on the high schools soon.

The Rapp-Coudert commissioners are merely using the Stalinists as the cloak for a widespread assault on any teacher who dares organize in defense of his interests and any teacher who dares have an idea not included in the official school texts. Somewhere among the laws of the country there is still the recognition that every man, woman and child has the right to think as he wishes, to meet in free assembly, to publish his views. In the case of the Stalinists, these views are obnoxious to us, as is the entire Stalinist organization—though not for the same reason that motivates the Coudert Committee.

The Real Issues

Striking now at the Stalinists who are most vulnerable, the reactionaries will eventually strike at every teacher who, for example, opposes the war. During the last war, many teachers were dismissed from their jobs for objecting to American

entry. The same will undoubtedly happen this time.

That the Stalinists have injured teacher unionism by their policies and tactics goes without saying. That is why a group of teachers in the Stalinist-controlled Local 5 (high school and elementary school teachers) have just requested a separate charter so that they can really get down to the job of organizing the teachers repelled by the Stalinists. Still, the cause of teacher unionism, of civil liberties and of academic freedom in its real sense (the educational freedom to discuss ideas and facts freely and objectively), demands that the accused teachers in City College be defended.

Professor Counts, head of the Teachers International and an opponent of Stalinism, has come out against the Rapp-Coudert Committee. That must be followed by organized protest action. Such protests as have been organized by Local 5, and other Stalinist outfits like the dishonored and dying American Student Union, are futile. The issues of civil liberties, unionism and academic freedom demand that the anti-Stalinists organize a protest in defense of the accused. The Stalinists cannot even avoid injuring the issues involved in their own defense.

Student Protest

Student groups on the campus have already protested the committee's investigation and condemned Wright's action. A healthy move among the students would be a student united front, organized in cooperation with the Teachers Union, to defend the college against the Committee and yet not play the game of the Stalinists—or of the reactionary Union for Student Action, organized by the Big-Business protégé, Murray Flanner.

As the Young Peoples Socialist League, youth section of the Workers Party, pointed out in a leaflet distributed on the college campus, the teachers and students must not allow the Coudert Committee and its attacks on teacher unionism and public education to become a football for the rotten policies of Stalinism. The unions and teachers can be defended without whitewashing the Stalinists.

# Our Battle Line Is the Picket Line

—by Paul Temple

"When is a strike unnecessary?" asked Bill right off as soon as he spotted Larry on Sunday.

LARRY: Who'd you think I am—the Quiz Kids?

BILL: Well, I got that question from your leader, Franklin D.

LARRY: What the hell—is he on Information Please, too?

BILL: No, he made a speech last night. He told us we've got to stop "unnecessary strikes of workers." So I got to thinking—

LARRY: You know what he means. And he's right, too. In these times, a union that's working on defense shouldn't strike. Unless it's absolutely got to. It slows down production.

BILL: Come on now, Larry, you're a union man yourself. Did you ever hear of a legitimate union that calls strikes just for the hell of it?

LARRY: There's racketeering unions, too.

BILL: Sure, but Roosevelt wasn't thinking about racketeers when he broadcast that speech to the world. I'll tell you what he was thinking about—Bethlehem and Vultee and Ryan Aircraft and those strikes. THAT'S what's on his mind.

LARRY: You've just got your axe out for him. What's wrong with warning against unnecessary strikes, especially now? I'm against 'em, too.

BILL: Who isn't? and against "unnecessary" measles, war and politicians besides. BUT WE DON'T NEED ROOSEVELT TO TELL US NOT TO GO OUT ON UNNECESSARY STRIKES. A man doesn't go out on the picket line and live on the soup kitchen and take the chance of losing his job without thinking twice about it.

WHAT ROOSEVELT HAD ON HIS MIND

LARRY: Well, Roosevelt must have had something in his mind when he said that.

BILL: I'll say he did! He wanted to stir the public up against strikers. He wanted to give the impression that when a union puts up a stiff fight

for workers' rights that's sabotaging defense.

LARRY: There you go! Don't you think that's a bit too strong, hey?

BILL: Not a bit. That's also why he hooked together the words "deliberate sabotage" in the same sentence with "unnecessary strikes," five words after. Look at it this way: Suppose Roosevelt went and sent out a blast over the air about "unnecessarily high wages." Wouldn't that give the impression that there's a lot of wages that are too high and ought to be scaled down? Same thing here. There hasn't been a strike in the war industries that was "unnecessary" FOR THE WORKERS—you know that and Roosevelt knows that.

So what's the point of raising a row about it unless it's to get a hand-hold for the purpose of clamping down on NECESSARY strikes?

LARRY: I still think you're making too much of two little words. The whole point is, the unions and management have got to try to settle everything by negotiation before it comes to a strike.

BILL: Sure, negotiate. But negotiation with a company is like diplomacy with Hitler. You can talk big around the table only if the other guy knows you've got a big stick behind you. That's why Wall Street wants a big army and navy so they can "negotiate" Hitler out of South America.

OUR big stick is the strike. As soon as we give up the right to strike, the boss can kick us in the teeth and forget about it.

LARRY: Don't take on, nobody's giving up the right to strike.

BILL: Is that so? Didn't Bill Green of the AFL promise no strikes in the war industries.

LARRY: That's just Bill Green.

BILL: Isn't Roosevelt always talking about the great democracy of England and how we've got to follow her example? Well, they've abolished the right to strike in England and substituted compulsory arbitration. And those "two little words" mean Roosevelt's moving that way, too.

THE PICKET LINE IS OUR FRONT LINE

LARRY: When it comes to war, some rights have got to go, and maybe compulsory arbitration has to come in.

BILL: That's just the idea Roosevelt is trying to stir up now. Look where it leaves us. Suppose a union organizer goes to the boss to "negotiate." He says: "Please, Mr. Boss, your profits are going through the ceiling; prices are up ten per cent higher; and you can't buy pork chops for a family on \$25 a week. How about a raise?"

"Well," says the boss, "why don't you try spare ribs?"

"The American way of life," says the organizer, "demands pork chops. All the men want is a little cut out of your extra profits."

"Sorry," says the boss, "you've got to consider my family, too. My little Oswald might be drafted and he'd need an extra car and a valet."

"Are you hinting you're against a raise for the men?" says the organizer.

"Well, I'm not for it," says the boss. "What are you going to do about it? You know, you can't strike. That's unpatriotic."

"The men'll be awful mad at you," says the organizer.

"That's cheaper than a strike," says the boss.

"We'll thumb our noses at your picture in the plant," says the organizer.

"As long as it's not on company time," says the boss.

"We'll write a letter to Roosevelt and complain," says the organizer in desperation.

"No use," says the boss, "all strikes are 'UNNECESSARY' now, so go back to your boys and tell 'em not to be fifth columnists. . . ."

Get this, Larry: the word "boss" means a dictator. And as long as we spend our working lives under dictators, our fight for democracy is on the picket line.

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THE MINERS MAKE "FORMIDABLE" DEMANDS

# An Expose of Bituminous Mine Conditions

By SUSAN GREEN

"All mine catastrophes are avoidable," Marcus Kerr, chief of the Ohio Division of Mines, is reported to have said. "All mine catastrophes are preventable," say United Mine Workers officials. "There is no such thing as an 'inevitable' mine explosion," says even James Hyslop, general manager of the Hanna Coal Co.—in whose Willow Grove mine 72 men lost their lives last March in an explosion so violent that it blew off arms and legs and heads of the unfortunate victims.

Nevertheless, according to reports, more than 1500 men were killed in coal mines in this country last year. There were a number of big explosions which buried 30 to 90 miners at one time. And there were numerous lesser disasters, fatal to a miner here, and to a few miners there.

Why? Because only SOME safety measures are enforced. MANY ARE NOT ENFORCED. State inspectors take their orders from the Coal operators.

Among the demands now being made by the UMWA is one for workers' safety, with UNION inspectors empowered to halt work when dangerous conditions are found.

Other union demands, expounded by John L. Lewis, include a blanket wage raise of \$1 a day, with proportional rate increases for men who do piece work; a guaranty of at least 200 days' work a year for each miner; two weeks annual vacation with pay; general improvement of hospitalization and medical care systems in mining communities; elimination of wage differentials, including that between north and south.

These are the demands the United Mine Workers are making for a new contract to replace the one expiring April 1, 1941, and involving 450,000 miners. Negotiations are going on in New York between representatives of the miners and the eastern coal operators in what is known as the Appalachian Joint Conference.

## Industrial Serfdom in the USA

Charles O'Neill, speaking for his fellow coal operators, said they would need some time to ponder these "rather formidable demands." However, without any pondering at all, he "generously" offered to extend the miners' working day—in the interest of pay-riotism. This is about all the operators have offered the men so far.

What needs pondering by the workers of the country is the bankruptcy of capitalist production, attested to by Mr. O'Neill's comment. If at this late date the workers' demand for 200 days' work out of 365 is formidable, if their demands for workers' safety is today formidable, what, in heaven's name, can workers expect from the capitalist system!

A survey of the unbelievable conditions existing in the bituminous mines will reveal the extreme reasonableness of the union demands.

If some people believe that in "democratic" America industrial serfdom does not exist, they have but to take a peep at Piney Fork, Ohio. This is one of the towns owned by Hanna Coal Co., which is the boss of four coal mines in eastern Ohio. Hanna Coal is a subsidiary of the M. A. Hanna Co., which has extensive industrial interests, including iron ore, shipping, oil, copper and the National Steel Co. of Weirton. It is an industrial plutocrat.

The families of Piney Fork live in company houses owned by the Hanna Coal Co. The fathers and sons working in Hanna Coal's mine (when they are lucky enough to get work), are compelled to spend their pay in Hanna Coal's store, and even to buy the fuel they themselves produce from Hanna Coal.

The school provided for the children of this company-owned town is an old wooden building. The kids have to run through snow and sleet fifty yards to and from the wooden outhouse. This has accommodations for only three children.

Hanna Coal smells up the town with the stink from the constantly burning slate and other refuse from the mines. Soft coal smoke darkens the air and fills the lungs of women and children. Even the clothes on the washlines bear evidence of the domination of a coal company over the people of a whole town.

This is how reporters describe Piney Fork, Ohio, which is interesting for other reasons. The Piney Fork mine was a handloading mine employing about 1,000 men. They have just learned that the company is going to mechanize the mine by installing loading machines. The mine will also be put on a steady three-shift basis. This will greatly increase production—and at the same time allow the company to discharge 300 to 500 miners.

James Hyslop, general manager of the Hanna Coal Co., is not concerned about the fate of the men laid off and their wives and children. "Same thing as happens to any other unemployed," he is reported to have commented.

No wonder the union makes its "formidable" demand for at least 200 days of work a year for each miner!

The union demand, for a \$1 a day wage increase for the miners looks "formidable" to the operators because it makes them drop the false cloak of pay-riotism behind which they have been hiding.

"We must help win the Battle of Production" read propaganda posters at the mine entrances. When the speed-up was first instituted for the so-called national emergency, the operators resorted to the bonus system. Then they dropped it. The explanation was given to reporters by a Willow Grove miner. "Yep," he said, "they abolished the bonus, all right—soon's they got the men workin' so fast they couldn't work any faster. Now the straw bosses keep 'em up to that maximum speed, but the men don't get paid any extra for it."

Therefore the union demand for the \$1 increase is not only to meet the skyrocketing cost of living, but also the vicious speed-up in the name of pay-riotism.

Reports are current that the government is definitely on the side of the operators in the matter of miners' wages. The excuse is that coal is a basic commodity, the price of which must be kept down. The operators, of course, will not be expected to curb their war-profiteering. But the underpaid miners are expected to make sacrifices—or else!

Sacrifices—not only by submitting to extensive robbery of the wealth they produce—but also needless sacrifice of life and limb. The last Congress adjourned without passing the Neely-Keller mine safety bill. This bill would have given inspectors of the U. S. Bureau of Mines the right to go into coal mines and make their findings public. The coal operators' lobby in Congress succeeded in ditching this bill. They have state inspection under their control and want it to remain that way. A similar bill is pending before the present Congress, which will perhaps be too busy giving "aid to Britain" to give any to the coal miners.

In the meantime the coal operators wantonly kill off hundreds of miners each year. In the case of the Willow Grove explosion, referred to above, state inspectors were in the mine two days before the disaster. They found quantities of gas and not enough ventilation. Yet they allowed the men in.

In the Nelms Mine of the Ohio & Pennsylvania Coal Co., which blew up last November, explosive gas was found on Wednesday in the tunnel where 31 men died on Friday. But nothing was done about it. After the explosion, the company put in a new ventilating fan. The old ventilating equipment had been more than 10 years old.

When the federal mine inspectors went into the Nelms mine after the explosion, they had difficulty determining whether the fatal spark had come from the electric cutting machine or the electric drill. Both machines were in what is described by mining men as "non-permissible" condition.

In mines where explosions have occurred practices continue which inevitably cause new disasters. Cutting machines are operated without water tanks to lay the dust. "Big dust," the most combustible of stemming materials, is used for blasting. Other practices denounced by the U. S. Bureau of Mines as hazardous go merrily on.

Often the miners can foresee danger ahead. Mike Polocy, one of the 72 men caught in the Willow Grove explosion, who is in the hospital, a human wreck, not expected to live, warned of the coming calamity. Here is his own story, as reported in the newspaper PM:

"I tol' boss something goin' happen. I raise hell with big boss all time. I brattice man. I know mine. He tol' me I crazy. He say: 'You min' you business, I min' mine.' He say: 'You get coal, we take care of gas.'"

Boss always raise hell. 'You step on gas.' Always hurry up, hurry up. I scared. Have one little explosion, two little explosion,

'bout month before. I know something gon' happen. Night before it come, I go home, I no eat supper. I so scared. I cry, no eat. I no want to go in mine."

But Mike did go into the mine the next day. Now he is a burned, crippled, bloodless, dying bundle of misery. But when he had warned the boss of the coming explosion, he was told to mind his own business.

The men go into the gas-filled mines, miles from sun and air and the chance of salvation, because they can't help themselves. Work has been so scarce for the bituminous miners. Poverty drives them into the jaws of death.

There is Carl Sterling, with a family of four. He told reporters that in 1939 he worked a grand total of 56 days. In 1940, 4 days. So far in 1941—to February 20—he worked all of 10 days. He is supposed to be working for the Fremont mine of Rose Valley, in the eastern Ohio district. The mine operated only when there were orders for coal. Sterling could go to no other mine in an effort to get more work. The mechanization of coal mining has thrown thousands of miners out of work. Each big mechanized mine has its own preferential list of former employees.

There was Ben Mazeroske, trackman in the Nelms mine, 25 years old when he was murdered with 30 others. His young widow, 23 years old, told reporters:

"He was afraid of the mine. He didn't talk much, but I knew he was afraid. Everybody knew it was a gassy mine, and dangerous. I know the union asked the federal mine inspectors to come inspect it last April, after Willow Grove blew up. But the state inspectors wouldn't let them come in."

Mazeroske remembered when he had been out of work for seven solid months in 1938. That drove him into the death trap that finally got him. You can now understand why coal operator O'Neill calls the union demand for a minimum of 200 days' employment a "formidable" one. Men might refuse to go into gassy mines. You can also understand why the union demands UNION inspectors.

## And These Demands Are "Formidable"

Ask the miners' wives what they think of the union demand for two weeks' vacation with pay—these women who at thirty look fifty—who daily stand at their doors and watch their men leave them to earn a living in the bowels of the earth. Will they come back at night? Will the mine cave in and crush them? Will gas explode and snuff out their lives? Will the more treacherous coal dust explode and blow them into atoms?

Do these men and women need two weeks each year of blessed safety, two weeks of absence of fear? To the coal operators this is a "formidable" demand.

## Good and Welfare

by Lefty

### DON'T TELL ME—LET ME GUESS WHY DEPARTMENT:

From a dispatch from London: "Promises of a more democratic framework and a better economic deal for the average men are cloaked in generalities by Prime Minister Winston Churchill as well as every other political leader."

We hate to think it, but...but...can it be that Winston Churchill "as well as every other political leader" necessarily speak in generalities because they haven't the slightest intention of democratizing England after the war?

FROM 12,000 TO 15,000 MEN on the B. & O. railroad have been put on a six-day week. They have been on a five-day week since 1932. The men will now be on a 48-hour week. The plea, of course, is the "national emergency," which now seems to be accounting for almost everything except childbirth and the chances of the Brooklyn Dodgers. Unions in other industries should take notice of the trend of events. The seven crafts involved appear to have been much excited over the whole business.

### GIDDYUP, MAUDE!

"Deputy Production Director William L. Batt of the Office of Production Management said tonight that the United States must forego producing electric toasters, typewriters and passenger automobiles and construct the 'sine-waves of war.'"

Didn't we tell you that the automobile would never replace the horse and buggy?

### EXTRA! EXTRA! ROOSEVELT TELLS TRUTH!

From Roosevelt's all-out British aid speech: "You will have to work longer at your bench, or your plow, or your machine."

### GEE, THERE AIN'T NO SANTA CLAUS DEPARTMENT!

"Several of the government's 'dollar-a-year' men, it was reported today, will be called before a Senate investigating committee soon to explain whether they have connections with firms holding defense construction contracts. . . . there have been complaints from Army and Navy officials . . . that contracts which the officials did not consider advantageous to the government had been pushed through at the insistence of some advisory group members." Gosh, and here we thought all the time that they were just patriotic old gentlemen willing to serve their country at a dollar a year!

### NOW LET ME SHOVEL A WHILE, SENATOR!

Speaking on the Home Guard Bill now before the Ohio state legislature, Senator George G. Hunter, according to the press, stated that "there are 30,000 Bund members in Ohio who might become active if England loses the war. He pledged that the guard would not be used to break strikes, but added that "it probably would be used at strikes to preserve order."

## A Challenge

(Continued from page 1)

works in order to eat. It shows up this boss democracy for what it is. It shows beyond contest what the boss government means when it says it will allow nothing to stand in the way of its war preparations. It indicates the true nature of this bosses' war.

The very first step taken by the War Department to send the Army into a factory either as scabs, or as protection for scabs, must be met with a union protest so mighty in its impact that it will jar the brass-hats rights out of their seats. To that end the unions must immediately consider organized action as a warning against the use of police or soldiers in a strike.

So too must the unions immediately consider an appeal to the soldiers. They have been drafted into the bosses' army. But they are for the most part workers or workers' children. It has happened in the past that national guardsmen sent in to break a strike have refused to act against the strikers. The draftees, given a lead, may have something to say in this case, too.

THE UNIONS MUST HELP THEM AND GUIDE THEM IN RESISTING ANY ATTEMPT TO USE THEM AS STRIKE-BREAKERS AND AS SCABS. THE UNIONS MUST HELP THEM WIN THE RIGHT TO SELECT COMMITTEES OF THEIR OWN CHOOSING THROUGH WHICH THEY CAN PRESENT THEIR DEMANDS. THE PROTECTION OF ALL LABOR MAKES THIS NECESSARY!

ON GUARD, UNION MEN! WE DARE NOT LET THIS CHALLENGE GO UNANSWERED!

## R. Forka

Word has come to us that Rudolph Forka, whom we believed to be in a German concentration camp, was killed on July 17, 1937, after undergoing the severest torture at the hands of the concentration camp barbarians.

Comrade Rudolph was 23 years old at the time. For all of his youth, however, he had been an active participant in the revolutionary movement for several years, having joined the Trotskyist movement in 1933.

A militant with surpassing courage, Rudolph was ever entrusted with the most dangerous jobs, each of which he executed promptly and fearlessly. In 1936 his comrades asked him to leave Germany but he refused to leave his post, insisting on sticking it out and pressing the fight against Hitlerism from within. The brief letter we have received does not give us all the details, but it indicates that the Nazi beasts made him pay for his devotion to humanity's liberation by subjecting him to the foulest and most inhuman tortures.

Rudolph was known only to a few of us personally. Yet everyone of us knew him—knew him through knowing the bond of comradeship that links every worker and revolutionist in indomitable hatred of Hitlerism and the evil system of capitalism which spawned it.

Though several years have passed since his death, we now pause a moment in tribute to this fighter in revolution's cause. But only for a moment . . . spent in steeling ourselves for a more impassioned revolutionary offensive against world tyranny.

Our final tribute to Rudolph Forka will be on the battlefield of revolutionary victory. That's the way Comrade Rudolph would have it!

## Branches Make Preparations For Shachtman National Tour

Branches are getting their plans under way for the Shachtman tour which will open on April 9. Syracuse, the first city to be visited, has already informed us that it has made arrangements for the meeting at which Shachtman will speak on the WAR AND AMERICAN LABOR. The Syracuse comrades are notifying local sympathizers of the place and time of the meeting. As soon as other branches complete arrangements for the public meetings, LABOR ACTION will publish address and topic. The following is the full schedule of the tour. Several changes in the itinerary have been made, so we ask you to read it carefully.

Syracuse	Wednesday, April 9
Rochester	Thursday, April 10
Akron	Saturday, April 12
Cleveland	Sunday, April 13
Akron	Monday, April 14
Detroit	Tuesday, April 15
Ann Arbor	Wednesday, April 16
Chicago	Thursday to Tuesday, April 17-22
Madison	Wednesday, April 23
Minneapolis	Thursday-Friday, April 24-25
Butte	Tuesday, April 29
Seattle	Friday, May 2
Portland	Saturday, May 3
San Francisco	Tuesday-Wednesday, May 6-7
Oakland	Thursday-Friday, May 8-9
Los Angeles	Sunday to Saturday, May 11-17
Houston	Friday, May 23
Kansas City	Tuesday, May 27
St. Louis	Thursday to Sunday, May 29 to June 1
Streator	Monday, June 2
Chicago	Tuesday-Wednesday, June 3-4
Louisville	Friday, June 6
Cincinnati	Saturday, June 7
Columbus	Sunday, June 8
Akron	Monday, June 9
Youngstown	Tuesday, June 10
Pittsburgh	Wednesday-Thursday, June 11-12
Washington	Friday, June 13
Baltimore	Saturday, June 14
Philadelphia	Sunday, June 15
Reading	Monday, June 16
Mt. Carmel	Tuesday, June 17
Newark	Wednesday, June 18
Massachusetts (Boston, Lynn, Worcester, Fitchburg)	Friday to Monday, June 20-23

## Bus Strike—

(Continued from page 1)

used cops against the picket lines. Other locals of the TWU, other CIO and AFL unions in New York and throughout the country will join hands on this important issue. The city-wide CIO Council is going to start a drive to enlist widespread labor support on Thursday, and on Friday a city-wide conference of non-labor groups will take up the question of support.

### Men Are Solid

Talks with the men prove how solid they are. Some said they were glad that the strike started when it did. The streets were then covered with high snow drifts which were left to melt or not, depending on the weather, because La Guardia was trying to save some of the taxpayers' money. Drivers working last Sunday told of the great difficulties encountered in operating their buses then. Aside from the problem of maneuvering, there was the effect on the men themselves of bumping along, sometimes almost smashing their heads against the roof of the bus.

These men, not exactly skilled statisticians or college professors, saw right through the companies' attempt to mislead the public by false advertisements. Comparative wage figures given by the bosses carefully avoided the fact that the bus drivers put in over ten hours more per week than did the workers against whom their wages were compared. Besides, if one worker is getting less than another, all the more reason for him to join in demanding more pay. That's the way labor looks at the "comparison."

How luxuriously a bus driver lives on what the companies consider his excessive pay can be illustrated by taking a typical case. Matthew O'Callaghan, married and with two young daughters, gets about \$48 a week, lives in a four room apartment in the Bronx at \$34 a month. (John Ritchie, head of the bus companies, lives in a penthouse and his salary is kept secret.)

On this excessive pay, the O'Callaghans just about squeeze by with a comparatively decent living in this rich country, but there's little chance to save anything. Mrs. O'Callaghan says that when the strike is won and the men get a raise, she's going to expropriate the additional pay each week for savings.

This shows how important it is that the strike be won—especially in face of the combined press and politician attack. And not only for the men who are on strike. Labor in general is deeply concerned. Breaking of the strike by scabs under police protection will encourage the bosses against other unions and will show them that they can always rely on La Guardia to call out the cops to act as strikebreakers. The bus strike is not a pushover: it requires work and steadfastness. If the men "hold the fort," victory will come.

When asked if they would go back on the company's terms, the men roared out "No!" Let that be their answer to the company, to the scabs and to La Guardia and the victory is theirs, for half the battle is already won through their enthusiasm and their determination.

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

### NAVY DEPARTMENT RAISES WORKING HOURS

Dear Editor: What is in store for the worker as a result of the war preparations is indicated by the increased work-week imposed on white collar workers in the Navy Department.

The normal work-week is to be 48 hours, with the authorities having full permission to work them longer, or as long as they please—with no compensation, either in the form of overtime pay or as credit toward leave.

There are to be two shifts, one working from 8:30 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. and the other working from 3:45 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. These shifts are to alternate, working days one week, and nights the other. As was asked me, what are those who live in boarding houses, and pay for their meals

there, supposed to do, since the boarding houses do not serve lunch. And what are those in the suburbs supposed to do, since the trolleys will not be running at 11:30 p.m., to enable them to get home? This, of course, has not even been considered.

If this is what is being done to white collar workers, you can well imagine what conditions the brass hats will seek to impose on the industrial workers.

White Collar Worker. Washington, D. C.

### THE ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH DID NOT PRINT THIS LETTER

Editor, St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

Sir: A St. Louis Negro, trying to address the Missouri Legislature, is

shouted down with cries of "Send him back to the cotton fields! Give him a cotton sack!"

There is the germ of a good idea here. Would it not be in the public interest to say the same thing to our state legislators? A great popular movement with the simple program: "Back to the cotton fields! Give them cotton sacks!" for our lawmakers, might accomplish wonders. After a season or two in the cotton fields of swampy Missouri (at the prevailing wage of 75 cents a day—during the season), away from the debilitating atmosphere of Jefferson City, they could not fail to be toughened physically, and would thus serve as a patriotic example for our youth, who, according to U. S. Army officers, live entirely too "soft" a life.

There would also be the secondary advantage, that our legislators would,

perhaps, return to Jefferson City with some dim awareness of pressing social problems to be solved.

Since it seems to be accepted, in certain circles, that we shall have to introduce in America most of the practical arrangements of a fascist régime, in order to combat fascism abroad, there would certainly be no point in permitting the inheritors of the glory of the Roman Empire to test their physical fitness once a year by playing leap-frog in front of their chief, while the inheritors of the mantle of Thomas Jefferson grow flabby under their togas.

"Back to the cotton fields! Give them cotton sacks!" (or more simply: "THE SACK!") They can get in on the cotton chopping this spring. An amendment to the State Constitution will do it. And while we're about it, why not ratify the XIII,

XIV and XV Amendments to the Federal Constitution?

Respectfully yours, D.

Feb. 1, 1941.

### DID YOU NOTICE THIS ROOSEVELT STUNT?

Dear Editor: In wandering through the back pages of one of the newspapers, I came upon a little buried item which contained the news that President (I Hate War) Roosevelt had signed a bill which will save business more than \$100,000,000 a year in taxes.

If this ain't a piece of the neatest fakery you ever saw! Every damn day Roosevelt and his whole string of rattle-dazzle politicians drone into our ears that we must save, sacrifice, work longer hours so that the gov-

ernment and the 60 families can build up the biggest war machine you ever saw.

First they give us only \$21 a month for conscription service because they say they haven't got the dough. Then they pass a tax on movies that jacks up the prices and brings into the coffers of the government \$90,000,000 a year. Then they pass a new income tax law to squeeze the poor stiff who makes only \$800 a year. Now they are going to pass some more laws that will tax nickel soft drinks, etc.

I, for one, am glad to see the various strikes that are now taking place because it shows that there are plenty of men in our country who are not going to let Roosevelt's war machine blitzkrieg American Labor.

Fraternally, A. Miller.



# Editorials

## OUR PROGRAM AGAINST THE WAR

1. Not a man, not a cent for Wall Street's war. All war funds to the unemployed.
2. For a rising scale of wages to meet increasing cost of living. Thirty-Thirty—\$30 weekly minimum wage—30-hour weekly maximum for all workers.
3. Expropriate the Sixty Families. For Government ownership and workers control of all war industries—aviation, steel, chemicals, railroads, public utilities, etc.
4. Against both imperialist war camps. For the Third Camp of World Labor and the Colonial Peoples.
5. Let the people vote on war. For the right of youth to vote at the age of 18.
6. Abolish secret diplomacy. Open the files of the State Department.
7. Withdraw all armed forces from territory outside the United States. Free the colonies. Hands off Latin America.
8. Against compulsory military training and conscription.
9. For the defense of civil liberties and workers' rights. Stop the persecution of aliens. Against the M-Day Plans and war-time dictatorship.
10. For full social, economic and political equality for Negroes. End discrimination against Negroes in industry and trade unions.
11. For an independent Labor Party.
12. For Workers' Defense Guards against Fascist and vigilante attacks.
13. No confidence in the Roosevelt government. For a workers' government and a people's army.
14. For Peace through Socialism. For the Socialist United States of the Americas, for the Socialist United States of Europe, and for the World Socialist Federation.

## Not by Mediation, But by Militancy!

The New York Times of March 17 carried the information that "Roosevelt Wins CIO to Mediation. Philip Murray, president of the CIO, had gone to Roosevelt to win him over to his 'industry council' plan. Roosevelt was determined to have the mediation board that the big bosses, Perkins, Knudsen, Green and Hillman, want. The Times says that Murray 'bowed to the inevitable' and promised to have the CIO names at the White House shortly."

This was a change of front by Murray who recently sent a memorandum to Roosevelt protesting against the appointment of such a board. Among other objections that Murray raised to such a step, the most important in his opinion were: "Labor problems cannot be solved in a vacuum which would be the practice under a separate labor board. . . . The imposition of 'cooling off' restraints would be a negation of collective bargaining. . . . Modern labor relations are an integral part of industry planning. Such relations encompassed in collective bargaining are inevitably directed towards industry-wide agreements. . . . A number of the industry problems are closely integrated with labor relations."

Murray then repeated his argument for "industry councils." Under his plan there would be councils in the major war industries composed of equal representation from labor and management with a government representative as chairman. At the top would be a central policy-making board with equal labor and management representation, and Roosevelt as chairman. Murray argued that the present government machinery to speed the production of war materials "is unwieldy, inefficient and unfunctional." He added that "its continuation will create a chaotic situation most harmful to defense production and to the production of goods for civilian needs." As an example of the "present disorganization" he cited the aluminum industry: "No planning is being done for the aluminum industry as such. . . . For each major and essential industry the picture is the same: no unified industry plan. . . ."

All this is almost too

## Naive and Childish

to talk about. A lot of little boards with equal labor and boss representation and a government man as chairman. A super-board with equal labor and management representation and the President as chairman! Whenever a tie occurs, the President to cast the deciding vote. It is not difficult to guess which side would get Roosevelt's vote.

There is no doubt that Roosevelt would like some such scheme as this, but does Murray think that he could get Roosevelt himself into such a pickle as this? Did he really think that there was the remotest

possibility of getting Roosevelt, arch political schemer and front representative of "management" to consider such a proposal seriously, even for one minute?

Worst of all is Murray's agitated state over the absence of planning in industry. His industry councils were to take care of this and set matters right. (He certainly couldn't catch Roosevelt with this bait. This silk-stocking spokesman for the big bosses had already scrapped one industry planning scheme—the New Deal—when it began to interfere with his war plans.)

"No planning is being done for the aluminum industry," says Murray; and "for each major and essential industry the picture is the same. . . ." This is not quite true, of course. There is no planning of the kind that Murray and the workers want. That is, there is no planning for higher wages and shorter hours. There is no planning for increasing the happiness and security of labor. There is no planning to call off the spies, the thugs, the strikebreakers and the company unions. But there is a well-organized plan to build corporation profits to titanic heights, at the expense of labor.

This is the only type of planning that capitalism is capable of, and the only type that capitalists are interested in. Any other type of planning must be done by the workers themselves. It is only labor itself that can have any interest in planning for higher wages, shorter hours, better working conditions, security, peace and happiness for the working class. The bosses plan only for their own food, clothing and shelter. They take the food from the workers to feed themselves, the clothing away from us to clothe themselves; they take the best houses and leave us the shacks!

If Murray would take a few hours off and read a few pages of the Communist Manifesto and other writings of Marx and Engels, and combine this reading with his own experience in the labor movement, he would begin to understand some of these things. There he would read that the government is the "executive committee of the ruling class," that while one may find efficient planning in one capitalist plant or several, capitalist industry as a whole is a planless and anarchistic system. For purposes of boss war, however, industry and government may coordinate their war production plans—but that's not what WE mean by planning. He would also learn something about capitalist wars: that they are only a means through which the capitalists of one country seek to protect their interests that are being assaulted by the capitalists of another country.

This elementary reading, we say, combined with Murray's vast and long experience in the labor movement, would make him understand that in conflicts with the ruling class, especially in a period of imperialist war, the working class must have its own economic and political program, that they must break with the Republican and Democratic Parties. Today, this means, of course, a break with Roosevelt.

## The Right Road

The organized workers, particularly those of Murray's own organization, are an organization into industrial unions and militant fighting on the picket line for higher wages and shorter hours.

This is the fight that Murray and the CIO leaders should be at the head of. Instead of this, Murray is deluding himself and the workers by attempting to plan capitalist industry to make it more efficient. He wants to tell the capitalists how best to organize their shops and plants for the mass production of materials to fight their war. This isn't the business of a leader of the workers. His problem is to plan the strategy and tactics of the unions that will result in higher wages and shorter hours. The capitalists know what they are about and how to run their business. If they can't do it, that's their funeral, not ours.

Of course Murray "bowed to the inevitable." The inevitable here is capitalism preparing for imperialist war and the profits of imperialist war. The inevitable is the fact of the class division in capitalist society and the accompanying class struggle waged relentlessly and consciously by the ruling class. It is notification once again to the working class that it too must be class-conscious and prepared always for relentless struggle against the ruling class. In plain language it means that the working class will get from the ruling class only as much as we are strong enough to take.

# Insurance Is Big Business And Big Business Runs It

By FRED MORRIS

People often talk about the menace of big business. But few have ever stopped to think of the staggering size of the life insurance business, an industry with 28 billion dollars of assets and with hundreds of billions of dollars of life insurance policies issued. Most people in the United States hold some such policy, yet scarcely any of these millions ever utter a sound as regards the business policies of the companies which are supposed to belong to them and

whose officers and employees are supposed to work only for the benefit and welfare of the policy holders.

The recent report by the Temporary National Economic Committee, the first fairly thorough insurance investigation in many years, shows a whole series of shocking facts. A few large companies dominate this enormous aggregation of wealth, and they in turn interlock with the largest banks and industries in the United States.

The insurance companies make de-

posits of cash in their interlocking banks or else buy industrial securities or advance loans to them. Directors, supposed to be in a position of trust to safeguard their policy holders, often fail to attend any meetings, yet use their positions to get favors for themselves or their other companies. And, of course, these big boys who don't like dictatorships have established a self-perpetuating régime, the old officers and board of directors in actual practice electing their successors—usually themselves.

Whenever remedial legislation is introduced, the companies leap to the defense of the poor widows and orphans whose savings are thus menaced. But, during the lifetime of the family breadwinner, they do their darndest to load him with excessive amounts of insurance at excessive rates. For example, variations in costs to the holder may range from a yearly premium of \$24.58 to \$28.11, and the net cost from \$58.81 to \$133.94 on a whole life, dividend sharing policy issued at age 35.

Savings bank insurance plans in Massachusetts and New York save the purchaser about 40 per cent as compared with holders of policies in private companies. Naturally, the companies fight against them, maintaining expensive lobbies in Washington and in the state capitals to endeavor to control legislation.

### Frightful Excesses

Probably the worst excesses in life insurance are to be found in the industrial field where the low income working man is the one who gets rooked, just as he does in industry generally. Overzealous agents, urged on by their employers' greed for more and more business, try to sell as much as they can, without regard to the ability of the buyer to keep up payments or to the coverage thereby afforded the family in case of the death of the family head. The lapse rate is terrifically high here, and all reserves are lost to the holder. As the TNEC says: ". . . industrial insurance has failed to fulfill its essential purpose." And further: "the public is sold policies which lapse only to be sold again."

Barnum's famous dictum that there's a sucker born every minute is the operating principle of the companies. In April, 1938, these companies, so solicitous of widows and orphans, got together to fix and boost premium rates and to reduce surrender values. "The principal life insurance companies have for several years undertaken to eliminate rate competition by means of inter-company agreements and gentlemen's agreements." These "gentlemen" hold meetings whose minutes are blank as to rate-fixing agreements. Thus all is "unofficial" and there need be no fear of the anti-trust laws. In New York, in fact, they persuaded the Superintendent of Insurance to fix as the legal rate the very amount agreed on by our worthy gentlemen. You see, their five billion dollar a year income isn't enough for them.

Just let the "small" business man who wants to borrow about \$100,000 try to get it from an insurance company. And as for the small shopkeeper or really small-industry manufacturer, he doesn't stand a chance.

The report says: "An ever increasing amount of the country's savings are flowing to life insurance companies, which are in effect sterilizing the savings funds received and preventing them from flowing into new enterprises or undertakings where the element of venture or risk is present. Thus the small business man or average industrialist is denied access to this more important capital reservoir."

### The Way Out

Our concern is not for the business man, big or small, but the facts and conclusions given above indicate the enormous hold which insurance has over our economic life. And when we see that the companies take from poor workers, funds desperately needed for their everyday needs, funds often completely lost through lapses because of inability to keep up excessive payments, we are indeed concerned. New legislation has been proposed, but so weak is it that even the New York Times refers to it as "mild." The way out will not be found in laws or in good intentions; let the Sherman Act stand as a case in point. Only a workers' government can safeguard the worker as regards his old age, his sickness, or the welfare of his family after he is dead: Only thus can the haunting fear of unemployment, the horrors of war and all the horrible aspects of a dying economic order be ended.

Readers of LABOR ACTION who are interested in securing further information on this subject are requested to write to the Editor for information as to savings bank insurance, comparative costs in different companies, and insurance abuses in general.

## A Few Questions, Lord Halifax!

What is happening today in India, Your Lordship? As Ambassador to America and a former Viceroy of India you are in a position to know better than anyone else.

Why has all mail (including newspapers) stopped arriving from India for months?

Why has the American press been completely silent on the subject of Gandhi's limited civil disobedience campaign?

Why has not a single item about India appeared in the American press for almost THREE months?

Why do Indian students and families living in America receive no word from home for months?

COULD IT BE THAT A TOTAL WARTIME DICTATORSHIP (INCLUDING A TOTAL CENSORSHIP WITH RESPECT TO THE EXTERNAL WORLD) HAS BEEN CLAMPED UPON THIS NATION OF 400,000,000 PEOPLES?

We know that the limited civil disobedience movement launched by Gandhi was steadily expanding in early January. WE KNOW THAT IN MID-JANUARY GANDHI OPENLY PROCLAIMED THE DISTINCT POSSIBILITY OF NATION-WIDE, MASS OPPOSITION AND DISOBEDIENCE TO ENGLAND'S WAR PLANS.

We know that practically every leading official of the Indian National Congress had been arrested by January; that Gandhi was receiving thousands of letters daily urging him to proclaim mass civil disobedience.

And then came total—TOTALITARIAN—silence!

Could it be that our "democratic" British brethren are ashamed at the brutal repression they are employing against the nationalists? Could it be, Lord Halifax, that you prefer silence about concentration camps for Indian nationalists you are organizing?

We repeat our question: What work is British Imperialism up to in India today?

SHERMAN STANLEY.

## THE WORLD AT WAR

### Roosevelt Follows Signing Of War Powers Bill with An Interventionist Speech

By MAX STERLING

With the ink hardly dry on the Lend-Lease Bill, Roosevelt openly proclaimed to the world, in a speech before the White House Correspondents Association, that American intervention in the World War will be total and will go all the way.

Like Wilson, his predecessor as war president, Roosevelt deliberately obscured the real causes of the war—the gigantic struggle between the "have" nations and the "have-not" nations for the world's markets, colonies and sources of raw materials. Said Roosevelt: "Nazi forces are not seeking mere modifications in colonial maps or in minor European boundaries. They openly seek the destruction of all elective systems of government on every continent, including our own."

But not a word from Roosevelt that it was the capitalist class of Britain, America and their present allies, who applauded Hitler and Mussolini at the moment when they were engaged in "the destruction of all elective systems of government" and the labor movements of these countries. It was precisely when they "sought modifications in colonial maps" and the boundaries of the Versailles system that Hitler and Mussolini became monsters. In the eyes of labor they had become monsters long before that!

Britain and Greece, said Roosevelt, were "thinking in terms of the great freedoms." But he didn't explain how it is that in India and the British colonies in Africa and Asia hundreds of millions live under a bloody English rule as ruthless as Hitler's. Nor did he explain the extent of "freedom" in Greece, either under the recently deceased Metaxas, or today—a "freedom" operated in the image of Hitler's terror.

Roosevelt also overlooked several facts about conditions at home. He might have more adequately explained the "democratic" motives of an American imperialism which supports the bloody dictatorships of South America and Cuba and in various ways exploits the peoples of Latin America, Hawaii and the Philippines. So, too, might he have explained the "freedom" enjoyed by millions of Negroes or by the sharecroppers or agricultural workers of California who live under vigilante rule.

These are irrelevant facts to the imperialists, hell-bent for war. What they are fighting for has nothing to do with democracy or the common man's right to a decent livelihood.

What they wanted and got, in Roosevelt's speech, is the application of America's military and economic potential to the war. Despite Hitler's assertion that America is too late, the fact remains that he has not yet dared an assault on the British Isles. American intervention therefore assumes a decisive importance.

Concretely, we see this in the Balkans. Backed by America, the British too are going all the way. The large and fully equipped forces they have landed in Greece and in Turkey demonstrate that, with America behind them, they have accepted Hitler's challenge for a new front in the war. The Anglo-American combination has bolstered up Greece and Turkey. Even Yugoslavia is hesitating.

Roosevelt has set his course toward war, and he proves that by every step. Every fourth American youth will be ploughed under, every worker will have to sacrifice—for the greater glory of imperialist profits.

The real goal of American imperialism is domination of the world. To this end, Roosevelt demanded in his speech that American labor work longer hours and give up its struggle for a decent living. He also cautioned the profiteers that they might have to "sacrifice" a little. But that "sacrifice" will stack up for little in face of the real and exhausting sacrifices he is seeking to force on labor.

That then is an indication of the "new world order" that Roosevelt proposes to shape. It will be a rehash of Versailles, a perpetuation of the dying capitalist system. The evils of the capitalist system will remain but in a more brutal and barbaric form. How much democracy there will be is already indicated by the sweeping powers given Roosevelt BEFORE the United States has militantly entered the war. In the very same sense that the whole war is a lie, a fraud forced on the working class for the ends of imperialist rivalry, so is Roosevelt's speech a lie and a fraud. For labor there is only one camp in the war—the camp of independent labor action for labor's own emancipation.

## THE NEGRO'S FIGHT

### We Must Aid Africa's Anti-War Militants

By J. R. JOHNSON

There seems to be some slowness in collecting donations for the African revolutionaries now being persecuted by the British government for opposing the war. This is certainly because comrades and sympathizers have not got a clear picture of what a revolutionary opposition to war in the colonial countries means, and what its significance is in the struggle for socialism.

### A HIGHLY ADVANCED COLONY

West Africa is one of the most advanced of British colonial possessions in Africa. The climate for generations prevented Europeans from settling there, so that the natives retained the land. On this basis, a Negro petty bourgeoisie, lawyers, doctors, journalists and even government officials developed. But there are millions of natives in the interior of Nigeria, for instance, governed by native chieftains who are for the most part in the pay of the British government.

In addition to the native bourgeoisie of the towns, there is a peasantry which is unique in Africa. Some sixty years ago a native smuggled in some cocoa beans from Portuguese Africa, planted them and they grew. This was the beginning of an industry which in forty years grew to \$50,000,000. Luckily the natives owned the land and had a good start. Otherwise white plantation owners would have set up huge estates based on wage labor, found scientists to prove that the African physically and mentally was incapable of cultivating cocoa (they did that in Kenya) and gobbled up all the profits for themselves. To take the cocoa to the ports there is a bunch of Negro truck drivers, many owning their own trucks.

For some years this petty bourgeoisie was nationalistic in sentiment but not vigorously anti-British. It accepted the British government in large things, though full of racial pride in small. It supported the last war. But capitalism itself educates the workers. The crisis of 1929 shook up the cocoa business badly and these farmers, producing directly for the world market, felt the shock in a personal way. The British cocoa dealers, Fry's, Rountree, etc., all Quakers, all Liberals, forgot laissez-faire and formed a pool to cut prices.

By 1937, the farmers had had enough of it and there was a general strike in which truck drivers and the dock workers all joined. There was violence, the burning of a police station and pitched battles with the police. The British government gave in. They sent out a commission and the farmers were granted the right to organize a pool of their own and to bargain.

But the whole political situation was now very tense. The West Africans had been bitterly disappointed at Britain's rôle in the Ethiopian tragedy. On the day that the Italian troops entered Addis Ababa, the Negro children cried so much that school had to be abandoned for the day. In Nigeria some old line black toadies dominated the Lagos municipalities. A radical youth movement, many thousands strong, sprang up all over West Africa, put up candidates of its own and drove out their pro-British petty bourgeois. They denounced the CP and the war for democracy. Then came the war.

Now, even in West Africa, the British government has absolute powers. It can put anybody in jail any time it likes with no questions asked. But the extracts from the West African press, which Padmore has given in his article in LABOR ACTION (March 10) show that even the native press is questioning the war aims of Britain. This is a sign of enormous importance. It simply could not have happened in 1914-1918. For these people are petty bourgeoisie and will not lightly risk their hides. The sentiment in the colony that West Africa has nothing to gain is undoubtedly very strong. It is not revolutionary but it is a great step forward. Certain of the more radical elements, despite their bitter experience with the Communist Party, have come forward and spoken and agitated openly. They have been jailed, some have been released, all are in difficulties. The government is making it hot for them.

### A REVOLUTIONARY OBLIGATION

What these comrades want is aid, money to help them; but what is of equal importance, money from a revolutionary organization in America. They ask for little. We should send double and treble what they ask for, as material aid and as a sign of solidarity. Some of them may never have heard of the Fourth International, but they are members, in the front line. They are few but they are in a good situation. If the European tension breaks they will be in a position to influence hundreds of thousands at once. That is the World Revolution we are always talking about.

The same process is taking place in every British colony. I hope there is no comrade who has had the slightest doubt about that, even before Padmore's article. It will not break out today or tomorrow, but it is gathering. Let the bourgeoisie tear itself to pieces. If the Proletarian Revolution should only announce itself in Europe, anywhere, it will sweep like a flame through Africa and India. Time will show, but meanwhile every single person who comes forward and fights is precious. The news that a few dollars was sent by an American Revolutionary party will be one of the most powerful propaganda efforts that we have done for years.

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