

ARE THE MINERS BEING DOUBLE-CROSSED?

You Can't Intimidate Them!



Miners employed at the Marvine Colliery, Hudson Coal Co., in Scranton, Pa., as they quit work Friday, April 30, at 9:30 p.m. These men look mighty confident of victory—and with good reason! (Acme Photo)

Our Correspondent Finds Miners Determined to Win

By DAVID COOLIDGE

PITTSBURGH—As this is being written, the miners are returning to work following the fifteen-day "truce" arranged between their Policy Committee and the new coal czar, the Secretary of the Interior. As the chairman at one local meeting which I attended put it, "Mr. Lewis has granted Mr. Ickes a fifteen-day truce." And as far as I could learn, this is the way the miners view the matter: it is only a truce.

The battle isn't over yet. The miners haven't the least intention of giving up their demands. They are determined about these demands, and it can be said plainly that they will never agree to any compromise that does not result in substantially higher wages and

improved working conditions. On this matter of better working conditions, I will say more later.

It is necessary to emphasize that while the mine workers have formally agreed to the "truce" and are back at work, they do not like this truce. Numbers of them that I talked to, individually and in groups, remarked that this thing has been going on long enough: "We've already given them a thirty-day extension." From what I have heard in getting around from place to place, I am of the opinion that thousands of these miners really did not want to go back to work until they got their new contract.

Maintained Discipline

It is also important to emphasize as strongly as possible that, while they went back to work, they maintained the same superb discipline with which they began their action and the same discipline that kept them off the job for the four days from Saturday to Tuesday.

Even in Fayette County, where the return was somewhat in advance

of other Western Pennsylvania counties, the movement was not as stated by the Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph (Hearst), which paper carried the head on Monday afternoon, "Fayette Miners Troop Into Pits." Even the most casual observation in Fayette County on Monday afternoon and evening revealed the fact that there was no danger of a jam at the mine entrance caused by men rushing back to work.

This was very clearly demonstrated by the fact that all through this region coke ovens, which had been charged for pulling within 96 hours, had not been pulled by Monday night. At Allison, a miner told me that the ovens there would have been pulled sometime on Monday if the men had been at work. In discussing the matter with the mine superintendent, however, the men had decided that they would carry out the instructions of their Policy Committee and return on Tuesday. Furthermore, the fact that Fayette County was ahead of other counties in getting going was due to instructions from the president of Dis-

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Are the half a million coal miners of this country being double-crossed?

That is what appears to be the case as we go to press.

The capitalist press, which is still foaming at the mouth with its poisonous attacks on the miners, has not told one-tenth of the story. Even now, we do not have all the details. But we have enough of what has been happening behind the scenes. And it is a story of one of the dirtiest deals ever tried on a mass of working men who take their lives in their hands every day they go down into the earth to work.

Here's the Whole Story:

The miners' contract was coming to an end. As usual, their union representatives opened up negotiations in New York with the representatives of the coal operators.

The miners presented their modest demands for a pay increase to meet the skyrocketing cost of living. They were no longer fooled by the empty promises of the Administration that "price ceilings will be maintained," that "prices are going to be rolled back." Experience has showed them and all other workers that all the promises remained on paper—but prices kept rising and rising until the miners could no longer live like decent human beings on the pay they were getting.

It is only when the strike was called off that Price Administrator Prentiss Brown admitted that prices were completely out of control. The miners and their wives have known it for a long time.

What was the reply of the coal operators to the proposals of the miners? These operators are the spokesmen or tools of big business, of the railroads, of the steel industry, of big banking in the country. They sat through the "negotiations" like wooden Indians. The only thing they would say to the miners' proposals was "No!" They made no proposals of their own—none whatsoever. They made no counter-propositions. They just sat tight.

Why? Because they were playing a dirty and crooked game. They were trying to force the issue according to plan. These profit-bloated gentlemen, spearhead of the labor-busting movement, were trying to take advantage of the "war situation" to force the miners to keep on working at slave wages—or be branded by the kept press of big business as "agents and tools of the Axis."

What was their plan? It has already leaked out—the whole rotten story. They had been tipped off "by Washington" to stall as long as possible. For what purpose? In order to shift the issue of the miners' demands to the War Labor Board. It was a conspiracy between the coal operators and Washington.

Good for You, Aircraft Workers!

The Federated Press reports that rank and file delegates representing thousands of aircraft workers met in Detroit this week and "howled down" a proposal by their neo-fascists to condemn John L. Lewis and the fight of the miners.

What is the War Labor Board? Every intelligent worker has bitter reason to know. It is the graveyard where thousands of workers' grievances and demands have been buried for months and months and months. It is the slaughterhouse where the legitimate wage demands of labor are hit over the head with the Little-Steel-formula axe.

The miners knew all about this "clever" plan. They resisted it to the very end and they are still resisting it. They were and remain one hundred per cent right.

The miners don't want their urgent demands buried in the cemetery of the War Labor Board, which is stacked against them three different ways: by the representatives of the capitalists, by the representatives of the "public," and by the so-called representatives of labor, who seem to be concerned mainly with smashing John L. Lewis for their own political reasons.

Steelmen's Proposition

The UMW refused to budge. The most violent campaign of lies and slander the capitalist press has engaged in for years did not help. The miners stuck solidly with their union, and all efforts to drive a wedge between them broke down before they could get under way. Then—

In comes John R. Steelman, the government conciliator. Whom did he represent? That is the question. For the newspapers, it was given out that he merely represents Frances Perkins, the Secretary of Labor in Roosevelt's cabinet. But that was only partly true. Actually, he represented Roosevelt himself! That's the point, and that's what the miners' representatives were given to understand. He was speaking for the government itself and not for one of its subordinate and powerless departments.

What did Steelman propose? A guaranteed yearly wage rate for the miners based on a six-day week! That is what the miners were willing to accept. Their representatives in New York did accept it! But the operators did not. Remember the tip they had gotten from the right places in Washington. They stood pat. The operators wanted to send the case to the War Labor Board, come what may, and they knew what they were doing. That was a good reason for the miners refusing to accommodate them!

What the Miners Faced

The miners met the plan of the operators head-on. They showed in twenty-four hours that they could blow it up. They showed how easy it is for labor to get what it wants and deserves—the minute it decides to act!

Stop a minute and see what faced the miners:

The whole capitalist press was against them, without exception. It drooled at the mouth. It howled like panic-stricken hyenas, and was echoed by the jackals of the so-called "liberal" press and—don't forget this!—by the jackals of the Stalinist "Communist" Party and the Daily (Strike-breaking) Worker.

The servile labor leaders of the CIO and the AFL did all they could to stab the min-

ers in the back. What in the name of all that is sacred gives these lickspittles the right to the title of labor "leaders," anyway? We are not worshippers of John L. Lewis or the United Mine Workers' officialdom. We have our criticisms to make of them, as have many thousands of miners. We know their virtues and their vices.

But in this fight they were the authorized representatives of half a million mine workers. In this fight they were bearing the brunt of a battle fought for the whole labor movement—in fact, for the whole American working class. Every worker with half an ounce of brains in his head knows that a victory for the miners means a victory for all labor, while a defeat of the miners means a heavy setback for all labor and the labor union movement.

Yet what did Murray and Green and Thomas and Frankenstein and the rest of that crew do while the miners were being forced out on strike? Did they proclaim their solidarity with the miners? Did they go to the United Mine Workers to confer with them on what the rest of the labor movement could do to help their brothers? Nothing of the kind. They had time only to confer with those who were working to break the miners' strike! Don't forget this.

Miners Stand by Union

Everything was done and everybody was used to intimidate and bluff the miners out of their demands. But it did not work. On the critical day, the miners went out on strike—to a man, and no coal moved out of the pits.

They were denounced as "Axis agents." That didn't help.

They were threatened with the use of troops. But bayonets are too light to dig coal.

They were threatened with being reclassified and drafted into the Army. But nobody scabbled.

Then Roosevelt was brought in. He thought the magic sound of his voice, plus more promises and still more promises, would accomplish what nothing else could accomplish. He "ordered" the men back to work for Monday morning. The union leaders met and decided, following the conference between John L. Lewis and Harold Ickes, that the miners would go back on Tuesday morning, pending a fifteen-day truce.

There was the test. Would the miners listen to Roosevelt, who attacked their union over a nation-wide hook-up, without saying a word against the operators, who exploit and rob the miners—or would they listen to their union, which is defending them and fighting the operators?

Monday came and Tuesday came. With impotent rage in every sentence, the newspapers everywhere were compelled to admit that the overwhelming majority of the miners followed their union and ignored the "orders" of Roosevelt.

The New York World-Telegram, venomous enemy of the miners, admitted on May 4 that "Virtually no anthracite miners responded to Mr. Roosevelt's appeal for Monday work." That's the anthracite region, on which the reactionaries counted heavily.

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NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE LABOR FRONT

Auto Union Locals Blast CIO "No-Strike" Pledge

Over a dozen presidents of United Automobile Workers (CIO) locals in the Detroit-Flint area have petitioned the international executive board of the union to rescind the no-strike pledge.

close to 100,000 workers. During the past six months, the locals have been reporting a persistent demand by the rank and file for scrapping of the "equality of sacrifice" war policy.

special convention talk by holding "War Policy" conferences throughout the country. These conferences were not policy-making bodies, but just forums for pretty speeches on how to carry on collective bargaining during wartime through the benevolent offices of the WLB.

Enough news has leaked out of the recent meeting of the international executive board to indicate that heavier and heavier blows are being rained against the "sacrifice everything" policy (sometimes called "equality of sacrifice").

Local union administrations, quickest to feel and respond to the pressure of the membership, are embarrassing the international executive board with concrete proposals for reversal of policy.

At a general meeting at which the men voted to return to work, President Meany denounced Walter McCarter, general manager of the Cleveland Transit System, as a "faker" and "man of bad faith," and promised to call another strike if negotiations failed.

The union bureaucrats and the Stalinists played their usual role. Thomas Lenehan, bureaucratic president of the Cleveland Federation of Labor, and A. E. Stevenson, Stalinist secretary of the Cleveland Industrial Union Council, publicly opposed the strike.

And although the international office had four weeks' notice of the strike vote, it refused to authorize the strike on the grounds that it would "take six months to get the board together." Michael Garvey, international representative, made himself unpopular with the men by refusing to sanction the strike.

The strikers were asking for time and a half for over forty hours a week. The operating men now get time and a half for work over eight hours a day, and the miscellaneous men for work over forty-eight hours a week.

The strike, twice postponed, was finally called at midnight last Wednesday, when the management continually refused to meet with the union's negotiating committee.

Meany finally agreed to ask transit workers to return to work upon condition that the management be forced to meet with the union every day until the negotiations are completed. Paul Williams, federal conciliator, guaranteed this provision.

Cleveland Transit Strike Forces Company to Negotiate with Union

CLEVELAND—Three thousand five hundred transit workers carried on a successful one-day strike despite one of the most vicious slander campaigns by the newspapers in Cleveland labor history.

The strike, one hundred per cent effective, completely paralyzed transportation for eighteen hours. Called by local leaders of Division 268 of the Amalgamated Association of Street, Electric Railway & Motor Coach Employees after the membership had overwhelmingly voted in favor of a strike, it was denounced by international union officers as "a revocation of the no-strike pledge made to President Roosevelt."

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Brewster Local Quits N. Y. Council

LONG ISLAND CITY—Local 365, UAW (Brewster) at its regular meeting last week almost unanimously passed the recommendation of the executive board to condemn the political execution of the two socialist Polish labor leaders, Ehrlich and Alter, by the Stalinist bureaucracy.

role since the invasion of Russia by Germany. It was further stated that the Greater New York Industrial Union Council stand in opposition to the Bushkill program of the local, which calls for a special convention of the UAW to rescind the no-strike pledge of the union, and to form an Independent Labor Party.

The semi-monthly paper of the local, Aero-Notes, reflects the militancy of the union membership and its leadership. In the current issue of the paper there is a front-page article entitled "Support to Miners." This article is quoted elsewhere in this issue of LABOR ACTION.

The sentiments expressed in Aero-Notes on the miners' strike are still another reason, why the local had to

Delegations Quit UAW "War Policy" Meet as Protest

Delegations representing New York and New Jersey locals in Regions 9 and 9A on May 5 walked out of a special "War Policy" conference, called by the leadership of the United Automobile Workers Union, in protest against the undemocratic conduct of the conference, and the obvious intention of Richard Frankenstein and the other bureaucrats to prevent the convocation of a special convention.

Next week's LABOR ACTION will carry a full report of this conference, as well as of the conference held in Detroit.

In Chicago:

You can now get LABOR ACTION, The New International and Henry Judd's pamphlet, "India in Revolt," at CESHINSKI'S BOOKSTORE 2720 Division Avenue.

bolster, to say the least, the "sacrifice everything" program.

Bendix Situation

One of the problems which confronted the Washington sessions of the international executive board is the situation that arose out of the strike situation at Bendix, N. J., and which is causing a greater and greater stench throughout the powerful Regions 9 and 9A.

A delegation of local UAW presidents and executive boards from Curtiss, Air Associates and Brewster pleaded the case of the Bendix strikers. They asked that the international legalize the strike, and thus enable them to deliver the same support that was magnificently given to the Air Associates strike two years ago, when a similar situation prevailed.

a scandal in the eyes of the workers.

The Bendix situation should mark a turning point in the strategy of the UAW militants in their attempts to stop the retreat of what was, and can still be, the most militant union in this country. No longer should they pursue the policy of placing hope in the willingness of the international executive board to call a special convention to rescind the no-strike pledge.

The path toward a special convention does not lie through the appeals to the international executive board or factions of it. The local unions must follow the initiative given to the Air Associates strike two years ago, when a similar situation prevailed.

Two Coal Strikes: What We Can Learn

United States, 1943 - Britain, 1926

By A. A. B.

The miners' strike, whatever its outcome, is an important stage in the development of American labor. It is not a mere strike for higher wages. It is a protest against the treachery and the hypocrisy of the government, against the contrast between the things the government "says about 'equality of sacrifice,' holding down prices," etc., and the things the government DOES—allowing the capitalists to fatten themselves on the war and letting the burdens pile up on the people.

In its way, the strike is also a protest against the labor leadership which took it upon itself to sign away labor's rights, and chain it to the capitalist war machine with a no-strike pledge.

To understand completely the lessons of this strike, we can usefully spend a few minutes thinking about another great strike, the general

strike of 1926 in Great Britain, which began with a strike of the miners.

Bare Right to Live

In 1926 Great Britain was not at war, but the whole working class was seething with dissatisfaction, just as the whole working class in America is seething with dissatisfaction today. During the war British capitalism had made the most high-sounding promises of all that labor was going to get—after the war, of course. Now the war was over and, as was inevitable, Britain was placing the burdens of what was called post-war reconstruction upon the backs of the workers.

The struggle began to crystallize around the miners' demand that no further attempt be made to degrade the standard of life and working conditions in the coal fields. "Not a penny off the pay, not a second on the day." Then, as now, it was a question of the mere right to live as a human being.

The British government had no WLB and OPA at the time. But it appointed one, a Royal Commission on the Coal Industry, presided over by Sir Herbert Samuel, a former Minister of the Crown. The British working class knew that if the miners lost, all of them would be overwhelmed by a general capitalist attack on all fronts.

In February, 1926, there was a joint meeting of the Industrial Committee (representing all the British trade union and the miners' leaders), and on the 19th the committee issued a statement expressing complete solidarity with the miners, and a determination to stand by them. It would seem that these men were at any rate different from Philip Murray and William Green, who have carefully expressed solidarity with Roosevelt in his struggle against the miners.

a bureaucrat, in America, England or France.

Three weeks afterward, with the struggle approaching a climax, the miners' leaders again approached the Industrial Committee, which began to back water. It spoke about "reducing points of difference to the smallest possible dimensions"; and Walter, now Sir Walter Citrine, wrote to the miners that the committee did not think matters had reached the stage when "any final declaration of the General Council's policy can be made."

Meanwhile the coal operators proposed going back from the seven hour day to the eight, and a lowering of wages. The Government Commission (pardon me, the Royal Commission) sent in its report, which drew special attention to the horrible sufferings and losses—of the coal operators.

With all the British workers backing the miners, the General Council of Trade Unions held a meeting to consider a general strike of the whole working class in support of its brothers in the coal fields. The vote was 3,653,527 for the strike, 49,911 against.

If you want to know how the British capitalist press behaved, just read the American press today. There was no war, but the same howls of "challenge to the government," "defiance of the civil power," etc., etc. The British workers stood firm, determined to win this battle, for they knew that, in defending the miners, they were defending themselves. Yet the strike lasted only nine days and came to an abrupt end. Why?

As soon as the meeting declaring the strike was over, the labor leaders at once sought ways and means to break it! This is the literal truth.

For the ensuing nine days the leaders of the General Council spent their time on their knees before the government. As A. J. Cook, the John L. Lewis of those days, wrote afterward: "It seemed

that the only desire of some leaders was to call off the general strike at any cost, without any guarantee for the workers, miners or others."

That was exactly what happened. They called off the strike and the miners were left to carry on alone, only to be beaten after many months of heroic struggle.

The Historical Lessons

There are many differences between 1926 in Britain and 1943 in America, but despite all the differences there is a certain historical pattern which we can follow and store up for future use.

1) This is not a personal conflict between Roosevelt and John L. Lewis, just as in 1926 there was no personal conflict between A. J. Cook and the British Prime Minister. Whenever the working class of any country is getting consistent blows, one union, very often the miners, brings the issue to a head by a decision to fight.

2) The rest of the workers, in 1926, as in 1943, know what is at stake, and follow the struggle with deep interest and a desire to help. But whatever the labor leaders say, you will find them, in too many cases, using their influence against the continuance of the struggle.

3) The Roosevelt Administration says that owing to the war, the workers must go back. That is, it supports the coal operators "only because of the war." But the Baldwin government was not waging any foreign war. Yet it wrapped itself in the report of the Royal Commission and fought side by side with the coal operators. OPA, WLB, Royal Commission—these are only capitalist disguises.

4) The struggle was decided then, as it will be decided now, by the solidarity of the workers and their determination to keep their leaders in line. The moment the General Council betrayed the struggle, the miners were lost. Today, if the miners win some concessions, it is due to a variety of reasons which are explained in other pages of LABOR ACTION. But one fundamental reason will be that Roosevelt knows how eagerly and sympathetically the large masses of the workers are watching the miners' fight. He cannot afford to antagonize labor now.

The militancy of the miners and the importance of the solidarity of labor as a whole. That was the lesson of 1926. That is the lesson of 1943. Don't let all this blabber about John L. Lewis, John L. Lewis, John L. and the President fool us. The American working class is making one of its great and necessary experiences on its road to power. This direct challenge to the capitalist class and the capitalist state is a milestone on that road. We must see it for the historic event that it is.

The Readers of Labor Action Take the Floor...

On the Situation At Westinghouse

Dear Editor:

At the present time, Westinghouse Local 107 of the United Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers (UERMW) is renegotiating its contract with the Westinghouse Electrical & Manufacturing Co. of South Philadelphia, as are all other Westinghouse locals throughout the country.

The most important and conflicting issue arising during negotiations has been the effective date of the contract itself. Last year Westinghouse locals fought to establish April 8 as the date, but Westinghouse management cleverly squeezed two months retroactive pay from the workers and established the beginning of June as the date, pending negotiations.

Thus, the purpose and intent of Local 107, in rigorously driving for a large attendance at its April 6 membership meeting was to show that it was supported by the majority of the workers in again demanding April 8 as the effective and retroactive date of their contract. That Tuesday's membership meeting had the largest attendance of any regularly scheduled meeting, many of the workers having to leave because there was no room. Many proposals on the new contract were discussed, and the following are several which were adopted:

First—April 8 as the effective date of the contract.

Second—Equal wages for women.

Third—Higher rates for new employees.

Fourth—Wage increases equal to the rise in the cost of living since June, 1942.

Fifth—Abolition of the learners' set-up.

Sixth—For a master agreement covering all Westinghouse locals.

All in all, this membership meeting seemed to accomplish its purpose. Nevertheless, several days later the foremen on the second shift, in the shop whose employees made up most of the attendance at the previous meeting, began to taunt the workers and to threaten them with the loss of Sunday's overtime pay because they had taken time off on Tuesday for the meeting. Immediately, spontaneous outbursts among the men occurred and a sit-down was imminent. Chief and local shop stewards prevented a stoppage, but they could not prevent the workers' indignation. The next several days rumors began to circulate that the local union was going to order a shut-down of the plant the following Saturday and Sunday to protest. These rumors were false, but they did partially reflect the attitude and the resentment of the workers, and their desire to take some practical action in the fight for their rights.

On Friday, a mass meeting was held outside of the shops, in which the workers bore down with all their pressure on the Local 107 leadership for immediate action on overtime and other grievances which the workers held—all of which could be said to result from Westinghouse management's stalling in contract negotiations.

Westinghouse management answered all this unforeseen working class action by posting all over the plant new interpretations of the President's overtime order. These interpretations say in effect that six full and complete days must be worked before the usual overtime payments for Sunday would be made. Thus those workers on the four to twelve o'clock shift were to lose a portion of their overtime payments on Sunday, because their attendance at the local union meeting necessitated their taking off a half day on Tuesday. This was a direct attack on the union's right to free assemblage, as well as a dastardly but clever attempt to cut the workers' overtime standards.

The next general membership meeting on April 17 proved to be a failure despite the willingness and desire of almost the entire day shift to quit work and to attend the meeting. Though the local union did not take any progressive steps to protect its overtime standards, this second meeting accomplished other worthwhile objectives, such as adopting a resolution to help the Sun Shipyard organizational drive with financial and moral aid, and through the circulation, among Westinghouse employees, of the facts concerning the drive.

The true answer is that the American people still have fresh in their memory the war of 1914-18; the result of the last "saving of democ-

racism" was ten million dead, twenty million wounded, misery and privation for the rest of the working people.

In the U.S. alone, we were enriched by 25,000 new war-made millionaires.

Soon after the peace we experienced the biggest economic calamity ever experienced by the capitalist system. In the U.S., we had twelve million unemployed and starving, in the face of the greatest accumulated natural wealth in the history of the human race.

Answers the Question: Why No War Songs?

Dear Editor:

A certain boss paper lately asked the following question: Why are there no new war songs being written; why doesn't the public care to listen to the war songs written during the last war; and why don't even the men in the armed services care to listen to the war songs—instead they prefer to hear the old-time songs?

To answer this question, they give us several answers of people they interviewed. The answer is nothing but babble and prattle.

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Soon after the peace we experienced the biggest economic calamity ever experienced by the capitalist system. In the U.S., we had twelve million unemployed and starving, in the face of the greatest accumulated natural wealth in the history of the human race.

The American people still remember that it was American and British money that built Hitler's military machine; that this machine was built with the intention and purpose of subduing Russia to the will of the dollar and the pound.

They also remember that American natural resources, especially iron, contributed to the making of Japanese ships, submarines, torpedoes, airplanes, bombs, machine guns and bullets.

We are particularly aware of the black market when we remember that only a few years ago we were paying solid cash for the destruction of the necessities of life, as food, wheat, cattle, pigs, cotton, etc.

Now they see how the very same people who prattle about the war

being conducted for freedom, for ideals, are making money in every way, regardless of the consequences on those they rob: workers and consumers.

This is the answer to why the people at home, and the men in the armed forces lack the inspiration to put into song this holy crusade. Consciously or unconsciously, they know that they are being used as the cogs in the wheel, mere tools in the game of the mighty. The picture they see before them does not create a state of mind which would promote artistic creation. That is the answer. G. Kowal (Scranton, Pa.)

LABOR ACTION

Announces a Series of Lectures on the War By MAX SHACHTMAN

FRIDAYS AT 8:15 P.M.

May 14—United States in the War.

June 11—Russia in the War.

June 18—Socialism or the Third World War?

Place—Labor Temple, 14th St. and 2nd Ave., New York

Admission—25 cents per lecture.

History and the Truth Take a Beating in Warner Brothers' 'Mission to Moscow'

Hollywood Face-Lifters Make a Lend-Lease Offering to Stalin

By R. FAHAN

When Czarina Catherine "the Great" decided in a fit of royal whimsy to tour the Ukraine in order to see for herself the wonders of life which her rule had brought to the people, her Premier, Potemkin, devised a clever scheme. He hired a crew of actors and technicians, and constructed a series of happy villages, with idyllic surroundings and contented, cheerful "peasants"—all of it make-believe and torn down once Catherine triumphantly passed on. The real Russia—the Russia of serfdom and misery—was spared her and her entourage. It was a triumph for her regime, and all that was lacking was a Walter Duranty to do it proud for the American press with references to the "Russian soul"—but then, Catherine could hardly expect such modern improvements.

And somehow, after this writer staggered out of the Hollywood Theater in New York City where Mission to Moscow is being shown, the picture which persisted in his mind was one of Potemkin villages, the lie substituted to camouflage the bitter truth, the conscious and deliberate manipulation of facts in order to justify a regime of totalitarian terror. From beginning to end, Mission to Moscow is nothing but a Potemkin Village, an elaborate fantasy of make-believe, donated by American imperialism, through its Hollywood vassals, as another lend-lease offering to its Russian partners.

A SENSATIONAL REVELATION—WHEN DAVIES MET SCHACHT

Mission to Moscow is not an ordinary film; it pretends to documentary stature; it speaks as if it were an historical oracle and Davies the very repository of final truth; it boasts of meticulous attention to every factual detail in order to present an accurate record of what has taken place in recent years. It pretends to explain the war, the Stalin regime, the rise of Hitler.

Yet, we say, it is a tissue of lies from the beginning to the end.

There are four major themes in the film: the role of Russia in the pre-war period and the development of events which led to the war; the internal situation in Russia; the Moscow Trials; and, of course, a strictly OWI presentation of the omniscient wisdom of President Roosevelt and ex-Ambassador Davies and the correctness of their war policy.

Let us leave the last of these for another article, though it is in a sense the most important, and take up here the first three, one by one.

Davies begins his film journey at the request of President Roosevelt, who entrusts him with a subsidiary mission that is as sensational as anything else in this film. Davies stops in Berlin on his way to Moscow and there makes an offer to Hjalmar Schacht, the then Finance Minister of Hitler's regime. President Roosevelt, Davies tells Schacht, is willing to grant Germany her "reasonable" claims for additional foreign markets, outlets for finished goods, sources of raw materials, and colonies, provided Hitler enter a universal disarmament scheme.

This remarkable scene, in which the financial wizard of the early Nazi government is depicted in such a favorable light, is as revealing as anything else in this film. It brands as a lie all the endless rhetorical poppycock in which Davies and Litvinov indulge in the film: all the talk about forming an anti-Hitler bloc, of "collective security." For it shows Roosevelt willing to strike a bargain with Hitler provided the latter does not want to grab up too many of the world's imperialist spoils; it shows Davies impressed by Schacht (as responsible as anyone else in Germany for the rise and continuation in power of Hitlerism). This is the true mentality of this mission to Moscow: ready to strike a bargain with a "good" subsidiary of Hitler (just as Chamberlain did afterward, and as Stalin did afterward;

just as all of them were ready to do so long as they didn't have to give too much of the spoils to Hitler, and could still keep most for themselves.)

Was Davies, and the Roosevelt Administration for which he spoke, ready to countenance the continued existence of Hitlerism, with its anti-Semitism and oppression of labor, its slavery and human degradation—was Davies ready to countenance this Hitlerism so long as he could strike a bargain with Schacht? The picture answers: Yes, and in this one respect it is historically accurate. And it is revealing too: the man who was willing to strike a bargain with Hitlerism... saw Stalinism in a favorable light!

During the early part of the film—that is, before Davies reaches Moscow—there is another extraordinary scene. We see the League of Nations assembled to hear Haile Selassie denounce the invasion of Ethiopia by Mussolini. After him, Litvinov makes a speech for collective security and "in defense" of Ethiopia, which meets with the scorn of those assembled. What we missed, however, was a sequence to this scene showing Russian oil barges bringing oil to Italy to be used for the Ethiopian invasion. That would have added something to this part!

But the talk about European peace is intended in this picture merely as an embellishment for the Russian part, intended to show that peace could have been maintained if the advice of Russia had been followed. As if this world war didn't flow from basic economic and social causes, from the great contradictions of world capitalism torn to bits by imperialist rivalries! Had the collective security policy been followed, the war would have broken out earlier—possibly to the advantage of the Allies, but even that is doubtful. Peace in a capitalist world was and is impossible, and all the cheap talk of Davies-Litvinov cannot hide that

BUILDING POTESKIN VILLAGES... IT'S EASY IN THE MOVIES

But let us turn to the main part of the picture: the construction of the Potemkin villages. Davies enters Russia and immediately sees a "land of plenty": food delicacies await him; perhaps, after all, he was a bit hasty in bringing along those refrigerated cars filled with American food (not shown in the film). From this we are to infer that the Russian people eat well under Stalin. The famous "forced collectivization" which led to a famine from which millions died? No mention. Is this repeat typical of the food of the average Russian worker or of the Stalinist bureaucrat? Davies is silent. HE was given good food; he saw that Litvinov, Molotov and the rest got good food. Who cares about the PEOPLE of Russia? And why pay attention to the statistics of the Stalin regime itself which prove that the people of Russia at the time of the Davies visit had one of the lowest standards of living on the continent?

Similarly on other counts. Freedom of speech in Stalinland? Treatment of those who dare disagree with omnipotent, omniscient Stalin? The right to organize opposition parties? Free elections... with more than one choice? Freedom of discussion within the Communist Party?

All of these embarrassing topics are studiously avoided by Davies in both his book and the film. Instead, the film shows him taking an "unguided" tour (did Warner Brothers think the American people were really such suckers as to believe that the Stalinist regime would allow the Ambassador of the United States to take a tour through its industrial regions without making careful preparations to make sure that he saw just what it wanted him to see, and nothing else?)

And what impresses Davies? The fact that piecework and "incentive pay" and other exploitive devices are

being introduced into Russia, and the readiness of the Russian industrial machine to transform itself to war production. That is, what really impresses Davies is the fact that Russia's is not a socialist economy. He is tickled to death at the fact that "incentive pay" and the speed-up of Stakhanovism have been brought to Stalinland; these are things he understands and appreciates. Certainly if, for instance, he had been shown the Russia of Lenin and Trotsky, which didn't have so great an industrial development, but which had something more precious: factory democracy, shop councils, genuine socialist idealism, then he would have been horrified.

Davies' trip through Russia convinces him that it really isn't so far away from capitalist America; that, to quote from his book, "the Russia of Lenin and Trotsky—the Russia of the Bolshevik Revolution—no longer exists." It is his recognition that Stalinist Russia is also an exploitive society and therefore represents no revolutionary threat to the capitalist world, which fills Davies with joy. Hell, he isn't dealing here with any wild-eyed radicals who want a world revolution; these people are "practical"; a good capitalist can strike a bargain with a fellow like Stalin.

As for the "unpleasant" features of Stalin's dictatorship, well... the GPU might have killed off a few million people who committed the one unforgivable sin: disagreeing with or standing in the way of Stalin; but in this "historical record" they are shown merely as guards for the Davies family...

It is the overwhelming realization that Russia under Stalin represents no revolutionary threat to the capitalist world, that "the Bolshevik Revolution no longer exists" which fills Davies' heart with such joy. Once they do not threaten his social system, he is ready to deal with them, and if that deal involves one of the most fantastic of whitewashes of one of the most bloody, barbaric dictatorships in history, well, a bargain's a bargain...

So what if hundreds of thousands rot in GPU prisons? So what if the overwhelming majority of the Lenin Central Committee is murdered by Stalin? So what if the land of terror is presented as the land of freedom? So what if the film shows nothing of the sycophantic idolization which Stalin permits his lackeys to indulge in? So what if the time servers of Stalin, the stuttering ninny, Molotov, the idle figurehead, Kalinin, the pliable agent, Litvinov, are depicted as wise heroes?

A FEW THINGS YOU WON'T SEE IN THE FILM

Remember, runs the paeon of joy through the Davies approach, we can deal with Stalin; he isn't a Lenin or a Trotsky; he's not a "red."

Does the film neglect to show that historical meeting of Stalin and Ribbentrop where they signed the "non-aggression pact" for twenty years?

Does it neglect to show Molotov uttering his most famous words: "Fascism is a matter of taste"?

Does it neglect to show Stalin making his famous speech in which he blamed the war on England and France, and implicitly absolved his new-found partner, Hitler, of responsibility?

Does the film neglect to show Stalin addressing the Nazis with the immortal words: "Our friendship has been cemented with blood" after the partition of Poland?

Does it fail to show that not only Hitler but Stalin too invaded Poland, that this invasion was carried out in concert?

Does it fail to show the historic occasion when von Ribbentrop came to Moscow to sign the "non-aggression pact" and the bands blared out the Internationale and the Horst Wessel Lied together?

SO WHAT? Why do you keep harping on these embarrassing details? What do you expect when an American capitalist gets together with Stalinist murderers—the truth?

And does it show the arch Caligula, Stalin, as a kindly old man with gray hair, tolerant, wise, friendly? Well, at least the physical likeness is pretty good... except for the fact that in the film there isn't any blood on his hands.

WHY THE DOUBLE FERGERY ABOUT THE INFAMOUS TRIALS?

Yet, when all is said and done, Mission to Moscow rests on one truly remarkable scene: the scene which depicts the trials of the Old Bolsheviks. It is here that it is most outspoken. Why not? If Davies, can in addition to his new-found friendship for the Stalin regime, also endorse its murder of the real revolutionaries, isn't that killing two birds with one stone?

The picture commits a double fergery. It commits the fergery of

his book, which accepted at its face value the legal methodology of the Stalinist regime (a man is considered guilty until proved innocent), as well as the fantastic confessions. And it commits the additional forgery of never recording the doubts which his book contained. There he wrote that "the situation has me guessing." He writes that "the trial and surrounding circumstances shock our mentality." If the picture is a faithful report why isn't he shocked there as well? He speaks of the second Moscow Trial as "the subordination of the individual to the state." Why isn't that mentioned in the movies? He says of the execution of the army generals that "facts are not now available and it is doubtful whether they will be for a long time to come." Then, why does he so bluntly accept the "guilt" of the defendants?

Davies has committed one of the most unpardonable of crimes. He has doctored his own record! He now accepts as valid that which he had many doubts about previously. While in the book he said that the defendants were, by virtue of their confessions, technically guilty under

TYPICAL!

"The special Soviet edition of Life included pictures of unnamed individuals typical of the different peoples who make up the Soviet Union. The typical Jew was Prof. Joseph J. Lieberberg, former president of Biro-Bidjan, who was dismissed in October, 1936, on charges of Trotskyism."—The Nation.

Stalinist jurisprudence, he permitted himself to doubt the charge that they had plotted with Hitler. In the movie he accepts Stalin's case—hook, line and sinker. In the book he is incredulous at the report that Krestinsky, whom he had known personally, was guilty of plotting with Hitler. In the movie, Krestinsky is one of the loudest confessors!

HOLLYWOOD CHANGES TRIAL SCRIPTS TO FIT THE CASE

The trial, as staged by Warner Brothers, is even more fantastic than that staged by Stalin. The prelude is set at a diplomatic ball at which Radek, Bukharin and Tukhachevsky ostentatiously whisper with Axis diplomats. Now, were these men really so stupid as to conduct their alleged "intrigues" at diplomatic balls? But everything goes, as far as this great "historical record" is concerned.

At this ball, Bukharin makes an "appointment" with von Ribbentrop. Where did Davies and Warner Brothers get that one? It wasn't even in the Moscow Trials themselves!

But the greatest forgery of the picture, its filthiest and vilest piece of intellectual dishonesty, is the "trial" itself. What were actually three trials are here condensed into one. Why does a film which boasts of such meticulous detail find it necessary to amalgamate the trials? The answer is simple: to avoid showing what is for the Stalin regime the crushing fact that the prosecutors of the first trial were the defendants at the second and third. Yagoda, who was supposed to have been marked for assassination by the defendants in the first trial, was himself a victim at a subsequent trial.

Ulrich, who was chief judge at the trials, was subsequently shot by the Stalin regime as a "traitor." That would have been embarrassing to the Davies whitewash; it would have been embarrassing to have to explain why Tukhachevsky was carefully exonerated at the second trial and subsequently shot in secret. Remedy? Combine all three trials into one. When dealing in fantasy and lies, a little more or less doesn't matter.

Surprise! A new defendant is dragged in. Tukhachevsky "confesses" too. But at the time of the trials he issued a statement condemning the defendants. And he was TRIED AND SHOT IN SECRET! He never confessed; perhaps he was too much of a man to consent to that debasement. In the movie he makes a little speech which was really that of Muralov in the first trial. But what's the difference? Mix up the trials, the defendants, the speeches... it's all the same!

Radek "confesses" that Trotsky was at the head of the "plot." But why aren't we shown the scenes from the trial in which Holtzman, the alleged go-between for Trotsky and Radek, "confessed to having met Trotsky at a hotel in Copenhagen"—which never existed. Why aren't we shown that part of Piatokov's "confession" in which he told of having flown to meet Trotsky in Norway during December, 1935... when there is no record of any foreign plane having landed in Norway that month. And what about the confession of Vladimir Romm in the third trial that he met Trotsky in

Paris... at a time when Trotsky wasn't in Paris.

Mission to Moscow speaks of truth and other great ideals. In that case, why doesn't it dare to show the voice of Trotsky (he wrote on these trials also, and he had something to say, too) refuting the charges of the trial point by point? Why doesn't it include a word of the findings of the Dewey Commission which investigated the trials thoroughly and found them a monstrous fraud?

This picture is an elaborate whitewash. It is part of the attempt of an important section of the American capitalist class to reach an agreement with Stalin not merely for the continued joint prosecution of the war, but also for joint action during the post-war period, action to organize a Europe devoid of revolution. If, in order to achieve this ambitious objective, it is necessary to indulge in a little job of lying, hypocrisy, slander and corruption such as this film represents, that is certainly not too high a price to pay. Its basic ideology is reactionary to the core. Davies, the man who is ready to make a deal with Hitler, saw a kindred spirit in Stalin and his regime which was not too far away from the spirit of capitalism. That there was no freedom in Russia didn't worry him nearly as much as the relief he felt when he discovered that there wasn't any socialism there.

He saw, again together with Stalin, an enemy in the intransigent revolutionary, Trotsky, and in that he was correct. Trotsky was an enemy of capitalism and all its filth. Davies was ready to slander Trotsky by charging him to be an accomplice of Hitler while keeping quiet about the fact that it was Stalin who really made the pact with Hitler and thereby gave him the green light for this war!

This was Ambassador Davies and this is his film. Other than politically it cannot be considered; it is long, windy, pretentious, cheap, constantly agape in the presence of "great" men; in short, a bore.

But go and see it, by all means. It's a good test of how strong your stomach really is.

Wanted:

A private meat grader for each housewife—because the new ceilings on meats allow a wide price range, depending on the grade of the meat. That's some loophole for cheating the housewife!

How is she to know whether she is getting (for fifty-one cents a pound) the AA Choice loin veal chops or the A Good grade (which should be only forty-seven cents), except on the dealer's say-so?

Leg of lamb ranges from thirty-eight to forty-eight cents a pound. Loin lamb chops from fifty-five to seventy cents. Sirloin steak from forty-four to sixty-three cents. To cite a few instances.

Prediction: The housewife who doesn't know grades—and who of us can make such fine distinctions, except that we can tell if a piece of meat looks good or bad?—is going to be cheated right and left.

Two demands must be made: 1) That there be an immediate reduction in these outrageously high ceiling prices. 2) That every piece of meat be so stamped with its grade that any customer can see what she is getting.

Otherwise, let the OPA supply each housewife with a private meat grader.

This Is Genuine Labor Solidarity With the Miners

"Should the day come when production at Brewster ceases because of lack of parts or fuel, the membership should be on its guard against attempts to vilify the miners. We must not let the National Association of Manufacturers connive us into criticism because of plant shut-downs. The real reason will be the attempt by the mine owners to make hay while the sun shines, to make their war profits regardless of who suffers.

"The miners' fight is our fight. If they lose, we lose."—From Aero-Notes, published by Local 365, Brewster, UAW.

Keep the Sub Drive Moving Forward!

LABOR ACTION 114 West 14th St., New York City

LABOR ACTION, 6 mos., 25c; 1 yr., 50c. New International, 6 mos., \$1.00; 1 yr., \$1.50. LABOR ACTION and New International, 6 mos., \$1.00; 1 yr., \$1.75.

Enclosed find \$_____ for which please enter my subscription to LABOR ACTION _____ 1 yr., 6 mos. New International _____ 1 yr., 6 mos. LABOR ACTION and New International _____ 1 yr., 6 mos.

Name _____ Address _____ City _____

By HENRY COLEMAN (Campaign Director) APRIL 25—MAY 1: EIGHTH WEEK

New York	17
Streator	8
Cleveland	7
Detroit	7
Buffalo	5
National Office	1
Chicago	1
WEEKLY TOTAL	46
GRAND TOTAL	545

NOW IS THE TIME TO GATHER OUR STRENGTH FOR A GENERAL OFFENSIVE ALL ALONG THE LINE, WITH EVERY CITY AND EVERY SUBSCRIBER IN THE FIGHT, TO KEEP THE SUB DRIVE MOVING FORWARD ACCORDING TO SCHEDULE DURING THE LAST AND MOST IMPORTANT WEEKS OF THE CAMPAIGN.

We have shown we can do it. But the active sub-getters must resist the inclination to just sit back "for a while" and think about the good work they've done—they must go out and beat their record. More depends on them now than ever before.

We can either finish the drive with our goal only partially achieved, calculating our success merely on the basis of so many subs brought in

—whatever the total may be. Or, we can finish the drive with our goal reached (and perhaps even surpassed); and THEN we can measure our success not only on the basis of 1,000 new subscribers gained, but above all on having set ourselves a goal, gone to work on it, and reached it—on having shown once more how labor's forces can mobilize themselves and achieve their own ends in a DISCIPLINED way.

We hope these remarks will be taken to heart by our friends, because the Easter holidays apparently cut down our returns for the week of April 25-May 1. Forty-six subs is a long way below the MINIMUM weekly quota of seventy-five that we MUST maintain, and completely out of sight of the quota of one hundred that we WANT to maintain. We are therefore a little BEHIND on our schedule, and we have to make up for it.

All the localities must step up their returns; all can and should do better. There are a couple of bright spots, however: Streator comes through in fine shape in this week's returns. We shall expect more from Streator. Chicago falls down, but we can let you know in advance that the Chicago returns for NEXT week will tell a different story. Los Angeles has ordered another big batch of LABOR ACTION leaflets. Cleveland returns are up this week, and so are New York's—but we're expecting BIG returns from New York a little later on.

WORKERS PARTY PLATFORM

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

LABOR MUST DEFEND ITSELF!

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

SOAK THE RICH—LET THEM PAY FOR THEIR WAR!

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

DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS TO THE DRAFTEES!

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

SMASH JIM CROW!

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

BE PREPARED!

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

LABOR ACTION

A Paper in the Interests of Labor

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P. O. Commits New Outrage

When the Post Office Department revoked the second-class mailing rights of The Militant, a weekly labor paper, it had just about tapped the ORDINARY limits of reactionary violence against a free labor press. However, the gentlemen in the Post Office, and their mentor in the Department of Justice, Francis Biddle (he likes to be called a "liberal") are evidently no ordinary men. Without waiting for a test of its high-handed decision in the courts, the Post Office is now beginning to bar the paper from third-class mail. After Postmaster General Walker had handed down his decision on the paper's second-class RIGHTS, and while it was instituting legal proceedings to reverse that decision, The Militant sent its copies, through the mails as third-class matter, the costs of which are much greater than second-class mail. Several of these issues have been delayed in mailing by the Post Office, and the last issue of The Militant carries the announcement that its April 24 issue has been ordered destroyed. This action, like the earlier action of the Post Office, should evoke a storm of protest because involved here is a vital freedom, the destruction of which will cause the severest injury to the labor movement in particular, and to democratic rights in general.

The Miners Are Determined to Win -- Their Fight Is Your Fight!

Many Union Locals Back Miners' Cause

It's Labor's Fight

The truth is most uncomfortable for the boss press, the Stalinist wreckers and the government agencies directly involved in trying to break down the miners' case. They have tried their damndest to "isolate" the mine workers from the rest of labor and to "isolate" the union leadership from the ranks of the UMW. Try as they will, however, they can't get around the fact that by and large labor stands behind the Mine Workers Union—despite what this or that worker may think of John L. Lewis. There is hardly a worker in the country who doesn't realize that the miners are fighting HIS battle.

We have already reported, in previous issues, action taken by various local unions in support of the mine workers. We are sure that there are many more that have not come to our attention. On page 2 of this issue we quote from Aero-Notes, organ of Brewster Local 365, UAW. Below we add to the list:

Auto Workers

Michigan UAW locals which met in Detroit over the week-end to discuss their grievances against the government's wage and job freezing order cheered the speakers who spoke in favor of the mine workers' strike. The UAW leaders steered the discussion along lines of supporting the miners' demands, but against the strike action. The delegates' real attitude, however, was reflected in their applause, so that even the conservative New York Herald Tribune wrote: "The UAW delegates went even further by reserving their greatest ovation for a speaker who asserted that organized labor generally should not attempt to 'straddle the fence' by supporting the United Mine Workers in their wage demands and not John L. Lewis. Lewis and the mine workers are fighting today the fight that you and I and the entire CIO should be making," James Lucas, a delegate from the Pontiac Local of the UAW told the conference amid rousing applause."

Text of a resolution on the strike adopted Sunday by a conference of United Automobile Workers (CIO) Michigan representatives:

Whereas the United Mine Workers have presented fair and just demands to the coal operators of the nation, and

Whereas these demands have been unjustly turned down, while has forced the miners to strike, and

Whereas the United Mine Workers have refused to submit their wage cases to the War Labor Board because of that board's recent decisions in the aircraft case, the Atlas Cement case and other cases, and

Whereas the United Mine Workers have stated that they will not trespass on the property of the coal operators of the nation until the case is handled fairly and squarely, therefore,

Be it resolved that this conference of Michigan local unions of the UAW (CIO) go on record supporting the demands of the United Mine Workers to establish decent and fair wages for the coal workers of the nation, and

That this conference call on President Roosevelt and the leadership of the CIO to aid the miners in obtaining their just and fair demands.

Akron CIO Council

"A resolution asked that a pay increase be granted the United Mine Workers of America and Bell Telephone Co. employees has been approved by Akron Industrial Union Council.

"The resolution asserts that employees of the company and mine operators are in the inequality class and should be given pay increases beyond the fifteen per cent Little Steel formula. Copies of the resolution have been sent to mine operators, company officials, John L. Lewis and Philip Murray.

"The passage of the resolution conforms to the policy of the Council to break the Little Steel formula because of the rapid increase in the cost of living. A survey of food costs in Canton, which is supposed to be a typical industrial center in Ohio, shows the average price of thirty-three standard foodstuffs has increased 110 per cent since the formula became effective while wages are being held to fifteen per cent."—From the Summit County Labor News, April 23.

Railroad Workers

OAKLAND, Calif., Apr. 29—A well attended meeting of E. C. Fellows Lodge No. 143 of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen & Enginemen this week passed a resolution to support the United Mine Workers of America in their present fight.

The resolution stated that this lodge supports the miners in their justified struggle for a \$2.00-a-day increase, and wishes them all success in their fight to break down the Little Steel formula. It was sent to the Grand Lodge of the BLF&E with a recommendation that it be forwarded to the War Labor Board.

In the course of the discussion on the motion it was brought out that the outcome of the miners' fight would have tremendous effect on the current wage movement of the railroad workers, as well as on the efforts of all labor to maintain its standard of living. A Grand Lodge representative who happened to be at the meeting, and who led the discussion pointed out the arbitrary nature of the Little Steel formula and the injustice arising out of its application. He stated that if labor in this country is not to be completely subjugated it would have to break the Little Steel formula. He went on to say that if the miners aren't big enough to do the job, perhaps the railroad brotherhoods will have to try their own hand at it.

The resolution was passed unanimously.

(Continued from page 1)

trict No. 4, William J. Hynes, who went on the air Sunday night, immediately following Roosevelt's speech, and gave instructions to return to work on Monday morning. The Pittsburgh papers which carried dispatches of the Associated Press and the United Press failed to inform their readers that this was the situation in District 4, made up of Fayette and Greene Counties.

In other counties, notably Washington and Alleghany, the miners held strictly to the Tuesday opening instructions. Meetings were held by the various locals and a vote was taken. While voting on the return was more or less a matter of formality, it was necessary to discuss the arrangement of the shifts; that is, which of the three shifts that came off at the beginning of the strike should be the first to begin work. At one local meeting which I attended, this matter consumed three-fourths of the time of the meeting.

Papers Distorted Facts

It can be said that the daily papers distorted the issues of the strike, fabricated events and deliberately lied. They acted precisely as they have in the past. It was their purpose, of course, to make the reading public, far away from the scene, believe that the miners' grievances were a sort of figment of the imagination, and that if it had not been for Lewis they would have continued at work. This is far from the truth!

It is no wonder that representatives of the daily papers were not tolerated in the mine fields if their presence became known. At one local meeting I was stopped at the door and told that I could not remain until I had been approved by the local's president. I used the last number of LABOR ACTION with the front page head "THE COAL MINERS ARE RIGHT" as my credentials. This was all that was necessary to prove that I was not there to "misquote and lie," as one of the officers put it. One officer said to me that "if you had been representing one of the Pittsburgh papers we would have thrown you out on your head."

Anyone who traveled through the region in the past few days would wonder just how the daily papers and the press associations did get the "news" which was carried by their papers. The reporters were not at the meetings, and they were not accepted by the miners individually. Even in talking to the men individually and in small groups it was clear that they were suspicious of anyone who looked like a newspaper man. Many of them told me so in plain words that could be easily understood.

Ranks Held Solid

This is the real story of how the men returned to work and what they thought of the way the daily papers were handling their strike. Despite the fact that the men wanted to work because they need the money, they maintained discipline and kept their ranks solid. Hundreds of deserted pits attested to this. Sunday afternoon and all day Monday, in five or six counties, I saw only two men "trespass on company property." This was at one mine of the Pittsburgh Coal Co., where two men were pushing a mine car up the tracks.

In trying to discover the reasons behind this solidarity and determination, I talked to many miners about wages, working conditions and prices in the company stores. While conditions may vary a little from place to place, and company to company,

conditions are fairly general for the whole bituminous field.

While it is known that deductions are made from the miners' pay for such items as powder, caps and light, it is not known that this is a rule and just how much it amounts to. At the Pittsburgh Coal Co., the largest producer, a miner must pay out of his wages eight cents a stick for his powder. He uses from five to ten sticks a day. He is charged eight cents each for firing caps and may use four or five a day. He pays eight cents a day for his light, whether or not he works.

Everyone knows that there is slate in coal deposits and that the slat is waste material. Miners do not get paid for the first twelve inches of slate. Slate and deductions for powder, caps and light reduce his pay. A man who is rated at eight or ten dollars a day can have his income cut to six or eight dollars a day after paying for his powder, caps, light,

and putting in his time shooting down eleven and a half inches of slate, for which he is not paid, with powder which he has paid for. Add to this the fact that they do not work a full year, and it is easy for anyone except a captive reporter of the daily press to understand why the miners did not flock back to the pits.

A loader for the Pittsburgh Coal Co. has a rate of eighty-seven cents a ton. He can load about ten tons a day. But for one reason or another, he may not get the coal to load. Or, as explained to me by some men at one mine, the pumping system may not work or may be inadequate. Then they must work in water, which not only endangers their health but makes it impossible to load the coal and get the daily ten tons. These are some of the reasons why the miners do not make enough money to live on.

The matter of prices at the company stores in the mine patches is another grievance. This, of course,

is the basis of the rapid rise in the cost of living in the mine field. Dozens of miners talked to me about the high cost of living. At one company store, a rather elaborate and gaudy affair, a sort of department store, I saw sweet potatoes at two pounds for 35 cents; ordinary apples, two pounds for 29 cents; and some wilted spinach, two pounds for 29 cents. The miner who was conducting me around said that "common" (white) potatoes had advanced in the last three months from sixty cents to ninety cents to \$1.10 a peck. In thirty days, cabbage advanced from nine cents to nineteen cents a pound.

Their Attitude Toward Lewis

These things that I report here are what make the ordinary miner act as he does. These are the ordinary everyday things they talk about when they discuss the strike with them. You want more money because, with the high prices, they can't live on their present incomes. They want better working conditions, because present physical conditions in the mines cut down their incomes, jeopardize their health and endanger their lives.

I talked to them about John L. Lewis and Roosevelt's speech. Most of those that I talked to were not much impressed with the speech. Because to them the speech didn't seem to bear on their daily lives in the mines and mine communities. They have an idea that Roosevelt can do something for them, but they now expect him to act in their favor. However, they will be disappointed if they do not COMPEL him to act that way, because he certainly has no desire to do so. I came across a few miners in Fayette County who expressed great confidence in Roosevelt. One man also said that the reason that Lewis was willing to confer with Ickes was that "he seen he was swamped."

As far as I could learn from the men that I talked to, there was no heat for or against Lewis. He is their recognized leader and they take his instructions in a most forthright manner. They seem willing to obey and abide by whatever action is taken by the Policy Committee. It was clear, however, in their meetings and in conversation, that they expect an increase in pay. They are confident they will get it. At one meeting the chairman said: "We have already won a victory."

One thing that seemed to give a great deal of satisfaction is their belief that they have successfully sidestepped the War Labor Board. They believe that Ickes, the official representative of their "new employes," will find a way around that will produce at least a portion of the increase they are demanding.

To Our Readers:

We have devoted a considerable part of LABOR ACTION this week and last to the mine situation because of its extreme importance to labor. As a result, many articles have been omitted—including the series on Puerto Rico, and the series on the meat shortage. These articles will appear in subsequent issues of LABOR ACTION, as well as many more that you will find extremely interesting. However, we intend to continue giving the miners' struggle the fullest possible coverage. In this issue we publish an eye-witness report by David Coolidge. We intend to keep that up. Thus, if we cannot find room for other subjects, remember that we have articles on them ready—but also remember that it's all eyes on the miners right now!

THE STRIKE-BREAKERS

While a half million coal miners were defending the interests of all labor in the country against the conspiracy of the bosses and their government to enforce a status quo of misery and degradation, the so-called "friends of labor" sharpened their cutlery and went to work at one of their favorite occupations—knifing and hacking away at the men who have ever been ready to give their lives for the greatest of democratic rights: the right to a decent livelihood for themselves and their families. Listen to the language of strike-breaking:

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT

"I stated that if work were not resumed by ten o'clock Saturday morning, I should use all the power vested in me as President and Commander-in-Chief to protect the national interest and to prevent further interference with the successful prosecution of the war."

PHILIP MURRAY, CIO PRESIDENT

"I should not like to have it said about American labor that you or I leaned over the body of an American soldier and said: 'Son, you wouldn't have been dying today had I done my job back home.'"

RICHARD T. FRANKENSTEEN, UAW EXECUTIVE

"I am unalterably opposed to their strike. I think they are bargaining on the blood of American youth."

JOHN GREEN, PRES. MARINE & SHIPBUILDING WORKERS, CIO

"Lewis pretends to believe that the miners can be helped by a small wage increase, even if this destroys all hope of holding the line against the farm bloc and the wholesale merchants."

PM—JAMES A. WECHSLER

"The stand of this newspaper is plain. We are against John L. Lewis and the strike which he—without daring to issue a strike call—has encouraged and blessed. We believe that the President of the United States must be supported in ANY moves he makes to insure the uninterrupted production of coal."

NEW YORK POST—VICTOR RIESEL

"We say that it approaches treason... Lewis should not be permitted to exploit these legitimate grievances to bring about a virtual insurrection against the authority of the United States... Grievances are grievances. But war is war."

DAILY WORKER

"The labor movement has an important part to play in bringing this disastrous strike to an end. It should appeal to the miners over the head of Lewis through radio, press, wire and delegations, urging that they heed the President's call and go back to work."

LEAFLET, COMMUNIST PARTY, QUEENS COUNTY

"Lewis wants to destroy the WLB so there can be no peaceful settlement of wage disputes; we need the WLB because we need national unity to crush the Axis. The whole episode shows that the old methods of strike action do not win support for labor in the midst of this national emergency."

It seems to us that we've heard these songs before. They are the loony tunes that the gravediggers of labor's rights have whistled from the time of labor's first mighty efforts to achieve emancipation from starvation wages and oppressive conditions.

"SOLIDARITY FOREVER!" is our singing reply to their scabby serenades!

Are Miners Being Double-Crossed?

(Continued from page 1)

ily because of the recent dispute between the miners and the United Mine Workers officialdom over the "dues question." You can imagine how the rest of the miners acted.

The miners went out like one man when the union decided to show its strength and its determination. They went back like one man when their union decided to go back pending final settlement. But the operators and their newspapers and their spokesmen in Washington did not succeed in breaking the ranks of the miners!

Here's the Double-Cross

Why did the union representatives decide to send the men back? Because of what was discussed at the conference between them and Harold Ickes, appointed by Roosevelt to take over the running of the mines. The details of what was discussed have not been made public yet. But it is not hard to understand what happened.

Given the fact that the government was going "to take over the mines" and become the miners' "new employer," the union leaders believed, or were given to believe, that the terms under which the miners would work for their "new employer" would be the same as the terms proposed earlier to the "old employer"—the coal operators—by the representative of the government, Dr. John Steelman. These

terms the miners had already found more or less acceptable.

But here is where the double-cross comes in!

The representative of the "new employer," Harold Ickes, remained silent for days, or else talked double-talk. On Wednesday morning the papers finally published a statement by Ickes indicating that the miners' demands, the demands they had been led to expect would be granted, would not be granted by him, that the case would have to be passed on by the War Labor Board after all.

The Administration politicians figure that now that they have tricked the miners into going back to work, now that they have the American flag waving over the tippie, they can do what they want with the miners. They can tell them: "You're working for the government now. You can't strike. Just keep your nose to the grindstone and your mouth shut. Meanwhile, accept once more, for the hundredth time, our promises and promises and promises."

What Will Miners Say?

What will the miners say to this proposition? The middle of May, when the fifteen-day truce is up, will tell. But it is hard to believe that the miners are going to take this lying down, that they will allow the miserable trick of the operators and their government to be played upon them to the end.

On the Strike And the "Men At the Front"

Plus a Suggestion

A dirtier and more vicious campaign against labor than the capitalist press carried on against the miners and their union in the past three weeks, has not been seen in this country for years.

The dirtiest and most vicious part of the campaign was the effort to poison the minds of the U.S. soldiers, at home and at the war fronts, against the workers and the labor movement.

Press associations and correspondents abroad hunted high and low for comments from men in uniform that might be used against the courageous and justified fight of the miners. They didn't find many from whom they could quote. But the few they did find, were featured in every paper.

HOW COLONEL SCOTT "FIGHTS" FASCISM

Here is Colonel Scott, of the Air Force, in Orlando, Fla.:

"I know I could do one service. This service would be the destruction with six fifty-caliber machine guns on an American fighter plane of John L. Lewis. I definitely believe that by such a cold-blooded act I could rid the country of a man who acts as though he were in the pay of the Japanese government." (United Press dispatch, May 3.)

Colonel Scott's idea of the way to "smash fascism" is obviously to massacre labor leaders by a "cold-blooded act." Maybe he thinks that is what the Detroit and California workers are turning out airplanes and machineguns for. Anyway, we don't remember his proposing to use his six fifty-caliber machine guns to destroy the people who were being paid in good Japanese cash, and the people in the Administration in Washington who allowed them to be paid, for selling scrap iron and oil with which to kill the Chinese—scrap iron which finally found its way into the ripped-up bodies of American soldiers.

Then there is another United Press dispatch of the same day, this one from Honolulu, which reports that "the general opinion in Hawaii" seems to be "that the strikers should be forced to trade the safety of the home front for Pacific fox holes." We'll come to the "safety of the home front" that the miners enjoy later on. But we find it interesting to note that "general opinion in Hawaii" seems to think that being sent into active service "for our country" is a punishment fit for criminals—that is, for workers who go on strike for a decent life that the war is supposed to win for all of us.

AN EXCELLENT INVITATION

But the best of all is the report of the New York Times correspondent on May 1 in a wireless from "A United States Air Base in Southern China." He says that the "boys of the Fourteenth Air Force" are "hopping mad" about the coal strike. That isn't all. They expect an invitation, and here is how it reads:

"Bring John L. Lewis out here and we will take care of him."

Now that's an invitation that union labor ought to accept right on the spot!

It's an excellent idea. Why shouldn't labor send its spokesmen out to the men at the front? Why shouldn't they be allowed to do that?

If John L. Lewis or any other authorized representative of the labor movement could go out to the men in uniform at the fighting fronts, he might be able to give the soldiers the OTHER side of the story, labor's side, and let the soldiers judge for themselves on the basis of ALL the evidence.

THINGS THE SOLDIERS WOULD FIND OUT

He would find that for every son of a coal baron or steel king or financial magnate who has been taken into the Army, there are hundreds from the families of coal miners and steel workers.

He would be able to show them with cold and terrible facts that the soldiers are not the only ones who are getting hurt and dying.

He would be able to tell them that in the year 1941 alone, there were 64,764 coal miners killed or injured in the mines. He could tell them that during the war speed-up in the year 1942, an estimated 75,000 coal miners were killed or injured in the mines.

He could tell them that year in and year out, in peacetime and wartime, mining is the most dangerous job in which any considerable number of men is employed. The standard life insurance company ratings, for example, add ten dollars to the premium for each thousand dollars of insurance, and double indemnity for accidental death is not given.

He could tell them that in some localities as many as one-third up to nearly one-half of the miners examined have the deadly disease of their trade—silicosis—in one stage or another.

He could tell them that if labor does not fight for a decent standard of living NOW, right in the very midst of the war, then the soldiers will come back to civilian life to find themselves compelled to work at the lowest possible wages and under the worst working conditions.

He could tell them that the fight to preserve unionism, to prevent it from becoming a dishrag of the capitalists and their government, is a fight for the defense of the interests of EVERY working man, whether he be in civilian clothes or in Army or Navy uniform.

He could tell them that the curse of labor is that its demands are always TOO MODEST, in comparison with the fabulous profits that the capitalists and big investors are cobbling hand over fist during the war.

He could tell them a lot more interesting, important and vital things about the labor movement in general, and about the fight of the coal miners in particular.

The "invitation" of the "boys of the Fourteenth Air Force" is an excellent idea, if it were only carried out right.

LABOR OUGHT TO ACCEPT IT!

United, resolute, militant action!
Watch the miners for the next ten days. And watch their enemies. There is a lot to learn from both of them.
Every working man and woman in the country is looking to the miners and their fight. Every one of them is on their side. They are fighting for ALL of us!