

LABOR ACTION

Independent Socialist Weekly

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In LA Too: Ban Swells Crowd For Shachtman

By PETER LACCIARO

LOS ANGELES, Nov. 25—Max Shachtman, ISL chairman, hit Los Angeles last week after a series of very successful meetings in San Francisco, and LA's balmy weather did not slow him up. His presence here was the occasion of another boost for the revitalized Los Angeles Independent Socialist League and Socialist Youth League branches.

At the Case Hotel Shachtman spoke before the largest ISL meeting in many a year, where he very ably discussed the world situation as it exists today and the prospects for the future in a speech entitled "The Struggle for World Power." Over 90 people in the audience listened intently as he lashed into American imperialism's attempts to line up "democratic" allies in its life-and-death struggle with Stalinist imperialism.

He also smashed telling blows at the "you've-got-to-be-practical school" of rationalizers for their support of U. S. imperialism, pointing out that the Stalinist camp has already chopped off large chunks of the

(Turn to last page)

The Patriot



"Dear Sir: This is to inform you that our Small Arms Manufacturing Company has now opened a new department for the fabrication of artificial legs. . ."

Truman's New 'FEPC,' Near-Toothless Is Attempt at Deal with Dixiecrats

By L. G. SMITH

The campaign for the establishment of a Fair Employment Practices Committee patterned on the one of World War II has been pushed ever since the Korean war began by all organizations who want equality for our national, racial and religious minorities. They have been urging President Truman to issue an executive order setting up such a committee, as past experience indicates how unlikely it is that Congress can be prevailed upon to do anything about the matter.

But on December 4 Truman issued an order which makes a mockery of the desires for a real FEPC. He created a committee on Government Contract Compliance which will have as its duty merely the investigation and inspection of the way in which the provisions in all government contracts for bidding discrimination in employment are being honored.

The committee will have no enforcement powers whatever. Its job will be to advise the heads of contract-letting departments how they should enforce anti-discrimination provisions in their contracts, and in extreme cases may bring violations to the attention of the director of defense mobilization.

'WEAK,' SAYS NAACP

The reaction of leading liberal organization to the president's cheap gesture on this matter has been immediate. Clarence Mitchell, director of the Washington bureau of the National Association of Colored People, stated: "Since the start of the Korean war we have been urging action on the president. We are disappointed because of the weakness and lack of enforcement power in the executive order. However, we must work to make the most of it, at the same time seek ways of strengthening it."

The national executive secretary of Americans for Democratic Action stated that "Truman's appointment of a committee on government contract compliance is not a substitute for a fair employment practices commission," and urged him to create "an effective FEPC with full enforcement powers in line with the Democratic Party's platform adopted in 1948."

Although both these men and their organizations undoubtedly know exactly what

(Turn to last page)



Washington Snafus Cease-Fire To Keep the Troops Trigger-Happy

By GORDON HASKELL

The guns fell silent all along the Korean land front on Wednesday, November 28, and the world breathed a sigh of relief. Except for routine patrol action and light Stalinist attacks which were not pressed with vigor on minor positions, the fighting seemed to be coming to an end. It is reported that Chinese troops played volleyball in plain sight of the American lines, and lit bonfires to warm themselves at night.

But the feeling of relief, of hopeful anticipation that the senseless slaughter in Korea had perhaps come to an end never to be resumed, was not permitted to last long. American government officials, from the generals in command of the front-line troops to the president of the United States, took immediate steps to dispel the hopes and dash the illusions of the American people which had been created by the lull in the fighting.

President Truman called a press conference at his Florida vacation spot, and proclaimed that the American forces would continue to apply "pressure on the enemy" as the strongest incentive for the latter "to agree to a just armistice." He even had the gall to denounce the press services for having reported the almost complete end to the fighting and charged them with spreading harmful illusions among the people.

General Van Fleet who commands the Eighth Army insisted that his military order had been "misinterpreted" by all his front-line commanders! He claimed that he had not intended to order the infantry to hold their fire unless they were attacked and the artillery to engage only in counter-battery fire. Orders were sent out immediately to resume aggressive patrol action, and to reply to Stalinist

artillery fire in a ratio of five to one.

WAR-AS-USUAL

Yet as we go to press, it does not appear that the American troops and their allies are resuming any major operations on the ground. The president's declarations seem to be intended more for home consumption than as a military directive. Only in the air does the war continue in its full fury. In fact, the end to large-scale ground action, at least for the time being, seems to be so much taken for granted that large elements of South Korean troops have been pulled out of the line and are being used in a large-scale operation against a reported force of 10,000 guerrillas deep in South Korean territory.

The reason for the lull in the fighting at the front is obvious. Both sides have signed an agreement which stabilizes the front for at least 30 days. The troops certainly have no desire to risk their lives to gain bits of land which would have to be given up if an armistice is signed within the allotted time. Even the officers can see that this would be senseless.

But Truman's insistence that the

fighting must go on also has its reasons. The government does not want the American people, nor the troops, to get a strong taste for peace. The war psychology must be retained at all costs. The Korean war is unpopular enough as it is. But if once the people here feel that it is over, to resume it again on a large scale would be politically dangerous.

Directly related to this is the reported lag in armaments production. A Senate subcommittee, headed by Senator Lyndon Johnson, Texas Democrat, charged last week that armament production is lagging far behind schedule. Although this is denied by the men in charge of the mobilization setup, it is given daily confirmation by such things as the inability of the American air force to meet the Stalinists on equal terms over North Korea. If the armament effort will have to be jacked up further, this can only be accomplished by a much more drastic cut in civilian goods than has been made to date. For the people to accept this prospect, it is necessary that the war psychology be kept going. Men who die useless deaths in Korea to achieve this objective can have the consolation of knowing that they are expendable.

Next Week

STUDENT SOCIALIST

A four-page student-youth section

of LABOR ACTION

Detroit Hit by Ford and Chrysler Layoffs But UAW Chiefs Won't 'Embarrass' Governor

By WALTER JASON

DETROIT, Dec. 2—Like the crash of thunder before a storm breaks out, the news of another 25,000 layoff at Ford and Chrysler hit this industrial area, which already has nearly 100,000 unemployed.

Perhaps this is the event that is going to force United Auto Workers (CIO) officials and government officials to do business other than "as usual," in the coming months. A fever pitch of excitement swept through various plants where men received their notices of layoffs, and local union halls are finding themselves crowded with more and more unemployed wanting the union "to do something about it."

As a matter of fact, there is only one immediate action which could be taken to alleviate the suffering of the unemployed in Detroit—and in the rest of Michigan, for the same situation exists in Flint and elsewhere.

An emergency session of the state legislature could be convened by Governor Williams to revise the unemployment-compensation laws, boost the benefits up from the current level (\$27 per person,

with \$2 for each dependent) to an amount equal to a 40-hour work week. Elimination of the waiting-week provision would end another hardship.

Last month Governor Williams called an emergency session to meet on the acute problem of what counties and areas should permit the use of rifles in deer hunting. It would seem that the unemployment situation is at least as impor-

tant as the plight of the deer hunters.

POLITICS-AS-USUAL?

Proposals along this line have been adopted at various local union meetings, but they have been buried by higher CIO officials who don't want to bring up anything that may embarrass "their boy" Gov. Williams. After all, his reelection in 1952 is more important than the unemployment problem, and a lot of people would get sore if he called an emergency session of the state legislature. This would cost him votes—among business-

men. So the alibi runs, in UAW circles, with a variation on the theme, "Don't you know that the Republicans control the legislature? They won't vote any increase." Of course, it was these same Republican legislators who increased the benefits from \$24 to \$27, under pressure.

The point is that the UAW-Democratic Party politicians are afraid

to bring the pressure to bear, because they are really afraid, to make any move for fear of losing votes for Williams. (They assume that the unemployed, like good union people, will vote the way their union tells them next fall.)

It remains to be seen if this unionism-as-usual, or politics-as-usual, will be able to continue in the face of the worst depression condition in Detroit in many years.

The restlessness of the unemployed is equalled by the unrest among the employed, who find that short work weeks, new taxes and the growing inflation keep depressing their standard of living.

One of the surest indexes of this turbulent frame of mind is the reaction of skilled workers. After all, their standard of living is higher than the assembly-line workers.

In recent weeks, Detroit has seen wildcat strikes among the skilled trades. There was a stormy meeting of 1,000 skilled workers in Detroit last week at which UAW leadership representatives were booed vociferously.

SKILLED MEN IN LEAD

The situation in a nutshell is this: In unorganized shops in Detroit, a skilled worker makes from \$3 an hour up, with plenty of overtime if he wants it. In UAW organized shops, most top rates start at \$2.35 an hour.

It was this disparity which forced a special panel of the Wage Stabilization Board to recommend a 28½ cents an hour flat increase, something which companies like Ford had agreed to already.

But the "Wage Freeze Board" said no. Is it a wonder that the skilled trades in Detroit are at the boiling point? Walter P. Reuther, who has been delaying and stalling on this issue, finally came out with a demand that the Wage Freeze Board reverse its position. He had failed to attend the skilled-

trades meeting, and was subject to a neat attack by Carl Stellato of Ford Local 600, whose skilled-trades workers are taking the lead in this struggle.

The unskilled workers in Detroit's plants are cheering the skilled workers along in their fight for a wage increase. For a chance to bust the present wage level opens up, if the skilled workers win. Certainly, if the skilled workers need a 28½-cent wage increase, the lower-paid unskilled workers need at least as much. It will take more than clever arguments to offset this thinking among the men on the assembly lines.

GANGSTERS: ONE DOWN

In this storm and strife, the UAW ranks here have almost overlooked the significant victory of their union in smashing the gangster-industry setup at the Michigan Stove Company, which had received nation-wide publicity during the Kefauver hearings. After winning an NLRB election, the UAW uncovered a plot of the gangster elements around Sam Perone, a Kefauver witness, and holder of a juicy contract on scrap iron at the plant, to terrorize the unionists and take over the local union.

The arrest of six of his associates and Perone himself on charges of conspiracy to prevent workers from joining a union, and the prospect of further nation-wide publicity which might have touched the deeper tie-up of racketeers and certain Detroit industries, forced a capitulation by the company.

The UAW won a union shop; a flat ten-cent hourly wage increase, sick and welfare insurance, pensions, and other standard provisions of union contracts. It gave the prestige of Michael Lacey, East Side regional director, in charge of this local union, quite a boost.

Gomulka's Rise and Fall Both 'Made in Moscow'

By A. RUDZIENSKI

The world press reports from Warsaw that the Stalinist parliament has voted to hand over Vladyslaw Gomulka and General Marian Spychalski to trial. Since these men are members of the Polish diet, only the immunity of the Polish deputies which was inherited from the independent Polish republic permits us to find out the fate of Gomulka. In Russia itself, Stalin does not need this "bourgeois formality," and any member of the Russian politburo can be arrested by order of NKVD chief Beria.

A review of Gomulka's political career casts some light on his present changed status. As our readers will remember, Gomulka was formerly the prime minister of the post-war Stalinist government in Warsaw, and Spychalski was his leading general and organizer of the Stalinist armed forces in the country.

From the point of view of revolutionary struggle, Gomulka's political history is gray. He began his political career in the trade unions and in the left wing of the Polish Socialist Party (PPS), dominated by the Communist Party.

CP BACKGROUND

As a member of the CP later, he belonged to the right wing, the "majority." The leaders of the CP's right wing came from the post-1906 left wing of the PPS—not to be confused with the PPS left wing of 1926-31—with the exception of A. Warski, Rosa Luxemburg's friend and co-worker.

The CP right-wing majority supported the program of "democratic revolution" for Poland: before the socialist revolution could take place, they believed, there would first have to be a kind of Polish "Kerenskiad" as an inevitable preliminary stage. While this was a mistaken theory, this right-wing majority was also opposed to the Stalinization of the CP, and defended the internal democracy and proletarian character of the party against Stalin's henchmen. It was for this reason that Stalin decided on the destruction of this group and ordered the murder of its leaders, including Warski, Kostreza, Wroblewski, Huberman, Rylski, Prochniak, Krolkowski, Dombal, and others.

The CP minority, the "left-wing" group, which passionately fought against the "two-stage theory" of the Polish revolution, replaced the majority in the leadership of the Polish CP by order of the Kremlin. But after a short time these leaders were also accused of "Trotskyism" and of being political agents of the Polish government, and they were murdered by the GPU.

We recall these facts to facilitate an understanding of the fate of Gomulka, who belonged to the younger generation of the CP which supported the majority as a defender of the independence of the CP and of the Polish working-class tradition against the GPU.

CORPSE REVIVED

When in 1929-30 the Kremlin delivered the leadership of the Polish CP into the hands of the then minority and ordered the "consolidation" of the party around this new leadership, Gomulka supported this "consolidation" as did all the members of the majority.

During this period, for example, this writer was at one time at a meeting in Lvov where I was ordered to be "self-critical" for non-existing mistakes. I refused to do this, but Gomulka, present as the Central Committee representative, remained silent in spite of the fact that he sympathized with my opposition. This opportunism of Gomulka's, noted by the GPU, was both the basis of his later political career and also the cause of his downfall now.

Before the outbreak of the Second World War, the Polish CP had been dissolved by Moscow as an "agency of the Polish government,"

and its leaders, both majority and minority, were murdered, but the Gomulkas survived in Russia and in Poland because the Stalinist reaction needed this type of opportunist for its own aims. When the Russian Stalinist army invaded Poland, the "empirical" Stalin remembered the "two-stage theory" of the Polish revolution. The authors of this theory had been murdered for putting it forward, but corpses do not stink in Stalin's nostrils: he ordered that the old theory be disinterred and refurbished in new form. In Poland, as in the other satellites, it was proclaimed that there was now a period of the "bourgeois-democratic revolution," the epoch of "popular democracy," which was represented as a kind of "Kerenskiad" under Stalinist leadership. This was put forward as the antechamber to the Stalinist totalitarian paradise.

SQUEEZED LEMON

Since the Polish underground resistance was very strong, Gomulka and his friends were put forward as the "leaders" of the new "popular democracy," the Polish "Kerenskiad." Gomulka was appointed to the premiership to find a common language with the "left" elements of the PPS and the Populist Party. He was proclaimed as the leader of the popular republic, and the Stalinist cheering squads yelled "Vies-lav! Vies-lav!" (Vieslav is Gomulka's old pseudonym.) In this capacity, Go-

mulka performed his "duty" and pacified Poland for the Stalinist conquerors. He helped to accomplish the "consolidation" of Stalin's forces, as in 1930.

But in the course of time, the usefulness of his job came to an end. Cyrankiewicz took his place as prime minister and he was dismissed from the general-secretaryship of the party. The Kremlin had ordered the transition from the "popular democracy" to the Stalinist so-called "proletarian dictatorship," that is, a fully Stalinist totalitarianism. Gomulka was released to the State Control agency, as a squeezed lemon.

Now he is charged with being the leader of "Polish nationalism and Titoism" and has been bound over to trial. But if Gomulka was acting as a "nationalist," this "nationalism" had been created ad hoc by Stalin, and it was the master in the Kremlin who had been the sole author of this "deviation."

There were tendencies in Poland toward "nationalism" and maybe toward "Titoism," but Gomulka could never be the leader of such a tendency; he suffers too much from lack of character and from opportunism. He is only the scapegoat for Stalin's strategy. As a political leader, he was never capable of any independent role. His career and his downfall were both made by the Kremlin. His opportunism was the cause of his rise as it will now be the cause of his sad end.

LONDON LETTER

The Bevan Group and The Japanese Treaty

By DAVID ALEXANDER

LONDON, Nov. 28—The Bevanite members of parliament yesterday broke with the Labor Party majority on an important foreign-policy issue in the vote on the floor, in a fashion which illustrates the contradictory sentiments of the group when it comes to foreign policy. The issue was the Japanese peace treaty, but the story goes back some weeks.

Before the recent election the Bevanites felt they had to toe the party line for fear of bringing down the then Labor government. But when the Parliamentary Labor Party (which is the name of the Labor MPs' fraction in the House) met after the election, and elected a committee to formulate policy, Bevan and his main supporters deliberately abstained from taking part in the committee election. They did not want full responsibility for the decisions.

Last week, at a closed meeting of the Parliamentary Labor Party, Attlee had appealed to the Bevanites to show solidarity on the Japanese peace treaty issue, which was coming to a vote.

Despite this, however, the 14 Bevanite MPs mustered another 19 members of Parliament to vote against ratification. Nearly 100 others abstained.

Suspicion of U. S. imperialism no doubt played a role in this minority vote, but part of the reasons

for the Bevanite opposition were far from progressive or socialist. Ellis Smith, for example, said that the expected revival of Japanese industry would be a competitive menace to the industrial North of England. The Japanese could produce goods much more cheaply than Britain, under what he charged were almost slave-labor conditions. It was suggested that Britain should not ratify the treaty until it had included some protective clauses to restrict Japanese competition.

The majority pointed out that Britain had no alternative to ratification as it could not enforce such restrictions if Japan were to regain its sovereignty, in accordance with the aim of the treaty.

Consistent socialists and internationalists would also point out that to deprive another people of its independence and sovereignty in order to restrict its ability to compete for world markets with the industry of one's own country was a strictly imperialist approach to the problem.

Algerians Unite To Fight French

By DAVID ALEXANDER

LONDON, Nov. 28—Details have recently reached us here of the amalgamation into a united front of all the anti-imperialist organizations of Algeria to fight the French masters of the country.

The organization was formed last August by three groups, the MTLD, an Islamic religious organization, and the Communist Party. The most powerful of these is the first (the initials, in English, stand for the Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Liberties). The specific weight and role in the alliance of the Communist Party is a question mark.

The leader of the MTLD, Messali Hadj, was recently released from prison by the French but he is not allowed to participate in political activity. His movement has some hundreds of thousands of supporters. When I met one of them, he assured me that they were well organized. They certainly have arms caches. Their support is country-wide, but it is dangerous to talk about them except in the mosques.

The MTLD is a social-democratic organization. It is against all imperialism, and is prepared to accept as equals both Christians and Jews, neither of whom are generally looked on with friendly eyes in Algeria, as can well be understood.

Although there were elections earlier this year, and it was out of the resultant dissatisfaction that the "Algerian Front for the Defense and Respect of Liberty" was formed, the less than 20 per cent of the deputies who were directly elected are in an impatient mood. In a country where 2 million Frenchmen rule 4 million Arabs—where all the French carry arms legally and many of the Arabs keep them illegally—the situation is very explosive.

The Arabs have a good sense of history, and many of them told this writer, on a visit to Algeria last year, that they "remember Abdel Kader."

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'Intellectual and Artistic Life Has Been Flattened Out' 'The Hoodlums Are in Control Here as Well As in Russia,' Says Times Theater Critic

By MARY BELL

There has been ample discussion and analysis in these columns of the universal atmosphere of the witchhunt which had a seemingly modest beginning in government circles with the Truman loyalty oaths. The checklist was the privately drawn up and as yet judicially uncontested attorney general's list of "subversive" organizations. Then the use of the list spread to industrial, educational and all other kinds of institutions. An avalanche of hysteria was unloosed and McCarthyism was the hysterical culmination of this national disorder.

Among the arts, Hollywood was invaded, and screen writers and actors were subjected to this intellectual terror. The Un-American Activities Committee staged its hearings, and professional heads fell for political unorthodoxy, suspicion of unorthodoxy or Stalinism, association with Stalinism, etc.

Red Channels, the infamous sheet concerned with the radio and TV networks, edited by two ex-FBI agents, spat forth its baseless accusations and insinuations. Jean Muir, after mention in Red Channels, was not subsequently employed. Mady Christians, the well-known actress who recently died, was also listed. Margaret Webster, the famous producer, said in her final salute to Miss Christians that the unhappiness and public disrepute occasioned by this listing hastened the latter's death.

Elmer Rice struck back at the use of Red Channels recently when the Celanese Corporation

vetoed an actor for one of his plays who had been listed. Rice refused to have anything more to do with the sponsor. Such forthright action in the face of the prevailing political mood has been rare.

So far as the actual output of artists and writers, who furnish the backbone of the theatrical and screen productions, is concerned, the effect of the witchhunt upon it is more difficult to assess; but it must be more insidious and, if possible, more poisonous, than the blacklisting of actors and writers. One knows in a general way that without an atmosphere of freedom and experimentation, acceptance of unconventional ideas and explorations in new fields, writers and artists must be severely cramped.

"HERE AS IN RUSSIA"

The distinguished New York Times theater critic, Brooks Atkinson, has some pertinent remarks worth quoting in his column of December 2. He is attempting to find the reasons for the particularly empty state of the theatre, with the exceptions of Shakespeare and Shaw, this season. After citing the inevitable economic ills of Broadway stage productions, which must function like capitalistic business enterprises and earn profits for backers, Atkinson writes of the new problem which has beset the theatre:

"If there were any real intellectual or spiritual drive at the core of the contemporary theatre, the wild economics would not be the decisive factor. Nothing mate-

rialistic or practical can destroy an art that is vital. But something elusive and intangible seems to have drained the vitality out of the theatre, and perhaps out of other American arts as well. No one knows the reason exactly, but could it be that the spiritual climate in which we are now living smothers art that is really creative, and that the emphasis on public expression of all kinds is toward meekness and conformity? People are playing safe. They hesitate to say what they think. The intellectual and artistic life of the country has been flattened out. The ignorant heresy-hunting and the bigoted character assassination that have acquired the generic title of McCarthyism are succeeding. The hoodlums are in control here as well as in Russia, and the theater begins to look as insipid in the one place as in the other.

"No one can create art without looking into the bottom of his private soul and reporting the truths he finds there. Things that are expedient are not art if, in fact, they are anything at all. Art is frank, first of all. Not that artists are necessarily in rebellion against the times in which they live. Shakespeare was lucky enough to live in the robustious and expansive climate of Elizabethan England when a woman of great courage and enlightenment dominated the scene. It was a fertile period and he flourished. But some of our greatest artists have been in opposition to the intellectual and cultural life of their periods and they spoke up like men of insight and courage. Aristophanes, Ibsen, Strindberg, Tolstoy, Chekhov, Shaw, O'Casey and O'Neil were not content to give lip service to mediocrity. For it is the nature of great artists to be more alive than most people are: to have more imagination, keener eyes and more passionate convictions.

"We cannot expect to have vital art in our theatre if we emulate totalitarian countries and yield the control of cultural life to the Yahoos and hoodlums." Brooks Atkinson is no alarmist and he is not a socialist. He writes as a theater critic on what he believes to be the best interests of the theatre. His language is strong and his points are telling. He demonstrates that the attorney general's list has made its way into every nook and cranny of our contemporary life.

LABOR SCOPE

THE CONTRADICTION IS ALL MURRAY'S

By BEN HALL

Phil Murray was bitter in his denunciation of the wage control policies of the Truman administration, and the delegates who heard him at the recent CIO convention echoed his sentiments. They were impatient when Price Stabilizer Michael DiSalle sought to defend his course and rudely ignored his remarks to their sessions, refusing to hear him out, choosing to busy themselves with their own private conversations while he sought their attention in vain. And these are men who are accustomed to giving the Truman administration at least a respectful hearing.

Now the Steel Workers union begins negotiations with the nation's most powerful industrialists. The companies have already announced their flat rejection of any wage increase, unless they are guaranteed a substantial price increase. The union insists that it is determined to get a substantial wage raise and it makes clear that it does not intend to be bound by the formulas of the Wage Stabilization Board.

These negotiations begin with the threat of strike clearly in the minds of all. The wage policies of the Democratic administration face a new test and the "Fair Deal"-labor alliance is about to be subjected to new strains and pulls.

The CIO finds itself in the very embarrassing position of supporting a regime in Washington whose wage program it cannot stomach and of serving on a Wage Stabilization Board as loyal participants while rejecting its basic policies.

Elmer Rice, CIO member of the board, president of the United Textile Workers Union, wants to get off. Joseph Curran, president of the National Maritime Union, wants his union exempted from the board's control. If the Steel Workers union is compelled to fight the board's rulings or intervention in its negotiations, every possible justification for continued labor participation will have evaporated and the whole setup reduced to a farce.

While labor still sits on the board, it begins to build up a terrific pressure to break through the whole structure. The steel negotiations will underline the impossibility of creating a durable and stable class peace in this period of war economy. Under the best of circumstances, the administration will find a device to stumble along temporarily without precipitating a crisis in the form of a nation-wide steel strike. But it will not, because it cannot, find a way to eliminate the almost permanent, nagging threat of similar crises to come.

The steel companies are shrewd enough to pass the buck to Truman: "Whether our workers are to get a raise," said Benjamin Fairless of U. S. Steel, "is a matter which probably cannot be determined by collective bargaining."

And as the administration reluctantly mixes into the negotiations it will have to figure out a way to deal with the co-thinkers of one steel union official who said: "We're not going to pierce the wage ceiling; we're not going to bend it; we're going to break it!"

THE FIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY on the HOME FRONT

The 'Trenton Two' Can Be Saved

By MEL HACKER

Two Negroes face life in prison for a crime which they did not commit. They are the two remaining members of the now world-famous "Trenton Six," the jury at a second trial having acquitted four of the original six. Collis English and Ralph Cooper have been imprisoned for almost four years. They were indicted for the murder of a junk dealer but their real crime was, that as members of a downtrodden minority group, they were particularly susceptible to the intimidation and frameups of the police. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the American Civil Liberties Union are currently spearheading a drive to free these innocent men.

It is impossible to understand the case of the "Trenton Two" without taking into account the background of city politics from which it emerged. In 1948 Trenton was having a crime wave, Mayor Connally was under indictment for bribery, and his police department was under attack for a long series of unsolved crimes. The press was clamoring for reform. An editorial in the Trenton Times, headed "The Idle Electric Chair," pointed out that no man had been convicted and sentenced to death in New Jersey for a crime since December 11, 1945. The police department, stung into action, began frenzied attempts to round up suspects for various unsolved crimes. Within 15 days six men were arrested for the murder of a 72-year-old junk dealer. These suspects, the Trenton six, were all Negroes who had alibis.

There were no eye-witnesses to the crime. The dead man's wife who had seen "three light-complexioned Negroes" enter the store failed to identify either Cooper or English, the darkest-skinned of the six. Held under arrest by the police, five of the men signed utterly confusing confessions. Testimony at subsequent trials revealed that these men had been drugged, interrogated for as long as 19 hours at one stretch without sleep, denied access to

legal counsel. A hurried trial found them guilty and sentenced them to death.

At this point the Communist Party through the Civil Rights Congress, its legal-defense arm, capitalized on the case to build support for the Communist Party and collect huge sums of money, ostensibly for the defense of the Trenton Six. It brought the matter to the New Jersey Supreme Court but subsequently withdrew after the NAACP and the ACLU entered the case. The Amsterdam News claims that the Stalinists spent very little of their collected money for legal defense. In 1949 the New Jersey Supreme Court reversed the verdict of guilty, stating that the trial record was a "judgment tainted with error."

In the second trial, stories were changed and with jury horse-trading four of the six were acquitted and Collins and English given life terms.

The ACLU and the NAACP, together with the Princeton Committee for the Defense of the Trenton Six have organized the Joint Committee to Free the Trenton Two. They are asking funds to bring the case to the U. S. Supreme Court.

This case is part of the struggle to publicize and eliminate the second-class citizenship and exploitation of the American Negro by a corrupt capitalist society. The Stalinists have been out-fought in this case by liberal civil-rights organizations. We urge your full support to the Trenton Two.

BEHIND 'COUNTERATTACK'

The reactionary newsletter Counterattack has terrorized radio and television for the last three years. The screening of personnel on the Elmer Rice television broadcasts is the latest incident in its active history of using charges of subversiveness to blackball performers. The Jean Muir case also brought these activities to light.

The Nation magazine suggests that this ugly witchhunting deprives citizens of their rights without due process of law and also



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The ISL Program in Brief

The Independent Socialist League stands for socialist democracy and against the two systems of exploitation which now divide the world: capitalism and Stalinism.

Capitalism cannot be reformed or liberalized, by any Fair Deal or other deal, so as to give the people freedom, abundance, security or peace. It must be abolished and replaced by a new social system, in which the people own and control the basic sectors of the economy, democratically controlling their own economic and political destinies.

Stalinism, in Russia and wherever it holds power, is a brutal totalitarianism—a new form of exploitation. Its agents in every country, the Communist Parties, are unrelenting enemies of socialism and have nothing in common with socialism—which cannot exist without effective democratic control by the people.

These two camps of capitalism and Stalinism are today at each other's throats in a world-wide imperialist rivalry for domination. This struggle can only lead to the most frightful war in history so long as the people leave the capitalist and Stalinist rulers in power. Independent Socialism stands for building and strengthening the Third Camp of the people against both war blocs.

The ISL, as a Marxist movement, looks to the working class and its ever-present struggle as the basic progressive force in society. The ISL is organized to spread the ideas of socialism in the labor movement and among all other sections of the people.

At the same time, Independent Socialists participate actively in every struggle to better the people's lot now—such as the fight for higher living standards, against Jim Crow and anti-Semitism, in defense of civil liberties and the trade-union movement. We seek to join together with all other militants in the labor movement as a left force working for the formation of an independent labor party and other progressive policies.

The fight for democracy and the fight for socialism are inseparable. There can be no lasting and genuine democracy without socialism, and there can be no socialism without democracy. To enroll under this banner, join the Independent Socialist League!

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Readers Take the Floor . . .

QUESTION ON THE BURMA LINE-UP

To the Editor:

In an article headlined "In Burma: An End to the Civil War," Comrade Alexander describes the process by which the union government, set up on "January 4, 1948, after the Attlee-Nu agreement" defeated its many opponents. After describing these opponents—the "White Flags" (Stalinists), "Red Flags" (left sectarian revolutionists), the Karennis (a minority people), and sections of the People's Volunteer Army—the article ends with the reassuring statement that: "Soon Thakin Nu's socialist government will begin to rebuild a country which has been a battleground for 10 years."

Information about the complex and primitive struggles in the various colonial and ex-colonial countries is admittedly scant and this is especially true of the factions, struggles and movements within the labor and socialist arena. I have no reason to doubt the authenticity of Comrade Alexander's descriptions, yet I am extremely suspicious of some of the implications of his article.

Readers of LABOR ACTION may remember a series of polemical exchanges between Jack Brad and myself revolving around the question of the orientation and strategy of revolutionary socialists in the colonial struggle against imperialism, LABOR ACTION for January 17, 21 and June 27, 1949.

As it turned out I was incorrect in calling the Indonesian Republic a "puppet" of the Dutch, but I was not mistaken in insisting on the independence of the revolutionaries from the republican nationalists and their social-democratic allies. The tragic murder of Tan Malakka by the Republicans confirmed my prediction that the Republicans would turn against any attempt at a mass social struggle against the Dutch.

It seems to me that Comrade Alexander's unfriendly treatment of all opponents of Thakin Nu's "socialist" government and especially of Thakin Soe, the leader of the "Red Flags," goes an incredible distance in the direction of an uncritical liquidation of Trotsky's theory of the permanent revolution in the colonies.

As democrats and socialists we support the most conservative republic against the most democratic imperialist power (even one led by the Labor Party). But

do we stand with the Thakin Nu government ("with strong British and American support") against its revolutionary opponents (no matter how "sectarian"), or do we give friendly and critical advice to those feeble attempts being made to deepen and broaden the struggle begun by the nationalists?

It is my view that Trotsky was only mistaken as to the relationship of forces between decaying imperialism and the nationalist-colonial bourgeois elements. A revolt has occurred in Asia, to be sure, but in no case has the colonial bourgeoisie even begun to carry out a fundamental democratic revolution. India, Indonesia and Burma offer no refutation of this view. It is daily confirmed by the conservative and opportunist moves of the rulers of Iran and Egypt.

Socialists should not make the mistake of underestimating the ability of these elements to gain independence from the decaying Western, colonial empires. We should also not make the even more serious error of wiping out the class line between Thakin Nu's "socialist" government and the masses of Burma.

R. MAGNUS

Comrade Magnus raises justified questions about the complexity of the Burmese political movements in the light of Comrade Alexander's closing sentence; the editor also addressed similar questions for further information to Comrade Alexander on receiving his article. The Alexander article was informative as far as it went; what it lacked was sufficient political information on the program of both the Thakin Nu government and the "Red Flags" group. Such information is almost totally lacking in this country.

But unless Magnus has such information—and he does not give it in his letter—we feel that he is rather going out on a limb in merely assuming that the Thakin Nu socialist government is of the same type as (say) Nehru's in India. It is only on this assumption that his remarks on the theory of permanent revolution are pertinent.

We still expect to hear from Comrade Alexander on this—or, for that matter, from other contributors.—Ed.

READING from LEFT to RIGHT

STEEL FOLLY, an editorial.—Tribune (London), Nov. 16-29.

Tribune, the unofficial organ of the Bevan group in the British Labor Party, notes that "The Tories feel far from happy about denationalizing iron and steel." Its editorial brings together a couple of noteworthy expressions of the Conservative dilemma.

"Can it be," asked the Economist (one of the most "responsible" of the Conservative periodicals) just before the recent debate on denationalization in the House of Commons, "that denationalization is necessary for the efficient running of the industry?" As the Tribune points out, the Tories have to make a case for this proposition since it would be difficult for them to admit that they are for denationalization simply because "they are inspired by that very spirit of narrow dogmatism which, according to them, obsessed the Labor government."

The Economist's reply to its own question is instructive:

"The answer clearly depends on the form it takes. If there is an attempt to put everything back into the state it was in two years ago, then the net effect will be to substitute a very tight privately owned cartel for a very tight publicly owned cartel, which would hardly be an improvement. . . .

"The way to denationalize steel is therefore not to try to sell it back in exactly the same parcels that were acquired . . . but first to do it up in different, and technically more balanced parcels. This will take time and the Corporation

should be given, say, three years to accomplish the job.

"It is also perhaps worth sounding the warning that the only form of selling the industry back to the public that will be worth while will be genuine sales to private shareholders venturing equity capital. If such capital is not forthcoming—and investors who are once bitten may perhaps be twice shy—it would be better to leave things as they are rather than to set up some sort of semi-public, semi-private corporation financed by fixed-interest capital. A privately owned steel industry will be preferable to the present arrangement only if it is in diverse ownership, flexible and competitive to a higher degree than has prevailed since 1932."

It is hardly likely that the Tories will, or will be able to, turn the clock back to 1932 even on the advice of the Economist. The Manchester Guardian, therefore, is even now concerned with mitigating the worst consequences of the expected. It proposed that a future steel board be given power "to intervene in firms which are grossly inefficient and to promote new steel plants which private enterprise is not prepared to build." While thus, in fact, admitting that private enterprise is not to be trusted, this liberal organ is just as insistent that the industry has to be restored.

One need not suggest that the difficulties before Tory denationalization are anything like insuperable ones, but it will be fascinating to see them try to work it out while at the same time trying to give the impression that they are not putting the old monopolies back into the saddle.

WORLD POLITICS

GERMAN SOCIALIST LEADER BLASTS THE SCHUMAN PLAN

The following strong statement on the Schuman Plan by the leader of the German Social-Democratic Party, Kurt Schumacher, was originally published in the Bulletin de l'Internationale Socialiste, and is here translated from the French trade-union weekly L'Unité (Nov. 15), which made the excerpts.—Ed.

By KURT SCHUMACHER

I am not yet of the opinion that French policy is essentially a European policy. Nor do I think that the cause of freedom is to be identified with the needs of the Americans at any particular moment.

It is dishonest to tie up the end of the occupation [of Germany] with certain demands of the Allies, notably with the acceptance by us of the Schuman Plan in the economic field and with the so-called Pleven Plan on the military field.

To give one's assent to every measure, even if it is badly applied, simply because it comes from the Allies certainly does not represent a positive attitude. Likewise, to defend one's own social class, one's own people and way of life does not represent a negative attitude.

Neither one of these two plans has an international character and neither has constructive elements for a European community.

The economic meaning of the Schuman Plan is twofold. Firstly, it involves paying the lowest possible price to get the largest possible amount of coal for the other countries. Secondly, it involves maintaining German steel production at the lowest possible level and keeping the cost of this production at the highest possible level, so that the other countries might be able to sell their steel to Germany and not have to fear Germany's competition on the market.

All of this means low wages in Germany. . . . The economic meaning of the Schuman Plan is twofold. Firstly, it involves paying the lowest possible price to get the largest possible amount of coal for the other countries. Secondly, it involves maintaining German steel production at the lowest possible level and keeping the cost of this production at the highest possible level, so that the other countries might be able to sell their steel to Germany and not have to fear Germany's competition on the market.

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Youth and Student Corner

Boon for the Stalinists: CCNY's Robeson Case

By HENRY GALE

When CCNY's Student-Faculty Committee on Student Activities refused to co-sponsor a projected speech by the Stalinist spokesman, Paul Robeson, and effectively denied him the use of the college's Great Hall, it took an action which by now it may well have found cause to regret. The student body has had much greater cause to regret that action and its consequences. What has taken place has been both a defeat for civil liberties and a political gain for the campus Stalinists.

The background of the situation is the following. The Young Progressives (Stalinist group) of City College, scheduling Robeson to speak on January 10, had attempted to obtain use of the Great Hall. For a group to get this privilege a definite procedure had been established, the main requirement being that the meeting be co-sponsored by the Student Council and the SFCSA. In the past, this co-sponsorship had been given to such representatives of diverse and controversial viewpoints as Henry Wallace, Newbold Morris, Norman Thomas and Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt. It had never been previously denied to anyone.

These legal channels had been met up to the point where Student Council agreed to co-sponsor the meeting. However, the Student-Faculty Committee refused. At this point YPA attempted to use an alternate procedure, involving payment of a fee, but this also required the approval of the Student-Faculty Committee. Again it refused its permission on the ground that the meeting would not be "in the general interests of the college."

The reaction of the student body was overwhelmingly to protest against this undemocratic procedure. The Student Council, by a vote of 22-4, denounced the Student-Faculty Committee's action and demanded that Robeson be allowed to use the Great Hall. Both student newspapers also violently denounced the administration. One headed an editorial:

SYL Friday Forum

Friday, December 16 at 8:45 p.m.

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Speaker:

GERTRUDE BLACKWELL

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Remaining Sessions:

December 9	STALINISM: THE ROAD TO 1984	Gertrude Blackwell
December 16	THE WAY TO FREEDOM	Phyllis Hoffman
December 23	DEMOCRACY AND THE NEW SOCIETY	Hal Draper
December 30	THE WAR WE NEEDN'T HAVE	Julie Falk
January 6	WHERE TO BEGIN	Jack Maxwell

At LABOR ACTION HALL, 114 West 14 Street, New York City

"The Issue is Freedom." And petitions protesting the ban were signed by many anti-Stalinist students.

The basic argument of defenders of the SFCSA ruling is that academic freedom had not been abridged inasmuch as Robeson's right to speak at the college, in some room other than Great Hall, had not been attacked. That this fact delimits the degree of abridgment of academic freedom involved is true, but the argument is nevertheless wholly fallacious.

It misses the entire point at issue: that a college facility, which had formerly been, in effect, used by all who desired to do so, was denied to a person solely on the ground of his political views.

This action is anti-democratic because it establishes discrimination in the use of college facilities on the basis of political opinion; the best meeting rooms are to be denied to representatives of unorthodox viewpoints. From this point to that of total denial of speaking rights for such tendencies is not such a long step as it might, on the surface, appear.

The anti-democratic and precedent-setting character of the SFCSA action is only the most important aspect of its reactionary nature. Its other reactionary aspect lies in the assistance which it has given to the forces of Stalinism on campus.

(1) It has given the Stalinists an issue around which they could develop a wide agitation. Until the Robeson incident they had, on the whole, been notably inactive. That situation was drastically reversed, and they have recently passed out large numbers of leaflets.

(2) It has given them an opportunity to pose as defenders of civil liberties.

(3) It has guaranteed a successful meeting for Robeson. Student interests has been stimulated to a point where a large overflow crowd can be predicted. How Robeson would have fared in the huge Great Hall no one can say. Is it, however, too much to suggest that in an atmosphere unclouded by hysteria, student response to this much tarnished tin god of the CP would be at a decidedly low level?

CCNY Symposium on War Hears Draper and a Leading Stalinist

NEW YORK, Nov. 29—Under the sponsorship of 12 campus clubs of all political complexions, a symposium on "The Economic Causes of War" took place this afternoon at City College before a crowded lecture hall filled with over 200 students. What made the occasion an unusual one was that the panel of four speakers included both a well-known Stalinist spokesman and a representative of independent socialism. It has been a long time since a leading Stalinist has been compelled to speak from the same platform with a revolutionary socialist.

In addition to Herbert Aptheker, the Stalinist speaker—he is the author of numerous Stalinist brochures on Negro history in particular—and Hal Draper, editor of LABOR ACTION, the program included two Columbia University professors, William Vickrey and John Randall Jr.

Professor Vickrey, who led off, had a few remarks to make cautioning against exaggeration of the role of economic causes in the generation of wars, and then emphasized the necessity for finding some way of reconciling the warlike antagonisms between the Western bloc and Russia.

Aptheker, reading his speech from a prepared manuscript, spent virtually all of his 20 minutes citing facts and figures on the profit-making of capitalist interests in the present and previous war crises, scarcely touching on current politics at all. Only in his last couple of minutes did he make the necessary obeisance before the "one-fifth of the world" which had "broken with capitalism" and was "interested only in peace."

Draper, noting that Aptheker was "very good at criticizing one

Not 'Neutrality' but Opposition to Both Imperialist Powers — From Israel: A Socialist Voice on the War

The Israeli socialist journal Ha'Iton Ha' Democrati, published in Tel Aviv by M. Stein, recently presented its views on the war in a long editorial statement, of which important sections are translated below. In its essential lines, it is a genuinely socialist approach to the international crisis, and we welcome it.

Comrade Stein's paper is independent of any of the major parties, including the Mapai, and is especially outstanding (as far as the Israeli press goes) for its consistent championing of the rights of the Arab minority in the state and of a policy looking toward an alliance of both Jewish and Arab toilers against the ruling classes of the Near East. In the same issue from which the article below is translated, the editor also announces that the paper expects to become a daily shortly.

The translation from the Hebrew is by Al Findley.—Ed.

When the ruling class of the U. S. declares that it does not want war it is not lying. No doubt, they prefer to achieve their aims peacefully. The population of the U. S. is large, its industrial production tremendous and its financial power is great. Europe, on the other hand, has been badly battered, Britain is no longer a decisive power, Asia and Africa remain weak. Wide parts of the world are therefore open to U. S. expansion and domination that can give the U. S. the fruits of the labor of the peoples of the world in such great quantities that not only the rulers but the people of the U. S. will be able to share.

It is precisely peace that can bring the rulers of the U. S. such an era of unprecedented wealth and prosperity—that is if they could only have the time to conduct their "business as usual." BUT will they have the opportunity? . . .

The world has become too small for the social systems of Russia and the U. S. to co-exist. Talk of the co-existence of capitalism and communism may have good intentions but has no truth. It would, of course, have no truth when applied to genuine communism. But even the so-called communism that prevails in Russia cannot long live in peace with the capitalist system. Not because the two systems are different but rather because of the similarity in both systems.

It is precisely because both in the U. S. and in the USSR the masses are exploited and the minority enjoy special privileges, because both are oppressive and exploitive systems that seek to consolidate and expand, that it is "natural" that they stand in each others way and end up in conflict.

The coming war between the U. S. and Russia will be a world war. Firstly, because it will be a war for rule of the world. Whoever wins will dominate the entire globe.

Two-in-One War

At the same time it will be an ideological war between two social systems. This "twin" struggle is not a mere coincidence but has been brought about by the decline of the capitalist system and by the growth of the science of transportation.

The aspiration to unite and centralize the public activities of man in order to improve his lot is as old as mankind. Tribe, city-state, nation-state, empire are all steps and stages in the road of the unifying and centralizing tendency mentioned above. The advances were small ones and the road was a narrow one with many obstacles, and it expanded slowly.

All past attempts at world rule—the attempts of the eastern emperors, of Alexander, of Rome, of the great rulers of the Middle Ages, of Napoleon—all failed. All of course were partial tries; the "world" they aspired to rule was a very limited world. The main obstacle was their inability to rule from afar. Even in the narrow confines of their world they did not have the means to continue a central rule for any length of time.

Only with the expansion of the science of transportation was any real progress made toward the goal.

World War I was not yet a war for world domination. Each side was a coalition of equal powers. The victory of neither side would have resulted in a central world government. Of course, World War I was a step toward such a setup and was a prelude to World War II, which had implicit in it a single world power. However, even in World War II one side was an alliance of many countries of more or less equal power and it was this side that won. World War II was, however, a very great step in the direction of creating one central power. It weakened the power of many countries and left only two countries in the field. The coming world war will not be a war between alliances like World War I, nor a war between an alliance and a single power as in World War II but a war between two individual powers. The outcome inevitably means that the winner will become the single world power or government.

The same developments that make possible the centralization of political power also turns "economic anarchy" into a liability and a destructive force. They are two sides of the same coin. Man needs both the centralization of political and economic functions—a central direction of affairs.

We Are Not 'Neutral'

It is therefore natural that the problem of centralized political power and the question of the social order are posed at the same time. Indeed they have appeared side by side for a number of years. The Russo-Japanese War brought the Revolution of 1905. World War I brought the October Revolution. World War II catapulted Russia into one of the two contenders for world power. In the coming war this development will reach its height and the question of world power and the social question will be united.

Since the war between the U. S. and Russia will be both an "ideological" one and a struggle for the world, is it possible for any country to remain neutral? Of course not! Even in World War II there were no real neutrals. Even those countries that were formally neutral were so only because it suited the great powers for their own considerations. In practice the "neutrals" served one of the powers while the other closed its eyes to the situation. If the war had continued, there would have come an end even to this kind of neutrality.

There is no doubt that no country—even if it wanted to—would be able to remain neutral in a war between the two giant contenders, with different social orders, fighting it out for world mastery. It is, of course, ridiculous to assume that the Near East, a strip of the world where some of the greatest battles may be fought, will be able to remain neutral.

The slogan of neutrality for the Near East is a false and harmful one. It is harmful because it deflects attention from the real dangers that threaten, it arouses false hopes that it is possible to avoid the dangers by staying on the sidelines. The way to prevent involvement with either the United States or Russia in a war is not "neutrality" but opposition to both. He who has a choice of two alternatives—be hanged or be burned—will not choose neutrality toward both, but as long as he has sense will seek a third alternative, i.e., to remain alive.

World War II did not bring a European October Revolution. The degeneration and treachery of the mass workers' organizations, both "right" and "left," bore its fruit. The Second International became during the war partners and servants of the imperial rulers, and after the war they became, or rather they tried to become, the "popular" administrative "heirs" of

their rulers. They remained loyal to imperialism—of course, "for the benefit of the people." The adherents of the Third International were as usual tools of the rulers of Russia: deserters during the period of the Stalin-Hitler pact and fighters in the underground after the Nazi attack on Russia. At present they write in a net of contradictions in the conflicts between "national patriotism," "Soviet patriotism," "class patriotism" and the need to preserve the faith of the workers. They are writhing without any clear perspective, can accomplish nothing worth while, and are losing the prestige they had gained in the struggle against the Nazis.

Hope in the Colonial Peoples

In the fascist countries, the workers had been so demoralized by their own parties that they filled the ranks of the Nazis, and the few that remained loyal had little or no influence. If after defeat of the fascists, one of the remaining loyal workers tried to rouse the masses to revolutionary activity, he was suppressed both by the "democratic" and "communist" armies. The inhabitants of these countries are at present little better than passive observers of the things done by the different occupying powers.

The present state of the working class does not offer real hope that in the near future it will be able with its own power to rid itself of the exploiting systems and/or that it will be able to prevent World War III.

However, World War II brought a different important development in its wake—the weakening of the colonial powers. Even though the democratic powers—the main colonial powers—won the war, they paid a great price. The three great empires—British, Dutch, French—have lost their ability to rule. Destruction of their empires is not complete, it is true, but the possibilities have been created to bring this process to its final conclusion relatively quickly. . . .

This is the essence of Churchill's proposal for the unification of Europe. His plan is directed not only against Russia but against the undeveloped countries—the majority of the human race. It is essentially a plan not for the unification of Europe, but a plan to use the industrial superiority of Europe and America against the oppressed, backward people. The struggle against colonial oppression is not only worth while, but is a great, immediate and important need.

For the Future of Mankind

The countries of Europe are as yet unable to accept Churchill's plan *in toto*. The old social concepts have not completely lost their power, the memory of Hitler makes it difficult to accept ideas and concepts advanced by the Nazis. Time may change this situation. In the great turmoil, these obstacles may be forgotten and may glorify the advantages of a prosperity for the few based on the blood of the many. The smoothing of the path to this goal may be the aim of a Third World War.

The struggle against colonial oppression will not succeed unless it is conducted by the subject-nations with mutual understanding and sympathy.

Every progressive war that is fought for the freedom of a colonial country, whether Near or Far East, is fought not only for the neutrality of that country alone, or for the region within which that country is situated, but for much more than that. It is fought for the neutrality of the entire world, for peace and for the future of mankind. Those who fight for freedom in all colonial countries must remember this well—they must understand and impress upon their memories the necessary living connection between their struggles and the struggles of others for freedom.

The enslavers of both sides [Russian and Anglo-American—Tr.] do not limit themselves to borders, neither in Korea nor in Malaya nor in any other place. The oppressed must do the same. The enemy is strong, brutal and has had much experience. We must learn from him in order to conquer him.

Not the "neutrality of the East"—Near or Far—but a progressive and united war against the united and common enemy!

One Halley Promise Filled: No 'Flashy Start'; Will Tammany Try to Get In on the Act Too?

By PETER WHITNEY

NEW YORK, Dec. 1.—With something less than a bang, Rudolph Halley has opened his career as the newly elected New York City Council President by calling for the ousting of two city officials friendly to gangster Frank Costello, and for an investigation of corruption and patronage in the Fire Department. Halley, candidate of the Liberal Party and strong labor forces, gave the two old-party machines a knockout blow in the recent elections after a campaign based on fighting crime and corruption.

The question arises: why single out two officials when the very investigations conducted by Halley himself for the Kefauver Crime Committee put the finger on many more highly placed New York City officials? Why single out the Fire Department when other major city departments have been as guilty of payroll padding, granting of city contracts to favorite firms, and graft?

If the answer is that even crime-busting must start somewhere and it's better to tackle a little bit at a time and get somewhere than to have spectacular fireworks of denunciation, the fact is that the demands raised by Halley in the form of the two resolutions before the City Council were not introduced with the expectation of passage but with the aim of putting the Democratic majority of the City Council on the spot and arousing public opinion to these evils. As expected, these measures were referred to committees and are likely to stay pigeonholed there.

During the 1950 elections for mayor, Costello's political friends and associates, headed by Tammany Hall and its leadership, were supporting Rudolph Halley's friend and mentor for the mayoralty. Impellitteri challenged their candidate and successfully ran as an "independent candidate." He attacked political bossism and succeeded in corraling the sentiment of New Yorkers for an "independent, unbossed" candidate.

Scarcely had he warmed the mayor's chair than he was engaged in overtures to return to the Democratic fold. His price: control of Tammany Hall and the ousting of the present leadership in favor of himself and his associates, like Rogers and Brickman. He is still engaged in this battle and given the present soul-searching among the Democrats to ac-

count for their two successive and smashing defeats, he may yet accomplish his aim.

GET THE BIG FRY

It is in the light of this internal struggle within the Democratic organization that Halley's moves must be examined. Are not some of Halley's own associates tarred with the Costello brush by their association with Tammany Hall and their acceptance of its support? Does not his silence on the present leader of Tammany Hall—also a city official—raise legitimate questions?

Rogers countered Halley's attack by charging that Halley had "refrained from bringing in the names of many people who were evidently useful to him, including some Manhattan Democrats. . . . Wouldn't Halley's denunciation of city officials who are in open and notorious association with Costello be stronger if his list were not limited to two supporters of Mayor Impellitteri but included some of the bigger fry, much more important and higher placed in the councils of the Democratic Party of New York City?"

In accepting office, Halley told his supporters that he would not start out eating "raw meat" and that he was not a flashy starter. He would need time for hard, careful groundwork and would move cautiously and slowly. While there may be justification for this attitude on some complex municipal problems, surely on Halley's specialty—crime investigation and the fight against corruption—his supporters had the right to expect a bold, aggressive attack instead of a piecemeal nibble.

DEMS MAY COMPETE

Halley may find the ground cut out from under him by some new competitors coming to the fore. His monopoly on fighting for "good, clean government" and ousting officials tainted with graft and gangster association is being challenged by Democratic Party leaders themselves.

The New York Democrats are neither blind nor stupid, and the handwriting on the wall is too large to be ignored. In 1950, Impellitteri won by a plurality of 225,000 by claiming to be an "unbossed" independent Democrat against the regular nominee; in 1951, Halley won by a plurality of 164,000, and beat the Democratic machine in Manhattan, Bronx, and Brooklyn. The Liberal Party thus emerged as the first party in the city, and the Democratic Party—losing every borough, including Staten Island and Queens to the Republicans—was thrown into a crisis of first-rate proportions.

What could be more revealing than the statement by Brooklyn boss Sinnott? "The Democratic Party in this city has lost the confidence of the people. . . . The people have been appalled at the disclosures of dishonesty and corruption in the public service. These cannot be condoned and must be condemned." Sinnott then proposed that the Democrats can resuscitate themselves by rallying around the crime-fighters in their own organization and identifying themselves with all efforts to rid municipal politics of gangster influence.

HEAD IT AND BEHEAD IT

Only then can the Democrats win the victories that they did in the past under Roosevelt and Lehman. In other words, since you can't fight the prevailing tendency, you might as well become part of it. If the people want "unbossed" candidates, if the people want "gang-busters," the Democrats will gladly furnish such candidates and save their own heads in the process. This time-worn strategy in politics is known as running to the head of a movement in order to

behead it. It is even possible for them as long as Halley sticks to "crime-crushing" and fails to develop something quite different:

A POLITICAL PROGRAM.

The shadow of the two important elections coming—the presidential election in 1952 and the mayoralty election in 1953—has engendered the deepest soul-searching and questioning among the Democratic tops. What can be done to restore the power and prestige of the Democratic Party in New York City? New Yorkers can expect to see some sweeping moves within the Democratic ranks and a reshuffling and re-vamping of the party's leadership with the aim of putting forward a new face to the voters.

HE PROMISED

The Democrats' crisis should be the Liberals' opportunity. The Liberal Party rightfully rejoiced over the Halley victory. They put up the manpower and money to ensure his victory, and all commentators credited the Liberals as the decisive force behind Halley. They are now the No. 1 party in New York City, and are in the strongest position to enlarge their labor base and forge ahead as the independent political organization of labor and liberal elements.

The rank and file of the party, many of whom have urged the party to run its own independent candidates, are especially jubilant. They feel that despite the shortcomings of Halley and his campaign his election is a tremendous confirmation of the correctness of the policy of running independent candidates and that the leadership can no longer steamroller their demand with talk of "impracticality" and "now is not the time."

At the last state convention, State Chairman Adolf Berle assured the delegates that once the party got a sizable vote, the delegates could then write their own ticket, but until then the time-honored policy of supporting the best men in the two major parties had to be followed. The party has now reached its highest vote—and elected a candidate to the second highest post in New York City—but will Berle remember what he promised the rebellious members who were urging the party to run its own candidate?

The Liberal Party leaders have been cautious in their statements on the Halley victory and how it would affect their future policy.

Man Looks in Mirror—Appalled

"Germany's economic recovery has helped the rich more than the poor," Benjamin J. Buttenwieser, retiring assistant United States high commissioner, declared today. . . . The Germans, in an effort to rebuild the capital wealth of their physically destroyed country, have concentrated the benefits of the economic recovery program in the hands of the 'money interests,' Mr. Buttenwieser continued.

So goes a N. Y. Times dispatch from Bonn (Dec. 2). The ironic angle on this indignant condemnation of the German "money in-

terests" is that it comes from a former partner of Kuhn, Loeb & Company who is also a former governor of the Investment Bankers Association.

FEARS HALLEY SWITCH

In the recent election, for example, Republican Congressman Javits, whom they have endorsed again and again, supported the Republican candidate against Halley. Sharkey, the Democratic candidate against Halley, could likewise boast that in days gone by the Liberals had supported him and helped to elect him. Senator Lehman and Congressman F. D. Roosevelt Jr., elected to office by Liberal votes, repaid their political debts by supporting Sharkey. Absolutely no gratitude in this game of politics!

Is it any wonder then that a prominent Ladies Garment Workers Union leader plaintively writes in the union's paper: "In the past, the Liberal Party sometimes suffered the consequences of candidates who, after election, switched to other, opposing sides. We hope that the newly-elected president of the City Council will not forget the Liberal Party in months to come, and will continue to justify the trust put in him."

If the Liberal Party leadership utilizes this great victory simply to strengthen its bargaining position with the Democratic leadership and to demand that it too must be consulted before the Democrats name their candidates, not only will Halley but also the people of New York forget the Liberal Party. They will reject it as a party which elevated itself on the progressive sentiments of the voters only to be in a better position to make rotten deals with the old parties.

But if the Liberals build a stronger, firmer, and intransigent party and press for a program to satisfy the needs of New Yorkers, they will maintain a massive pressure on Halley and keep faith with the voters who placed their confidence and trust in them. An aroused electorate wants action not only on crime and corruption in government but on the thousand and one living problems—like housing, transportation, and the exorbitant city sales tax. It is up to the Liberal Party to fulfill the mandate of the people and continue the battle based on the beachhead of the Halley victory.

An Index to LABOR ACTION for 1951

will appear in our December 31 issue, providing a key to the entire contents of the year. It makes your file (or bound volume) of LA doubly useful. Don't miss it!

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Truman 'FEPC' Near-Toothless —

(Continued from page 1)

Truman's action means in political terms, it appears that they are choosing, for reasons of political diplomacy, not to state clearly and openly that what is involved is an attempt at a rotten political compromise inside the Democratic Party at the expense of the Negro people and other minorities.

COAXING DIXIE

There has been evidence that such a "compromise" is in the making. In a nationally-syndicated column by Thomas L. Stokes (we quote from the Los Angeles Mirror for November 19) he wrote: "What may become known in our political history as the compromise of 1952 is under negotiation. It is going on within the Democratic Party and involves the controversial civil-rights program. The aim is to minimize agitation within the party over the racial issue, reduce the prejudice appeal exploited by the Dixiecrats, and bring the South back into the party. The means would be a modification of President Truman's program for discussion in the next session of Congress, and for a compromise plank in the party's 1952 platform.

"The compromise envisaged would retain the essential principles of the Truman civil-rights program, but on a moderated basis that is believed would satisfy a majority of the Southern people. It would be presented to other elements of the party as a practicable, attainable program that still would mean progress, and might unify the party for the stiff fight expected in 1952."

THE LOST WAR

In plain language: it is proposed to sell out the Negroes in order to get the support of the Jim Crow whites who control Southern politics. Stokes stated that the discussions on this matter had not as yet involved the president. But this "FEP" executive order seems to justify the belief that Truman is now a party to the "compromise."

Further information on this was contained in a column in the New York Post

Briticism

A cautious appraisal from a British War Office report of October 19:

"The British Overseas Airways Corporation flag was torn down at Farouk airport in Cairo on Thursday.

"An anti-British atmosphere appears to prevail at the airport."

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by Murray Kempton on November 27. Under the title "The Lost War" Kempton wrote:

"Almost 10 months ago Mr. Truman's advisers put on his desk the draft of an executive order reviving the wartime Fair Employment Practices Commission, as a means of ending discrimination against minorities on hiring for defense jobs.

"The chances of Truman signing the order have been a subject for Washington rumor ever since. The intervals between rumors get longer and longer. It has been more than six months since the president gave any indication that he would even like to sit down with a group of representative Negroes and discuss the need for an FEPC....

"Meanwhile, the Washington files of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

bulge with reports of discrimination against Negroes in defense employment. Some of it comes from private contractors, and some of it from government itself."

Kempton then proceeds to list a number of specific instances taken from both fields, such as failure to promote qualified Negroes at the Charleston and Norfolk Navy yards, listings of "For Whites Only" on jobs offered by the Maryland employment service, and similar practices by large-scale government contractors like Bendix Radio in Kansas City, Caterpillar Tractor in Peoria, Ill., etc.

ACTION NEEDED

These are only the most flagrant instances which have come to attention. The minority groups themselves know all too well that although employment practices have never gone back to

the situation which prevailed before the last war as far as they are concerned, discrimination in hiring and promotion is still more often the rule than the exception in most parts of the country.

The need for an FEPC with real enforcement powers is still as great as it ever was. And the government agencies themselves are still in need of a real clean-up of prejudiced officials and practices. The advances which have been made under the economic pressures of the last war and of the constant struggle of the Negro people and other minorities for equality are in danger of being frozen at best, and of being frittered away at worst.

Whether or not the "compromise" predicted by Stokes and seemingly confirmed by Truman's order will be achieved at the expense of the minority groups depends to no small degree on their

own action, as well as on that of the labor movement. If they continue to give assurances that they will continue loyally to support the Democratic Party regardless of how cynically it sells them out, there is every reason to believe that even a real FEPC will remain nothing more than a wish. The Republican Party, of course, offers nothing better.

Both the minority groups and the labor movement can hope to assert their interests only if they assert their political power. And this can be done effectively only by organizing and working independently of the two capitalist parties, by forming a political movement which directly represents their own political and economic interests. A labor party could expect strong support from the one-tenth of the nation whose interests Truman is flouting.

Shachtman's Meetings in LA — —

(Continued from page 1)

globe precisely because of the stupidity and internal contradictions of the U. S. bloc. He went on to show how the creation of a Third Camp was in reality the practical way of stopping Stalinism and capitalism.

The question period which followed indicated the interest his speech held for the audience. The audience in the main was composed of young workers and students who had never been around before.

STUDENTS HEAR HIM

An equally important phase of Shachtman's visit to the fair but not so democratic clime of California was the series of circumstances surrounding the ban on his speaking at both University of

California campuses, Berkeley and Los Angeles.

The two sections of the U. of C. maintain separate football teams which each year play each other with all the honor that befits professional athletes, but on the question of Shachtman's right to speak the two schools got into the same huddle. The resulting "fix" kept Shachtman from speaking on campus.

However, the wave of indignation which greeted this stupid and totalitarian-type action in Berkeley also swept the LA campus and, as a result, on the day following the Case Hotel meeting, many students who perhaps wouldn't have been interested in hearing Shachtman speak on campus walked across the street from the school to the YWCA cottage to listen to him.

Well over 50 students (most of

them for the first time) heard Shachtman deliver a smashing indictment against the mentality of the powers-that-be who, while recruiting soldiers to fight in the war "to extend democracy throughout the world," are equally busy trying to suppress democracy at home. The socialist pointed out that in reality it was the students whose rights were being assaulted, namely the right to listen. This right and that of free assembly and free speech are inseparably entwined and a blow at one is at once a blow at the other.

WIDE SUPPORT

Especially courageous in the events surrounding the Shachtman banning were a number of students who do not wholly agree with the ISL, or perhaps not at all, yet volunteered and worked for Shachtman's right to speak.

"Do Ye Hear the Children Weeping, O My Brothers?"

A Government Report on Children and Youth in the Wealthiest Country in the World

By RICHARD TROY

That the United States is now in the midst of an era of great relative prosperity, is an incontestable truth, especially in comparison with the continuing depressed conditions of European capitalism; in fact, this difference is behind much of current politics. But to let this truth becloud the great inequalities which continue to plague this nation is to be led astray.

In this connection attention can usefully be drawn to an attractively planned and colorful little pamphlet issued by the government on the status of America's "Children and Youth," in which is presented, in clear and graphic form, some of the findings of the Midcentury White House Conference on Children and Youth. The pamphlet, incidentally, contains an introduction from one of the few highly placed administrators who still thinks about these things, Oscar Ewing.

NO CAUSE TO CHEER

Much of the statistical material which the pamphlet dramatizes, though not unfamiliar, is worth recalling if only as a reminder that the struggle for a better and more dignified life is not an effort solely needed by poverty-ridden Italians, Indians, Iranians, etc.,

but also something quite squarely in our midst.

For example, there is the familiar and impressive figure for the "average" family income in the United States in 1948: \$3187. But watch the statisticians break it down somewhat: The average income of Negro families in 1948 was \$1768. Furthermore, the average income of families with six or more children is only \$2,488 while the average income of families with two children is \$3,334. The problems of the proverbial "average" family shopper become a little more complicated. Twenty-five per cent of the children of the United States, besides, live in families whose total income is below \$2000. Or, put it another way, 6 per cent of the families in the country (including those with no children at all) must feed 50 per cent of the nation's children!

In 1948 one third of the nation's families were living below what the Department of Labor computed to be an adequate standard. This meant that one out of every two children in urban areas had parents whose income was not enough to maintain them "adequately." Only 20 per cent of the farms in the country have private baths and flush toilets; and as many as 26 per cent of non-farm homes are WITHOUT private baths and flush toilets. Sixty-nine per cent of the

population live in dwellings occupied by more than one person per room.

Of course, if one contrasts these figures with those of nearly any other nation on earth one finds America is incomparably rich; but before we can sit back and relax, let us read some more.

CHILD MORTALITY

Despite the emphasis in press and literature on psychological explanations of juvenile delinquency as opposed to the "old" sociological ones, it is still true, for instance, that twenty times as much delinquency is recorded in slum areas of Chicago than in the "good areas."

TB mortality is 12 times as high; pneumonia mortality four times as high; infant mortality 2 1/2 times as high; truancy 3 times as frequent. And medical care? One imagines, for example, that a rich state like New York should be doing only moderately well on this score. But children in New York receive seven times as much dental care (probably medical care too) than children in the nation's most impoverished states.

Our school system steadily improves, at least in quantity; today's generation is getting four years more schooling than the last. Yet only 53 per cent of our

youth of 16-17 years of age are going full-time to school. Only half of our five-year-olds are in kindergarten; one out of every five of high school age is not at school. And the divorce rate! It is up 50 per cent since 1940. (This is also true of illegitimate babies, incidentally, though there is no visible connection.)

But it would be a mistake to end our statistical sally without one encouraging note: Americans are eating less potatoes (by 42 per cent) than they did 40 years ago! It is, of course, one excellent index of prosperity (as is the 29 per cent increase in per-capita milk and 30 per cent increase in per-capita egg consumption).

Yes, America is relatively prosperous—even if the level of prosperity is based on a war economy and would fall with an "outbreak" of real peace, and even if that level of prosperity in one top-dog capitalist country is related to the poverty of the rest of the world.

It is prosperous if we compare it with the shambles that capitalism has made of the rest of the globe. But America's "prosperity in one country" also bears within it a dark future for the children and youth who still have to grow up—even for those who grow up in families with "adequate" incomes.