

# Italian Workers Strike To End War And Oust King

By SAM ADAMS

Italy stands poised on a knife's edge. It is almost a month since the "Sawdust Caesar" resigned. In this period, Marshal Badoglio was made Premier. The new Italian government was first asked by Roosevelt and Churchill to surrender unconditionally. Then General Eisenhower offered "honorable peace terms" for surrender.

The new government rejected both offers. But it is a most insecure government. At its back stand the armed legions of Hitler. In front of it is a mounting wave of Allied arms which threatens to overrun the entire country. All around it is the rising tide of the working class—the most important element in the whole situation.

The masses have taken to the streets. From the first day of the collapse of the fascist regime they made known their demands: Peace! Freedom! Elections! But the regime of Victor Emanuel and his Marshal cannot satisfy the needs and demands of the Italian workers and peasants, and surely this ruling clique cannot last.

The latest news from Italy is that the workers have gone out on a general strike! The demands of the general strike are a ringing cry of the workers' determination to be free. They want:

1. The immediate liberation of all political prisoners.
2. The complete liquidation of the monarchy and monarchistic institutions.
3. Cessation of the war and an appeal to public opinion of the Anglo-Saxon countries for respect of the rights of the Italian people.
4. Freedom of press and organization.

Gaetano Salvemini, well known anti-fascist, has charged that: "Mr. Churchill and Mr. Roosevelt are waging, in Italy, two simultaneous wars. One is aimed at achieving 'unconditional surrender'; the other is aimed at preventing revolution."

And this is the fact: The Allies are interested above all in preventing the Italian masses from asserting their wishes and their rights. When Churchill speaks of preventing "anarchy and chaos" in Italy, he means to keep in power the "authority" of the rotten, incompetent and murderous ruling class. He means to prevent the people from taking matters into their own hands. And when Roosevelt endorses Churchill's remarks it is for the same reason.

"Anarchy and chaos," indeed! What kind of a regime was Mussolini's? And what kind of a regime is that of Badoglio?

Is the murderous regime of fascism an "orderly" regime? And are the craven, profit-mad Italian big business men the representatives of "order"? They may be to Churchill. But to the Italian masses they represent everything that is rotten, disorderly and chaotic in our civilization.

We must say: Hands off the Italian masses. They will deal with their corrupt rulers. They want peace and they alone can achieve it. They want order, but by order they understand freedom—free speech, free press, and the right to organization. That is the only kind of order worth anything. They do not want the order of the police regime of fascism. They do not want order imposed by guns. They want an end to the old life! Nothing must stand in their way.

The American working class must solidarize itself with the Italian masses in their struggle for freedom. Greetings are not enough. Papers are not enough. Money is not enough. American labor must say:

**Italian workers and poor peasants: Go to it. Get rid of your exploiters. Destroy the old system of exploitation, poverty, insecurity and murder. Build anew. Build the Workers' Republic of peace, freedom and security. We are with you with all our hearts.**

And it must add to all who stand in the way: **Hands off the Italian workers and peasants!**

(See pages 3 and 4 for other articles on Italy)

## No "Little Steel" Limits For Profits

There is no stopping big business! It continues to coin it in as a result of the war program. Its profits are climbing!

The July issue of Exchange Magazine, organ of the New York Stock Exchange, reports new rises in profits and dividends of industry exceeding those of the previous high year of 1942.

Reporting on 835 companies listed on its exchange, the magazine revealed that 596 paid cash dividends during the first six months of 1943, as against 560 in the same period of 1942. One hundred and eleven of these companies paid higher dividends than they did in 1942!

The railroad companies, which are fighting bitterly against any wage increases for their low paid workers, are having a banner year. They paid a total of \$88,345,000 to stockholders, as compared with \$67,321,000 last year. This was a gain of 31.2 per cent!

The aviation industry, another in which wages are notoriously low, led the list with an increase in dividend payments of 98.5 per cent!

The rubber industry, which is also contesting wage increases with the aid of the WLB, increased its dividend payments by seventy per cent.

"Labor," official organ of the railway unions, reports that for the first six months of this year, the railroad companies, a monopoly industry, have increased their "earnings" over 1942 by fifty per cent. Profits for the railroad magnates in 1942 were the highest in history. This year they are even higher.

"After paying interest, rentals, taxes and all other charges," says Labor, "Class 1 carriers had a 'nest egg' of \$448,800,000, which compares with profits of \$289,185,666 in the first six months of last year."

At the time of this writing, there have been no protests in Congress, the WLB has not tried to apply the "Little Steel Formula" to profits, nor has the President said anything either.

# LABOR ACTION

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A PAPER IN THE INTERESTS OF LABOR

ONE CENT

## WHAT IS COST-PLUS?

### The System Operates to Enrich Monopoly, By Increasing the Wealth, Profits, Dividends And Salaries of Big Business Magnates

By MAX SHACHTMAN, National Secretary, Workers Party

Labor's position is growing worse by the month.

The cost of living continues to rise for the working man's family. The official figures of the Department of Labor show that living costs have risen 26.9 per cent since January, 1941. That is bad enough. But every worker, every housewife, knows that even this high figure is considerably below the real increase.

The official figures are too low because the government officials are afraid to give too much justification for labor's demands for higher wages.

They are too low because they don't take into account what the housewife is forced to take into account every time she buys something. Namely, the almost universal violation of the "price" ceilings. Namely, the fact that black market prices are far higher than the officially-fixed rate. Namely, that many commodities are being produced with such a lowering of quality, without a corresponding lowering of price, that it amounts to a stiff price increase in the end.

Price controls are a failure from one end of the country to the other. Price roll-backs are a bitter joke. Ninety-nine per cent of the government promises that prices would be rolled back or controlled have remained promises that never left the paper they were written on.

#### Who Will Benefit from Subsidies?

It is estimated that the \$485,000,000 payment made out of the U.S. Treasury to roll back prices on meat and butter will mean a saving of no more than thirty cents a week for a family of four. To put it another way, it means that to meet the high cost of living, the head of the family will get a "wage increase" of three-fifths of one cent per hour if he works a fifty-hour week.

Who will get the real benefit out of this payment? The big packers will get \$400,000,000 per year as a gift, and the creameries will get another \$85,000,000.

That is a typical example of how the government acts to "protect" the interests of the workers.

The cost of living has risen tremendously, almost 27 per cent according to the official and far too conservative figures of the government. But the government has ruled at the same time that no wages shall be raised more than 15 per cent above the rate paid in January, 1941.

At holding back wages, the government works like a clock, and does not hesitate to use all the power and force at its command.

At holding back prices, the government is bankrupt and helpless, by its own admission.

The bankers, the business men, the corporation heads, the monopolists, the war profiteers—all cry that labor is well off, too well off. Their kept press echoes them. Their tools in the government say the same thing.

But the fact is that half of the 40,000,000 Amer-

## Stalinists Get Licking in ALP N. Y. City Election Primaries

It appears certain at the time of this writing that the Stalinists in the American Labor Party, led by their fellow travelers, Marcontonio and Connolly, have suffered a defeat in the New York City ALP primaries.

The Dubinsky-Counts-Rose group claims victory in the two largest ALP boroughs of the Bronx and Brooklyn. They concede Manhattan, a weaker ALP district, to the misnamed Left Wing.

The Stalinists carried on a furious and dirty campaign to win this primary. They employed every conceivable device at their command to turn the trick. Using CIO locals under their control, they sought to mobilize the whole union behind their stooge candidates.

ALP voters were canvassed by Stalinists seeking their votes.

Stalinist voters previously registered with the Communist Party now registered with the American Labor

Party. Well known Stalinist leaders did likewise, hoping that victory in the primaries would put them in a position of leadership in the party.

The Stalinist campaign was sparked by the Daily Worker, which went all-out in a filthy drive to take over the party.

The stake was a high one for both groups. Had the Stalinists captured the New York City primaries, they would have been in a position to take over the state organization and use it in the interests of the Communist Party. If this had occurred, the Dubinsky-Counts-Rose leadership would have walked out of the party, taking with them the overwhelming majority of the party's members and supporters.

Thus a split in the ALP was one of the issues in this election, for a victory of the Stalinists, the greatest danger in the labor movement, would have destroyed the organization.



ican workers outside of agriculture are worse off, financially, than they were before the World War broke out in Europe four years ago. These 20,000,000 have either received no wage increase during the four years, or their income has lagged behind the galloping cost of living. The other 20,000,000 are able to keep a little closer pace with the skyrocketing prices only by toiling long, wearying, nerve-and-body-wracking hours of overtime.

This statement is made by no less an authority than John W. Edelman, labor liaison officer on the staff of the Office of Price Administration.

There are other reasons why the workers, even those who are getting a somewhat higher figure on their paycheck than they used to get, cannot keep up with the cost of living. Every worker knows what these reasons are.

#### The Standards for Workers

First, there are the rising taxes, which have increased for millions of workers anywhere from 5 to 35 per cent since the beginning of the war.

Second is the wage cut in the form of War Bond buying, which is voluntary in theory but which every worker in a plant knows to be close to compulsory in practice.

The situation has grown worse by the month. What is in sight? Relief from the situation? No, only a worse situation.

The Roosevelt Administration has no program, unless unkept promises are to be considered a program. Congress is even worse, for we have in Washington today the most reactionary Congress the country has had in years, an open tool of capital.

What is the program of the official labor leaders, the heads of the CIO and the AFL?

The organized labor union movement in this country is at the peak of its power. All told, it now numbers 13,000,000 organized men and women. This represents a force that can enforce its legitimate demands without the slightest difficulty. But the labor leaders keep scraping and bowing

(Continued on page 4)

### Union Labor Must Lead the Fight For Negro Rights

By W. F. CARLTON

The racial tension in the country steadily gets worse. In areas widely separate from each other, outbursts have already taken place or people live in daily fear of them.

The recent demonstration by the Negroes in Harlem is of exceptional significance, because New York is one of the areas where relations between races are better than they are in most other places in the United States. But if it can happen in New York, it can happen anywhere.

LABOR ACTION has repeatedly drawn the attention of the labor movement to the danger of this situation for labor. Once more we call their attention to the fact that it is necessary to act now.

The ruling class is already acting. Attorney General Biddle proposes to prohibit Negroes from going into industrial areas such as Detroit. Elsewhere in this issue LABOR ACTION deals with this dangerous order, aimed not only at the Negroes but at labor and the people as a whole, regardless of race, nationality or creed. We mention it here merely to emphasize that racial tension and racial upheaval are not merely the concern of the Negroes and of the government.

#### Negroes and the Labor Movement

Labor cannot content itself by being sympathetic to the Negro. It has to take responsibility for the defense of the Negro people against the violence of their persecutors. But it must do more. It must take responsibility also for assisting the Negroes in their struggle for their legitimate rights as citizens of the United States.

The CIO, all things taken into consideration, has recognized the importance of white and Negro solidarity in the labor unions. In the course of the last six years Negro labor has made more progress toward its complete integration into the labor movement than during the preceding sixty years. This is not to give a blanket endorsement to all policies and procedures toward Negro labor in the CIO. But the general trend can best be illustrated by the results of a poll recently taken among 10,000 Negro people by the Pittsburgh Courier.

Asked if Negro workers should seek closer cooperation with organized labor, 96.4 per cent of them replied "Yes." Only 2.4 per cent said "No." And 1.2 per cent were uncertain.

It is clear that the sentiment of the majority of the Negro people has changed tremendously from that of the old days, when so many Negroes looked upon white workers and organized labor as their bitter rivals for the favors of the employers.

Labor worked hard to achieve this measure of success. The racial upheavals will break up solidarity be-

tween white and Negro labor and undo all the good work which has so patiently been performed during the last few years.

#### Unions Must Take the Lead

One of the most striking features of the recent disturbances in New York and Detroit is the fact that in the factories white and Negro labor continued to work side by side, not only in solidarity but anxiously discussing together the fighting and the agitation in the streets. One of the leaders of the UAW in Detroit has reported that during the disturbances many workers called upon the leadership to take steps to put an end to what they felt instinctively was a danger to the union and a disgrace to American democracy. These workers were absolutely correct in their demand.

They were correct because the situation cannot continue as it is. If the fighting between whites and Negroes in the streets continues, sooner or later it will affect the relations in the factories. It will affect the relations in the unions. Unscrupulous employers are not going to miss the opportunity to encourage provocation leading to violence. They know that this must ultimately have the effect of creating bad blood between different sections of their own workers and recreating the situation which existed before the CIO.

One of two things must take place. Either the white and Negro solidarity in the factory must take upon itself the task of putting an end to the violence and division outside. Or the violence and division outside will continue until it starts to undermine the solidarity inside the factory.

#### What Defense Means

Workers in the factories asked their leaders to take steps against the rioting, to do something. One reply was that nothing could be done, because the labor unions had to be on guard against forming what would be called vigilante bands. This makes no sense at all.

If unionists, Negro and white, make it officially known to the whole public that they do not intend to have racial disturbances undermining the solidarity of their unions; if they state also that since the government and the police show that they are either unable or unwilling to protect the Negro people and to keep order they intend to do so, how in the name of heaven could anybody call such organizations "vigilante bands"? At best, the argument is stupid. At worst, it is an excuse for inaction. In view of this situation, it is necessary for the unions to establish union and workers' defense guards against reactionary fascist bands.

We go further than this. Nothing is so certain to make

(Continued on page 4)

### 'Would the WLB Do This For \$6.58 a Day?' -- Miner

"The government says it needs coal badly, but I believe the miners need a raise worse." That is the opinion of a coal miner who has written a letter published by the Scranton, Pa., Times concerning the justice of the miners' wage demands.

This is his story of conditions in the mine as he knows them:

"I work in the mines in twenty-six inches of coal. I carry twenty-five pounds of powder, a safety lamp, battery lamp (seven pounds), a lunch and a bucket of water for one and three-quarter miles to my working place. When I reach there I am exhausted.

"Then we have to slug for seven hours in sulphur water, dust, smoke and under a falling roof. Would the WLB do this for \$6.58 a day? I guess not. Why doesn't the board investigate the coal mines and see what is going on? They can't see the mines from the outside.

"I pay \$10 every pay day for bonds, I pay social security, victory tax, union dues, lamp rental, gloves and other expenses. When I get my pay I have about \$55 left (for two weeks—Editor). I am ashamed to hand it to my wife. She has even shed tears at the amount I brought home. From what I have left I have to pay \$20 rent, \$1.50 light, \$15 insurance and \$20 on the store book. What have I left? My empty pay envelope." — From the United Mine Workers Journal.





