

# LABOR FACES 10% SALES TAX!

## The Double Standard--



## TUC Convention Reflects Labor Militancy

# Mass Strikes in Britain

By JOHN BERNE

From 15,000 to 23,000 British miners in Nottinghamshire were on strike recently. The discontent smoldering among the miners was touched off by the jailing of Sydney Page, eighteen years old, when he refused to work underground in the pits.

### Miners' Complaints

The Page case was, in a way, a test of Labor Minister Bevin's order to compel boys down to sixteen years old to work in the coal mines. The order drafting boys was accompanied by a nominal increase in wages. As to this farcical increase, Will Lawther, president of the Mine Workers Federation, said:

"The award is one that will be of no use whatever in helping us to get the young manhood required to give the country the coal it needs. Everyone in the industry is convinced that the job that the youths are called on to do is one that merits payment in accordance with the risks run."

In Ashington, Northumberland, 14,000 more miners struck.

David Anderson, New York Times London correspondent, reported one miner as saying to him:

"Feeling has run high in the coal industry, and trouble has been flaring up ever since the war began. The miners are very concerned for their future after the war. They not only want good working conditions today, they want to be reasonably sure that improvements won't be lost. That is why they are restless now and why youngsters shy clear of this industry. They know, as I do and as everyone should know, that it is not by any means certain the miners will get a fair deal after the war."

### Ship and Plane Workers Aroused

The miners are not the only discontented workers in Great Britain. In the Clydesdale shipyards, 4,000 men—which is close to the total in that area—walked out on a question of pay.

Men and women, totaling 9,000, struck at the Vickers Armstrong plant at Barrow in Furness, claiming they were not being paid the wages authorized by the National Tribunal sitting on their case last spring.

In another part of the country, 12,000 women employed in an engineering plant in aircraft, served two weeks' strike notice on management.

In an attempt to allay the discontent and growing strike feeling among aircraft workers, Minister of Aircraft Cripps called a meeting of

management and labor leaders involving some 500 of the largest aircraft factories. What kind of oil this meeting decided to throw on the troubled waters was not made public. However, to avert the strike of the 12,000 women above referred to, an increase in pay was allowed to all grades of workers in the inspection department retroactive to August 22—with the possibility of a bonus for other types of labor.

### TUC Reflects Mass Discontent

While Labor Minister Bevin was complaining in the House of Commons about "unofficial strikes," the Trades Union Congress, which met the week of September 6 at Southport, Lancashire, reflected the ferment in the 6,024,000 workers represented by the 800 delegates present.

Among other action, the delegates passed a resolution described by the New York Times correspondent as "propounding four decencies, which are a little closer to the average man than the loftier four freedoms. The average Briton wants a decent home, a decent job, decent education, decent social security, which means cash to pay the doctor and an independent old age. The very word 'decency' implies that the request is not unreasonable; in fact, it is the minimum expected. Labor Party executives have not failed to read the writing on the wall at Southport as well as that on the agenda."

Another paragraph from the report of this Congress written by Mr. Anderson deserves to be quoted to give the full flavor of how British labor feels:

"It is on record plain as day that the people want. The writer was told by a reliable member of the Trades Union Congress that a serious disappointment would lead to a most serious result. The miners and workers in the electrical trades would walk out on a general strike tomorrow if they were sufficiently provoked, it was said."

### Capitalism Causes War

Another noteworthy item on the agenda of the Congress related to a resolution erroneously declaring the German people responsible for having started the war and for all the crimes committed by Hitler and the German armies. There was strong opposition to this resolution. Among the appeals made for its defeat was the following correct formulation of the question from the working class point of view:

"We venture to hope that good

sense, the spirit of international comradeship, an informed and correct assessment of the conditions and forces that have produced Hitlerism and the overwhelming need for post-war international working class solidarity will cause the Trades Union Congress to defeat the resolution by an overwhelming majority. It is not true that the war is due to the innate characteristics of the common people of any nation. War is endemic in modern monopoly capitalism. Unilateral disarmament will not secure peace. It will make certain the resurgence of nationalism. This resolution will make another war inevitable."

## Next Week--

Labor Action will carry a first-hand report on the UAW convention by its labor editor, David Coolidge.

The Boston AFL convention will also be reported.

# Kentucky Labor in Unity Move

By ROY GOULD

LOUISVILLE—Delegates from the AFL, the CIO, the Railroad Brotherhoods and the Miners' Unions from all over the state of Kentucky have met and organized a united front organization that may make history here.

In recent years the labor movement of this state has been thoroughly split into four almost equal sections, inasmuch as the mine and railway workers rank in size along with the AFL and the CIO. Now all factions seem anxious to unite for the common good to strengthen the workers.

The bosses' offensive and the insulating decisions of the government agencies, denying raises to railway men and to the Louisville packing house workers, have brought a feeling of crisis in labor's ranks and were directly responsible for the suc-

## Meat Packers' Profits Soar

If you are wondering why you are paying top-notch prices for whatever meat you are lucky enough to get and why very often the butcher turns Mother Hubbard and says the cupboard is bare, read the latest study of the Office of Price Administration. It reveals that fifty-three meat packing companies, which handle about eighty-five per cent of the country's meat supplies, made \$108,613,000 PROFIT, as compared with the 1936-39 average of \$24,971,000, or an increase of 335 per cent, nearly three and a half times the peacetime profits, which were hardly meager.

While profits increased nearly three and a half times, the volume of sales rose only eighty-three per cent, which means that for every dollar invested by the meat packers their return was 2.4 times as great as in peacetime.

But more than that. Not content with the super-profits of wartime, these fifty-three companies are actually responsible for the meat shortage which has gripped the country for months. They follow the practice of refusing to send meat to those areas where the ceiling prices established by OPA are considered by them to be too low, while the areas with higher ceilings, especially the restaurants and hotels patronized by the rich, are well supplied.

The much-talked-about but little-curbed black market, where the sky is the limit, as far as prices go, and billions of pounds of meat are sold, gets its meat from these companies.

The result is that in those areas where the OPA prices are somewhat lower there is no meat, and in those areas supplied with meat, prices limit the customers, so that the average family cannot get enough meat in either case. In contrast, the rich have no problem. Whether you eat meat or not is then decided by these fifty-three large meat packing companies. The OPA slaps ceilings on meat, but the meat packers seem to know how to get around that, too.

# Los Angeles Car Strikers Get Another Run-Around

The following is the latest report on the Pacific Electric Railway Co. strike in Los Angeles. Elsewhere in this issue will be found a complete story of this important labor struggle, as well as a first-hand report by a LABOR ACTION correspondent who interviewed strike leaders and militant rank and file members.

LOS ANGELES—Despite the militancy of the workers of the Pacific Electric Railway Co., who conducted a forty-eight-hour strike against the miserably three cents an hour raise sanctioned by Economic Stabilization Director Fred M. Vinson, instead of the thirteen cents an hour agreed to by the company and the union, and despite the determination of the men to stay out on strike until their demands were met, it is now apparent that they were coerced into going back on the job by questionable tactics on the part of their own union representatives.

They went back to work on the

strength of still another promise, again through President Roosevelt, that their case would be given speedy action. This time the new three-man investigating committee (the case has been under negotiation and "investigation" for the past fourteen months) is to report by October 15, and a definitive decision is to be reached within ten days thereafter.

No written ballot was taken in terminating the strike. William F. Nutter, chairman of the Pacific Electric Division of the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen, flew here from Washington, where he had been negotiating the case to address a mass meeting of the strikers Saturday night. Some 2,000 strikers were reported in attendance. Nutter reviewed his work in Washington and then presented a resolution for calling off the strike as of 2:00 a.m. on Sunday.

According to the Los Angeles Daily News (September 27), "observers said that when Nutter called for a voice vote on his resolution, he was an-

## Treasury Department, Congress And Big Business Plan New Tax Burdens on Low Income Groups

By SAM ADAMS

The Treasury Department has just submitted to Congress the highest tax bill in American history. The over-all amount called for in this new bill is \$10,560,000,000, a scaled-down from the sixteen billion dollar bill proposed last January and thereafter reduced again to twelve billions.

The new bill calls for some simplification in making out tax returns, but this is rather unimportant when placed against the fact that it proposes to increase the taxes on all incomes, resulting in the heaviest pressure against all low-income groups, that is, the workers.

The biggest opposition to the new tax bill comes from big business and its spokesmen in the House and Senate. They object to any increases in taxation upon corporations and big incomes, even though rebates are planned for them, and even though the new tax rates proposed for corporations still give them profits equal to those made in the boom year of 1929.

The big business opposition has formulated its program: a national ten per cent sales tax on all retail goods!

This program was presented to the House Ways and Means Committee by M. L. Seidman, chairman of the taxation committee of the New York Board of Trade, a big business organization. This sales tax program was immediately supported by reactionary Representative Taber, New York Republican, who also called for "economy" and the cutting of the government budget by \$4,158,000,000.

The Treasury Department is willing to eliminate the victory tax, now counted in on the withholding tax, but proposes to raise the latter tax to twenty-four per cent from the present rate of twenty per cent.

It is in the reduction of exemptions that the new tax bill proposes to hit hardest at the workers. The program calls for a reduction in exemptions of married couples to \$1,100 instead of \$1,200, and to cut the exemption for each child from \$350 to \$300.

Income taxes would start at twenty-seven per cent in place of the present twenty-two per cent (nineteen per cent income tax, plus three per cent victory tax.)

These new taxes will be accompanied by a forced savings provi-

(Continued on page 4)

## What the Brewster Decision Means--

# Union Security Endangered by WLB

The War Labor Board's recent decision in the Brewster Aeronautical case is outrageous. The facts were clear. The union's members and its leaders were merely trying to defend rights guaranteed to them in their contract.

Frederick Riebel, Jr., president of the company, time and again openly said that he could not and would not produce planes efficiently under this contract. Every statement that he gave to the press made it clear that he was out to challenge seniority rights, grievance procedures and every other union "interference" with his desires.

What did the WLB do in the face of this record? It punished the union, depriving plant guards of their seniority rights and threatening all

their other union rights by making the union contract, so far as it applies to guards, subordinate to the orders of the Navy. It renewed the union shop clause in the contract for a trial period of six months, during which the local must prove that it is "responsible."

After hearing of this decision, Riebel expressed the opinion that everything was now "in the groove" and that he could get down to the job of producing planes. Was he happy? Of course!

### WLB and Chrysler

It is an outrageous decision, but it might well have been worse. In the important Chrysler case, the board, in a decision rendered on August 18, put the workers in almost all Chrysler plants on trial too, but in a harsh-

er way. It refused them maintenance of membership and a dues check-off but promised that, if the workers behaved, it would reconsider the matter in six months.

The board in that case admitted what everybody knew, that the Chrysler Corporation simply would not settle grievances but said that there should have been no strikes in spite of that. The company was criticized, the union punished.

Every member of the United Automobile Workers is faced with the problem of this WLB, which becomes more of an employers' tool every day. It is now the policeman for industry and the government against the unions.

Nevertheless, the labor members, AFL and CIO alike, among them

UAW leaders, still remain on the board. They lend it their authority. They go further: they support its most reactionary decrees. The Chrysler decision was made UNANIMOUSLY, with the agreement of the labor members. Many other decisions have been made in the same way. We don't know yet whether the Brewster decision was unanimous or not.

### What It Did with Brewster

For the benefit of our readers who don't know the Brewster story, we will give a brief review of it.

A strike took place in August at the Harboro, Pa., plant of the company, because several armed guards refused to take posts assigned to them by Coast Guard officers. They were entitled, by the seniority provisions of the union contract, which had expired but had been extended, to choose their own posts.

Riebel, company president, admitted both during the strike and subsequently that he was generally dissatisfied with the contract. He said, without any beating around the bush, that production would be poor, unless the WLB in the new contract, which was then (and had been for months) in dispute, allowed him to discipline and discharge workers and otherwise to run the business without union interference.

No further evidence besides Riebel's repeated and outspoken statements of his union-breaking aims is needed to understand the true situation. The union, however, submitted clear proof, as we reported in earlier issues of this paper, that Riebel had actually stage-managed the guard situation in order to gain his ends.

The workers in the Long Island City and Newark plants of the company were all but unanimous in supporting Harboro. They already knew from their own experience that the company was out to break the union.

(Continued on page 4)

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE LABOR FRONT

Los Angeles Carmen Resent 14 Months of Stalling

LOS ANGELES — For forty-eight hours, commencing at 2:00 a.m. Friday morning, September 24, 2,600 members of the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen, by a vote of 1,822 to 69, effected virtually a one hundred per cent shut-down of passenger and freight service on the Pacific Electric Railway, which services fifty-six cities in the Los Angeles and Southern California area.

Not a street car or a bus left its terminal after the early morning strike deadline. By noon, the few cars that had already started their runs before the deadline were back in their yards, and as far as passenger service was concerned, the tie-up was complete.

Freight continued to move, but at a sharply reduced pace. This trickle was curtailed to where practically no freight was moving by the splendid action of solidarity displayed by union members of the Southern Pacific, Santa Fe and Union Pacific who refused to handle freight to or from the struck Pacific Electric.

Following a mass meeting, Saturday night, to which top union leaders had rushed by plane from Washington and other parts of the country, the strike was called off, effective at 2:00 a.m. Sunday morning. No reason for this action has as yet been given.

How the Workers Felt

The Pacific Electric workers felt, and still feel that they were more than justified in calling a strike. Authorization for the strike was overwhelmingly voted in July, but the calling of the strike was postponed as a result of a promise by President Roosevelt that investigation of the grievances of the men would be made at once and a prompt settlement would be forthcoming.

Executive Board of UAW Gives Handout to Boss Politician

By LOUIS DUKE
Disregarding rank and file sentiment expressed at the Michigan CIO convention in July to put an Independent Labor Party in the field in the coming municipal elections in Detroit, the Executive Board of the UAW has voted to appropriate \$20,000 toward the primary campaign of Frank Fitzgerald, Circuit Court commissioner and Democratic boss.

Stung Once—Stung Again

Stung with its support of the incumbent mayor, the notorious anti-labor, anti-Negro Edward Jeffries, in the last mayoralty election, the UAW Executive Board action goes contrary to its own experiences with candidates of the old capitalist parties and against the needs of the great mass of Detroit unionists.

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Pacific Electric Railway is eighty-seven cents an hour. Following negotiations with the company, an agreement was reached whereby this maximum would be raised by thirteen cents, to one dollar an hour. Before this increase could be effective, however, it had to be sanctioned by Fred Vinson, national economic stabilization director. Despite the obvious fairness of the demand, agreed to by the company, Vinson saw fit to pare down the modest increase to three cents an hour. This the men refused to accept, and in July voted to go out on strike.

After the intercession of the President in July, another "investigating" committee was appointed, but the men still got no action on their demands. Meanwhile the cost of living continued to rise, and the Pacific Electric workers found their position growing steadily worse.

Workers Tired of Run-Around

In an endeavor to force a decision on their increase, the men went out on strike Friday morning. This strike was unusual in the extent of the active sympathy shown the strikers by citizens in every walk of life. Congressmen from this area, with an eye to future elections, sided with the workers. They pointed to the tremendously increased living costs, criticized the government for "too much stalling." One of them stated that the small raise agreed to by Economic Stabilization Director Vinson was "ridiculous" in the face of the rise in the cost of living in the Los Angeles area, according to the Los Angeles Times of September 25.

Though the strike has now been called off, and President Roosevelt has appointed still another "investigating" committee, and has once more promised speedy action; and though the workers are still waiting for the small increase in wages, but strike has served to show the Pacific Electric trainmen that the only way they will ever get satisfaction is by forcing the issue into the open, utilizing their democratic right to strike.

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In the words of one of the strikers, as quoted in the Los Angeles Times of September 26, the strike "has shown that the PE men are a unit in their protest against their treatment by the Administration and that they are determined to have their wrongs given more attention than they have been able to get thus far."

They Can Win the Fight

At this writing it is difficult to say what will happen. If it rested with the men alone, they would stay out

Labor Action Reporter Talks To Los Angeles Car Strikers

By ANNE TEMPLE
In calling the Pacific Electric Railway strike, the grievance committee threw the last-minute appeal by President Roosevelt into the ashcan. He proposed that the men continue working while he set up another board (the third one) to study the PE wage demand and report in fifteen days to Director Vinson.

The chairman of the grievance committee, William P. Nutter, had been cooling his heels in Washington since July, but could get no satisfaction. With the strike action pending, he attempted to see President Roosevelt, home front czar James Byrnes, or Vinson, but he reported that he was able to see only Byrnes, and "he didn't make much headway."

Commenting on Roosevelt's proposal, Nutter stated: "The action is not only unusual, but is actually the first of its kind. We now have a board—a super-board—which will examine the findings of the Maris Committee (Super-Board No. 1). The strangest thing is that the President now selects three of his previously appointed Labor Relations panel members to pass upon the decision of three of their associates. Vinson was the bottleneck in the old deal, and he may be the bottleneck in the new deal."

The grievance committee shared Nutter's rejection of a further stall to break the spirit of the men and insisted that "we cannot tolerate another thirty-two-day delay." They charged the government with endless delay in the handling of the BRT's wage demands.

The strike, which began at two in the morning, was one hundred per cent successful. Not a train carrying passengers or freight has moved out of the terminals except by authorization of the strike committee. Big picket lines were thrown around the main terminal points. A twenty-four-hour picket line had been set up and the men reported enthusiastically for picket duty. The lines were completely paralyzed and on the vast Pacific Electric track system nothing moved.

Interviews with Strike Leaders

On Friday afternoon, just after a consultation with Army and Navy officials and a telephone conversation with Nutter in Washington, Don H. Sheets, vice-chairman of the grievance committee, told reporters: "I left at seven this morning and made a tour of the property of the PE. Everything is shut down tighter than a drum. No men are going through our picket lines. The morale of the men is exceedingly good and they have definitely dug in for the duration. They are ready to stay out until they get their just demands. Prayers and promises don't mean a

thing any more. There is only one way to settle this strike—and that's up to President Roosevelt. It's out of Vinson's hands now."

When asked by LABOR ACTION reporters to make a special statement for the paper, since it is wholeheartedly behind the strike and seeks to publicize labor's just demands, Sheets stated:

"It is pretty hard to say what the outcome will be. There are so many things that could happen in this industry. These men here feel that the government has not given them a fair deal and, generally speaking, the laboring people are not getting it because of the policies set down by the government. They feel, as do most labor unions, that if the hold-the-line orders is to be effective, it should apply not only to wages but also to price levels and ceilings. If that had been done, labor would not be in the situation it is today."

"We are just asking for the possibility of making a living. On the picket line this morning I heard some stories from family men who have six or seven children to support, and there is a basic month of 208 hours. You can figure out yourself how anybody can support a family at seventy-five cents an hour. They don't get a square deal."

Comment on the WLB

When the Brotherhood action was compared with the strike of the miners Sheets agreed: "I think the miners have a just grievance. Probably some of the methods used could have been improved on, but we are taking the same kind of action. This is a wildcat strike. I haven't contacted the president of our union (Whitney), who publicly expressed his disapproval of the strike. If he knows it is on, it's because he heard about it over the radio or saw it in the papers. If he wants to, he can call me tomorrow and tell me to put the men back to work, but I would tell him no; I wouldn't do it. He has the constitutional right to remove me if he doesn't like what I'm doing."

To get an idea of how the strikers felt, LABOR ACTION reporters went down to the picket lines and talked to the men. The strikers were of one opinion: they had been given a dirty deal and a run-around by the government board. They were sick and tired of working for six bits an hour. They had given the government every chance to give them the thirteen-cent increase and now there was nothing else to do but strike, and see it through.

Opinions of Workers

The first one we approached was asked his reaction to Washington's decree: the case wouldn't be settled as long as the workers were out—

that "these actions are strictly the action of the men on the Pacific Electric." They advise the men that the term "wildcat" or "outlaw" might, with some justification, be applied to this situation.

If the men maintain their solidarity and are not intimidated by government threats or taken in by another stall, they stand a good chance of winning their demands. They are really fighting for all the workers and should get full support of the union movement.

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World Events By Europaen

A New Revolutionary Party in Italy

A New York Times dispatch of September 27 states that there exists in Italy an "Italian Socialist Party of Proletarian Unity" which is called "Trotskyist." The dispatch does not say anything of the program of this party except to state that it is anti-Stalinist and has banded together with a number of other socialist and liberal groups in a "Committee of Delegates of the Anti-Fascist Movement."

Another dispatch speaks of a group "which calls itself communist," but which has signed several resolutions condemning Russian foreign policy and calling Russia a non-socialist country.

If these two dispatches prove to be correct, they are of the utmost importance, suggesting that revolutionary socialists in Italy have formed an independent organization opposed to traditional social-democracy and to Stalinism.

The name of the new party reminds one strongly of the name of the Spanish POUM (Workers Party of Marxist Unity). There is no way of knowing if this is intentional or just a coincidence. Anyway, it seems clear that it is a new left wing socialist organization, possibly embracing Trotskyist and other left wing socialist elements; or they may be the friends of Balabanoff, called Socialist Party (Maximalists).

A very good example of the unprincipled and opportunistic attitude of the Italian liberals is afforded by the recent actions and utterances of the great white hope of Italian liberalism, Count Sforza. Nobody expected Sforza to come out for a socialist revolution, but it was expected that he would live up to his recent high-sounding declarations of opposition to the monarchy and for an Italian republic.

Indeed, only a week ago Sforza still categorically denied that he would have anything to do with either the King or Badoglio, calling for a "Cromwellian" republican army to fight on the side of the Allies.

Since then, he must have had an impressive talk with somebody in the State Department. He made it clear afterward that while he was not willing to enter into the Badoglio government, he would nevertheless collaborate with it, since, at the present time, all that matters is the defense of Italy against the Nazis.

The Struggle Will Deepen

Quite a number of well known Italian liberals have left America and England in recent weeks for Italy. Whether they want it or not, they are going to be used as a "liberal" cover for Badoglio. We may soon expect a refurbishing of the Italian Premier's government with a sprinkling of well known "democrats." It would not be astonishing if the Stalinists of the Lega Anti-Fascista would soon come more into the open with the backing of Mr. Vishinsky, Russia's representative on the Mediterranean Commission set up by the Allies.

The political situation in Italy begins slowly to crystallize. The extremely vague political programs will have to be concretized. It will not do any more just to advocate the overthrow of fascism. The different

parties will have to make a stand on their attitude toward the Allies, who back the King, Badoglio and the remnants of the old apparatus. This will be the crucial question for traditional anti-fascists in the Allied occupied territories. Will they be willing to collaborate and to serve the Allies under the cover of "democracy" or will they advocate revolutionary socialist action.

It is to be expected that in the first weeks, or even months, there will be a certain popular support for the Allies, especially in view of the fact that they will provide food for the half-starved masses. But once the workers realize that nothing fundamental has changed in the set-up of repression, that the same Carabinieri will still club the workers, the temper of the masses will change.

Seiberling Rubber Co. Wants New Speed-Up System

AKRON—The Labor-Management Committee of the Seiberling Rubber Co. recently proposed a five-point speed-up program which features incentive pay as an attraction for the rubber workers.

Briefly, the program embraces: suspension of artificial control over output, adjusting seniority ratings for transfer of skilled workers, use of women workers more extensively, more intelligent utilization of machinery and labor power and drives against absenteeism.

The whole program is part and parcel of the current campaign against unions and the rights of unions. The bosses seek to make it more palatable to the workers by emphasizing the incentive pay features.

What the Program Is

A brief analysis of the program will reveal these points as the real features of the plan: the suspension of artificial controls means that the speed-up is back again. A worker may get a bit more pay temporarily, but watch the bosses start to cut the piecework rates as soon as the output per man-hour goes up. You put out more effort and get less pay for more effort. But what about the boss? He will get more profit from your extra effort, for his profit is made on your production, and the more you put out the more profit he makes.

But wait a minute, he will say; my profits are subject to renegotiation by the government, since my work is all war contracts. Don't take that too seriously. Renegotiation of war contracts are very uncertain and the bosses will probably be successful in thwarting any serious threat to their profits. That is plain to be seen from the maneuvering going on now in Washington by the big industrialists at the war contracts renegotiation hearings.

Of course the bosses have other safeguards on their profits, such as contingencies "for damn near anything under the sun" that they or their able servants, the accounting firms, can think of. One of the most favored new contingencies is called post-war conversion contingency.

The worker has no post-war conversion contingency. He has just enough to eat, clothe himself and keep a roof over his head. Nor does the worker get a post-war credit of ten to twenty per cent on his income tax like corporations.

Destroying Union Gains

The second point of the proposal is designed to break down the seniority system in the plants which the unions fought so long to put in effect. It is also a good weapon to use against militant workers to isolate them.

As for the other point, the one pertaining to the full and intelligent utilization of machinery and labor power, it is the most important and can only be effective when the workers themselves put them into effect. Any worker who has had more than one day's experience in the shop knows what waste is being made of the wonderful technique of production that society has at its command.

The proposal of the Labor-Management committee is misnamed as an incentive pay proposal. It really is a proposal for a speed-up of the workers for more profits for the bosses.

A further misnomer is the Labor-Management Committee. It is actually a management committee. These kinds of proposals are to be expected from them, but labor's representatives have no place on them.

What to do? The answer is: recall labor's representatives from labor-management committees, and let them represent labor again.

New York Sperry Local Gets Undemocratic Constitution

After many months of high-pressure on the part of certain stewards and rank and file members of the union, the Sperry Local of the UE has finally come through with a draft of the constitution and by-laws.

The primary purpose of a union constitution is to govern its functioning, its rules and regulations and guarantee the membership, the highest body of any trade union, its democratic rights.

It is on the latter point that this constitution falls down. It does not guarantee the membership its democratic rights. As a matter of fact, it never gets to the point of giving a guarantee to the membership, since, in this constitution, the membership practically does not exist.

An examination of the past record of the leadership which drew up this draft constitution enables us to understand why and how they have failed.

Leaders Fight Democracy

One of the primary concerns of the local leadership in the past has been to scotch any attempt at membership meetings, where the rank and file might speak up and possibly challenge some of the authority and decisions that the leadership had been dishing out.

With this in mind, the constitution provides for at least two membership meetings a year, either local or plant-wide in character. The "at least" was intended as a concession

long for a democratic system of regular membership meetings. It might just as well NOT have appeared.

Knowing the leadership and its record, one can understand that the fewer membership meetings held the better they like it. Without criticism and intervention of the membership in the form of concrete proposals and motions, they can go on their own merry way and run the union, like bureaucrats, from above.

For Rank and File Control!

If the membership is to be the highest body in the union, it must have some form of expression. True, the stewards' council represents the members in the shop, BUT IT IS NO SUBSTITUTE for membership meetings and decisions. They go hand in hand. There cannot be one without the other.

The stewards' council must implement the decision of the membership. It carries out such rank and file decisions. It is the primary job of the membership, however, to make these decisions, to act on motions and reports of committees, and to bring in its own proposals. That is the essence of union democracy. All decisions are, in the last analysis, the property of the membership. They are affected by the decisions. They must make them.

The same holds true for nomination of officers. The union belongs to its members. The members, then, have the right and the duty to nomi-

inate officers. The union belongs to its members. The members, then, have the right and the duty to nomi-

Against Bureaucracy

An executive board member gets up at a meeting and makes his nomination—a rank and file member, on the other hand, must secure, according to this constitution, fifty names on a petition before he nominates anyone. In any democratic trade union, nominations for officers are made at membership meetings where every union member, be he president or rank and file member, has the right to make his nomination. No distinction should be allowed between elected representatives and those who elect them!

In this constitution which they have presented to the local, they have shown that they have little or no regard for the membership. They have shown it by their omission of delegated authority to the membership in any form and by their direct inclusion of obstacles in the way to real rank and file democracy.

As it has been in the past, it is now again the job of the membership to fight against this high-handed procedure. It was their pressure which produced this constitution, bad as it is. It will be their pressure which will change it and replace it with a real union constitution in which the watchword will be rank and file democracy! Democratic procedures—

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# The Case of the Yellow Truck and Coach Co.

By Leon Gordon

This is a story about the War Labor Board and, even more, about American labor leaders. It is a story that is going to be repeated, that is going to take still more shameful forms, unless the workers force a break with the WLB and the no-strike policy.

December, 1942: WLB places the Yellow Truck and Coach Local at Pontiac, an affiliate of the United Automobile Workers, on "probation." The local is granted a maintenance of membership clause which may be revoked, unless the union investigates past and future stoppages and disciplines those responsible.

March 17, 1943: Unauthorized stoppage occurs at Yellow Coach. All UAW stoppages have been "unauthorized," of course.

July, 1943: Regional Director McCauley of the UAW announces that the local, complying with a directive of the Detroit office of the WLB, has fined 179 members five dollars each for participating in the strike of March 17. Two members were given four-week disciplinary layoffs.

## WLB Praises Fining of Workers

August, 1943: WLB rejects stand of the company that the local is irresponsible and should be deprived of maintenance of membership. We quote from the decision:

"The action of this local union in fining 179 of its members was not a popular action. There is little doubt but that local union officials had a difficult task in obtaining such action from the executive board and in securing its approval by the membership. The fact that the WLB retained the right to act on withdrawing the maintenance of membership clause unquestionably had some relationship to the action taken. However, this factor should not detract from or deny credit where it is due. . . . Such assumption of responsibility by American labor deserves support."

The decision goes on to hail the fines as the first such action ever taken by a UAW local and as far more effective than even layoffs or discharges under the present conditions of labor shortage. Best of all, in the eyes of the WLB, fines, unlike other forms of discipline, may be DIRECTLY imposed by the union, thus putting the responsibility for policing the no-strike pledge where the WLB thinks it belongs, not on the companies, but on the unions.

## Destroying Militant Unionism.

September, 1943: Detroit regional office of the WLB orders the management of Yellow Coach to take certain steps leading to the discharge of union delinquents, in fulfillment of the maintenance of membership clause. (This means, by the way, that the company was conducting its own kind of stoppage against the WLB award.) As an important reason for the order, the Detroit WLB states that the union must have some backing to enable it to collect fines from members responsible for unauthorized stoppages.

In the long run, the employer and "public" members will probably not even have any regard for the union leaders who betray their own organizations. This trend is indicated in the recent decision of the WLB's shipbuilding commission in the Federal Shipbuilding & Drydock Corporation case. The public member, casting a deciding vote, ruled that in RENEWING a maintenance of membership provision, a fifteen-day escape clause should be included, just as it is now included in all FIRST awards of maintenance.

What does this mean? The union leaders, cooperating fully with the WLB, demoralize the members. In return, the WLB supposedly guarantees that the members must continue to pay dues. Then the WLB slaps the leaders by telling the dissatisfied members that they can quit an organization which isn't doing them any good but is just collecting their dues.

## "The Masters" at Work

# "Unions Face Growing Regulation"

By W. WHITE

The masters of American industry are very busy making their plan for the post-war world. They want to control, so far as is possible, the world's airlines, its waters, and its governments. As a basis for this global grandeur they seek at home the return of free enterprise, modified by a generous quota of government regulation against forces inclined to disturb this freedom of theirs—regulation sufficient to frustrate foreign competitors and to keep American labor docile. Tariffs, subsidies, and anti-labor legislation are, after all, an essential part of the tradition of freedom, as it is conceived of by our "Sixty Families."

Their plan, so far as it relates to labor, embraces these two principal legal parts: (1) continuation of the War Labor Board, under another name, to free them from the "evils" of collective bargaining; (2) a comprehensive set of regulatory acts, covering every aspect of union life, so that the dictatorial labor board may be legally free to enter into all corners of union activity.

## Big Business Seeks Allies

To reinforce their own organized strength and these purely legal measures, they rely on two potential allies outside the government: (1) a labor leadership which they confidently expect they will be able to harness fully in the course of wartime collaboration; (2) a vast army of returning veterans, desperate for security and poisoned with anti-union propaganda.

The second of these allies is counted on to help keep the first, if necessary, in terrorized silence; the first, in turn, is counted on to soften up the ranks of labor, making them an easy kill for the second.

An interesting version of this pattern for the future is to be found in Barron's National Business and Financial Weekly (price, twenty-five cents) of September 20. James L. Wick has there written a featured article entitled "Unions Face Growing Regulation." The editors claim, no doubt truthfully, that the article is based on conversations with members of the WLB, New Deal officials in other agencies, members of Congress, and Washington economists specializing in labor matters.

Labor unionism, says Mr. Wick, has expanded to such an extent that it threatens to become a monopoly; and, like all monopolies, it must submit to regulation in the public interest. The unions try to keep wages up in all circumstances, even when this policy means the curtailment of full employment. They also inter-

ferre with technological progress, for fear of the loss of jobs. In short, if we may interpret him, they try to defend the workers against the real monopolists, who consider themselves identical with the "public interest" and who submit to no regulation, except on paper or in agreements among themselves to become even more monopolistic.

## Who Will Regulate Labor?

Who is to regulate the labor "monopolies"? Answer: Many Washington observers NOW feel that the WLB, despite an "apparent pro-labor bias," is at least a first step toward a permanent policy of strict regulation of the unions. The recent disciplinary decisions of the WLB against violators of the no-strike pledge are cited by these observers as evidence of the trend.

"Observers hold that members of the permanent labor board they envisage must be selected on the basis of whether their primary sense of responsibility is to the nation's future."

Furthermore, they must, like the federal judiciary, be independent of the executive and have long terms of office. In other words, a President, worrying about re-election, might yield a LITTLE to union demands, but a board chosen for a long term would have freedom from fear in that respect.

Their primary sense of responsibility should be to the nation's future. Good! What do Mr. Wick's informants mean by this vague formula, to which anybody could subscribe? They mean, he says, that a national wage and hour policy is needed that individual unions could not interfere with, a policy such as the WLB has already given us, supposedly for the duration of the war only.

Unregulated unions have the bad habit of asking for a raise every time new contract negotiations come up, that is, every year. They do not scruple to deprive employers of all their profits. This drives the weaker companies out of business and leads to business as well as labor monopoly!

## New History and Bosses' Aims

That unionism is responsible for the "Sixty Families" is quite a new angle on American history! Even orthodox historians concede that the monopolies in steel, automobiles, rubber and aluminum preceded any significant unionization of these fields. In fact, the monopolies exerted themselves to repress all traces of unionism, and they succeeded until the recent rise of the CIO.

We cannot pause, however, to correct Mr. Wick at length. We must

pass on to the conclusion of this argument of his. It is that a national wage policy would bring some stability to labor costs and further the confidence among business men which is so necessary for investment and expansion. Now it is all clear. That primary responsibility to the nation's future, which the labor board must have, is a responsibility to the great corporations. Aren't they the nation? To date, they always HAVE BEEN!

The planners of the capitalist future do not merely make pious decisions and resolutions, after the manner of our labor leaders, but they also consider how their projects may be realized.

There will be, they say to themselves, ten million veterans returning from the war. Having used them in one war, we shall enlist them in another. They will want jobs, and we shall tell them that the unions are responsible for their unemployment. They will demand an end to the "anti-social practices" of the unions. They will demand laws to end labor racketeering, excessive fees and dues, closed unions; to break union opposition to technological improvements; to force publication of financial statements by locals and internationals.

## Casting the Die

Mr. Wick mentions these and several other "reforms," but he is cautious and says nothing about organizing the veterans for violence, if necessary, against the unions. We may be sure that those for whom he speaks will not stop at the bounds of legality. They have in the past, as even congressional investigations have amply proved, made full use of labor spies, armed guards, and professional strike-breaking thugs. If need arises, they will go further in the same direction in the future.

Still, the less violence needed the better. The planners are willing to hope for and work for, to quote a phrase from our authority, "a new company unionism." Some WLB and other government officials feel that, because of wartime regulation, workers are learning to look less to their unions on the problems of wages and hours. On the other hand, through another wartime innovation, the labor-management committees, many good union men are becoming more "company-minded." They are learning about the headaches of management, such as competition with other companies, pleasing customers, planning production, etc.

Union leaders are becoming, as unionism matures, more conservative and responsible. Labor leadership is

becoming socially acceptable, and educated men will not hesitate in the future to choose it for a career. Awaiting the time when the unions will attract educated men, the capitalists are generously bringing education into the unions.

Mr. Wick speaks highly of the Harvard scholarships now being awarded annually to union leaders. They are a means of inculcating "a great sense of responsibility" in those who benefit by them. We socialists have often said that the capitalists use even the educational system for their propaganda, and we welcome an open admission that this is true.

The article ends on a note of high idealism. Business leaders, too, we are assured, must be different in the future. Mere bankers and production engineers will not do. They must have a genuine respect for the "rights of their employees. Otherwise they will not command the confidence of the freer workers of the future."

## Labor Must Be on Guard

Isn't it amazing? This man describes a situation in which labor will be bound hand and foot by government boards and regulations, will be harassed by an army of returning veterans, will be betrayed into inaction by its own "responsible" leaders—and then he proceeds to speak of the freer workers of the future! The lessons which Hitler has given in demagoguery have not gone unobserved.

We write this report on the Wick article because capitalist propaganda along the same or similar lines—menacing propaganda wrapped in the phrases of sweet reasonableness—is becoming more and more common. It should not go unchallenged.

We write it also because the union leaders are taking the workers and even themselves to the very edge of disaster. Their subservience to the capitalists, who are thinly concealed behind the form of government—behind Roosevelt, the Democratic Party, the WLB, the no-strike pledge, the Little Steel formula, the labor-management committees—is proving ruinous.

The failure of the labor leaders to demand the democratic right to speak with complete frankness to the soldiers—through union papers, the radio, in person—about the problems of the workers at home and the problems of the soldiers themselves, their failure to take the lead in defending the economic and political interests of the soldiers and their families—these failures can prove fatal in the future. A sharp turn is demanded by this dangerous situation.

# Of Special Interest To Women

By Susan Green

On the food front the uppermost worry now is about milk.

How long will we get how much? The dairy farmers want higher prices from the consumer or government subsidies—or both. Naturally, they have all kinds of reasons for wanting more money—the main reason being that more money is what they are in business to get.

When dairy farmers are mentioned, maybe you think of a lot of little farmers whose wives go out to the red barn to milk Brown Bess. You're wrong.

Dairy farming, like all farming, is in the iron grip of big business. Higher prices and government subsidies accrue to the benefit not of the owners of a few cows, but to the dairy bosses connected with huge banks, insurance companies and industrialists like the Pews of Pennsylvania, who are part and parcel of the powerful farm bloc as well as oil magnates and shipbuilding capitalists. If the government allows a subsidy of from \$200,000,000 to \$300,000,000 to induce the big dairy bosses to keep the price of milk from going up, THAT PRETTY PILE OF DOUGH WILL GO MAINLY TO BIG BUSINESS.

And how soon will they ask for more government money—which in the last count comes out of the pockets of the working people?

This vicious circle of profit grubbing must be broken. It can be broken by the united effort of the small and independent farmers, of farm workers, of labor unions, of organized housewives. These elements, constituting the bulk of the working people, can and must end the power of big business to dictate whether we eat or not, and at what price!

Mrs. A. D. Wilkinson, socially prominent bigwig of Grosse Pointe, Detroit, has her own ideas about "equality of sacrifice." The Wilkinsons were discovered to have a food supply good for several years. They had a stock of 1,276 cans of rationed food, with a point value of 7,273, and deep-freeze foods valued at 1,078 points. How the rich suffer—poor things!

Another illustration of "equality of sacrifice" comes from the realm of politics. Firms supplying New York City institutions with food have very obligingly—probably for valuable consideration—supplied city food inspectors and food buyers with plenty of the wherewithal.

The chief food inspector got away with a six-pound leg of lamb and six pounds of steak as a typical week's purchase. The lesser lights in the

department got their share of top round, porterhouse, legs of lamb and eggs. None of the accused men has, as yet, been suspended from office.

Where there's a will—AND PLENTY OF MONEY OR CONNECTIONS TO BACK IT UP—there's a way.

As the working class housewife waits in line, shifting from one weary foot to the other, to get that quarter of a pound of butter—if she's lucky—she can occupy her mind with pleasant thoughts of others who are more fortunate than she.

The First Lady has returned from her 23,000-mile jaunt to the far Pacific with a new hair-do, weighing less, and full of interviews.

At her interviews she keeps repeating that the boys in the armed forces "have very strong feelings about strikes." She says, "I don't think I saw a boy who justified any strike."

Of course, Mrs. Roosevelt could not and did not take an authentic poll of how the armed forces—CONSISTING IN THE MAJORITY OF WORKING CLASS PEOPLE—feel about strikes. But if they feel as she says they do, at least one thing becomes clear: THE TROOPS ARE BEING FED BOSS PROPAGANDA.

Certainly no soldier who is told he is fighting for a better world would, for instance, be opposed to the miners' strike if he knew the real facts about the miners' pinched existence and about the mine bosses' war profits.

Did Mrs. Roosevelt perhaps inform these misinformed boys that the bosses—who out of greed for profits supply defective war materials which may mean unexpected death on the battle fronts—will make \$8,600,000,000 in profits this year, are also socking away a post-war reserve of \$69,000,000,000, and will get for a song from the government war plants worth \$10,000,000,000?

You bet she didn't! So important is the gentle sex these days that the British Cabinet—in person—saw fit to assemble 6,000 women picked from trade unions, professional groups, housewives' clubs and so on, to tell them what more will be required of the people by way of war sacrifices.

Prime Minister Churchill informed the gathering that the almost superhuman war effort must be maintained "through the fifth year of the war, or the six year, or, if need be, forever—until we have achieved our purpose." Which is not a very cheerful prospect.

Minister of Labor Bevin made it clear that

large sections of workers will be shuffled from place to place this winter, and that more woman-power will be imperative in aircraft factories, cotton mills and transportation. This will mean increased hardship to very working class family.

Food Minister Woolton tried to inject a bright note by predicting that Britain would be "tasting some of the fruits of victory" in the form of oranges, lemons and onions from the conquered Mediterranean area.

But the real "fruits of victory" were described by Anthony Eden, Foreign Minister, in these words: "As Cordell Hull rightly said the other day, we must consider that force of some kind is the element of any new world order. Indeed, unless such an order has sufficient force to give effect to its decisions, it cannot hope to serve its purpose."

Is that what men, women and children are today suffering for? What kind of new world is it that will require a super-colossal military policing system? The seething conflicts of the world will not be ended, but will merely be held in check by force. For how long?

This "fruit of victory" will bear the seed of World War III. That is why we socialists urge all working people to band together and work for a socialist peace—THE ONLY KIND THAT WILL ENDURE!

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# Same Junkers Same Old Junk Same Old Bunk

From Mine Workers Journal

Elmer Davis' OWI boys have put out a powerful piece about the Prussian Junkers, the big land holders of Eastern Germany. The Junkers without doubt are among the worst scoundrels now unhung in any part of the world, but when we read about them now we can't help wondering why they are still here for OWI to write about.

As we remember the last war "to make the world safe for democracy," it was these very same Junkers we were fighting then, and we were going to finish them, mop them up, root them out and then everything would be lovely. Oh, yes, we were going to hang the Kaiser, too—the dirty Beast of Berlin.

How come the Junkers got off so easy? Can it be that the Sixty Families of America, the 100 Families of the British Empire, the 200 Families of the counterfeit French Republic had a fellow feeling for those rotten old Junkers and decided that they might come in handy some time?

Well, anyhow, the Junkers slipped out of the back door while the politicians were framing up the peace treaty at Versailles and here they are again—same old Junkers, same old junk, same old bunk.

After the last war, Walter Rathenau, one of the smartest men in Germany, who was murdered by some of the cowardly sneaks who afterward got up the Nazi racket, remarked that the world was really run by some 400 men of all nations who usually got along with each other, but had a fight every now and then.

The late Edward N. Hurley, American manufacturer, who built our ships in the last war, but never entirely "forgot his raising" and carried his BLE card all his life, said that about fifty big industrial bosses could keep the world at peace if they wanted to.

A. A. Berle, Jr., shortly afterward published the "Modern Corporation and Private Property" and showed that for all practical purposes, 1,000 corporations, dominated by less than 250 men, ruled America.

The Prussian Junkers are just one section of groups of powerful men who have dominated all the great powers. When wars come we can be quite certain that these top guys have had a falling-out about the "divvy." Heretofore when peace has come, it meant that they had gotten together again. And whether they cooperate, quarrel or fight, the people usually get the short end of it, and that's that. The big shots never pay for the wars.

Mr. Davis tells us that there are about 15,000 to 17,000 Junkers families who own 16 per cent of the land of Germany, with 3,000,000 little farmers holding the rest. Wonder whether Elmer has ever been down South, out West or to Hawaii? Why, those 15,000 Junkers are pikers compared to many of our ranchers, sugar growers and cotton barons. The 40,000 county families of Great Britain own nearly 100 per cent of the farm land of England.

The 15,000 German Junkers rob Germans and Poles! Of course our big ranchers and planters are all nice men and rob nobody, and the British squires are just apple pies to their tenants—almost as soft as the rack renting Irish landlords used to be.

So far as we are concerned, the Junkers can't be junked too quick to suit us, but since we are paying some of Elmer Davis' salary, we wish he would talk about things nearer home, some time.

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# A Record of the Anti-Labor Decisions of the War Labor Board

By WALTER WEISS

Elsewhere in this issue we tell the story of the War Labor Board's decision in the Brewster Aeronautical case. We believe that Brewster workers and members of many other unions have known for quite a while what the score is on the WLB. We don't think that Brewster members were too much surprised by the obvious injustice of the decision. But all of us can learn something by a study of how the WLB got that way—learn something not only about the WLB, but also about the present crop of top labor leaders.

The WLB has told its own story, up to February 15 of this year, in an official government pamphlet called "Summary of Decisions of the National War Labor Board." It may be obtained from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C.

In this pamphlet, the WLB shows by its own words how it has become more and more an OPEN instrument of the employers and an enemy to every trace of militancy in the unions. In order to keep the story reasonably brief, we shall confine ourselves to the issue of maintenance of membership.

**"Maintenance of Membership"**  
This newspaper has, of course, often pointed out how reactionary the board's decisions are on wages and other matters. From the very first, the WLB did not grant union or closed shops except as renewals of those already existing. In the famous "Captives Mines" case, decided by the WLB's predecessor, the National Defense Mediation Board, Roosevelt himself made it clear that the government would never compel any worker to join a labor union. In other words, while he was saying that unions must not strike in time of emergency, he was refusing them an important union right, which they had often been able to win by the use of the strike weapon.

In the beginning, however, the War Labor Board DID grant maintenance of membership to almost any well established local union, justifying the action by these obvious truths:

"Management . . . has a guarantee for the duration of the war of con-

tinuous business without the usual risks to investment. The unions, with the unusual risks of the war pressure against strikes and against general wage increases . . . need some security against disintegration. . . . After all, they might by striking have won the union or closed shop."

The employer members dissented, insisting that the poor working man should have some means of escape from the "tyranny of the unions." The public members were soon convinced by this argument and began on June 18, 1942, to put an "escape clause" into all maintenance awards, allowing members to withdraw from the union for a period of fifteen days after the rendering of the decision.

## The Board Acts Against Unions

In this decision of June 18, the Ryan Aeronautical case, two employer members graciously concurred, although still expressing the opinion that the decision didn't go far enough. Two weeks later, in the Caterpillar Tractor case, Public Member Morse expressed himself as very hurt that all the employer members were again dissenting. He said, in effect:

"So that we could be one happy, unanimous family, we yielded to your employer members on the escape clause idea and we EVEN PERSUADED THE UNION MEMBERS to yield too. Now you're still not satisfied."

The employer members were saying something to this effect: "Since maintenance of membership is granted in almost every case where the union asks for it, the unions should file twice yearly with the board copies of their constitutions and by-laws, names of officers, amount of dues and initiation fees, and a statement of receipts and expenditures."

## WLB Seeks Control of Unions

This is an old game of the employers. All the information mentioned is readily available except the financial data, and the bosses want that only to help them to judge whether a union is weak enough for the bosses to attack. Public Member Morse, who wrote the Caterpillar decision, was very much hurt, as we have said, but he also made another

concession. He denied that the public members would ALWAYS vote for maintenance of membership.

Now we quote this official pamphlet directly (page 19): "...The impact of their (employer members) suggestions is revealed in decisions subsequent to the Caterpillar Tractor case. In future cases, as will be seen, a maintenance provision was granted only after the board had satisfied itself concerning the responsibility and soundness of the union and its leadership" (our emphasis).

In the S. A. Woods case the public members said that they agreed COMPLETELY with employer members that, before granting maintenance of membership, the board should be satisfied that a union was responsible and run on democratic principles. In the board's eyes, "responsible" means that the leaders should be very conservative, and "run on democratic principles" means that the members should always follow (preferably by a unanimous vote) these conservative leaders, and never cause trouble.

Even in this case the employer members, from whom our top union leaders could learn something if they were not playing such an utterly worthless game, refused to admit that they were satisfied. They again refused, having gained a big point, to vote for maintenance but warned that they might not continue to do so in the future, unless regular financial statements and a record of changes of officers were required—and unless the board banned contributions by unions to political campaigns!

Already on August 27 the board, then only seven and a half months old, had become just about what the employers wanted. In the Monsanto Chemical case of that date, Public Member Morse wrote a decision denying maintenance because the union had called a strike, recommended by the leaders ("lack of responsibility"—W. W.) and overwhelmingly endorsed by the members ("lack of democracy"—W. W.).

Professor Morse piously hoped that the union would make a better record in the future. The decision was UNANIMOUS, reports PM (August 28, 1942). And, adds PM: "Louis A.

Lopez, labor representative, concurred 'with great reluctance.'"

On September 19, the WLB repeated this performance, again UNANIMOUSLY, in the General Chemical case. In this case "Morse's statement left no doubt that the stand taken for the first time in a similar dispute—affecting workers at the Monsanto Chemical Co., had become a keystone of board policy" (PM, September 20, 1942). The same thing, or worse, has since happened in many cases.

A case where the board was more merciful is just as revealing, for it shows that the board was willing to be flexible in carrying out the good work of destroying union militancy. In the Worcester Pressed Steel case, decided on September 30, 1942, the union was granted maintenance despite a two-day strike in April of that year. The record of the union LEADERS, both local and international, since that date convinced the board that they had not instigated or condoned the stoppage but that it was a spontaneous demonstration of the rank and file.

Now we quote directly: "If this union is to become a responsible organization acting through its leaders, it is necessary that it have some power over its members in order that small minorities may not again precipitate some rash action."

The decision proceeds to say that under maintenance of membership, a member must remain in good union standing to keep his job. "Thus the responsible leaders and the reliable elements of the union have an effective disciplinary power which will enable the union to get behind the company's production efforts."

In this way the board began to use (or to try to use) local union officers, as well as international officers, as police spies with the duty of ferreting out militant members.

## A New Policy

On October 17, 1942, the WLB made this procedure too a keystone of its policy. One point in a three-point program to prevent wildcat strikes was this:

"In any case in which the workers are organized and represented by a local union, the report of the mediation panel or investigator shall include full information as to the relation of the local officers to the strike and their efforts locally and in cooperation with the international officers to prevent its occurrence." (New York Times, October 18, emphasis ours.)

As if this were not enough, the board on December 16, 1942, placed the Pontiac Yellow Coach Local on a probationary maintenance of membership and ORDERED the union to discipline members who caused stop-

pages and ORDERED the international union to investigate the local, its leadership and the members responsible for stoppages and to report results to the WLB.

This order has a sequel. On July 14, 1943, Regional Director McCauley of the UAW reported that the Yellow Coach Local had fined 179 members \$5.00 each for an unauthorized strike on March 17. On the recommendation of a WLB investigator, two members were given four-week disciplinary layoffs. This account is from the New York Times of July 15, which goes on to say:

"The union's action in fining its members, said to be the first such mass disciplinary move ever taken by a UAW-CIO local, was adopted by the Detroit board (of the WLB), with industry members dissenting."

## Labor Members Should Quit WLB

The action is also a first-class disgrace to the union movement. The WLB has since shown its appreciation by renewing maintenance of membership for the local, over the protest of the industry members.

One of the most urgent tasks of the UAW convention, of other labor conventions, and of local unions is to put an end to this dirty police work, which can only disrupt the unions and kill their fighting spirit. Let the bosses do their own dirty work, if they can.

The top union leaders have had the impudence to complain that the Connally-Smith Act was making the WLB an agency for policing and punishing the unions. The WLB was already such an agency. That's why Senator Connally said in debate that he wished "to strengthen the hand" of the WLB.

It was already such an agency—and with the connivance of the top leadership of labor! How often have they threatened to resign? Mere words! How often have they agreed with the most reactionary new steps taken by the board? The record speaks for itself!

They should be FORCED by the rank and file to resign from the board. They will use every dodge to avoid such a break with the Roosevelt Administration, fearing the logical next steps, the end of the no-strike pledge and an Independent Labor Party. They will give all kinds of "inside dope" on private talks they have had with the President. They will remind the workers of their personal deeds of heroism and martyrdom, past or present—how Ford's police beat up Frankenstein and Reuther, how Thomas was arrested for defying a Texas law against free speech. We applauded them for these deeds, but they do not change by one iota their record on the WLB.

## Continuing a Reply to a Reader--

# On the Question of Russian Morale

By MAX SHACHTMAN

The world military situation in which Russia recovered and began to beat back the Germans is radically different from the situation in June, 1940. Then, Germany had nobody to worry about in the West. Now, it is faced with a recovered and growing British power and with a tremendous and growing American power. Then, it was beginning the bombing of England. Now, it is itself experiencing the disruptive blows of unprecedentedly heavy bombings from England.

There are many other factors to be considered. Stalin has been preparing Russia for war for some fifteen years, including the setting up of a vast war industry (with the aid of forced labor and slave labor) deep in the interior of Russia. All this work was done in a condition of totalitarian secrecy and totalitarian, super-concentrated and super-centralized control; and we are only now beginning to see how extensive the work really was. Then, as now, the last drop of energy of the people was ruthlessly squeezed out by the bureaucracy which was and remains intent, above all, upon preserving itself in power.

## Fear of Foreign Rule

At the same time, let us remember, the Russian people have been under the sway of this totalitarian rule and kept within hermetically-sealed borders for the same long period. It is hard for us, in this country, to realize fully the power over mind and body that a super-totalitarian regime like Stalinism can exert over a people, at least for a period of time.

When such factors are added to the fact—which is quite natural and highly justified—that the Russian people do not want to be ruled by foreign overlords, and that they have a deep-seated, healthy hatred for the particular system that this foreign invader represents, namely, fascism, there is not much reason for surprise at the spirit of resistance and sacrifice of the masses. However much they may despise their own rulers, they do not want to see them

overthrown by the Hitlerites and, in the process, to have the rule of Stalin & Co. replaced by the rule of Hitler, Himmler & Co.

There is still another factor. It is rarely referred to in the press, although it is of tremendous and most decisive significance. However one may argue about the feelings of the Russian masses toward their rulers, there can be no doubt, especially now, about the feelings of these rulers themselves. THEY most certainly do have much to lose by a victory of Germany—in fact, they stand to lose everything.

## Preservation of the Bureaucracy

The bureaucracy stands to lose its complete domination of the government and industry. It stands to lose its tremendous power, its exceptional privileges, its mastery of the most populous modern country in the world, its prospects for even further expansion of its territory and therefore its power. What is astonishing, then, if it fights tooth and nail to defend the power that German victory would obliterate? What is astonishing, then, if, like the Czars of old, it callously pours millions upon millions of troops into battle?

They are not a mere handful, these bureaucrats. Their number, including those in high position and low, including their retainers, henchmen and would-be replacements, has been estimated at between fifteen and twenty-five million. No ruling class in history has ever enjoyed power to such a degree as the Stalinist bureaucracy. Naturally, therefore, they form the spinal cord of the fight, for they have no intention of yielding their vast powers without a fight, be it against an imperialist rival or against the people they themselves exploit. They run Russia's war, and Russia's war is run for them.

But what about the masses? Do they not have the idea, as our reader says, that all the land and the factories belong to them? Of course they do. At least, it is certain that many of them have this idea. But, unfortunately, the idea is not a reality at all, but only a myth of the

bureaucracy. The American (and all other) masses have had many wonderful ideas driven into their heads by their rulers, and even believe in them intensely and deeply. But that does not make them true.

## What Do the Masses Have?

The land and factories belong to the Russian people even less than the American capitalist government belongs to you and me. The Russian people have nothing, absolutely nothing, to say about the land or the factories or the government; everything is said FOR them and TO them by the reactionary totalitarian dictatorship of the Kremlin. Indeed, it should be obvious that if the Russian government (and land and factories) did belong to the people, or under their control, there would be no need whatsoever for the brutal dictatorship which exists and which is directed against the masses of workers and peasants.

In actuality, the masses are fighting to maintain and expand the power of their oppressors, whether they realize this today or not. Willingly, then, they are fighting to keep the bureaucracy at the top and on their backs. They are fighting to maintain the imperialist partnership that the bureaucracy has concluded with its Anglo-American allies. They are fighting so that the bureaucracy may extend its rule over Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland, the Balkans or parts of them, over Iran, over Sinkiang and other northern and northwestern parts of China, and whatever other riches the Russian ruling class can tear away for itself as war booty, in exchange for supporting the no less imperialist claims of such allies as Britain in India and elsewhere.

Do the Russian people understand this yet? Probably not. No doubt many, or most, of them believe differently. But that is precisely where the tragedy of the war lies—in the fact that the people in every country do not yet realize the real significance of the war, that they do not yet understand what they are really fighting for while their ruling classes

continue to rule. Let us conclude, for today, with some profoundly wise and appropriate words from a great revolutionary leader, Lenin. When he returned to Russia after the overthrow of the Czar, he delivered a simple speech on the war which was still going on (in 1917), and which many of the people thought was a just war, inasmuch as Czarism no longer ruled, inasmuch as a revolution had just taken place, inasmuch as the conquests of the revolution were being threatened by the German invader of those days. It is a long quotation from this speech delivered in Petrograd on May 27, 1917, but it is worth printing because it is so applicable to the present day, provided the necessary minor changes are made:

"I will never forget the question that one of them (one of the soldiers) put to me after a meeting: 'Why do you talk about capitalists all the time? Am I a capitalist? We workers are defending our freedom! It is not true—you are fighting because you are obeying your capitalist government; the war is not being conducted by the people, but by the governments. I am not surprised when a worker, or a peasant who has not studied politics, who has not had the good fortune, or misfortune, to study secret diplomacy, to see this picture of financial plunder (this oppression of Persia by Russia and England, for example) forgets this history and naively asks: what have capitalists got to do with it? I am fighting. He does not see the connection between the war and the government; he does not see that the government is conducting the war, and that he is a tool in the hands of the government.'"

It is so, also, in the present war. It is so, also, in Russia today, except for the fact that the word "capitalists" now has to be changed to read "Stalinist bureaucracy." But it will not be so forever. The workers learned better in Russia twenty-six years ago. They must learn all over again now. They will, and we will help to see that they do.

## Statement of Workers Defense League on Soldiers Jailed for Protesting Jim Crow in Army

In a letter released by the Workers Defense League, Private Alton Levy, former International Ladies Garment Workers' organizer court-martialed for crusading against Army discrimination against Negroes at the Lincoln, Neb., Army Air Base, declares that a high Army officer told him that anti-labor and anti-Semitic prejudice were two strikes against him from the start.

At the same time, Morris Milgram, League national secretary, reported that Army officials at the Lincoln Air Base are considering a general court-martial against Levy, who was tried by a special court-martial August 16, reduced from staff sergeant to private, sentenced to four months at hard labor and fined \$18 a month pay. This second court-martial, Milgram said, would be based on "the publication of Levy's letters to Miss Rosalyn Peck of New York City, which Army officers are contemplating using as violations of the Articles of War."

## Two Strikes Against Him

Neil Scott, WDL public relations director, and Mr. Milgram in a joint statement on the possible second court-martial, declared: "If it is a crime to reveal Army violations of the Selective Service Act provision which calls for 'no discrimination against any person on account of race or color' in the selection and training of draftees, then we plead guilty, and it is against us that the government should act."

"Soon I shall be able to write a tremendously interesting account of an interview I had with an 'administration officer' who figured prominently in my trial," Levy wrote in his latest letter from the guardhouse. "It will be headed, 'You had two strikes against you from the start...' These were his exact words. The details will curl your hair and, if possible, provoke even more activity and resentment on your end," continued Levy. "The two strikes were, of course, my being a Jew and my labor background."

## Public Opinion Helps Levy

According to the Workers Defense League, persons close to the situation report that had not public opinion become aroused and expressed in the press and by letters to President Roosevelt and to Levy at the guard house, Levy would probably have been removed from the Lincoln Air Base to some place of more severe punishment. "He may be called up for a general court-martial unless persons who are against the Army's Jim Crow policy flood President Roosevelt with telegrams and letters urging that Levy be freed and Army

Jim Crow ended by enforcement of the Selective Service Act or by Executive Order," the WDL said.

"A recent visitor to the Lincoln Air Base talked to General Duncan about Private Levy's plight," Milgram declared. "This person, whose name must remain undisclosed because of his close proximity to Army jurisdiction, reported that General Duncan stated that Levy made 'subversive statements' and that he didn't want people to think that Levy's being a Jew had anything to do with it. The general claimed: 'I am impartial in administering justice.'"

"He further declared that Levy was still under military orders and if he divulges military secrets he must still answer for what he does. He claimed nothing could be done about the court-martial, and that the Negro-white situation must be watched very closely, as there are 'a lot of Southern soldiers who don't want to associate with Negroes.' The general also said that additional court-martial charges might be brought against Levy for writing the letters which were quoted in Workers Defense League releases."

## New Sales Tax - -

(Continued from page 1)  
sions for incomes ranging between \$2,000 and \$25,000.

The fight in Congress against the new bill on the grounds that it places too heavy a burden on big business and the rich has made its passage unlikely.

The congressional hatchmen are now gunning for the removal of Morgenthau as Secretary of the Treasury. Bad as his tax programs have been for labor, the congressional reactionaries are convinced that his programs demand too much from the boss class.

They are out to put the whole burden of the war on labor, on those least able to carry it and those who have received the butt end of the "equality of sacrifice" program.

That is why they are championing the sales tax and an increase in taxes on low incomes.

## Soak the Poor!

The New York Times argues that statistics of the Treasury Department show that "four-fifths of all the income of the nation is going to people earning less than \$5,000 a year." The fact that this income is divided among almost the whole population of the country (the upper bracket incomes go to an extremely small number of people) is ignored. The reason for this is that the New York Times as well as its big business brothers want the financial burden for their war to be placed on the shoulders of the working class.

This is proved in another way. Even the Treasury Department has admitted that black market buying is done chiefly by those whose incomes are above \$3,000 a year. This means that the overwhelming majority of the working class is unable to pur-

Authentic eye witnesses at the Lincoln Air Base report that the most democratic spot there is the guardhouse. Among the white, Mexican and Negro prisoners there exists complete comradeship. "Despite the virtual tyranny of the military prison, the prisoners themselves live in complete democracy, with Northern and Southern whites fraternizing unreservedly with unsegregated Negroes, sharing jogs, towels, soap, cigarettes, etc.," Milgram said in eye witness report. "Yet, in the so-called freedom outside the guardhouse, the soldiers are rigidly segregated, which has produced seething animosity and a bloody riot."

Since his efforts have been made to treat the Negro soldiers better. Recreation equipment has been purchased for the Negro service club; passes have been given freely to Negroes in Levy's former unit.

A chaplain, speaking to white officers in charge of Negro troops, told them they were "sitting on a powder keg" and urged them to stop abusing Negroes and using offensive names for them.

chase the vast amount of goods sold in this market, most of it going to the upper income group.

## How Much Is Left?

In the upper income bracket, of those making more than \$25,000 a year, 110,000 of them still have an average of \$30,000 left after taxes.

Yet the millions who earn less than \$1,000 a year have only \$866 left after taxes. This includes both single and married people with families.

In the incomes ranging from \$1,000 to \$3,000, the average yearly wage left after taxes is only \$1,930, which is less than what is required for a family to buy its necessities of life.

It is upon this overwhelming mass of people, running into the tens of millions, that big business and its congressional and press mouthpieces demand that a ten per cent sales tax be placed.

In either case, whether the ten per cent sales tax, or something less than this, is passed, or whether the Treasury tax program in its present or modified form is passed, labor will get it in the neck.

LABOR ACTION urges its own program on taxes: Take the burden off the backs of the low income groups and the poor, who make up almost the entire population of the country. Place the burden on those who can carry it!

Put a capital levy on the wealth of the capitalists, on the corporations now enjoying a profit holiday!

Confiscate all war profits!

Conscript all industries under workers' control!

Expropriate the new war millionaires!

Expropriate the Sixty Families, the three per cent of the people who own ninety-six per cent of the wealth!

## The WLB Decision in Brewster Case - -

(Continued from page 1)

After pressure from their international officers (WLB threats having proved futile), the workers in Hatboro returned to their jobs. All three units of the local voted to file notice that they wished to take a strike ballot after thirty days, in accordance with requirements of the Connally-Smith Act.

## Truman Committee Findings

On September 22 the Philadelphia Inquirer reported that the Senate Truman Committee had found production at Hatboro virtually at a standstill.

"In one department," said that paper's story, "twenty-four motors for Navy planes, waiting for installation in the plant, haven't been moved for a full month because they lack nuts and bolts to fasten them to the planes."

"A little more than a week ago, two hundred men, all skilled mechanics, fed up with lack of work, asked the company to release them so that they could work elsewhere. Their requests were refused."

Riebel replied on the same day that the situation would "not be straightened out until the War Labor Board passes on the proposed new labor contract" (New York Times, September 22).

What the contract had to do with the lack of nuts and bolts he didn't explain. The only conclusion that can be drawn is that he has been so intent on destroying the union that he is unable to concentrate on his

work, which is supposed to be producing planes.

He didn't deny shortage of materials but said that "shortages are occurring in every plant in the country, but FIFTEEN MINUTES AFTER we find a shortage here every available resource is put to work to remedy it" (our emphasis).

These heads of big companies justify their huge salaries by boasting that production couldn't proceed without their planning and foresight. Is it foresight to discover shortages fifteen minutes AFTER they develop? Obviously these officials are highly overpaid bunglers. The workers, through their unions, could do a much better job of running the factories, saving millions that go out in huge salaries and profits to parasites, boards of directors and so-called management.

Some additional Truman charges are that "parts are handed out from the stock room in such small quantities that it is impossible for employees to work more than a quarter of the time and...new employees are being hired every day" (New York Times, September 23).

Bruce Earl, union head at Hatboro, states that the Truman Committee, as usual, hasn't revealed how bad things actually are. Union stewards have been making lists of shortages for weeks, he says, but the management takes no action.

## WLB Acts for Bosses

The WLB has now ordered (New York Times, September 24) that the

guards be covered by a separate bargaining agreement, which will give the Navy full control over their assignments and duties. In other words, they will continue to be union members and continue to be paid by the company, but they lose their seniority rights and can be forced to act as cops, under penalty of court-martial for disobedience, against fellow union members.

That isn't all. The local is permitted to keep the union shop clause in its contract, but only on trial. After six months the WLB shall determine whether the union has so discharged its responsibilities as to warrant the continuation of the union shop."

The company is also supposed to be on trial. What penalties the owners can possibly suffer, however, under the procedures of the Roosevelt Administration and the requirements of the Connally-Smith Act is not very clear. The plants might be

taken over. This did happen previously to Brewster, but they were quickly returned to private control under new management. Profits went on as usual. The system of punishments is completely one-sided, and not unintentionally.

We can be fairly sure that the decision would have been more outrageous yet, that the local would have lost its union shop clause at once, except for two reasons: The revelations of the Truman Committee created a terrible scandal. The company's management was shown not only to be operating at low efficiency but also to be hoarding labor on a truly colossal scale.

So that union members may understand more fully the nature of the WLB and the part played in it by the union leaders, we are publishing elsewhere in this issue a brief history of the WLB, which is based on an official government pamphlet. It is an astounding and revolting story.

## India in Revolt

By Henry Judd

25 Cents Postpaid

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