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Plain Talk on the War

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BILL: Well, Lefty, I passed the physical exam this morning. I'll be leaving for camp next week. So I thought I'd drop in and talk some things over with you before I leave.

LEFTY: Swell. Sit down. Pull over that ash-tray. . . . Well, what's on your mind?

BILL: You and I have hit it off pretty good down at the local. We've seen eye to eye on most things right from the time we both got fired in '35 for starting to organize the plant, through the strike in '36, right up to now. . . .

LEFTY: There's nothing mysterious about our getting along. I like a fellow that knows how to fight. And you sure were in there pitching against the company.

BILL: You should talk! . . . Of course, we've tangled on a couple of things—like supporting Roosevelt last year and how he was taking us into war. As I told you at the time, though, I didn't think he was any great shakes, but I didn't see anything else to go for. Anyway, what I want to say is, where we have disagreed you've pretty nearly always turned out right in the end.

LEFTY: There's nothing wonderful in that. I've been able to call the shots because I'm a Marxist. I belong to the Workers Party and have learned to understand things.

BILL: That's what I'm coming to. I figure that it's about time I found out what this Marxism business is. God knows, I went to bat enough times for you over it in the local when they were calling you a red, a Trotskyite, and about everything else. What does this Marxism and your Workers Party say on the war business?

LEFTY: How do you mean?

BILL: Look, here's the picture: Like probably a lot of other fellows all over the country, I'm beginning to wake up. It's taken a long while, but now that I'm beginning to see one or two things I don't want to waste any time.

In a couple of days I'm going to be in the army. And I'm not so sure that I'm going to be out at the end of a year, either. It may be quite a while before I'll be able to take advantage of the clause in our new contract guaranteeing us our jobs when we return. I've been reading some of the remarks of these army big-shots in the papers. This war is being played for keeps.

I and a lot of other fellows all over the country have suddenly been thrown face to face with the fact that in another two or three years we may be dead. I don't want to die in a year or so. There are a lot of things I want to do—get married, buy a

nice car, and start doing a little reading to find out what makes the wheels go 'round.

That I will die is always pretty hard for me to understand and to think about. But it's especially hard when I'm not sure what I'm dying for. When the governor sent in the National Guard in '36 I helped fight it out. That was O.K.—you could see what the tie-up was. But God knows, I've got nothing against some poor working stiff out of one of Hitler's mass sweat shops, or some kid who has known nothing but unemployment all his life. And I'm pretty sure he feels the same way about me. Well, then, what are we fighting for?

At the same time, I know that if the United States isn't armed (and here's where those who are against building up a big army, navy, and air force are crazy) Hitler will sooner or later take over. And then it's goodbye Local 342, goodbye marriage, goodbye new car, goodbye everything. If you look at it that way it does seem as if we're defending democracy against fascism, doesn't it?

LEFTY: Well . . .

BILL: But at the same time I have more than a sneaking suspicion that the slogan "defend democracy against fascism" that they're using today is the same baloney as the slogan "save the world for democracy" that they used in the last war. Did you see by the papers, incidentally, that Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox says that the slogan was used during the last war only to whip up our war spirit,

and that it wasn't a war for democracy at all? He says *this* war is altogether different, of course.

I don't know—the whole business doesn't sound too good to me. But one thing I *do* know—I'm going to find out what's going on if I have to break a leg doing it. You've never steered me wrong in the past. What's this war all about?

LEFTY: Well, that's a pretty big order in the little time that we have. I think that the best way to begin is to go back and study a factory—say the plant where we both work. Machine production in plants owned and controlled by the small, exclusive circles of the rich, with millions of ordinary Joe Blows like us laboring in them—this is the heart and soul of the system we live under . . .

BILL: Capitalism?

LEFTY: That's right, that's all capitalism is. And generally speaking, what happens in our plant shows you in a small way what is going on in the nation as a whole. And the same rules that capitalism has to follow in the United States it has to follow in England. Or Germany. Only there the government is called fascist—which means that instead of having an ordinary labor-hater at the head of the government they have a super-Pinkerton thug named Hitler, and his muscle-men. But it's still capitalism, though in a more brutal form, and with the nazi thugs demanding and getting a good share of the bosses' cut. O.K., so far?

BILL: Right with you.

LEFTY: All right. Now let's look at our plant. In that way we can get a good idea of what goes on in the nation as a whole. Down at department 114-D they pull in a lot of sheet steel from the cars on the siding. It's worth, at most, seventy-five cents a sheet. When it arrives at the shipping department as a steel locker, neatly enameled, and wrapped in heavy oiled paper, ready for shipping, it's worth about ten dollars. Where did it pick up all that value going through the plant? There're only a handful of fittings on it, some other hardware, and a few cents' worth of paint. Say twenty-five cents in all. Where did it pick up all its value?

I'll tell you where. That locker is valuable because we've put our labor power in it. In other words, it's valuable because we've worked on it with our brain and muscle.

And to look at it from the other end, that's why a clothespin is so cheap—it doesn't take much labor power to make one. Now I'm going to show you how you have been robbed by the company all your working life without knowing it. For what are your wages paid to you?

BILL: Why, to use your words, for all the labor power I put out.

LEFTY: Ah, that's just it! Actually, you're paid for only a *part* of your labor power. The bosses and the stockholders of the corporation take a part of what is due you. What they take is known as profit.

BILL: But aren't they entitled to a little profit? Isn't that their share?

LEFTY: Their share of what? Remember, it's only the workers' labor power that makes a product valuable. What labor power do these Fat Boys contribute who clip their coupons, and spend their winters in Miami, smoking cigars on the beach and watching the girlies walk by? Or these café society dolls that you see in *Life*, whose brains would rattle like a pea in a gourd if you shook them? They contribute nothing to the value of a product. What you call "their" share is nothing more or less than wages you should have been receiving for putting out your labor power. In short, you have been robbed of part of your wages.

BILL: It seems awful plain the way you put it. Why did I use to shy away from you when you used to talk this socialism business, anyway, I wonder?

LEFTY: Well, war and death make us all face problems more squarely. To go on: this taking of a share of the wages due you—we Marxists call this share *surplus value*—is enough reason in itself for the setting up of socialism. Under socialism, of course, this surplus value, which the boss now takes, would remain with us, the people as a whole.

We workers can never buy back all that we produce. To do this we would have to receive full value for the labor power that we put out. But, as we have seen, the bosses take out a cut called profit,

or surplus value. Since we can't buy back all the products we produce, they pile up in the warehouses. It's a cinch that the bosses can't buy up all of these "surplus" products. What would they do with them? Most of their profits are reinvested in the business, where they are used to buy better labor-saving machinery. This only makes the warehouses bulge more.

Since there is then what capitalists call an "over-supply" of products, work slows up, and some of us are laid off. This cuts purchasing power still more. Fewer products can be sold. Still more of us are laid off. And that's how depressions are born.

BILL: It's like Tony the ditchdigger in the story when he says: "I digga da ditch to buya da food to maka me strong to digga da ditch to buya da food to maka me strong," and so on.

LEFTY: Yes, except that Tony seems to be holding his own, at least. Well, to continue—to get out of the depressions the capitalist can try a number of things. He can cut wages, rawhide us more, or try to find new places in this country or abroad where he can sell his goods. This last thing is what interests us now.

The capitalist has to expand his market—his places to sell his products—or his profits will peter out. Especially if he's a **German one who has cut wages, lengthened hours, and speeded up the men as much as he dares even with the help of Hitler's sluggers,** and found that the country is still in dan-

ger of collapse through terrific poverty and depression. But when he looks around he finds that Britain, say, has a big monopoly on juicy markets like India. So what does Germany begin to do?

BILL: To build a big army, navy, and air force to take away this market from Britain by war.

LEFTY: That's right. So what's the picture? The German capitalist system lives by robbing the German workers. The English capitalist system lives by robbing the English workers at home and the native populations in its colonies abroad. Hitler wants the right to rob the English native populations and the English workers. And England wants to keep on robbing them herself.

That's why we don't support *either* the German side or the British side in this war. Nor do we support the war preparations in this country. For the purpose of the United States is to take over Britain, lock, stock and barrel, in the interests of J. P. Morgan, Andrew Mellon, the Rockefellers, and the rest of that crew. That the United States capitalists are fighting to preserve democracy is plain hooey. Their real plan is simply to muscle England out of her colonies and to put England itself under their thumb—unless Hitler beats them to the punch. Right now they want to help destroy Hitler—that seems to be first on the order of the day.

BILL: But if we don't arm, won't Hitler attack the United States?

LEFTY: Yes, he will. But the United States will

fight him in any event, because this war is nothing more or less than a tremendous fight for the control of the markets of the entire globe. To fight him successfully, however, this government in the end will have to become fascist itself. Only by squeezing the people to the starving point can capitalism secure enough armaments to fight Hitler successfully. To do that means the destruction of unions and everything that we have seen happen in Germany in the last ten years.

Of course, the capitalists aren't going to do this all at once. They still have plenty of profits out of which they can toss a few dollars to labor. We've seen that happen in some of the aircraft strikes. On top of that, American labor is strong. It has never taken a real defeat. Some of the unemployed slack is being taken up. In many ways the country is booming. The possibilities of getting wage increases—which were tough during the recent “recession”—are good now. Labor's feeling frisky. This situation will continue, and even increase, for some time. But sooner or later the capitalists will have to crack down. More and more anti-labor laws will be passed. The end result will be fascism.

Another possibility is that the United States capitalists, if they seem to be losing, can turn the country over to Hitler, as the French capitalists did, in the hope of salvaging something from the deal. But in both cases we get fascism.

Even if the United States won, everyone even

now admits that there would be a terrific crash after the war, which would make the last depression seem like a pleasant picnic in the country. And to preserve capitalism against the attacks of the workers, who would be trying to better their conditions, the bosses would have to call on the fascists, even if they already hadn't introduced fascism during the war. There's the answer to those who say we may have to give up some of our liberties in order to lick Hitler, but that we will get them back after the war.

BILL: What's the answer.?

LEFTY: Socialism, only socialism. Capitalism breeds war because, to survive, capitalism must have markets for its "surplus" goods. To get those markets, capitalism in every country is willing to slaughter millions of its best people, and to starve and bring sorrow to millions of others.

Only socialism will bring peace because only socialism will make unnecessary the seizing of foreign markets to absorb our "surplus" goods. We will be able to distribute those goods because there will be no capitalists to steal that surplus value. Then no one will suffer want!

BILL: I have to admit that it sounds swell. But what about Russia? Russia's supposed to be socialist, isn't it? But brother, I wouldn't live there for all the gold in Fort Knox. And believe me I want to believe in it, I really do.

LEFTY: What has happened to Russia is a

whole evening's discussion in itself. But briefly, it's this: Russia has laid a basis for socialism.

Of course, Russia cannot avoid the effect of the world market with which she must deal. She needs to buy machinery badly, for instance. She cannot build socialism completely any more than we could build it down at the plant or just in our own city. But she has made a start. She has showed for all time what a planned economy *can* be like.

Unfortunately, however, she has been taken over by a gang of assassins, kidnappers, liars, yes-men and plain chisellers. Their chief is Stalin. They are not interested in world socialism. They are interested in keeping their privileges in Russia.

You can see it easier if you think of Russia as a good union taken over by racketeers. They're interested in the union only insofar as they can use it to shake down a nice living. If anyone begins to question their policies in the union—and their nice living at the expense of the members—they take care of them—one way or the other. Stalin shoots them. Your racketeer isn't interested in a clean union growing up in the same field—it might put ideas in the heads of his members. In the same way Stalin isn't interested in building socialism elsewhere—or even in Russia. That's why he had to drive a pickaxe into the brain of Trotsky.

Stalin uses his communist parties to put pressure on various capitalist governments for whatever deal or alliance he wants at the moment. In the end,

however, only another state controlled by the workers will be able to help Russia. Stalin has brought Russia to the edge of ruin. By his murderous policies in Russia, and by his policies abroad, of which the invasion of Poland, Finland and Bessarabia are the latest, he soils the glorious name of socialism. Stalin makes socialism seem like a slaughterhouse. This enables Roosevelt to whip up more support for United States capitalism, which is about to throw us into the bloodiest war in the entire history of the world.

For these reasons we of the Workers Party have always stood for the removal of Stalin and his gangsters, and for the placing of the control of Russia back in the hands of the working class, as it was back in the days when Lenin and Trotsky were in the leadership of the soviet state.

BILL: What sort of game are the Stalinists, as you call them, playing in this war?

LEFTY: Right now they're acting as flunkeys to Hitler. In England, for instance, they work for peace. Not for peace through socialism but for a negotiated peace—which means, however tough and radical they may talk, that they are working for the victory of Hitler. Stalin is not interested in seeing England go socialist. He's interested in keeping Russia out of war so that his powerful position in Russia and the soft berths of his pals—whoever they are at this moment—will be secure. After all, a victory of socialism in England would set off the tre-

mendous unhappiness and anger which exists in Russia today.

BILL: The Stalinists seem pretty radical in this country, though.

LEFTY: Their fight against the war is as phoney as a fifteen cent watch. It's true that the Stalinists say that this is a war that is unjust on both sides. But the stress is all on England's past and present dirty actions. Hitler gets off pretty easy. If Stalin felt that Germany was about to turn on Russia, the Stalinists would be whooping it up for Roosevelt again and for war against the Nazis, just as they were a couple of years ago, before the Hitler-Stalin pact. The real test is: do they come out boldly, agitating for peace through socialism? Of course, they don't.

BILL: Your speaking of England a few minutes ago reminds me of something else. I see by your paper, LABOR ACTION, that the Workers Party is against aid to England. Now, I can see how aid to England can lead us step by step into war. At the same time, if we're for socialism, should we support the sending to England of all aid "short of war"? Wouldn't that give us more time to work and spread our ideas before we are involved in the war, when free speech will be only a memory?

LEFTY: Supporting a policy of aid to England would only boomerang against us. When and where would such support stop? I'm afraid that we would always want a little more time to plug

for socialism. And in the meanwhile we would be supporting the British slavemasters against the rising German slavemasters. We would be supporting the slaughter of millions of fellow workers on both sides. The rest of the working class would consider us no better than the war-mad bosses. The job of educating the working class to the single, great fact that there will be peace only through socialism would be more difficult because of the miseducation that we had given it before.

The struggle against fascism abroad and at home is one and the same as the struggle for socialism. **THERE IS NO OTHER WAY!** Capitalism in the United States, as we have known it, can no longer exist in its old form. To exist under the demands of a total war against Hitler it must take more and more out of the hides of the workers. But to lengthen hours, decrease wages, increase taxes, and speed up the workers means more and more dictatorial laws against labor. Of course, it will all be done under the plea of "national defense." The last step will be fascism.

But we do not wish to see a victory by Hitler. That would mean fascism too. It is the simple duty of every worker to his class and to the future of the world to struggle for socialism. Only in the struggle for socialism will the working class of the United States be able to preserve the gains it has already won. Only by the victory of socialism will fascism be defeated.

Only socialism is worth fighting for. Only socialism is worth defending. Only socialism will overthrow Hitler. Only socialism can prevent another and more terrible world war if this one is "settled" by a new, super-Versailles treaty, no matter if it is dictated by Germany or by the United States.

BILL: I see what you mean. I guess I never quite looked at it that way before. . . . Well, it all seems pretty good. I think I agree. But how are you going to tell all this to the average fellow down at the shop and expect to make much headway? He's not ready for the program yet.

LEFTY: That's right, he isn't. And that's why we have what we call a program of transitional demands, which are simply easy steps leading to socialism. Nearly every worker can go for almost all of this program, and the more of this program he accepts the farther he comes along the road to socialism.

BILL: Give me an example of one of the points in the program.

LEFTY: O.K. Here are all fourteen of them printed at the top of page four in this copy of LABOR ACTION. Let's take the first part of Point 5. It says: "Let the people vote on war . . ."

Isn't that a reasonable demand? Isn't it right that the people who are going to suffer should be allowed to say whether or not they want to enter the slaughter? What control do the people now have over congressmen, who are, ninety-nine out of

a hundred, pals of big business and not of the poor? What control do we now have over President Roosevelt, Secretary of State Hull, and Under Secretary of State Welles, conniving together over breakfast, making God-only-knows what promises to Britain, sending all sorts of agents all over the world, and secretly taking steps that will throw us into war? They can register the men of the country for slaughter in one day. Let us have one day to see if we want to go to that slaughter or not!

BILL: I'm for it 100 per cent.

LEFTY: Or take this part of point three: "For government ownership and workers' control of all war industries. . . ." We are being asked to sacrifice our lives in the coming war. That is no small thing. If the capitalists are sincere in their cries that this is a holy war for democracy, and that we all must sacrifice, let them sacrifice their blood profits in the war industries. Let the government take over the war industries. And let the workers control them in order that good working conditions can be maintained and that the government will not sneak out profits to business in one fashion or another.

Well, you can read the rest of them here in **LABOR ACTION** or in our other literature. You can see how once a worker takes these steps—and they will not be hard ones to take in the coming days—events in the shop and in the nation will force him to take further steps just to keep the gains he has already won. That's how the gap

which exists between the present political conservatism of the American worker and socialism will be bridged.

BILL: Let me have some of those pamphlets before I go tonight. I see I'll have to get in a little heavy reading before I leave for camp next week. . . . Well, what's army life going to be like? And, as a good union man, what is yours truly expected to do during that year at camp?

LEFTY: Before we get into that, I think that there is one thing that you and every other draftee have to realize. And that is that this army service isn't just a one year proposition. Maybe you'll be out at the end of a year and a new batch taken in. I don't know. But maybe you'll be kept in right through the war. Congress could pass a law to that effect in just about two seconds.

At any rate, make no mistake about it, the capitalist class, and its government and military errand boys, are preparing for a colossal war abroad. Step by step we are being pushed into war with Hitler. You can't supply Britain with armaments and food, repair warships in our drydocks, and convoy ships—and we'll be doing it—without getting into war. Sooner or later we will all be in it, and for a long time.

BILL: I agree with you there, all right. For the bosses to lick Hitler will take an invasion of Europe in the end. And to do that will take an army of three or four million men—or more. Those 4,500,-

ooo identification tags for the dead and wounded weren't run off just to throw the government printing office a little business.

Another thing I think we shouldn't forget is that the bosses will have to extend the war into South America and the Pacific. There are some nice little business and military propositions there that they'd sure hate to lose. Of course, they may lose their shirts, especially in the Pacific, but they're really going to try to keep the Nazis and the Japanese out. That means a navy about three times the size of the one they have now, and a real air force. Brother, it is *really* a world war this time, and it isn't going to be settled overnight.

LEFTY: That's right. The point that I make here is that our contact with the army isn't going to be all washed up at the end of a year. Once every one of us realizes that the chances of leading a normal life in this terrible age are pretty slim, the sooner we'll buckle down and clean up the mess. That's the first thing.

BILL: I understand that well enough. And as more men are drafted and as the politicians and the so-called dollar-a-year men (dollar-a-year men! —what a laugh!) drag us further and further into war, I think that pretty nearly everyone will realize that it's a long haul ahead. The problem is, what should fellows like me do in the army?

LEFTY: In general it will be about like in the shop: you'll fight for better working conditions.

Look at the army pay!—\$21 to \$30 per month for the privilege of dying! How far will that money go if you want to send a little home, go to a picture show or two once in a while, buy tobacco, get a few meals outside of camp, receive a newspaper, buy postage stamps, or take care of the other incidental things you find necessary once you get in camp? And don't forget, the cost of living is shooting up. The corporations are making money hand over fist. Why shouldn't we receive at least a WPA wage—\$60 per month? Yes, sir, if we're fighting to preserve democracy, let's begin by having a decent wage in the army.

BILL: I got a letter from Joe Kovac last week. He's an old friend of mine. We used to play football together in high school. He's in a camp down South and told me about some other things that need fixing. All during winter they lived in tents with dinky coal stoves in them. They haven't even started to put up enough barracks for the men. The toilets are terrible, and there aren't enough of them.

Joe didn't use to be too particular about his food, but he says that the stuff down there is slop. One of his favorite jokes for a while was to look at another guy's plate, then look at him and say, "Are you going to eat that—OR HAVE YOU?"

LEFTY: And that army chow can be terrible, believe me. I was in a CMTC camp for a couple of summers, and I know.

BILL: Another thing Joe beefed about was that there wasn't much leisure time. They about drill you to death. He said that the recreation facilities were a joke. Another thing that Joe howled about was the profiteering that went on at the camp stores where you can buy a few extras—if you have the money. Joe said he was going to write a letter to Roosevelt about it—or maybe Willkie; he didn't know which—it's so hard to tell them apart any more. Not that he expected to get an answer, anyway. Another thing was the cost of tobacco.

LEFTY: Well, there you are. One simple answer to some of these things would be to have camp stores with goods sold at cost—and tax free. As for this business of recreation, there ought to be plenty of time for it, and plenty of money spent for equipment, instead of the dribble that is now grudgingly spent. There ought to be facilities for swimming, playing basketball, tennis, soft ball, ping pong, handball, and all other sports. They shouldn't be limited to the officers alone. Remember—democracy's the word!

The men ought to have the right to have social, cultural, and discussion groups, under their own control, without the brass hats snooping around. That brings up another thing.

The men in every outfit should have the right to get together and have bull-sessions on any subject, including what's wrong with the country, the army, and their particular outfit. The men ought to

have the right to send out mail without any censorship whatever. And they should likewise have the right to receive any book, magazine or newspaper, whether Colonel Whoozis thinks the "CIO News" or the "American Federationist" is COMMUNIST propaganda or not. The men should have every right to discuss political problems and to mimeograph or print camp papers containing their opinions, without being censored by some shave-tail fresh from the ROTC and college tea dances. The men ought to have the right to vote in all elections.

BILL: What about the Negroes in this whole set-up?

LEFTY: Well, what do you think?

BILL: I think that they should be treated the same way that we treat them in the Local. They should have all the rights that the white soldier has. That means that they should have the right to serve in all the services, including the air corps. They should have the same rights as others to become officers. I'm opposed to all jim-crowism in the army. I'm opposed to Negroes being made servants to horses and officers, to being waiters, and, in general, to their doing the dirty work in the army. A Negro's blood is just as red as ours when he's wounded, and when he's killed he's just as dead as we whites are.

It's about time that they applied a little of this "democracy" talk to the Negro. Doggone it, I

really get hot under the collar when I talk on this subject. When I was a kid and the old man was blacklisted in the steel mills, we moved into a negro neighborhood, and I know that all this they say about the Negro is just so much baloney.

LEFTY: I agree with you 100 per cent. And it makes me mad, too. During peace time, capitalists leave to the Negro the worst shacks to live in; break the dishes after he's through, if he dares to eat in a white restaurant; make him use separate toilets in the South; curse his life with continual unemployment or employment at filthy, underpaid tasks; prevent him from voting by sticking him with a poll tax that he can't possibly pay; and lynch him when he dares protest—or lynch him for no reason at all except that he's black. But when the robbers' war comes he's plenty good enough to defend that Fine Old American Democracy against that man Hitler, who treats the Jews so brutally.

BILL: Well, here's a prize lot of grievances. How are we going about settling them—through committees, elected by the men the way we do at the shop?

LEFTY: Sure, why not? In union there is strength. The army is just like the employer. The brass hats like to take up the grievances individually, "man to man." It's easier to handle inexperienced persons that way.

BILL: It looks like we might have a little fun in this army after all!

LEFTY: Whoa, not too fast! Take your time. The first thing you have to do is to learn the ropes. Don't try any one-man reform campaigns, or in addition to the officers riding you, you'll become known as a screwball to the men. You've got to learn the soldiering business from A to Z, too. The men respect that, just as they respect a fellow who can really put out the work at the shop. Then you will speak with additional authority. You'll have to be a regular guy, too—but you won't have any trouble being that.

By doing all this, you and your ideas will gain great influence among the men. That influence will increase under the horrors of war and the hardships at home. Then, one of these not too distant days, we will be able to stop this war and begin the reconstruction of the country on a really democratic basis.

When enough of the men understand what the score is, discipline and a lot of other things will be taken care of. There's plenty of discontent right now. You'd be surprised how not having hot water, for instance, can change a person's outlook on life. And don't worry—there are plenty of these sergeants who have been influenced by seeing too many Hollywood movies about the army, who have been given the once-over-lightly in back of the barracks by one of the boys in the squad. It's those who

don't. learn what's behind everything and what they should fight for within the army that find it hard sledding. They become the suicides and the mental cases.

BILL: Mac, down at the gas station, told me a joke that sums up this army discipline:

"Major," the colonel yells, "take this man out and shoot him!"

"But, colonel," the major says, "this man is entitled to a fair trial."

"O. K.," says the colonel, "give him a fair trial, AND THEN TAKE HIM OUT AND SHOOT HIM!"

Speaking of officers, what if I have a chance to become one?

LEFTY: Grab it. You can show the men a new kind of officer. You won't be one of those "throw in another ten thousand men" kind. You'll help preserve the men, help save those who don't want to be heroes, especially dead heroes, but feel that it's expected of them. If the brass hats want to make an officer of you, knowing what your ideas are and that you're going to keep them, that's their look-out. All the training that you and the hundreds of others all over this country like you can get will prove its worth when the time comes for the organization of the great people's army out of the prisoners' army we have now.

BILL: "People's army"—what's that?

LEFTY: That's the army we work to create. It

will be controlled by us, with our own officers, democratically elected from the ranks. It's the army which will be free of all those flaws that we talked about in the bosses' army you're entering. It's the army that will fight the fascists at home, not create fascists the way the old Spanish army created Franco. It's the army that will really fight Hitler, not throw in the sponge as the French capitalists did because they were more afraid of the workers than they were of Hitler.

To back up a people's army we will have to have a workers' government, made up of our people from the ranks of the military services, the factories, the farms and the unemployed. It won't be Wall Street's government. It will be a government that will conclude an honest peace, destroy fascism, and take over the land, factories, mines, oil and gas pipelines, ships, railroads, truck, bus and air lines, radio networks, newspapers, movies, schools and colleges—and run them, not for the benefit of the gilded few but for the nation as a whole.

In short, the country will be given back to those who created it. Unemployment will disappear overnight. The amazing possibilities of socialist production will become plain to all. Socialism will spread like wildfire over the western hemisphere. Capitalist Europe will crash under the attack of the European working class, which will once more show its limitless courage. A new era will begin for the world.

BILL: You know, to some fellows the future seems almost hopeless, but I don't feel that way at all. It seemed black during the last war, too. But Russia struck off her Czarist chains. It will be the same this time, but bigger. I know that the soldiers in Hitler's army don't feel any happier about this war than we do. The time will soon come when they will take things in their own hands.

One of the first steps in this country, I think, is going to be, and should be, the development of an independent labor party opposed to *both* the republicans and the democrats.

I don't worry because there seem to be so few people who know what the events of today really mean. You, me, and Jim Morrow—just us three—began to organize the plant. But before we knew it there were a lot of swell boys—smart, too—in there pitching with us. And we didn't even know them before. It will be like that in the fight for socialism. With simple ideas that reflect what people want you can move millions. We all saw that during the CIO drive. It's like a ten-year-old kid who has a jack and knows what to do with it. He can lift a ten-ton tractor-trailer combination off its wheels as easy as spitting.

LEFTY: That's right. Events will change everything. A time will come when the men in the army will refuse any longer to see their friends mutilated for life or blown to bits in a war not of their own

making, seeing in the death of their friends the fate that all too likely will overtake them at any moment too. Nor are working men and women going to suffer at home—while seeing ahead the greatest economic crash and depression the world has ever seen ready to set in after the war. I am convinced of that, too. . . .

BILL: Uh—oh, Lefty, it's 11:30. I'll have to go. Let me have those Workers Party pamphlets you told me about.

Well, you've certainly cleared up a lot of things in my mind. It sounds pretty good, too. I know I don't have any arguments to offer. I'll write you from camp and let you know how things shape up. And don't you forget to write me, either. Well, so long, Lefty.

LEFTY: Don't worry; you'll hear from me. So long, Bill.



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