

Workers! This is Not Our War!
It is a War for Big Profits!
John Mounds is Independent
Labor Action Against the War!

LABOR ACTION

We Say—
Let the People Vote on War!
Make Congress Pass the
Ludlow War Referendum Bill!

MARCH 10, 1941

ORGAN OF THE WORKERS PARTY OF THE UNITED STATES

THREE CENTS

ORGANIZE THE WAR INDUSTRIES NOW!

Bethlehem Victory Puts New Heart into Buffalo Workers

New Victories Will Be Won By This Kind Of Militancy

Labor's Arsenal of Defense!

Special to Labor Action

BUFFALO, N. Y.—The workers at Bethlehem Steel's great Lackawanna plant have won the first round of their battle against one of the worst labor-baiting corporations in the country. Nine o'clock last Wednesday night was the zero hour. With the temperature at 12 above zero, thousands of workers poured out on the picket lines and sang and shouted their determination not to let any scabs get through the gates.

At the main gate, the few cars that showed up for the eleven o'clock shift decided that it would be smarter to turn around and go home, after the militant strikers had swarmed around the cars and rocked them to and fro. One scab, more vicious than the rest, backed up his car and shot it full speed through the picket line. Next to me, he knocked over a middle-aged Negro worker, who fell to the ice with a broken leg. This was more than enough to infuriate the picketers.

Stand Their Ground

While all the big shots were running around frantically trying to get the government to step in and make peace, the workers stood their ground, through the bitter cold night and battled the scabs to a standstill. Entirely, general manager of the plant, consequently declared the first day that the strike was a failure. Behind the scenes he was desperately trying to line up the Buffalo police, the sheriff's deputies and all the scabs he could muster. Even the first night it was obvious that he could never get enough scabs to keep the mills running, after hundreds of workers had poured out of the main gate at eleven o'clock, assuring the cheering picketers they would stay out, and leaving the plant pretty dark and deserted. So he tried to break the strikers' morale with a show of force and nerve.

But he badly underestimated the courage and staying power of the fighting workers, who were determined once and for all to break Bethlehem's strangle hold on their lives. Thousands of them proved that they've got what it takes by staying on the line all night and all day and giving would-be scabs a real lesson.

The result was that the company wasn't even given a chance to save its face. The three point plan that the workers forced Knudsen and Hillman to announce, and that was hurriedly accepted by the company is this: first, all the workers who were locked out are unconditionally taken back; second, the company and the SWOC are to meet around a table (this is the FIRST TIME in its infamous history that Bethlehem has ever met with a bona fide union); and third, the OPM is to contact the NLRB "to explore the possibilities" of an election at Bethlehem. At a meeting of the workers last Friday morning, Van Bittner promised them that the election will probably be held within thirty days. Thousands of cheering workers, many of them unable to get into the hall, went wild at the news and ratified the agreement by acclamation.

Of course, the workers still have a big job ahead of them. They must see to it that all the promises that were so hastily given to them in order to get them back to work are kept. The same united action that got their locked-out brothers back to work will force union recognition and wage increases from the bosses. The workers, black and white fighting side by side, have thrown real fear into the hearts of the bosses and their Washington yes-men.

The inspiring struggle of the steel workers has put new heart into thousands of unorganized Buffalo workers. Particularly among the 10,000 workers of the Curtiss Aeroplane workers of the company since the fall of an AFL strike back in 1934, has interest been intense. Many of them have been saying that if the steel workers win their strike, Curtiss will go CIO next. There should be plenty popping soon, not only in Lackawanna, but also among the aircraft workers.



The strike of the workers at the Lackawanna plant of the Bethlehem Steel Company proves once again that the one sure way for the workers to impress the bosses and the bosses' government is a demonstration of workers' power and might on the picket line.

Determination, militancy and organized aggressiveness is the only language that the bosses understand. It is the only language that Knudsen and Hillman, Congress and Roosevelt can understand.

The kind of action that the Lackawanna steel workers engaged in knocks the capitalist press on its back and throws those stooges of the bosses into fits of raving, moaning and wailing about "holding up defense," attacking "our system of free enterprise" and interfering with the "American way of life."

All this storm and fury is raised nowadays every time workers make the most simple demands on their employers: the right to organize and bargain collectively; the right to receive a larger share of the wealth they create; decent and civilized working conditions and hours. This is about all the workers are asking.

Yet when they make these simple and elementary democratic demands they are met with a flood of anti-Labor editorial scribbling, demands for sending in state troops, for increasing the number of deputy sheriffs, for a 30-day "cooling off" period, for compulsory arbitration, mediation boards, and anti-Labor bills in Congress from every jockey and paid-for congressman who has learned how to get the floor in the House or Senate.

A part of this campaign of the bosses is more bluff. They know that there is great strength and power in the working class. The bosses know that if we are solidly organized economically and politically we will be invincible. They know that if the workers in the mass production industries are organized in militant industrial unions and fighting together on the picket line they can win higher wages, shorter hours and for better working conditions.

That is why the bosses conspire today to wipe out all Labor-protecting legislation and substitute, in its place, anti-strike laws. That is why, when the bosses are not bluffing or maneuvering behind the scenes to wreck the unions, they approach us through various channels with "patriotic" appeals and honeyed words intended to throw us off guard and make us willing sheep for the imperialist war slaughter now being speedily prepared.

Our answer to the bosses must be simple, positive and direct: We demand a progressively increasing share of the wealth which we create. We create the wealth and you take it. You should be happy that you get anything at all. Some day, perhaps, the workers will take it all. Some day we'll put you in overalls and let you live in the streets we live in now.

The only answer to the present anti-Labor drive of the bosses and their stooges of the press and the government is increased union organization, the pressing of the workers' demands and backing up of these demands with strike action.

Aircraft should be solidly organized. The workers are ready to join the union if they have the

First round is organized. The drive in Buffalo was the best and greatest the workers have ever had for too long.

The drive in Bethlehem should be carried through to victory. The workers of Lackawanna made the correct beginning.

Organize the war industries; demand recognition; fight for higher wages and shorter hours; hit the bosses in the pocket: STRIKE!

CIO, AFL Oppose Model Fink Bill

Bill Sponsored by FBI and Reactionaries Would Be Used to Suppress Union Activity

By E. RENTNER

The Department of Justice's FBI-sponsored Model Anti-Sabotage Law, drafted by a Harvard professor and adopted by the Legislative Committee on Interstate Cooperation, is now being actively pushed in the various state legislatures.

At current hearings on the law introduced in New York, both AFL and CIO representatives expressed their strong opposition to it. Known as the Thompson bill here, it has also been introduced in the states of Washington (S. B. 80) and New Jersey so far.

Democracy in the Armed Forces? The Men Don't Think So

By FRED MORRIS

A number of recent items in the press, which rarely carries news unfavorable to the operation of the draft law, indicate that things aren't going as well as they might. A letter sent in to the New York Daily News comments: "I see by the papers that the glamor boys from Park Avenue are being sent to Camp Stewart, which Col. Ralph Tobin calls 'the finest encampment I ever have seen.' What I want to know is, why must we, the poor or middle-class boys, be sent to Camp Dix, a frozen mudhole, while Mr. Swank gets sent to the finest encampment? Are the Park Avenue boys soft, or can't they associate with us common people? REX."

Burns Mantle, well known dramatic critic, writing in the same paper, lolls about the show put on at Camp Dix by the cast of the musical comedy, "Hellzapoppa." Seats were on sale at 50 cents for draftees but when it was seen that "the capulet crowd" wouldn't have enough room, many tickets were called back and resold to officers at double and triple the price. Mantle writes: "Lots of grunting about that in camp... the show was given... mostly... for the officers." (My emphasis.)

What some Army men may expect is illustrated by the return of Col. Raymond W. Combs to active service. This leader of the forces of de-

The more significant provisions of the proposed statute follow:

Section 1: "Whoever intentionally destroys, impairs, injures, interferes or tampers with real or personal property with reasonable grounds to believe that such act will hinder, delay or interfere with the preparation of the United States or any of the states for defense or for war, or with the prosecution of war by the United States, shall be punished by imprisonment for not more than ten years, or by a fine of not more than ten thousand dollars, or both."

Section 2: "Whoever intention-

ally makes or causes to be made or omits to note or inspection any defect in any article... with reasonable grounds to believe that such article or thing is intended to be used in connection with the preparation of the United States..." etc., as above.

Section 3: This removes the constitutional privilege against self-incrimination by giving immunity from prosecution to the witness.

Section 4: "Any individual, partnership, association, municipal corporation or state... engaged in... the manufacture, transportation or storage of any product to be used in the preparation of the United States or any of the states for defense or for war or in the prosecution of war, or in the manufacture, transportation, distribution or storage of gas, oil, coal, electricity or water, or any... public utility, who has property so used which he or it believes will be endangered if public use and travel is not restricted or prohibited on one or more highways... upon which such property abuts, may petition the highway authority... to close... said highways to public use and travel..."

Section 11: Here it is provided that nothing in the act shall curtail the rights of workers to bargain collectively.

Labor organizations are aroused over the implications of this bill which purportedly aims only against foreign and domestic agents of foreign powers as is claimed by Prof. Warner, who wrote it. However, he considers that "damage caused dur-

ing strikes" is not exempted from the act if it is done intentionally and with reason to believe that it will interfere with national defense. In fact, Section 11 gives no protection to Labor at all. Guaranteeing collective bargaining is meaningless if the weapons of the strike and picketing are forbidden. And Sections 2 and 3 "are of such a nature that they could be readily used to suppress strikes or other union activity to improve wages, hours and working conditions. Reactionary local authorities would try to invoke the penalties of this bill upon the ground that labor union action resulted in interference with national defense production."—(CIO President Philip Murray.)

Section 9 of the bill, giving authority to close highways adjoining factories, opens up a strong possibility that this power will be used to keep workers from picketing struck plants. That this is not an idle threat is illustrated by a recent occurrence in Suffolk County, N. Y., where the superintendent of highways and the district attorney, anticipating the act, closed the street next to the struck plant of the Fairchild Engine

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We Must Answer Their Appeal!

By MAX BRACHTMAN

Last week, LABOR ACTION printed an appeal to its readers for aid to a group of West African Negro militants who have been imprisoned by British "democracy" for their opposition to imperialism and war. We have just received another urgent request from England, addressed to us by a reliable friend on behalf of the prisoners.

"Don't fall in with the money," he writes. "The boys, especially the work, need support. We are proud that we have stood the test when so many character-boxes have fallen by the wayside."

The IMMEDIATE need is about \$100. The bourgeoisie is working hard to give "aid to Britain" so that the empire, and British rule over its hundreds of millions of imperial slaves, may be preserved from German imperialism. We should not be behind-hand in showing our international class solidarity by giving "all aid" to the revolutionary victims of British imperialism. Our Workers Party is contributing an initial amount to start off the fund. Every American militant who is worth his salt will promptly add to that contribution so that at least the sum mentioned above is raised and sent off right away.

Let us show how internationalists rise above the tidal waves of nationalism, war and colonial oppression, how they demonstrate their fraternity, in death, with their brothers in other lands, even if separated by thousands of miles.

Do not delay. Send your contributions, large and small, to Jack Mann, c/o Labor Action, 114 W. 14th Street, New York, N. Y. He will be responsible for seeing to it that the fund goes where it will do the most good.

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In the Next Issue

of LABOR ACTION we will publish an analysis of Russia and her role in the present stage of the war—especially with reference to the Bulgarian and Turkish developments. There will in addition be many articles of more than ordinary interest: the story in J. J. Johnson's series on Ethiopia and the Negro Struggle, News from Our West Coast Correspondent, a survey of David Coakley's recently completed tour for the Workers Party, etc., etc.

Colonials Ask Britain's War Aims

The following article was written specially for LABOR ACTION by the well-known Negro revolutionist, GEORGE PODMORE, who is now in England. Podmore was formerly head of the Colonial Division of the Communist International but broke with the C. I. after observing the effects of the Popular Front policy in the colonies. He is the author of several books on the colonial question, among them: "New Britain Rules Africa" and "Africa and World Peace". He is the head of the INTERNATIONAL AFRICAN SERVICE BUREAU which is dedicated to the organization of the African people for their liberation from imperialist rule.

The Africans are segregated in every walk of life. They are denied education and political representation in government. They are debarrred from economic development by color bar regulations. They are hunted from birth to death by tax collectors, labor exploiters and post-law supervisors, who make them slaves in their own country.

In their language, the Africans have been reduced to that degrading form of servitude which Hitler is now trying to impose upon the Poles and other European tribes which the Nazis seek to Africanize.

"What Are We Fighting For, Anyway?"

Conscious of the fact that the British imperialists cannot pretend to be fighting those "evil things—brute force, bad faith, injustice, oppression and persecution,—to use the grandiloquent expression of our later lamented appeaser, Mr. Neville Chamberlain—and at the same time practice Hitler methods in the colonies, the native press is everywhere demanding their "trustees" to state their war aims.

"What are we fighting for?" asks the West African Pilot, organ of Nigerian nationalism.

"Before September 1, 1939," writes this paper, "the firmament of world politics was clouded by a conflict of nationalisms, imperialisms, racialisms, etc. It appeared as if mankind must be distinguished only by their pigmentation, by the colors of the shirts they wore, or how they used their hands in greeting one another, or how they shouted to greet their tribal chieftains. The strong held sway over the weak. The 'Haves' decided the course of world politics and diplomacy, and the 'Have-nots' entered upon an era of intensive and extensive preparation in order to transform themselves into the category of the 'Haves'."

Millions of lives were lost during the last World War, which was fought, it was alleged, to make the world safe for Democracy. But it was discovered, 21 years later, that the world was just as unsafe for Democracy as it was 4341 B.C. The question appeals to the African 'savages' thus:

"What are we fighting for, anyway? Are we fighting in order to preserve the status quo? Are we fighting to strengthen the strong in their grip-hold over the weak? Are we fighting to continue the lore of imperialism—to the victor belong the spoils? Are we fighting in order to substitute the brand of 'brute force, bad faith, injustice, oppression and persecution' as conceived of and practiced by the enemy for our own brand? Are we fighting in order to demonstrate our invulnerability and our capacity to take

punishment and to take our punishment to our adversary? Or are we fighting to exterminate the law of the jungle from the realm of international relations, by deed and not by word?"

"No matter what we are fighting for, unless the existence of Ethiopia and Liberia as independent African political entities is safeguarded, the African will always doubt whether war aims, as are usually promulgated, are not pious platitudes to suit the exigencies of national politics and policies."

What About After the War?

In another issue, the West African Pilot refers to the disappointment of Negroes in regard to Abyssinia.

"The Negroes of the world," it affirms, "would like to have the impression wiped off that Haile Selassie is being used, or may be used, as a cat's paw to drive off Mussolini and so force Italy to disgorge her loot, but that after this is accomplished Haile Selassie may rule over a protectorate or mandate, or whatever is left of his former territory after European 'spheres of influence' shall have been marked out."

On the Gold Coast of West Africa, even the black capitalist press finds itself compelled to voice similar sentiments. The Spectator, leading journal of this territory, poses the query: "After the war, what?"

And it replies: "We have heard eloquent and inspiring speeches on what is to happen to Europe. Hitler's new order has won a merited contempt. The Dominions are on equal footing with Britain; India has been promised a Dominion status after the war. What of Africa? What of the Gold Coast, for instance?"

This same newspaper elsewhere raises the question of war aims, on which it comments as follows:

"So far as we are concerned in West Africa, Parliament's discussion of war aims has passed in a scarcely felt-whiff of mere generalizations. It is all very well to talk about freedom for all peoples. We in West Africa, in the Gold Coast at any rate, are not interested in this all-peoples affair."

"But we cannot expand in the trammels of the spiritless, unprogressive Crown Colony system. No people can. It is a system of rule that does not allow of growth. We call for an honorable death for it and a quiet burial."

The Issue: Socialism or Fascism

In the West Indies similar demands are being raised. In this part of the Empire the labor and national liberation movement has reached greater maturity than in Africa, and the leadership is

definitely committed to a Socialist new order. Voicing these sentiments, The People of Trinidad, poses the issue squarely as one between Socialism and Fascism.

"The appeal to patriotic sentiment is not enough," it maintains. "What is necessary and urgent is a transformation of the political, social and economic structures of those parts of the Empire... and of the attitude of the Mother Country towards them that will produce instant and enthusiastic response to the anti-Fascist crusade which is being so bitterly fought at the present moment."

"As matters are, there have been no changes in the status quo since the war.

Protesting in its comment on the attitude of the British Colonial Office, The People continues: "It is fair to say that so far as the West Indies are concerned, nothing in the recent behavior of the Colonial Office would lead the people of these islands to believe that there is any change in the attitude of their rulers to their aims and aspirations. There has been the usual flood of fine speeches and even finer promises, fulsome and colorful, but the old order marches on insouciantly. It is difficult to go by on promises, and even the most patient and credulous of us at some time opens his eyes and says, 'Look, it's about time!'"

"It should be patent that a people who are politically inarticulate cannot appreciate the true meaning of democratic government. Unless Democracy, some of it at least, is tasted, its true values remain vague and meaningless...."

"It has been said again that this war cannot be fought according to the precepts of the old order and that a change of spirit alone can save us from the disaster that has overtaken so many countries of the world. The time has come when a statement of war aims for the Colonial Empire should be made. The old order has failed; to think in its terms at the present time would be tragic. By some and civilized action at the present moment the whole course of history may be swerved safely away from the dark prospect that confronts all humanity."

For as there can be no doubt about Britain's war aims. Since war is a continuation of politics by other means, an imperialist war can only be fought for imperialist ends. Only a working class government can formulate and carry out war and peace aims that will achieve a victory for the common people at home and throughout the Empire. Only such a victory will establish Socialism, Fascism and Imperialism and liberate the colonial and subject peoples and lay the foundation for a United Socialist Commonwealth of Free Peoples cooperating in the construction of a new world order that will finally eradicate wars and give economic security and REAL freedom to all peoples, regardless of race, color or creed.

"WHAT'S ALL THE SHOOTIN' FOR?"... THE MAN FROM MARS IS PUZZLED

Roosevelt - Churchill State Their War "Aims": -- To Win the War

By Dwight Macdonald

months of official unreality... the Administration is squarely facing the prospect of war. It is conceding, almost openly, that the United States cannot give to Great Britain the degree of assistance required to defeat the Axis and deny, as during the campaign, that war can be a consequence."

Thus, on the eve of taking the United States into the war, Roosevelt dare give no more explicit or satisfactory definition of American war aims than that we are going to war... to win the war. This is also the way that Churchill has been handling the delicate matter of war aims ever since his government went into office last May—and, before that, it was the best formula that Chamberlain could devise. Periodically, Labor and Independent Labor Party members get up in Parliament and ask for a statement on war aims. The best they have gotten so far was Churchill's cryptic reply last fall: "I don't think any one has the opinion that we are fighting this war merely to maintain the status quo, but we are among other things fighting it in order to survive." He refused to specify what the "other things" were and "showed a touch of displeasure at the revival of this campaign."

Our Friend from Mars

If the Man from Mars were to descend on this earth today, he might well repeat George M. Cohan's famous line: "What's all the shootin' for?" He would find both sides in the war insisting they are fighting for the same things. He would hear Ernest Bevin define this as a war to establish "social security," and he would also hear Bevin's opposite number, Dr. Ley of the German Labor Front, assure the German workers that they will have it better after the victory. He would listen to British Minister Herbert Morrison: "I conceive us to be aiming at an international cooperative system.... This depends on and involves the end of selfish national interests." And he would hear Nazi Ambassador Von Papen saying: "It is quite clear what Germany is fighting for. It

is to avoid a repetition of the tragedy of Versailles and to build a better Europe.... England proposes a European commonwealth for the future. She has had ample time since the last war to establish it. Now it will be Germany's turn to look after this plan. Our friend would probably go back to Mars convinced that the present war is a competition between rival philanthropists as to which shall have the honor of bringing happiness to the world working class and of building a nobler and finer post-war Europe.

A Few Hard Questions

It is hardly necessary, in this country today, to spend any time showing that Hitler's war aims are fraudulent, that a Nazi victory will mean what it has meant already in the occupied territories—a regime of terror and starvation. But the equally vague and equally fraudulent promises of Anglo-American statesmen are taken quite seriously—as yet—by the majority of the American people. We should ask ourselves, however, some of the questions that are keeping the more far-sighted democratic statesmen awake these nights. For example—

In the event of an Anglo-American victory "If India be freed? What about the rest of the British Empire? Is sacred principle of self-determination of nations be applied not only to the European continent but also to the colonial areas of the world? What will the victorious British-American alliance be used for? Will it be used to support the victorious British-American alliance in Germany after Hitler's collapse—to support it or to suppress it? Assuming that Anglo-American capitalist democracy will be no more friendly towards a German working class regime than it was after the last war towards such a regime in Russia, what other form of government will the victors try to impose on Germany? A second Weimar Republic? A second Hohenzollern monarchy? Or will, as has been ardently proposed, Germany be broken up into a dozen small states again as it was a century ago? What sort of governments will be

established in other European countries? (There would not be much popular enthusiasm for the royalist régime De Gaulle, leader of the Free French forces, will want to install in France, or for the kind of régime the reactionary Polish government-in-exile would try to impose on Poland.)

If the patchwork of European nations set up by the Versailles Treaty is to be restored, according to the principle of self-determination of nations, how will it be possible to escape the economic strangulation of Europe by national boundaries and tariff walls which has been largely responsible for the present war? Above all, what rôle will American imperialism play in the post-war settlement? Will it philanthropically finance the reconstruction of Europe and then withdraw? Or will it make another attempt—more serious this time—to "put Europe on ration" to shape and control the new Europe in such a way as to insure the world dominance of American imperialism? Will our slashing imperialist interests of the British Empire and its country be peacefully resolved after their joint victory? etc. etc.

The fact is of course, that there are no satisfactory answers, within the framework of democratic capitalism, either from the viewpoint of the masses or of the present ruling classes in England and America, to these questions. The masses will find that the Anglo-American answers will be indistinguishable from those the Nazis would give in the event they had won the war. And the ruling class hierarchies will find that to solve these problems in a way favorable to themselves will mean treading the same totalitarian path Hitler has already taken.

The only satisfactory answers to such questions as these, so far as the great majority of the British and American peoples are concerned, are those that will be given by a revolutionary Socialist movement in power. But it is precisely that perspective which really alarms the Churchill-Bevin-Roosevelt crowd and which produces their strange inarticulateness and paralysis when the simple question is posed: What are we fighting for?

British Workers Demand More Pay

SHIPBUILDER SAYS: "Why Should Workers Do All the Sacrificing?"

We are today in the midst of one of the most terrible periods that the human race has passed through. At the behest of their imperial masters, the workers of the world are butchering each other by methods of destruction which even the most bloodthirsty animal would regard with horror.

Our wars have grown accustomed to the scream of the sirens warning us that hostile aircraft are overhead preparing to drop their cargoes of death. We have grown familiar with the nerve-shattering detonations of bursting bombs. People are daily being rendered homeless, thousands are maimed, blinded and crippled, whilst the mangled bodies of men, women and children show the extent to which the rival capitalist rulers are prepared to go to maintain their interests. What a terrible indictment of modern civilization.

The ruling class is taking advantage of the war situation to undermine the very foundation of Trade Unionism. The rights and privileges for which our forefathers suffered imprisonment and transportation, and which have been maintained only by a century of struggle, are being steadily siphoned from us.

The Trade Union Movement is in a perilous position. Only by the united efforts of the men and women in the factories and workshops, organized through their Shop Stewards and Works Committees, linked up with an all-in Shop Stewards' Committee, can it survive and function as a bulwark in defense of our class.

This state of affairs is particularly noticeable in the engineering and shipbuilding industry. How often have we been told that such is the key men that our services are of vital importance to the nation. How often have we been pulled on the back and ordered to "be skilful and craftsmanship."

Our bosses are quite prepared to do all these things provided that we do not ask for betterment of our working conditions or an increase in wages. Immediately we do this, a great outcry goes up. We are denounced as fifth columnists and saboteurs.

The cost of living has increased, according to official statistics, 24 per cent since the end of 1939. We have received only a 10 per cent increase in our wages. This means, at anyone of your eyes, that our standard of life that is our real wages, has been seriously reduced.

Profits are being increased, the profits have been colling in, and despite the excess profits tax that employers are on a wave of prosperity, they have experienced for many years.

The workers are being asked for income tax. The workers are being asked for income tax. The workers are being asked for income tax. The workers are being asked for income tax.

brancher to the Union officials, but on the activity and militancy of the workers in the shops.

The fullest unity of all workers in the engineering and allied trades (which includes the shipbuilding sections, also involved in the claim) and a 100 per cent backing for the Shop Stewards, are essential if this claim is to be conceded.

Many of us would like to see united action extend to other sections of workers, including the railwaymen and public employees who have put forward a similar demand for a ten-shilling rise, and the miners, who are agitating for higher wages.

The employers are campaigning today for a reduction of the excess profits tax, in spite of the fact that their profits are steadily rising. The same employers rejected our claim, which had it been granted, would have brought our wages only partly in line with the rising cost of living.

The united strength of the workers, rallied behind their Shop Stewards, CAN WIN THAT INCREASE NOW!

BOCK BOWLER
(Chairman of Works Committee at Farnall's)

RAILWAYMAN SAYS: "Industrial Unity Is Needed For Victory"

The slogan of the National Union of Railwaymen emblazoned on all their literature is "Workers of the World, Unite!" What is being done to give effect to this slogan under present circumstances?

The attitude of the employing class, whether interested in shipping, mines, engineering, textiles, or transport, is becoming clear. Using every device known to Capitalism and speedily forging others, the employers are determined to show a united front to the demands of the organized workers for an increase of wages.

The shipbuilders and engineers were refused their demands on the plea that it was against the "national interest," and every effort will be made to turn the railwayworkers down on the same plea. The only "national interest" involved is the safeguarding of the interests of the capitalist class, whose profits are being very well looked after by this "united front" government of Tories, Liberals, Labor and Trade Unionists.

The railway companies, on the basis of the first six months of 1940, are making profits at the rate of £3,218,000 pounds, as compared with the average of 22,520,000 pounds for the ten years 1929-1938. Obviously, anything that is going to disturb that steady flow into the pockets of railway shareholders is against their interest—and they can always bring in the words "national" when it suits.

Taking employers generally, up to November 2, 1939, some 1,900 companies made 352 millions, as compared with 285 millions in 1939, an increase of 27 millions. Not a bad take-off in time of national emergency.

The shipbuilding movement in England has assumed new and large proportions. It is of tremendous significance and American workers should follow it closely. Four large sections of British workers—unintimidated by the war lords of the country—have put in demands for wage increases. Below we point aspects by a shipbuilder, an engineer and a railwayman, asking for united action. The aspects are reproduced from the January 25, 1941, issue of the British New Leader, organ of the Independent Labor Party.

Now that the issue has been jockeyed into becoming one of "national importance," it is evident that all the powers of the state machine will be brought into play. Propaganda, press, platform, cinema, wireless, will all play their part to organize opinion against the forward moves of the workers. Charges of sabotage, destruction of national unity and many other issues will be raised in an attempt to distract the workers from the wage struggle.

Indeed, it would appear that not only will the bosses do so, but they will call in many prominent men and women in the Labor and Trade Union movement to do the worst work for them!

The railwayworkers have raised the demand for an increase of ten shillings per week. This is being supported by the three principal railway Trade Unions and by a host of Unions catering for shopmen.

When the Trade Union Congress wanted to get a certain decision on the conscription issue they called in the executives of the Trade Unions. Why cannot the three railway Trade Unions take a similar step now and call a meeting of all the executives of Unions who are prepared for battle on this wage issue?

The owners are sheltering behind the National Tribunal, who, according to the Daily Telegraph, is now charged with the task of determining this wages issue not on the ability of the industry to pay, or on the merits of the case put up, but by the way in which it will affect the nation.

The only answer to capitalist attack is for the workers to present a solid front to the challenge.

If the Union executives will not live up to the issue in this way, and still rely on their own ability to meet opposing forces, then it is time for the rank and file of the Unions to raise their voices. The pressure must come from the bottom. What about you drivers, signalmen, porters, carters, clerks, permanent way men, etc? Why not force your Unions into taking the initiative and attempt to forge such unity?

The slogan of "Workers of the World, Unite" should be made a real live issue in the coming wage struggle. Only in this way can victory be secured and another nail knocked into the coffin of capitalism.

W. WALLASTINE
(Chairman of the L. Committee Section of the NUR)

Editorials

Trade Union Policy, United Front and the Stalinists

SACRIFICE? Make the Bosses Sacrifice Profits

OUR PROGRAM AGAINST THE WAR

- 1. Not a man, not a cent for Wall Street's war. All war funds to the unemployed. 2. For a rising scale of wages to meet increasing cost of living. Thirty-Thirty—\$30 weekly minimum wage—50-hour weekly maximum for all workers. 3. Expropriate the State. Nationalize Government ownership and workers control of all our industries—automobiles, chemicals, railroads, public utilities, etc. 4. Against both imperialist war camps. For the Third Camp of World Labor and the Colonial Peoples. 5. Let the people vote on war. For the right of youth to vote at the age of 18. 6. Abolish secret diplomacy. Open the files of the State Department. 7. Withdraw all armed forces from territory outside the United States. Free the colonies. Hands off Latin America. 8. Against compulsory military training and conscription. 9. For the defense of civil liberties and workers' rights. Stop the persecution of aliens. Against the M-Day Plans and war-time dictatorship. 10. For full social, economic and political equality for Negroes. End discrimination against Negroes in industry and trade unions. 11. For an independent Labor Party. 12. For Workers' Defense Guards against Fascist and vigilante attacks. 13. No confidence in the Roosevelt government. For a workers' government and a people's army. 14. For Peace through Socialism. For the Socialist United States of the Americas, for the Socialist United States of Europe, and for the World Socialist Federation.

In every case, workers' action did it! And the same can be told of every victory won by Labor in over a hundred years of union struggle in the United States. Sometimes the threat of action is enough to get results. In other cases, the men had actually to ACT! In either case, it was the working class itself who forced the victory.

Whatever the intentions of this or that individual in the government, the government itself remains a boss government dedicated to the preservation of the system of boss rule, dedicated to the exploitation of Labor.

Labor gets from the government or the bosses what it is prepared to take by strike action. That's what the Bethlehem strike teaches: Militant union action does it!

The amateurs of the Socialist Appeal-Militant, who are running the trade union policy of the Socialist Workers Party in the absence of their leader, who at least has some idea of what it's all about, are doing their utmost to work themselves up against our party and its paper, LABOR ACTION. In their current issue, amateurs Morrow and Hansen grow virtuous and critical about the policy we have advocated in the fight over New York Local 5 of the Teachers Union.

Teachers Local 5 has for a long time been under Stalinist domination and whoever knows beans about the Labor movement knows what this means. A small, rather loose opposition bloc has fought for years for a measure of democracy in the union, and for breaking the thor-

oughly destructive stranglehold that the Stalinists have had over the local. Two facts have imperiously demanded consideration as the inner-union fight dragged on: 1) the fight was becoming increasingly hopeless and destructive under the circumstances, i.e., within the framework of this particular local, dominated as it is by an ironclad Stalinist fraction; and 2) that the masses of unorganized, politically "neutral" or backward teachers simply would not join what in their minds is tantamount to a Stalinist party local. Stalinism, which we call the apoplexy of the Labor movement, does not have the necessary attractive power for the bulk of unorganized teachers in New York. They are, therefore, prejudiced? backward? bourgeois-minded? Let us grant that for the moment. But the fact is nevertheless indisputable, except to the blind and those who have learned trade and union policy only from a thesis (and a badly-read one, at that). Tell this mass—as you can, indeed, tell an advanced and conscious revolutionist—to join and "fight the administration on the inside"? Yes, you could tell them that. But masses of workers (or even teachers) have never been organized by that kind of arbitrary ultimatum.

Larry walked into the union hall and found Bill busily scribbling figures on the margin of a newspaper. Most of the numbers began with a dollar sign and ended in six zeroes.

"What're you doing—figuring up your income tax?" asked Larry.

Bill finished scribbling and looked up. "OK, Larry," he said. "You can buy yourself an auto. I've just doubled your wages."

LARRY: Fine! Does the boss know about it yet?

BILL: No, but he'll find out. It's all in this arithmetic. Take a look.

LARRY: Sorry, I never was good at figures. Can't even remember telephone numbers.

BILL: Well, the company just published its profit report for last year. Here it is: \$12,000,000.

LARRY: I guess I could buy a car on that, if I squeezed a bit.

BILL: No, dice, the stockholders need that for new yachts. And here's what WE got: \$10,000,000. That was the total payroll, for 6,000 workers.

LARRY: Well, well! So I got one six-thousandth of \$10,000,000! Sounds like a lot of money, even if it's only thirty a week.

BILL: Now look: that twelve-million profit came out of our labor. What gets it?

LARRY: The night clubs.

BILL: Well, it goes to a bunch of stockholders who think a latte is something you shave with... Still, a handful of them get more than 6,000 of us, who do the producing in this plant. What the hell are they getting the fattest cut for, anyway?

LARRY: I get it. They're useless, so we take the \$12,000,000 and double our salaries. Now all you have to figure out is how to do it.

BILL: Wait a minute: There's the president of this company, old man Crossgrain. What's he do for his \$50,000 a year?

LARRY: Well, he spent most of last year lobbying in Washington, making speeches and breaking our strike.

BILL: We could do without that, too. Where does that leave us?

LARRY: I've practically got my automobile now. Thanks, pal. Now all I want to know is: how are you going to pry all that money out of Crossgrain and the coupon-clippers?

BILL: Oh, I'll just visit the next Board of Directors' meeting and make a speech:

"Gentlemen! In these times when we are all fighting for democracy and the freedom of small nations and for the American way of life and the Chinese way of life and the Turkish way of life, and to save our shareholders and shareholders from barbarism—Gentlemen! In these times, it is only logic that counts!

"We must all sacrifice for the Great Cause of Democracy: Now my pal Larry and me and the rest of the gang, we haven't got much to sacrifice, unless you start taking our life insurance, too. So we humbly make this suggestion to you boys: WHY DON'T YOU LIVE ON THE MONEY YOU'VE SUDBREY MANAGED TO SWEAT OUT OF US? You don't really NEED the extra twelve million or so; and anyway the people who do most of the talking about 'sacrificing' ought to set an example. How about it?"

LARRY: Some'ow, Bill, I've got the feeling you wouldn't get Crossgrain to sacrifice two brass nickels with that speech.

BILL: Maybe you're right. Let's see... I've got it. I'll go to Washington and look up the workers' friend, Franklin D., and talk to him like a brother. Like this:

"See here, Frank, you've good at conscripting things, aren't you? How about getting after the big boys with the money?... Just conscript their bankrolls—and then'll be letting 'em off easy compared with a small fellow leaving his job and his family to take a chance of being shot at. Take the war industries away from the profiteers, put them under workers' control and turn the profits over to the draftees and the workers."

LARRY: Think that'll work?

BILL: Sure it'll work... if our union and a few million other workers did the "asking" with me. THEN WE COULD DUMP OUT ANY GOVERNMENT THAT WOULDN'T GIVE US THAT MUCH DEMOCRACY, AND PUT IN A GOVERNMENT THAT WOULD.

Willkie Reports

There is a story going around that the main purpose of Willkie's recent visit to England was to see for himself and for Wall Street—just how much fire there is beneath all this smoke in the liberal press about Bevin, Laski and the other "left" Labor Party leaders plotting to create a Socialist England after the war.

What Willkie saw and heard seems to have convinced him there was not much fire, that the Labor Party bureaucracy could be trusted in the future, as in the past to remain loyal to... the bourgeoisie. He is said to have reached the conclusion that the Churchill-Beaverbrook Tories are using the Labor Party leaders, and not vice-versa. Hence, runs the tale, his all-out enthusiasm for the Lend-Lease Bill the instant he set foot back in America.

This interpretation is borne out by a recent interview with Willkie, reported in Time for February 24. Here is what he said:

"British industry socialized? Certainly not—neither during the war nor after it, in my judgment. . . . The wealth of the old aristocracy—the income of the dukes and the duchesses living off the estates—will be a thing of the past when the war is over. And the fruits of the industrial system will be better distributed. . . . as they should be. But industry will remain privately owned and capitalistic.

"The way Bevin, the Trades Union Congress and all British Labor are working with British business is wonderful. . . . Some Labor men say the truce is only for the duration, that after the war business and Labor will be fighting again. . . . But . . . whatever Churchill's past mistakes, today he is the perfect rallying post. The cabinet is cohesive. And the King—duty sticks out all over him. He mixed a Scotch and soda for me himself."

Dirty Business

In 1932, Congressman Emmanuel Celler referred to wire tapping as "the dirty business of wire tapping." In 1940, the same Hon. Mr. Celler introduced a bill, H. R. 2266, legalizing government eavesdropping on phone conversations when authorized by the head of a government investigating body (e.g., the FBI).

The purported purpose of the measure is to guard against sabotage, a word used as a cover for many anti-Labor measures recently introduced into Congress. Even J. Edgar Hoover, FBI head, once attacked a similar measure because "the abuses arising therefrom would far outweigh the value which might accrue to law enforcement as a whole." But now, of course, conditions have changed. The atmosphere is different, and, under the cover of the war drive, reaction thinks that it can put through all the anti-Labor, anti-Democratic laws it has always favored.

However, no one is fooled as to the real aim of "such dirty business, such iniquities. . . ." (we quote the right honorable and late Justice Holmes). As the CIO says, passage of this bill "would bring back an instrument susceptible to the uses of tyranny, of blackmail, of oppression." The various railroad unions and the AFL have taken a similar position as expressed by their attitude to what is in essence the same bill under another name, that is, the Hobbs Wire Tapping Bill, introduced by one of the most anti-Labor congressmen, Hobbs of Alabama, a "Democrat."

That the unions have much to fear from wire tapping is shown by the case of the president of the Oil Workers Union (CIO) whose telephone wires were tapped by a man who had learned to tap wires in a government police bureau. The unions realize this and there'll be a hot fight before the Labor haters succeed in foisting this Labor spy measure on the American worker.

Our Readers Take the Floor . . .

IMPRESSED BY SPIRIT IN BETHLEHEM STRIKE

Dear Comrade Editor: I was at the headquarters of the SWOC in Lackawanna the night of the final preparations for the strike, and was very much impressed by the attitude of the men towards the strike. One worker was telling a group of others, "Delay, delay, delay, all we do is delay. What we ought to do is to start MOVING. . . . If it's a fight they want, they'll get it. . . . All we've got to do is stand firm." This attitude seemed to prevail among all the workers. As one worker said, "Yes, Mr. we've got to fight them."

This feeling, together with the wonderful solidarity that exists between the Negro and white workers, makes it a cinch that Bethlehem will have a tough time on its hands.

A Buffalo Worker.

DEFERS WITH US ON SHARECROPPER LETTER

Editor: The letter from the woman sharecropper in the issue of LABOR ACTION dated Feb. 24 asking us for material aid, is heart-breaking, but her request should be refused.

I have foreseen the condition she writes about and stressed in my speeches before various groups of sharecroppers the necessity and duty of collective union action for government relief.

The details of the situation are about as follows: When in January, 1940, another highway demonstration became necessary, due to evictions which in turn were due to a change in method of operation of cotton plantations (from sharecropping to making a crop with day labor) Governor Stark of Missouri promised the leaders of the Missouri Agricultural Workers Union (UCAAWA) the immediate construction of 1,000 portable homes together with a subsistence acreage. The union leaders were forced to accept this compromise because of their willingness to alienate public opinion. Had the offer been turned down the Governor could have (and I am sure would have) accused the union leaders of willfully exposing their membership to a shelterless existence in the month of January. Of course, the landowners played hand-in-glove with the Governor and did not at once execute their eviction notices. More than a year has elapsed and 510 portable homes have been constructed. Most of them are now occupied or ready for occupancy.

But while the question of a roof over the heads of 510 families is solved (20,000 are still living in shacks not fit for cattle) the question of bread remains.

I constantly asked these people who were to move into these portable homes: "What are you going to eat when you move in?" There was only one answer to that question.

With the unfeeling optimism of humanity most of these ex-croppers thought that day labor would at once be available to them. I knew (and so did many of the local union leaders) that this would not be the case for the majority. In fact in several localities there was a decided reluctance among the membership to move into these portable houses at all.

There is now but one answer to the question of Mrs. N., the ex-sharecropper who asks for our assistance. She should go before her local and get a committee to visit government relief headquarters and stay there until relief is furnished.

There is food in abundance in Southeast Missouri, even as elsewhere. I know the landowners are not letting their hogs and cattle starve, but they must be made not to let their human cattle starve. Only collective, demonstrative, union action will solve this problem. We can send Mrs. N. something to eat and 20,000 requests will pour in on us. We won't have solved anything. This problem is a union problem and easy of solution with collective action.

Milton Reschell.

S. Louis, Feb. 28.

We both agree and disagree with you. Individual aid cannot be sub-

stituted for organized mass action. But here we are up against a specific and, as you say, a heart-breaking problem. Surrounded by plenty, a working woman is compelled to appeal to her class brothers for help. The working class, acting especially through its unions, must help those members of the class who are deprived of a decent sustenance by the rotten system of capitalism. At the same time, and with increasing vigor, the unions must carry on militant activity to force the government and the bosses to provide decent relief and shelter for the whole of the working class. Yes, Mrs. N. should demand of the union local that it present her problem to the state authorities, and demand action. That may, however, be a lengthy dispute and Mrs. N. needs help right away. We therefore repeat our request to our readers that they send us clothes for Mrs. N. and her little boy.—The Editors.

A Similar Situation

Some time ago, a similar situation existed in the Office Workers' Union. The small CIO local was dominated by the same gang of Stalinist incompetents and disrupters. The fight of the inner opposition bloc reached the same futile stalemate that it subsequently reached in Local 5. An opportunity offered itself to the opposition bloc to enter a small AFL local which appeared to have a better chance for recruiting larger sections of the unorganized office workers whom the Stalinists had successfully repelled and alienated. At that time, as now, a red-baiting witch-hunt was on against the Stalinists; reactionary labor leaders were working then, as now, to capitalize on the situation for their own ends. But Socialist policy in the unions cannot be determined by automatic opposition to the 'reactionary' old-line labor leaders any more than by automatic opposition to the reactionary Stalinist leaders. Therefore, on purely practical grounds (there was not then, and there is not now, Messrs. Amateurs, any principled question involved), Cannon and all the rest of us in the SWP—Hansen was not yet then its theoretician, to be sure—formally approved the decision of the opposition bloc to quit the Stalinist local and join the AFL.

DRAFTEE WRITES ON ARMY CAMP LIFE

The following letter from a draftee was received by two of our readers and sent to us for publication: Dear J. and F.:

So very sorry for not writing much sooner, but you know how it is in these places. There isn't any news worth writing about. Things are pretty monotonous. All we do is march all day long and when we come in at night we are so tired that we usually hit the hay because 3:30 comes pretty early in the morning.

However, we are not doing so badly down here at the present time. The food is getting better every day. Maybe it's because the draftees came in last week. A few thousand of them come in every two weeks or so.

It must be pretty tough on those poor boys. They never wanted to come down here in the first place. A lot of them are very dissatisfied with the whole outfit in general.

They are also very homesick. At least, I had a pretty good idea of what I was coming into, having been in the CCC. I hear they are grabbing men left and right up there in N. Y. I guess it looks pretty bad.

They had a lot of strikes and petitions here already. We have a man arrested and court-martialed pretty near every day for refusal to work or "agitating."

Most of the men refuse to take orders from higher ranks. Over 17 men have deserted since we came down here. Not one of them has been caught yet. I wouldn't contemplate a thing like that. I have no big reasons to leave here. If you get caught it's too bad for you.

I am detailed as latrine orderly today, which is the softest job in camp. The poor men are out on a 25 mile hike. I always get out of as much work as possible and I usually get out of it quite amiably. Why should I break my back for a buck a day? All I do is mop up one latrine and then I have the rest of the day off.

I am pretty sure that this country will not go to war before the end of this year. The war machine is just in its pioneer stages. The new men haven't any shoes or overcoats as yet, so how are they going to fight? I wonder how much longer this war will last. Have you any idea?

How is your young daughter? I guess she is getting quite heavy by now. I suppose you haven't much free time on your hands with the new arrival. I hear the weather is pretty sloppy in N. Y. The weather is fine here at the present time. The temperature is about 5 degrees.

I guess I wouldn't be doing much at home (if I were there) this winter. How hard is it to get a job in N. Y.? Has the present supply of draftees leaving there increased the amount of job openings?

The summer will fly plenty fast down here. We will probably come home about the end of September. I haven't heard of any Easter furloughs coming up. I think there will be one because the draftees will be here four months by then and they will probably be given one as were we. I don't know if I would go home or not, however. I'll write again after I hear from you.

Next week we will return to this question and see how the ever-so-critical Cannonites carry out THEIR united front policy.

M. B.

Feb. 19, 1941.

Bethlehem Lesson Number One!

Among the many lessons to be learned from the Bethlehem strike, one stands out in sharpest proof: Labor can rely only on its own militant action to accomplish its ends.

However many the favorable statutes, however "friendly" the government, Labor must resort, in the end, to union action to enforce its demands. Labor statutes are effective only to the extent that Labor is ready to back them up on the picket line. Anti-Labor statutes (of which the number is daily growing) are ineffective only to the extent that Labor is ready to block their enforcement, and compel their repeal by taking to the picket line.

Item 1. Under severe Labor pressure Congress passed the National Labor Relations Act designed to guarantee collective bargaining—that is, designed to guarantee the right of a union to speak in negotiations with the boss for the men in the plant. Bethlehem openly flouted this law. Bethlehem refused to sit down and discuss with the union as Bethlehem was content the law was a dead letter. And the government did damn little to change its attitude. The workers at the Lackawanna plant at Bethlehem had to go out on strike to force the Bethlehem bosses to discuss with the union representatives. Workers' action did it!

Item 2. The Walsh-Healy Act provided for certain minimums in pay. Bethlehem disregarded the Act, paid what it thought it could get away with—and the government did . . . exactly nothing. The men had to go out on strike to force the company to discuss wage increases among the other things. Workers' action did it!

Item 3: By law, war contracts are supposed to be denied to companies violating the Labor laws. Bethlehem, however, has been getting its juicy share of the war contracts. In fact, virtually all of its work now is on war contracts. And it was given these contracts by the government despite the rules and regulations on the books. The workers had to go out on strike to force Bethlehem to recognize the Labor laws. Workers' action did it!

LABOR ACTION Official Organ of the Workers Party Published weekly by the Labor Action Publishing Company Vol. 5, No. 10 March 10, 1941 114 WEST 14th STREET, NEW YORK, N. Y. (3rd Floor). Editor: JOSEPH CARTER Managing Editor: EMANUEL GARRETT Business Manager: JOHN BILLINGS Subscription Rate: \$1.50 per year, \$1.00 six months, \$2.00 per year or \$1.50 six months for Canada and Foreign Registered as second class matter May 24, 1940, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1979.

Mr. Winchell And Miss Symes

Columnists have become increasingly popular in the capitalist press of recent years. Not to be outdone by it, The Call, organ of the Norman Thomas group, has opened its pages to the dilute talents of one Lillian Symes, to whom working class politics is a long string of anecdotes and old wives' tales, mainly the latter. In the issue of February 23, Miss Symes gives the elderly ladies who adore her stuff as juicy a tid-bit as can be found in a week of yawns.

"There are rumors that the Cannon and Shachtman Trotskyites are about to heal their differences and reunite under one banner, but that the conditions of this reconciliation are a series of self-humiliations and promises of 'good behavior' on the part of Shachtman. He must admit certain errors and promise never again to conduct a factional struggle against Jim Cannon. If he is sufficiently humble in his abnegation, he may be permitted to edit the party's theoretical organ."

As one of the leaders of the late, unlamented "militant" group in the Socialist Party, Miss Symes need yield to nobody in the rôle of expert on self-humiliation and promises of good behavior. All that Dan Hoan Alfred Baker Lewis, Jack Altman and other eminent warmongers had to do with the likes of Symes was to frown a bit, and they had her dieting on unpecked crow from breakfast to midnight snack. Her reward for being "sufficiently humble" is the right to give expression to her unique talents in a Call column. With the above quotation from her Winchellian column, it is easy to understand that she has been over-rewarded.

Upon reflection, however, if this is not more than fair to Miss Symes, it is less than just to Mr. Winchell. There is, after all, a difference between the two.

Mr. Winchell uses a keyhole and he often reports accurately some of the things that are to be seen through that aperture. Miss Symes uses a mirror.