

## SOCIALIST APPEAL

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1939, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the  
Act of March 3, 1879."FIGHT WITH THE SOCIALIST  
WORKERS PARTY FOR:

1. A job and a decent living for every worker.
2. Open the idle factories—operate them under workers' control.
3. A Twenty-Billion dollar Federal public works and housing program.
4. Thirty-thirty—\$30-weekly minimum wage—80-hour weekly maximum for all workers on all jobs.
5. Thirty dollar weekly old-age and disability pension.
6. Expropriate the Sixty Families.
7. All war funds to the unemployed.
8. A people's referendum on any and all wars.
9. No secret diplomacy.
10. An independent Labor Party.
11. Workers' Defense Guards against vigilante and Fascist attacks.
12. Full social, political and economic equality for the Negro people.

## Defend the U.S.S.R.

Summing up the meaning of the various steps already taken by the imperialist powers in providing Finland with arms and "international brigades", Hanson W. Baldwin, the military expert of the New York Times says:

"In ever-growing measure, as the 'little war' goes on, it becomes apparent that the Finnish front is, in a sense, an extension of the Western Front, a flank operation in the 'big war', and that events of such tremendous importance are being forged there that the 'big war' may be decided or materially influenced by the outcome of the 'little war.'" (New York Times, Dec. 31)

No more fitting commentary than this is needed on all the ballyhoo about "poor little Finland." The Finnish incidents are inextricably part of the Second World War, in which bourgeois Finland functions as an outpost of Anglo-French-American imperialism on the Russian border.

We have said this from the first. And from the first we stood on our fundamental position that, regardless of Stalin's crimes, we defend the Soviet Union—which is not the Stalinist bureaucracy but the economic conquests of the October Revolution—against the capitalist world. The overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy is the task of the workers, first of all of the Russian workers, and can in no way be aided by a military defeat of the Soviet Union. Such a defeat would lead to capitalist restoration and not to the resurgence of the October revolution.

The Stalinist press, while more than anxious to demonstrate the extent of imperialist intervention on behalf of Finland, has had almost nothing to say about one move which, a competent technical authority informs us, is probably the most serious blow so far sustained: the Roosevelt government's embargo cutting Russia off from aviation gasoline equipment and technical information. Russia had been purchasing most of its aviation gasoline here, but had lately been making efforts to acquire the technical plans and information necessary for producing this type of gasoline at home. It had not advanced far along that road when the embargo came.

The silence of the Stalinists about the importance of this blow necessary flows from their boastful theory of "socialism in one country", whereby the Stalinists maintain that Soviet Russia can—in fact had already done so by 1934!—build socialism in entire independence of world economy. This theory, on which the Stalinist bureaucracy arose and on which it will fall, is now once more demonstrated to be utterly false.

Soviet economy is inextricably tied to world economy and subordinate to it. War measures demonstrate this fundamental fact with especial sharpness. No amount of Russian-made armament will save the Soviet Union from destruction by the imperialists, if that armament alone stands between it and the imperialists. Just as much as in 1917, the salvation of the Soviet Union depends on the world working class. Either the workers of the belligerent powers will overthrow their ruling classes, or the Soviet Union will perish. Stalin has always sought a third road, but it does not exist. In his search for it he has isolated the Soviet Union from the world working class. History will testify that this was the worst of all his crimes.

## "Briey Basin"

To the nerve-shattered, mutilated veterans of France, Belgium and Germany, to the broken survivors of the first imperialist slaughter of 1914-1918, two words can evoke an especially bitter, galling memory—"Briey Basin".

Briey Basin was the symbol of the hideous sham of capitalist war lies. The censorship hid the truth about Briey Basin, but it was whispered all over Europe for four bloody years—from army to army and across No Man's Land.

Because the bombs and shells of War never came to the Briey Basin. Neither the French nor the German capitalist class cared to destroy the iron and steel plants from which flowed the materials of war. Human beings they flung away by the tens of thousands for one mile of torn-up mud, but the factories and mines of the Briey Basin, the smelters and steel plants of Lorraine, of the Saar and the Ruhr, these they kept undamaged by mutual agreement.

After the War the story came out. Puffy liberals exhausted their wind in execrations against the hypocrisy of the "Merchants of Death". "Never again", the capitalists promised.

Now it's 1940 and the Second World War. And capitalist economics hasn't changed. For a United Press dispatch of December 28 reports: "While nightly blackouts prevail in other parts of Germany and France, in their industrial districts no effort is made to cover up the blaze of smelter fires shooting up in the sky." Nestling side by side, the Saar Basin and the Briey Basin turn out the implements of war, each under the enemy's guns—but undisturbed. A "paradox", the United Press dispatch calls it. No, not a paradox. Just a continuation of the 1914-18 agreement between French and German capitalists not to hurt each other's factories. Human bodies are expended like so many checkers. But factories are precious. The human bodies don't cost the capitalists anything.

## "Relief Floater"

You can live anywhere in the United States—if you're not on relief. But if you're accused of being a "relief floater" God help you!

What's a "relief floater"? It's an American citizen, out of work, who needs relief, and wasn't born in the place where he needs it.

That's what Rosario Chirillo found out. He has a wife and four kids, and like more than ten million other Americans, he can't find work. But the wealthy taxpayers of Westchester County where he applied for relief denounced him as an Ohio citizen. It's not legal for him and his kids and their mother to eat in Westchester—(unless they can pay, of course).

So they ordered him out. But Chirillo knows that the unemployed and their families starve in Ohio—Ohio hunger has even made headlines in the capitalist press. So he won't go—he thinks he's an American, not an Ohioan, and "Americans don't starve".

Westchester has filed an eviction suit to throw out the Chirillos and their hungry kids—and they're going to use the same handy formula on other unfortunates who weren't born in wealthy Westchester.

"Relief floater" — make a note of it, unemployed worker. It's a neat run-around for the poor, invented by the bosses. Unless you learn to fight it, you're going to get a lot more of it.

Meanwhile the Chirillos are worrying about their four kids. But wealthy Westchester was thoughtful—they didn't file the eviction suit until after Christmas. Good breeding, you know.

## Union Solidarity!

In numerous articles during the last six months we have pointed out the mortal danger to the labor movement hidden—and not hidden any more either—in Assistant Attorney General Thurman Arnold's "anti-trust" investigation of the building industry. As we predicted, all his moves are directed against the unions and not the bosses. The most elementary considerations of union solidarity demand that every trade unionist worthy of the name stand in solidarity with the building trades unions against the Department of Justice and its G-men.

It is a fact, however, that the CIO leadership has said not a word against Arnold's union-busting campaign. It is a fact that the CIO News has yet to carry an article on this vital question. In the light of these facts, the appointment by John L. Lewis of one of Arnold's G-men to the staff of the CIO's dual building trades organization is a shameful violation of union solidarity.

The progressive role of the CIO consisted in its organizing of millions hitherto unorganized, and especially in the mass production industries. There is nothing whatever progressive about its attempts to raid the AFL jurisdiction in the building trades. The craft setup in the building trades results in numerous weaknesses in union organization, but the solution for that lies through the existing unions in the industry and not in having those unions broken up by Thurman Arnold with the CIO afterward presumably picking up the pieces and building a united union.

## SPARKS IN THE NEWS

By Dwight Macdonald

## Norman Thomas Converts the Heathen

There is no question about it. Norman Thomas has a remarkable talent for charming middle class audiences and for getting himself into the headlines. These are gifts which any leader of the left might well envy—and try to emulate. The energy and ingenuity with which he peddles painless "socialism" must be admired.

But I have long suspected that one reason Mr. Thomas so readily fascinates and persuades the middle classes is because, in his eagerness to win them over, he leans so far over in their direction as to make his own position—to the political layman, at least—practically indistinguishable from that of his audience. He is so very idealistic and respectable and so excessively anxious to be "fair" and to avoid stepping on any of the prejudices of his listeners, that what usually seems to happen is that the missionary leaves the meeting armily committed to the cause of cannibalism. At least, that's the way it looks to the cannibals.

Remarkable confirmation of this theory comes from a personal letter which last week happened to come into my hands. It was written by a rather conservative young married woman living in Chicago to an extremely conservative older woman in New York. I excerpt the section dealing with a recent debate between Norman Thomas and Hamilton Fish in Chicago—one of a series being held throughout the nation:

"The thing was posted as a debate between Norman Thomas and Hamilton Fish, but ended by being a symposium on 'Can We Keep Out of War?' They both forgot their politics (for once) and were two good Americans agreeing on the same subject. They both were of the same opinion, that we could keep out if we would stop policing the Pacific, mind our own business, and stop trying to play 'God' about affairs that did not concern us.

"It was truly a wonderful evening, and I left Thorne Hall with a feeling of joyousness at being an American and an enemy of Revolution and uprising. Why? Oh why can't people accept things as they are when they know from past experience how terrible can be the results?"

It is clear that this missionary to the heathen—who "forgets" his politics so conveniently—will never end up in the cannibals' stew pot. Rather is he preparing bigger and better stew-pots for future missionaries who are foolish enough to insist on remembering their politics.

## American Standard of Living

The great argument of those who defend the capitalist system in this country is that the American standard of living is the highest in the world.

Such orators should be referred to the second chapter of *The Structure of the American Economy*, the survey by the National Resources Committee on which I commented last week. In this chapter, called "The Structure of Wants," the tremendous class differences in this "democracy" of ours are charted in unmistakable form. Here we learn that the richest 20% of the nation's families receive every year half the total income of the country, getting as much as the remaining 80% of the families put together. Here we learn that half the families in the country somehow keep going on an income of less than \$1,000 a year, and one-tenth on less than \$340 a year.

These are family incomes, it should be remembered. The average American family consists of father, mother and two children. According to these figures, half the people of the United States have less than sixty-nine cents apiece per day with which to buy their food, clothing, shelter, etc. Even allowing for the single individuals who are counted here as family units, you still would get something under a dollar a day per person.

## Bread or Books?

A table on page eleven shows concretely just

## In the World of Labor

By Paul G. Stevens

## West African Negro Leader Interned by British

Wallace Johnson, the Organizing Secretary of the West African Youth League and President of the Sierra Leone Trade Union Congress has been interned by the authorities of British West Africa. Johnson was arrested under a "Defence Regulation" which provides that persons shall be detained "when the Governor is satisfied that it is necessary to prevent the individual concerned acting in a way prejudicial to public safety or defence."

The detention took place several days after war was declared. It is interesting to note that the judge who ordered Johnson's arrest is the man whom Johnson, as the candidate of the trade unions of Sierra Leone, was to oppose in the coming elections for the Legislative Council.

Wallace Johnson is also one of the leaders of the International African Service Bureau, whose rousing anti-war manifesto the Appeal carried several weeks after the outbreak of the war. That manifesto concluded with the following paragraphs:

"The issue is more fundamental than Hitlerism. It is a question of imperialism. Empire and Peace are incompatible.

"It is for this reason we say that, if lasting peace is to be achieved in Europe and throughout the world, then Capitalist Imperialism must give way to a world Socialist Federation of Equal Nations and Peoples—regardless of race, color and creed."

No wonder the imperialist masters of West Africa are afraid of Johnson. His program kindles the light of world revolution in darkest Africa.

## How the French Government Fights for "Democracy"

Some news about the struggle for "democracy" as it works out in France:

No less than 30,000 German and Austrian refugees from Hitlerism are interned in concentration camps. To safeguard the rights of the refugees an advisory body of well-known exiles under the chairmanship of the German Social Democrat Breitscheid was appointed. The committee has never been consulted, but half of its members

what this huge difference in incomes means. Here we find that a consumer with an income of between \$5,000 and \$10,000 a year eats five times as much food (in dollar value) as a consumer with an income between \$500 and \$750 (who is by no means at the bottom of the ladder, since at least 15% of all families have less than \$500 a year), that he spends eleven times as much on books, 30 times as much on recreation, and 45 times as much on his children's education. This last item is especially significant, since such differences in education intensify and perpetuate class differences.

People can get along without shoes, without any clothes to speak of, without books and chairs and medicine, but the two things they must have are food and shelter. In these charts, the lower the income level sinks, the bigger is the percentage spent on food and housing, until when you get down to the lowest tenth of the families the struggle for existence is so grim that three-quarters of the income must go for these two necessities of life. Contrast this with the very wealthiest families, those with incomes of \$10,000 and over, who spend only 40% of their incomes on food and housing.

The extent of starvation and semi-starvation among the masses in this land of plenty is strikingly shown by a single statistic in this chapter: the authors estimate that if the national income were increased by two-thirds, expenditures on food would be 44% greater than they are today. "This is particularly significant," they add mildly, "since it is so often stated that the demand for food is limited."

## Mass Markets—and Mass Poverty

All of this has ominous economic, as well as social, implications. Our mass production industries depend on a mass market to make money. But the tendency of monopoly capitalism is to concentrate income in the wealthy classes and to reduce the masses to ever lower depths of poverty. Economically, this is ultimately fatal for a number of reasons, one of them being that the masses spend almost all their income on consumer's goods (thus keeping the market humming) while the wealthy spend comparatively little and pile up ever bigger savings (which can only be used to build more factories, whose products must then still further crowd the market). The handful of families at the top, those with incomes of over \$10,000 a year (more than half the total number of families in the country) actually spend more each year than their incomes, going deeper into debt the farther down the scale their income is, until finally the bottom ten per cent spend more than half again as much as they take in each year. (This piling up of debt also works to undermine the mass market.)

Already the process of concentration of wealth has gone so far that half the national income goes to the richest fifth of the nation's families. And these save from 10% to 50% of their incomes, depending on the degree of their wealth. It is these families, furthermore, and not the masses, which will get the lion's share of any future periods of boom prosperity. "An increase in consumer income of 33%," write the authors, "could be expected to result in an increase of only 25% in expenditures on consumption and an increase of nearly 100% in savings." The only solution of this particular contradiction of our monopoly capitalism would be to increase the incomes of the great mass of "consuming families" at the expense of the incomes of the handful of "saving families." This is more or less what the left wing of the New Deal was half-heartedly trying to do up to the economic collapse that began in the fall of 1937. But since the wealthy families controlled the system, and since the New Dealers had no wish to basically alter this system, the fight did not get very far. It has now been completely lost in the martial music of the War Deal.

Their Government  
Roosevelt's War Moves  
Since the Last Congress

There was no recess in the war moves of the Roosevelt administration after the close of the Special Session. Repeal of the arms embargo was a major step in freeing the hands of the war-makers for intervention, but they did not rest on their oars. Nor will they rest until this country takes its place as a full-fledged belligerent. I want here to review a few of the landmarks of recent weeks in the trail toward war:

1. Two days after the scuttling of the Graf Spee it was revealed that the United States had played the decisive role in forcing the German ship to leave the docks at Montevideo. The legal rights under international law, in this case as in all others, are obscure. The de facto result is obvious: a unilateral blow was struck at Germany, one of the belligerent powers.

2. A British cruiser chased a German freighter into Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. The evidence of eyewitnesses indicates that the cruiser violated not merely the "safety zone" established by the Panama Conference but the territorial waters of the United States. This violation was supposed to be "investigated." The investigation has quietly dropped out of the news. Anyone who still thinks that Roosevelt is neutral might well ask himself what would have happened if a similar circumstance had taken place with the battleship German and the freighter British.

## The Law Is What You Make It

3. In connection with the war in Finland, Roosevelt has been discovering the beauties of the device which he calls a "moral embargo." There is no sanction whatever in law or tradition for these moral embargoes. They are, in fact, directly counter to the avowed intentions of the various laws on neutrality which have passed Congress; and, indeed, are counter to the whole professed theory of American government, since they are actions taken solely by the executive without any control or check whatever from Congress or the Courts.

According even to the Roosevelt Neutrality Act, which passed the Special Session, no credits can be granted to warring governments; transfer of title on all goods for such governments must be completed before shipment from this country; and ships of U.S. registry cannot sail to ports of such governments.

When Roosevelt argued in public for his law, he made the people believe that it would keep the U.S. free from involvement in the war. When war began in Finland, presumably the Neutrality Act should have been invoked at once. But it was not; Roosevelt has not found that a "state of war" exists in Finland—apparently having the same view on this point as the Kremlin. Consequently none of the provisions of the Act apply: credit can be extended to the belligerents, U.S. ships can sail to their ports, and so on. The ground is laid for a whole series of those "incidents" from which the people were told that the Neutrality Act would guarantee avoidance.

But not merely has the law of the land been suspended. Roosevelt has, through the invention of the "moral embargo", a grandiose new law of his own. The moral embargo, proclaimed by Secretary of State Hull, prohibits shipment of airplanes, airplane parts, bombs, airplane gasoline and gasoline refining equipment and several other types of munitions to—not both belligerents, which would have been in line with the older neutrality law—but to one, to the Soviet Union.

It might be thought that a moral embargo is merely a Platonic gesture or at most a propaganda measure (which latter of course it also is). But the truth is that the moral embargo is a hard and fast kind of sanction. It is enforced by confidentially telling armament manufacturers that if they break it they will no longer get U.S. government orders.

## War Birds on Top of the Roost

4. Last week Roosevelt appointed Charles Edison Secretary of the Navy. Edison is a plain-speaking man, who has broadcast his opinions. He favors a "two-ocean navy", big enough to smash everything else afloat, and he believes, as he puts it, in protecting this country by carrying the war as far as possible away from its shores; that is, by sending U.S. soldiers to fight in Asia and Europe.

For some months Louis Johnson, though still rated as Assistant Secretary, has been running the War Office. Johnson is of exactly the same war-mongering breed as Edison, and has among his other accomplishments the distinction of perfecting the M-Day plans for the war-time dictatorship.

Putting these two men in charge of the war machine is a complete answer to those scoundrels who try to "excuse" Roosevelt's "errors" as being due to the influence of "bad advisers" who have managed to worm their way into the administration. Johnson and Edison take their rightful place alongside of Colonel Harrington, in charge of WPA, and Colonel Fleming, now running the Wages and Hours administration. Roosevelt, for all his smiles, deliberately picks for key positions those men who can and will carry out his own ruthless policies.

5. Taking advantage of a loophole in a law, "competitive bidding" on armament orders has, during the past few months, been dumped. Competitive bidding was, it is true, often enough a farce, but now and then—when there was genuine rivalry among the companies concerned—it did serve to cut somewhat the armament profits. Now the companies can write up their costs virtually to where they please, and get a 10 per cent profit added for good measure, with no chance for a rival concern to put in a lower bid.

6. The bold and unprecedented act of sending Myron Taylor (ex-Chairman of the U.S. Steel Corporation, by the way) as diplomatic representative to the Vatican can only be understood as a means of mobilizing Catholic opinion for "national unity" in preparation for war. The Catholic hierarchy, because partly of its leaning toward fascism and the tie-up between the Vatican and Rome, is rather shy about Roosevelt's coming war—and the Catholics are the most powerful and best organized of the religious groups. Roosevelt's gesture—which cost a few demagogues from Protestants—seems to have taken them 100 per cent into camp.