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Musica and Business Secrets

(Reprinted from the Northwest Organizer of December 22, 1938)

This Coster case gives us ideas. Why not let the workers of the United States get a good long gander at those financial operations that even now are being covered up by the uncaught Costers and Whitneys in the marts of trade and gold?

Why not find out exactly why these big corporations can't pay a living wage? Why can't they provide more jobs?

Let labor's trusted representatives open the books of the big corporations.

We know the trusts and the big shots don't keep any secrets from each other. The business secrets of today are part of a gigantic plot of the monopolists against the interests of the people.

Why not see how many Musicas, Whitneys, Mellons, Insulls and Morgans there are, robbing, faking, plundering the wealth of the underpaid workers who produce the goods they finagle with.

Let's have a good old-fashioned peeking contest, with the American workers for judge.

Then we'll find out who it is that's cheating whom.

How the Arms Program Works

On December 30th, the U.S. Navy awarded a quarter of a million dollar contract to the Bethlehem Steel Corporation.

Two days before, E. G. Grace, Czar of the corporation, announced to the press that he would fight recommendations of the N.L.R.B. to disband the 20-year old company union.

In a few words: the Navy gang knew that Grace was using scab sponsoring a company union and intimidating workers from becoming real union men. And Grace knew he could sponsor a company union and union-busting methods and get the Navy contract.

The whole army-navy building program as revealed by this little incident is, in the final analysis, a scab union-busting program. It starts by giving the plums to open shops as well as to unionized establishments. Then as war comes closer and the might of the militarist gang (working hand-in-glove with the New Deal "liberals") increases, it begins to make inroads on the union organizations. That's what the M-Day Plan is for. It begins with a little favoritism for company unions and ends by putting the real unions behind the eight-ball.

There's a real point in Grace recalling that the company union plan was worked out in 1918 in cooperation with the War Labor Board. It is not merely a recollection—it is a prediction of the way things will look when war begins.

Hitler Apes Stalin

On January 3rd Hitler initiated the biggest "treason" trial in his six years of power. As one reads the official dispatches and the accounts of the first day of the trial, one is forcibly reminded of Stalin's juridical methods. Hitler seems to have drawn more than one leaf from the book of the Moscow trials.

As in the Moscow models, one learns in advance that those who are to be tried are already assumed to be guilty: some seventeen or so are to be beheaded. The trial is preceded by vituperative official releases. The chief victims are presented as oppositionists from of old, when they have actually been adherents of the regime. Ernst Nieckisch, the most prominent defendant in the Nazi court, is presented as a Socialist who "antagonized National Socialism long before 1933"; actually he became a militarist in 1923, supported the Nazi conquest in 1933, and published a newspaper after Hitler became Chancellor.

The trial, like the Moscow ones, includes secret sessions, while the public sessions are to be in the nature of demonstrations, with some twenty-two principal defendants and numerous supernumeraries. It is reported they will finish in open court. It will be a big show.

Stalin, however, still leads Hitler in the number of victims.

Socialist Party Comes to An End

Party Folds Up to Become an "Educational" Society Inside the American Labor Party

PATCH UP A LITTLE MISUNDERSTANDING



NORMAN THOMAS



ABE CAHAN

By the combined support of the extreme right wing (Thomas-Laidler) and their Tyler-Zamite satellites, a majority of the membership of the New York State Socialist Party has just voted in favor of a proposition submitted to referendum by the State Committee which provides for the members of the S.P. entering the American Labor Party.

The vote really brings to a conclusion a whole stage of development and marks its voluntary liquidation as a political party. Its liquidation as a left wing organization was effected some time ago.

After its break with the incorrigible social-democratic "Old Guard" a few years ago, the Socialist party not only took on new life but moved rapidly in the direction of revolutionary Marxism. The growth of a genuine left wing in its ranks, however, frightened the centrists and the right-wingers who had remained after the split. With a bureaucratic cynicism not exceeded by any Stalinist clique, the Thomas-Tyler leadership thereupon arbitrarily expelled from the party every member who stood for a revolutionary program.

Prediction Confirmed

The mass expulsion of left-wingers took the heart and soul out of the S.P. Hundreds who were not expelled, dropped out in disgust. The left wing, which formed the Socialist Workers Party a year ago, did not have long to wait for the fulfillment of its prediction: it declared that with the left wing gone, the extreme right wing would have undisputed and undisputable sway in the party and would reduce it to a conservative, impotent, social-democratic "educational" sect. Precisely that has happened now. The membership of the S.P. has been reduced to a shadow—a far cry from the days, only a few years ago, when it looked down contemptuously upon the small revolutionary groups from the "heights" of its 15-20,000 membership. In the last elections, it was virtually wiped out as an electoral machine, losing its place on the New York ballot because it failed to poll even half of the required votes; its showing elsewhere was the worst yet recorded in the last 30-40 years.

The Dual Strategy

Simultaneously, the right wing developed a "dual" strategy. Firstly, dissolve the party into the A.L.P., now that the S.P. had the "good fortune" to cease being an "official party," which makes its members eligible for membership in the Labor Party of New York. Secondly, fuse with the Social Democratic Federation, that is, return to the withered bosom of the "Old Guard."

The entry into the A.L.P., not at all reprehensible in itself but

which depends entirely on the policy which it is intended to follow inside it, means in the given case the end of the S.P. as a political party. Two years or so ago, virtually the entire party membership looked askance at the proposals of Alfred Baker Lewis and Co. to convert the S.P. into an educational society, that is, into a "respectable" Fabian club. No other party leader dared then to associate himself with this plan. Tyler-Zam and their friends even denounced it sternly as opportunist liquidation. That opportunist liquidation is now being realized jointly by Lewis, Thomas and Tyler.

To make absolutely sure that the remnants of the S.P. are properly house-broken, the unification with the Social-Democratic Federation, led by the distinguished "revolutionary socialist" Abe Cahan and James Oneal, is being rushed to completion. The political program of the united organization can easily be imagined now. It will differ from the classic opportunism of the present S.D.F. like a skinny mouse differs from two skinnier mice. After 37 years of independent existence in New York, the Socialist party will have produced a Fabian mouse, looking in its old age for scraps of cheese in the A.L.P.

The Centrist Lament

The "minority" statement of the Zamites in the referendum, which endorsed the majority proposition, nevertheless begged piteously that "there must not be an unorganized rush which will denude the branches and sub-committees of personnel and make independent socialist existence impossible in fact, even though guaranteed in theory." The plea will be coldly ignored by Thomas, Laidler and Altman, who are the real and only bosses. The "independent socialist existence" in store for the S.P. will be circumscribed rigidly not

so much by Thomas, much less Zam, as by Alex Rose, Dubinsky and Hillman.

In a word, its "existence" will be as real and independent and critical and free as is that of the S.D.F., its partner in the coming family reconciliation. You can more easily catch a bird by salting its tail than catch Laidler and Company saying or doing anything that hurts the bureaucratic political position of the A.L.P. hierarchy.

Future for S.P. Militants

What is left of Thomas' famous "all-inclusive" party? Little more than reminiscences of the tender moments it spent together with the "Old Guard" in the years gone by; there will be many such moments again in the days to come. Yet there is a little more than that. In the referendum in New York, a surprising number of members (85 out of 345, or one-fourth) voted against the State Committee proposition. In this, we are sure, these comrades did not express an unbending opposition to working inside the A.L.P. on a revolutionary socialist program, as their distrust of the unprincipled and opportunistic leaders of the S.P. This distrust is fully warranted, for gentlemen like Laidler and Altman will do exactly as much to infuse the A.L.P. with a class-struggle program as Louis Waldman and August Claessens have done—neither more nor less.

But what will these comrades do now? And the youth comrades in particular, for among them there are still many who want a militant socialist party? To all of them, the Socialist Workers Party and the Young People's Socialist League (Fourth International) call for true socialist unity, on a revolutionary Marxist program. Their place is with us, comrades in a common struggle. Is it not time they took their proper place?

THEIR WAGE IS ONE CENT AN HOUR!

How do the millions of workers down at the bottom of the economic ladder live? The answer to this question, long-shrouded in mystery and kept from public attention by the venal press, is now coming to light thanks to the Wages and Hours Bill.

Compelled to seek information for the purposes of applying the Bill, the Wages and Hours Administration has uncovered degrading conditions of poverty and exploitation which has kept millions of workers in the black pit of coolie misery. Out of their slave labor comes the fabulous wealth of the Doris Dukes, the Barbara Huttons, the Brenda Fraziers and the rest of the parasitic, upper-class bums of the 60 ruling families.

The Wages and Hours Bill in no way solves the problem of sub-standard labor. It merely smears a little soothing salve on this festering sore in the aim of making American workers more amenable to becoming cannon fodder in Wall Street's coming war, and of easing competitive conditions for the big capitalists.

Down at the bottom of this pit are the workers in the needle trades, cane sugar, fertilizer, peacan shelling and lumber industries of Puerto Rico and the South.

One Cent an Hour

In Puerto Rico, for instance, according to U.S. Labor Department statistics, 31.4 percent of the women engaged in the needle trades earn less than one (1) cent per hour, 31.1 percent earn one and under two cents and 31.4 percent earn two and under four cents. Adult male labor in the sugar cane fields averages less than ten cents per hour. The Labor Department states that the cost of a proper diet in Puerto Rico is \$3.19 per week. Yet over one-fifth of the families interviewed by government investigators had total weekly earnings of less than 50 cents and almost four-fifths earned less than \$3.00 per week.

In Texas there are many women workers averaging less than five cents per hour; in the entire peacan shelling industry the wages range from less than five to seven cents.

There are countless other examples of pay below 25 cents per hour. Notoriously low is the pay of the turpentine workers of Florida and the fertilizer and cotton workers throughout the entire South.

Western Union "Wages"

In the North the Western Union and Postal Telegraph Companies typify super-exploitation. About 50 percent of the Western Union "boys" outside of New York City

earn 10 to 19 cents per hour. In New York City over 25 percent earn 20 cents per hour or less.

The Roosevelt "solution," the Wage and Hour Act, which is to maintain "the minimum standard of living necessary for health, efficiency and general well-being," applies only to those 11,000,000 workers whose products or services are used in commerce between the states. Under the Act they are to receive not less than 25 cents an hour and their work week is limited to 44 hours for the first year; the second year they will receive 30 cents and work 42 hours; the third year they will receive 30 cents and work 40 hours; the eighth year they are to get 40 cents and work 40 hours. Time-and-a-half is to be paid for overtime.

In terms of real life this wage scale means that a man lives decently and marries on \$11 per week. The second year he is raised to \$12.60 and puts a couple of kids into the world. By the time the eighth year comes around he is getting \$16 per week and is looking for investments for his surplus cash.

Bill Does Not Effect All

It must constantly be borne in mind that the Act will affect only some 2,225,000 of the 11,000,000 workers directly or indirectly engaged in interstate commerce. The 24,000,000 workers who are not so engaged receive no attention whatsoever.

There are other tremendous gaps in the Act. Child Labor (under 16) in interstate commerce is prohibited. 50,000 children will be released from sweatshops immediately. Yet the New Deal has made no provision for supplementing the income of their parents who are unable to support them. Child Labor not involved in interstate commerce goes on. The New Deal courts say it is the problem of the states. All courts have said so since 1916.

Furthermore, the Act provides no minimum wage for part time workers, learners, handicapped persons and messengers. Workers handling, preparing or canning horticultural and agricultural products or making dairy products "within the area of production" or at nearby plants having seven or fewer employees are also excluded.

These are the gaps which become evident at first glance. As time goes on the government will inevitably multiply them in order to drive weak businesses to the wall. It must also be remembered that all cases of dispute are settled by a boss court.

Employer Evasion Begins

The employers, however, have not waited for the New Deal to punch additional holes into the

Act. They have already begun a campaign of firing and evasion. To-date, 3,300 complaints have been registered by unions and groups of workers. In Puerto Rico 120,000 of the island's 420,000 workers are being laid off, bringing the number of unemployed there to 350,000. Saw mills in Arkansas and Mississippi have closed. 5,000 to 7,000 workers of the peacan shelling industry around San Antonio have been shown the gate. In the North, the Western Union Telegraph Company has threatened to dump 3,125 "boys" onto the street because the company is operating at a deficit (\$1,615,919 for the first ten months of 1938); yet R. B. White, president, and Newcomb Carlton, chairman, continue to draw \$76,770 and \$62,065 per year.

Compared with America's capacity to produce, the Act's \$11 worth of purchasing power is a mockery. It has time and again been shown that a living wage begins at \$30. By setting such a sub-standard minimum the government has encouraged the bosses to reduce wages. This was done under the N.R.A. and will be done again.

Whether or not the Act can even to some slight degree benefit labor as a whole will only be decided by the activity of the trade unions. It is not enough for them to register complaints with the Wage and Hour Division. Where the bosses lay off and reduce wages, the unions must demand inspection of the books looking toward reinstatement and restoration of wages if the boss can pay. If the business is running at a deficit, as Western Union is, the workers must demand that the government take it over with workers control of wages, hours and financial operations. If the enterprise is too small to be taken over, the union must demand public works at trade union wages for those who have been cast on to the streets.

No reliance on the government! Make the boss or his government pay! For a 30 hour week at a \$30 minimum!

CORRECTION

In the article on Argentine last week an erroneous reference was made to a "Bolshevik-Leninist League" in Argentina. Actually several groups of the Fourth International tendency exist in Argentina and the Pan-American Sub-Secretariat of the International is at present sponsoring unity negotiations.

ASK FOR THE APPEAL AT YOUR NEWSSTAND

BRENDA'S PARTY

(Continued from page 1)

500 was spent on champagne for one evening, and another \$1,000 for Scotch and rye and just plain Bourbon. And you can't just sit around making a pig of yourself at the table, can you? So another \$2,500 was paid for a little music to keep things moving. And what's the good of music if you can't dance? So another \$500 went to buy 300 gigolos to keep the girls amused at the party.

And you wouldn't expect them to dance around in a room that looks like a barn, would you? So another \$1,500 went for decorations, including flowers. Nor could you take chances on any roughnecks crashing a quiet little private party, could you? So another \$400 went to hire private dicks for the night.

She Needs Relaxation

In a word, Miss Frazier's party set her back some \$25,000-\$50,000 for the night, and considering the clean, healthy fun they all get out of it, it was cheap at twice the cost.

Now don't think we begrudge Miss Frazier a little fun. Not for a minute. She has a tough job to do and she ought to be allowed a little innocent relaxation. Imagine how hard you would have to work to manage an estate which totals \$4,051,000! Well, that's what Miss Brenda has to draw her modest income from; and it's this little income that she must watch over so carefully so that she can have another little party next month...

But Here's A Point

And as we were reading the reports of the accounting of Brenda's little estate, and the details of her cozy little party, we were struck by a little point.

Hundreds of thousands of horribly persecuted people in Europe haven't even a crust of bread or a glass of clean water—much less a roof over their heads. They are refugees from the fascist barbarians. They ask that the traditional right of asylum be invoked so

that the doors of "democratic America" may be opened to them. And here are a gang of gigolos and clothes-horses, swilling around like so many swine at a gilded trough, wallowing drunkenly in champagne, squirting away about \$50,000 for just one night of debauchery—the "coming out" of a worthless social parasite.

Relieving Miss Frazier

Why, it would be the easiest thing in the world to maintain hundreds of thousands of refugees in this country! It would be just as easy to extend real relief to the millions of unemployed.

All that has to be done is to relieve Miss Frazier of most of her worries. Just slap a tax—a real one—on the fortune which she squanders in slop and swill. Slap the same stiff tax on all the members of her useless class!

And if the working class were to fight for that, for really putting the squeeze on the parasite class, the problems of the masses would be the easiest thing in the world to solve.

It is not the refugees who are the problem. The problem is the Brenda Fraziers and the rest of her class. And if we tackle that problem in the simplest, boldest and most direct way, we'll find that the "problem of the refugees" will be automatically resolved.

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11,000 DRIVERS STRIKE IN N.Y.

(Continued from page 1)

years two weeks vacation with pay. The union is asking for 45 percent on the gross take for day men and 50 percent for night men. Under the expired contract the men obtained 42 1/2 percent. Elimination of company strong-arm squads is also one of the pressing demands.

Union officials said that day men were now averaging \$17 weekly and night men \$15. The demands would bring a pay increase.

However, there is another issue behind the strike upon which the future of the union depends and which can be met successfully only through strike victory.

Make-Work Futility

It is the problem of cab service during the coming World's Fair. Grover Whalen, commissioner of the World's Fair, has proposed a reactionary scheme. He wants W.P.A. and relief workers to run 7,000 cabs in special service at their present low rate of pay.

Union members want to have all unemployed cab drivers hired under the contract, and then others to be hired also at union scale of wages and under the contract. The union must win the present fight for a contract with the big companies if it hopes to have the power to prevent Whalen's scheme from succeeding.

Progressive unionists want W.P.A. and relief workers to have a job and a decent living at the expense of the bosses and the government and not to drag down the union scales on the jobs.

Whalen's scheme is another attempt to divide the employed and unemployed through a fake "share the work" program. Progressive unionists counterpose a program of jobs for all at union wages.

Talk of arbitration through La Guardia or the state mediation board has already begun, and the strikers will have to be on guard if the union demands are not to be badly compromised.

QUESTION BOX

(Conducted by the National Educational Department)

QUESTION: How do you answer the argument that the big armaments program will provide jobs?—M.B.F., Boston.

ANSWER: If the armaments program is a "blessing" for this reason, then so was the tornado that swept the East not long ago. It cannot be denied that tornadoes, earthquakes, fires, etc., also provide jobs—provided they take place on a sufficiently large scale. It is obvious, however, that such calamities waste the wealth of society and make every member of society so much poorer.

The same is true of the armaments program. The products of this industry do not go to satisfy a single human need; they do not add a whit to the wealth and goods available to society. The government might just as well decide on a billion-dollar program to build Egyptian pyramids every mile from coast to coast. On the contrary, unlike pyramids, the armaments program means the expenditure of money (wasting of wealth) in order to make possible the destruction of more wealth, not to speak of lives—this being the sole use for which armaments are manufactured.

The armaments program, in brief, means expenditure for socially useless, or rather socially destructive ends. We propose that the huge sums which Roosevelt wants appropriated to build huge battleships, and make machine-guns and poison gas, be spent rather on low-cost, non-profit housing, to provide substitutes for the slums; to build decent dwellings for the families now condemned to live in fire-traps and unsanitary hovels. Homes, not battleships! This expresses sharply the contradiction between advocacy of the armaments program and the interests of the masses of workers.

It is also noteworthy that out of a billion dollars spent on armaments, as against a billion dollars spent on (say) W.P.A., a smaller percentage of the former will end up in the hands of the needy workers themselves, because of the exorbitant profit-making which is rampant in the munition-making industry.

It cannot be denied that the great armament programs of other countries have resulted in propping up industrial activity, at least at first, and have created a kind of artificial prosperity, temporarily and on a limited scale. It acts as a shot-in-the-arm for capitalism, temporarily stimulating but leading eventually and shortly to an even greater relapse.

Thus far, we have answered the question on the basis of economic considerations. But it would be short-sighted to look upon the armaments program as a measure for domestic economic recovery. The armament program is another link in Roosevelt's preparation for the imperialist war which he knows is inevitable. It is one of the laps in the arms race which is progressing so feverishly among all the nations of the world. It is Roosevelt's saber-rattling to catch the attention of Germany and Japan.

This means that sooner or later the armaments program WILL provide a job for every able-bodied man—the job of killing his fellow-workers in foreign uniforms. We will be permitted to fight for the investments of the Fat Boys in Latin America and elsewhere, while dictatorship is clamped down at home, the militant labor movement is smashed, labor is squeezed to carry on the war, and Roosevelt makes pretty speeches about "democracy." This is the armament program's job—nothing else.

(Readers of the Socialist Appeal are urged to submit their questions for an answer by this department.)

C. P. MISRULE IS EXPOSED IN TEACHERS UNION

(Continued from page 1)

cratic regime which the Stalinists have established in the Teachers' Union, the resignation of four prominent members of Teachers College served to bring the fact dramatically before public attention.

Professor Childs pointed out that he had, in fact, resigned from the Local some time last Spring, but had not made his withdrawal public out of a desire not to injure the union. He was impelled to make the announcement publicly, he said, only after an insinuating and characteristic attack had been made upon him and his associates in the pages of the Nation by the well-known C. P. stooge, James Wechsler. The Wechsler article was calculated to discredit in advance any possible public criticism that Childs might make of Stalinist misrule in the Union.

Militants Fight C. P. Misrule

Militants in the New York Teachers' Union, who have long been conducting an organized fight against the class-collaborationist bureaucracy of the C. P., have expressed themselves as regretting the decision of the college teachers involved to quit the union.

Their position is that it is—now more than ever—necessary to stay in the union and extend the fight against the disastrous policies and leadership of the Stalinists. Many of them feel gratified at the statement by Professor George S. Counts, former collaborator of the Stalinists who has recently broken with them, but who has declared, in connection with the resignations of other members from the Teachers' Union, that while he is discontented with the management of the union by the Communist Party people, he intends to stay inside the organization and fight against anti-democratic malpractices.

Professor Childs' revelations of the C. P. stranglehold on the union proved very interesting. He pointed out that after the official Columbia University Stalinist paper "Vanguard" had repeatedly published stupid and malicious attacks on the faculty and the College, he made an attempt to have the Teachers' College Union Chapter made public a disavowal of any connections with the Stalinist sheet. In this effort, he was defeated by the Stalinist overlords who were interested primarily in defending their clique interests, no matter how stupidly expressed or injurious to the union. It was after this humiliating demonstration of the complete factional control which the Stalinists exercise over the union, plus the fact that they



C. L. R. JAMES

C. L. R. JAMES OPENS NATIONAL TOUR IN PHILA.

C. L. R. James, noted English lecturer and writer, opened a national speaking tour on Friday, January 6th, in Philadelphia, and will speak in Newark on Sunday, the 8th.

A series of meetings addressed by James in New York prior to his departure brought enthusiastic praise for his oratorical ability and capacity for analysis of world events. Audiences will have an opportunity to hear him in almost every important city in the United States.

His next lectures are scheduled for the following dates and places:

New Haven: Tuesday, January 10, Fraternal Hall, 19 Elm Street, 8 p.m.: "The Twilight of the British Empire." Wednesday, January 11, Negro Community Center.

Roxbury: Thursday, January 12, 8 p.m.: "Twilight of the British Empire," Otisfield Hall.

Lynn, Mass.: January 13, 8 p.m., Lynn Labor Lyceum, 127 Oxford Street: "Twilight of the British Empire."

Boston: Sunday, January 15, 8 p.m., Masonic Temple, 1065 Tremont Street: "The Negro People and World Imperialism."

Time and place of later meetings will be reported as the tour progresses.

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tried to have him meet with Browder and Hathaway, C. P. leaders, in order to "straighten out" union matters (!!) that Childs resigned from the Local.