

## SOCIALIST APPEAL

Vol. III—No. 3 Saturday, January 21, 1939

Published every week by the  
SOCIALIST APPEAL PUBLISHING ASS'N.  
at 116 University Place, New York, N. Y.  
Telephone: National Office: Algonquin 4-8547Subscriptions: \$2.00 per year; \$1.00 for six  
months. Foreign \$2.50 per year. Bundle order  
3 cents per copy. Single copies 5 cents.All checks and money orders should be made  
out to the Socialist Appeal.Entered as second-class matter September 1,  
1937, at the post office at New York, New York,  
under the Act of March 3, 1879.

MAX SHACHTMAN

Editor

HAROLD ROBERTS FELIX MORROW  
Associate Editors

S. STANLEY, Business Manager

## Militarizing the W.P.A.

Many new changes have been quietly taking place in the relief and W.P.A. administration which, added up, reveal the intention of the Roosevelt administration to place the unemployed and relief workers in a military straight-jacket.

In New York, workers have been ordered to appear for fingerprinting or they will be considered not interested in their jobs. On some projects, organized protests have held up this attempt to prepare a convenient blacklist for the generals. The Stalinist-controlled Workers' Alliance, as usual, is cooperating with the government in this foul business.

Another step is the preparation of uniforms for the 5,000 recreation teachers in New York City. Colonel Somerville, W.P.A. head explains: "We believe a uniform will give the worker more authority . . . and increase the worker's pride in his job."

More and more Army officials are being placed in charge of relief and W.P.A. administration. Governors Island, military base in New York, has been drained of captains, colonels, and generals who replace civilian supervisors in the relief and W.P.A. bureaus.

Pressure is now being applied to enlist relief workers into the army and navy. Recruiting sergeants and attractive posters advertise the fact that in the army or navy there is "continuous employment, regular meals, sturdy clothing and adventure!"

Roosevelt, it is clear, looks upon the unemployed as the first source of cannon-fodder. Capitalism has no other use for them.

## Who Are the Murderers?

There are five young boys in the Sing Sing death-house, waiting to walk to the electric chair. Raised in the dirt and disease and ignorance and poverty of New York's worst slums, they were driven by their environment into one jam after another; and finally, trying to shoot their way out of one of them, they killed a man. When it is pointed out that the society which breeds those slums and that poverty and disease are responsible for that killing, the boss press in New York State raises its pious hands and preaches about "the sanctity of human life" and how these "monsters" must "pay the supreme penalty."

In the South Wing of the Capitol last week, 400-odd men passed the WPA Deficiency Bill. Three-fourths of these men were lawyers, the rest doctors, journalists, merchants, bankers. They draw down ten grand a year plus expenses from the Federal Government, added to many thousands they have time to pick up on the side. Practically all of them went to college, they all go to church, none ever goes without a meal or a new suit of clothes when he wants it.

The Bill they passed, if it becomes law through Senate action and Presidential signature, means that 600,000 to 800,000 WPA workers lose their jobs next month. This in turn means several hundred despairing suicides, thousands of babies getting rickets and skin diseases and bad teeth and pellagra because their fathers can't buy decent food, thousands of children and adults dying in the cold weather from pneumonia and diphtheria and tuberculosis because they can't pay for medical care, hundreds of thousands suffering permanent injury in health and morale.

The boss press calls the men who passed this Bill "saviors of the American system," "true and independent statesmen."

Who are the murderers?

## Socialist Pontius Pilates

Belgium has a "socialist" Premier named Paul Henri Spaak and a number of cabinet members of the same party.

Loyalist Spain also has a "socialist" Premier named Juan Negrin and a number of cabinet members of the same party.

All of them are members and leaders of the Second International—that is, they are not only friends and comrades and socialists but internationalists.

M. Spaak, however, shocked the members of his own party by his proposal a short time ago in the Belgian Parliament to send a representative to General Franco's government in Burgos—the government that is now engaged in a drive to slaughter all of Spaak's socialist comrades in Spain. Since this was too much even from a social-democratic Premier, the members of his party rose up in arms against him.

At a special Congress of the Belgian Labor (socialist) Party early last December, ringing with the cry "We shall not go to Burgos!" the delegates voted decisively against sending a representative to Franco's government.

When the reporter for the Resolutions Committee, A. Wauters, was asked point-blank just what the decision meant, he replied, "It seems to me to have been clear enough. We adopted our decision with all the responsibilities that it implied for the [socialist] ministers, that is, that they would have to resign."

Magnificent, isn't it? It shows how firm the leaders of the Second International are when socialist principles are to be protected, when solidarity with their Spanish colleagues is to be asserted? Hold on a minute.

Tuesday, December 6, the Belgian Chamber of Deputies met and in violation of the party congress decision, 18 "socialist" deputies voted for the government, several abstained and still others sneaked out of the hall in order to duck responsibility.

Wednesday, December 7, the General Council of the party met to consider the situation. The parliamentary group, led by Spaak, met at the same time. It threatened the party leadership . . . but it didn't really have to, for the General Council capitulated to these open traitors without a word.

Expel the traitors from the party? Nostalgic! The only ones expelled from the Second International, in Belgium as well as in the United States, are the left wing militants who mean it when they speak of working-class solidarity and socialism. Franco's friends, however, must be kept in the party for the sake of—unity!

Finally, a January 15 cable to the press from Brussels reads: "The Belgian Socialist Party today adopted a resolution denouncing the government's decision to send a representative to Insurgent Spain but admitting that it was necessary for Premier Paul Henri Spaak and other socialist cabinet members to remain in their positions for the present at least."

That is how the "socialist" Pontius Pilates wash their hands of the blood of their Spanish brothers. And these people have the unmitigated effrontery to talk of us, revolutionary socialists, as enemies of the struggle against fascism!

What about M. Spaak's good comrades here, Norman Thomas and James Oneal. Like him, they are members of the Second International. They have papers to write in. But they haven't had a single word to say in comment or in condemnation of Spaak's treachery. By their silence they make themselves accomplices of this un-speakable scoundrel.

Yet, may be they just haven't the time to write about him. After all, they are so busy explaining that Leninism and fascism are the same thing that they can't be bothered with the friends of fascism at work in their own camp!

## Traitors At the Helm

General Jose Asensio has been appointed military attaché to the Spanish Embassy in Washington, we learn from a Barcelona dispatch to the New York Times of January 17.

Asensio, chief in command of the Loyalist armies, was arrested by the government on February 21, 1937, and, together with Villalba, commander of Malaga, was charged with treason for betraying Malaga to the Fascists. That Malaga was betrayed, not even the Stalinists denied. When, directly implicated in the betrayal, the Stalinists tried to smear others, the C.N.T., on August 26, 1937, revealed that the Stalinist War Commissar, Bolivar, had joined Villalba in abandoning headquarters, and Antonio Guerra, Stalinist representative in the Military Command of Malaga, had stayed behind and gone over to the fascists.

The day Gijon fell, on October 21, 1937, eight months after his arrest, the Negrin government announced that Asensio, and his chief of staff, Cabrera, were about to be tried. Now we learn that he is not only released, but is appointed to an important official post! Why? Because he is blood-brother to the government which has thus honored him. Prison and shooting are only for proletarian militants in Loyalist Spain!

Traitors at the helm—such is the tragedy of the Spanish people.

## A Free Press

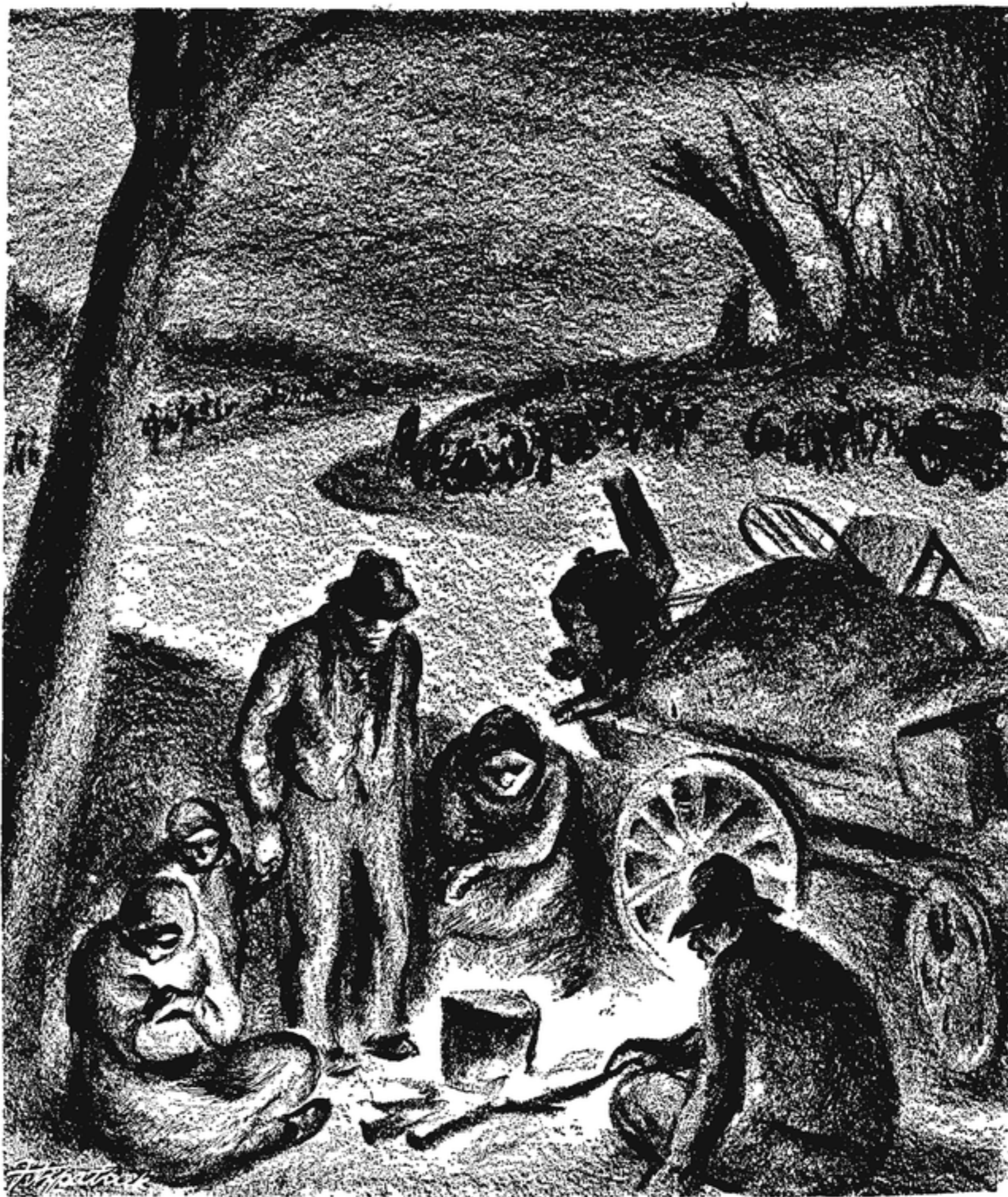
Secretary of the Interior Ickes went to town on the kept press, in a radio debate last week with Frank Gannett, head of the Gannett Newspapers.

Ickes was able to demonstrate that the powerful financial and industrial interests control America's newspapers. The few examples he gave of anti-labor policies of the "free" press could be added to by the thousands by trade unionists everywhere.

Ickes was telling nothing new. The most interesting question in connection with the kept press is—what can we do about it? And on that question, Ickes was cheek by jowl with Gannett. For Ickes declared that it was "up to the publishers to tell us how to free our press." That was an answer which Gannett liked; Gannett blandly declared that the press was free, and since Ickes himself had made Gannett and his kind the masters of the decision, the debate was over.

Smarting at Gannett's attacks on the New Deal, Ickes was saying: "If you keep this up, we'll tell the truth about you." But Ickes and the Roosevelt crowd haven't the slightest intention of freeing the press from the control of finance capital. For to free the press would require wresting it from the control of the capitalists by wiping out their economic power. That is a task in which not only Ickes not join, but which he bends his every energy to prevent. He is for capitalism and all its works. He grumbles occasionally, but only like a faithful servant who disapproves of the excess of his master. Freeing the press will be a job for the workers. The press will be free when the workers themselves are free and not before.

## In Missouri—America's Own Refugees



Reprinted through the courtesy of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch

## Sharecroppers Dramatize Their Plight In Sitdown On Missouri's Tobacco Road

(Continued from page 1)  
whole is of little concern to the health authorities.

**Sheer Desperation**  
It was in sheer desperation that the croppers camped on the highways to bring their plight to public attention. Evicted from their miserable shacks when they refused to accept a change in status to that of day-laborers, which would eliminate their one-half share of the government cotton reduction parity payment, or a reduction of their share of the crop from one half of the yearly produce to two-thirds, the croppers are now being compelled to accept the masters' terms.

Last year the parity payments amounted to about \$100 for a cropper, about one-third of his income. The laborer received from 75 cents to \$1 a day for 100 to 120 days and no advanced credit from the planter to which the cropper is entitled. An increase in day laborers would bring the day rate down to as low as 40 cents for 10, 12, and 14 hours.

"Already living on a level below that of the city slum dweller, the croppers revolted in such large numbers that the planters were taken off guard. Hundreds of families were unable to reach the highways for lack of trucks in which to haul their meagre

belongings. The 1,500 who camped on the highways had nothing more than old, worn and tattered blankets and roadside fires to protect them from the snow and the freezing weather. Not a single regular tent could be found in all 13 camps. The scanty food which they had taken with them from the farms was consumed before the end of the first day. The two-score or more children, some no more than 5 months old, had to go without milk for several days. Children, old folks, men and women all were deliberately permitted to grow cold and hungry so that they would submit to even more wretched conditions of servitude than they experienced last year.

## Promises of Relief

Governor Stark promised relief in the form of tents and foods but found one pretext after another for not supplying it. Tents could not be given without the "approval of the army." The Red Cross found that they could do nothing since these homeless, starving people were not "in their field." The federal authorities in control of the seven surplus commodity warehouses in this region refused to recognize the croppers' committees and insisted that each applicant make a personal appearance and reply to a detailed and complicated questionnaire. It was several days before they gave meagre hand-outs to the croppers. The St. Louis Industrial Union Council sent much-needed truck loads of food on the third day of the demonstration.

The morale of the croppers could not be broken by the efforts of the state and federal authorities and the landowners. The landowners, who at first scoffed at reports of the croppers' revolt, were soon painfully astounded by the response and organized their reactionary campaign against the movement. At Charleston yesterday (Thursday) they adopted a resolution which stated "that the government relief and charitable agencies [should] refrain from encouraging this movement by giving aid and assistance." State Senator James C. McDowell, a local landowner, blamed "agitators" for the "damnable scheme" and called for an investigation. A similar resolution was adopted on the same day by a meeting of landowners in New Madrid.

## Whitfield Threatened

Threats of violence against Owen H. Whitfield, local leader of the croppers and vice-president of the Southern Tenants' Farmers Union, were made by the planters. He left the field and is now in St. Louis seeking assistance for the croppers. Today, when J. R. Butler, president of the Union sought to advise the sharecroppers, he was "escorted" by the state police to the Missouri-Arkansas border. At present the croppers are without any leadership.

The landowners, insurance companies and individuals, however, prefer that the croppers produce profits for them while they are stricken with starvation and disease by malnutrition and unsanitary conditions. The landowners have received some benefits from the cotton-reduction plan of the Roosevelt administration. The law which provides for a reduction of cotton-crop acreage and government-payments neither provides for the croppers and laborers who are thus thrown out of work, nor contains a safeguard against the conversion of croppers to laborers, that is, against depriving the croppers of their share of the parity payment.

## Press for Action

The evicted croppers here expected that the federal authorities, witnessing their plight, would establish rehabilitation projects for them similar to the one existing near here, at La Forge. There, 100 families have been settled on about 67 acres of land and a loan of \$7,000 each and have cooperative stores and community cultural life. Plenty of land is available for such projects. However, the government will make no move unless compelled to by the organized efforts of the labor movement and the tenants, croppers and day-laborers.

The trade unions, particularly the C.I.O., must be aroused in support of these downtrodden people. Direct relief must be extended. The St. Louis Industrial Union Council must be supported in its relief work. At the same time the C.I.O. and Labor's Non-Partisan League should demand of Congress immediate appropriations for the relief of the croppers and laborers and the establishment of cooperative farms for the 20,000 croppers and laborers of Southeast Missouri and the more than 700,000 croppers in the cotton belt of the South.

## THE CAT SNEAKS OUT OF THE BAG

John T. Flynn, financial commentator for the Scripps-Howard press chain, in a recent article uncovered a damning indictment of the imperialist designs of the Wall Street-New Deal government at the expense of America's unemployed millions.

His article first exposes the fact that up to the close of the year only \$88,000,000 of the one billion dollars appropriated by Congress for the past year for PWA has been spent. Flynn further points out, that WPA funds during the past year were purposely kept down with the impression being given that a great outpouring of Public Works funds would take the load off the WPA.

An enormous campaign of propaganda was fostered, beginning last June, for several months. Almost daily announcements were made of new PWA allocations. Finally, the announcement was given out that all the money was allocated and nothing was left.

In Flynn's words, "The impression got around that a vast pouring out of public funds into public works, instead of WPA, was to be the administration's final bid for recovery."

"But now WPA funds are practically exhausted and WPA is still far from being under way. For 68 million dollars in six months is only about 11 million a month, hardly as much as the Government spends in the most prosperous periods." (Our emphasis.)

Flynn does not stop short at this point. His article makes abundantly clear the reason for the foisting of this gigantic fraud on the unemployed.

## A Deliberate Move

Says Flynn, in the very next paragraph, "Rumors have got around that PWA funds are being purposely held back in order to have them available for military construction when Congress meets. The argument will be strong that the armament plan will thus cost very little more than the funds already provided." (Our emphasis.)

Flynn then proceeds to expose the hypocrisy behind the New Deal campaign last summer when the PWA appropriations were made in favor of more adequate WPA appropriations. He asks, and answers, "But in the meantime, what becomes of Government expenditures for relief and work relief? If there is any validity in the claim that public works expenditures will produce recovery, then is it not plain that any plan which tends to divert them into war expenditures will postpone their expenditure and postpone recovery?" (Our emphasis.)

## F.D.R. and Housing

The workers dwelling in decrepit, disease-ridden slums can now reflect on Flynn's further comment on the government's low-cost housing program. "Six years ago the President, when the first PWA money was appropriated, was urged to go into low cost housing. This he refused to do. Here and there a few housing projects have been built at costs and at rental rates which put them completely beyond the reach of the low income groups."

Thus another one of the "liberal" phases of the New Deal program is exposed for the cheap demagogic vote-catching stunts it really is.

Flynn's revelations were published December 24, before the convening of the latest Congressional gab-fest. His analysis, which has gone completely undisputed, called the turn on Roosevelt's real program as presented to Congress.

In Roosevelt's proposed budget for the next fiscal period, one billion dollars have been lopped off the previous year's budget for all forms of unemployed relief. One billion dollars have been added to the previous year's armament's budget.

Flynn's final sentence confirms to the letter what the Socialist Workers Party has always predicted to be the real program of the New Deal.

"Now," says Flynn, "we are to have battleships instead of houses."

## CHICAGO MASS MEETINGS

## C. L. R. JAMES

will speak on:  
"THE TWILIGHT OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE"  
Friday, January 27—8:00 P.M.  
Capitol Building  
159 N. State St. Adm. 25c

"SOCIALISM AND THE NEGRO"  
Sunday, January 29—3:00 P.M.  
Abraham Lincoln Center  
700 Oakwood Blvd. Adm. 15c  
Unemployed Free