

# Cost of Living At Record Peak; Will Go Higher

By Cy Thomas

Bounding prices and rent increases have sent the cost of living soaring to a new record peak. According to the latest figures released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the consumers price index rose from 186.6 on Sept. 15 to 187.4 on Oct. 15. The latter figure is the highest in history, but will go higher under the government's soak-the-poor price control and wage stabilization program.

Michael V. DiSalle, Director of the Office of Price Stabilization, said his agency would soon issue a regulation, "to allow all manufacturers and processors to pass along to consumers cost increases since the start of the Korean war." Testifying before the House-Senate Committee on controls, DiSalle said such an order is made mandatory under the Capehart Amendment to the Defense Production Act.

## HAVING FIELD DAY

The price gougers are having a field day at the expense of the consumers. They are not only raking in fabulous profits, but, said DiSalle, they are evading the payment of taxes by "passing a big slice of the tax on to consumers in the form of higher prices for their goods."

The 700,000-man AFL Machin-

## No Precedent for "Contempt" Case Against Gus Hall

By Albert Hermann

The "contempt" trial of Gus Hall, Communist Party national secretary who was forcibly seized in Mexico City after failing to report for imprisonment in his Smith Act conviction, has shown the unprecedented lengths to which the Truman administration is going in its drive against civil liberties. Hall is being tried for ball-jumping despite the well-established practice in American and English law that the forfeiture of bail is the only penalty for such an act. Hall's bail has already been forfeited.

Hall's attorney, Harry Sacher, has pointed out that an exhaustive search of legal records has failed to uncover a single instance of punishment for "contempt" in such cases "in the 900 years' history of Anglo-American law." The government prosecutor has admitted that he has not been able to find any precedent, and the judge sitting on the case has also been unable to "recall any proceedings such as the one now before me."

Hall fled to Mexico City as a political refugee. U.S. government agents followed him to Mexico, kidnapped him and without resorting to extradition proceedings, took him by force to Laredo, Tex., where he was placed under arrest.

Thus the U.S. former political asylum, now has itself begun political persecution of opponents, and refuses to permit other nations to offer a haven to refugees. The invasion of Mexico by FBI agents in the Hall case has aroused widespread indignation throughout Latin America.

## GOOD FOR NOTHING

The answer given by CIO News is "organize for PAC." And the policy of PAC, of course, is to elect Democratic and Republican "friends" to Congress. That policy is good for nothing. It has led to an unbroken series of the "worst Congresses" in history.

If the labor leaders are serious about organizing "effective political action" they will promote the organization of labor's own political party to elect labor's own candidates to public office on labor's own program. No phony "friends" are going to do the job for them!

## Massachusetts Adopts Police State Measure

By Manny London

BOSTON, Nov. 20 — In the last hours of its record-long session the Massachusetts Legislature passed one of the most vicious thought control bills ever seen in this country. This legislature passed only three bills of importance in a session lasting four weeks longer than that of the 82nd Congress. These were bills increasing the salaries of legislators, an increase in taxes and the "subversive" law which outlaws the Communist Party. Among the lawmakers' unfinished business were a graft scandal involving the Attorney General and a pay fraud on a Legislature-created Board on Mental Health.

Living up to Dr. Johnson's definition of patriotism as "the last refuge of scoundrels," the legislators tried to cover up the graft scandals, their self-voted salary raise and general inaction on pressing problems by an orgy of flag-waving culminating in the adoption of the repressive gag law.

## SAVAGE PENALTIES

Under the provisions of this new law — which has already been signed by Governor Dever — not only is the Communist Party banned but machinery has been set up to declare other organizations "subversive." Many of the provisions are patterned on the

Vol. XV - No. 49

PUBLISHED WEEKLY IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

NEW YORK, N. Y., MONDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1951

PRICE: FIVE CENTS

# THE MILITANT

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207

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## Where to Tighten the Belt



## Steel Negotiations Start; Wage Freeze Big Issue

By Fred Hart

Contract negotiations between the United Steelworkers of America (CIO) and the United States Steel Co., which opened in Pittsburgh on Nov. 27, have been made the spearhead for the drive of the labor movement to break through the wage-freeze formula of the Wage Stabilization Board. However, the fact that the union side of the negotiations is in the hands of CIO negotiators who have become enmeshed in the government "stabilization" machinery makes the issue very doubtful.

## CIO LECTURES WORKERS

"It's easy enough to gripe," lectures the CIO News, "about the high cost of living that's going way up yonder. But the question is: When are we going to turn our gripe into effective political action? When are we going to organize to elect a Congress responsive to the people's will?" To be sure, griping is no solution — but why lecture the workers? They can only echo the question: When, pray when, will you provide the leadership, program and organization for an effective political struggle?

## FOR VIGOROUS FIGHT

Worker sentiment for smashing the formula which is now used to freeze wages has become stronger than ever throughout the country in recent months, and has manifested itself in local strikes and stoppages and pressure on the union leaders for a vigorous fight.

The constantly rising cost of living together with the big tax increases, which are in effect pay cuts, is the basic cause of the dissatisfaction of the workers in steel and other industries, and this resentment is rising as the cost of living soars to record heights.

The Steelworkers Union has opened negotiations with demands for a "substantial" wage increase, which, together with other fringe demands would amount to somewhere between 20 and 25 cents an

hour. The Wage Stabilization Board formula would restrict the steelworkers to a far smaller figure.

Steelworkers officials have been strong in their denunciation of the formula in recent months, as preparations for the negotiations were under way. Joseph P. Molony, District Director of the steel union for the Buffalo area, in a speech to a western New York regional Steelworkers conference just before negotiations opened, had this to say:

"I always thought that a formula was something you fed to babies, and evidently the Wage Stabilization Board thinks they

are doing business with babies. But, by the end of next month, they will find that they are doing business with the hairiest bunch of babies they ever tried to bottle feed."

This kind of talk was very popular with the representatives of the steel locals that gathered to hear Mr. Molony speak.

Whether the negotiating committee of the union will carry that attitude into the conferences with the arrogant steel barons, and, even more important, whether they will stick to that stand when the power of Wall Street's government is thrown against them, as it will be, remains to be seen.

Such developments in the first hours following the "misunderstanding" by the troops that an informal cease-fire existed, undoubtedly led the top brass to fear that discontent among the GIs would increase and that ratification might soon develop.

**Opposition to Treaty Grows, Tokyo Correspondent Says**

By A Special Correspondent

TOKYO — The ratification by the Japanese Diet of the Peace Treaty and the Security Pact has provoked an angry opposition that threatens to spread from Japan's big industrial centers throughout the whole country.

The Peace Treaty came as a sharp disappointment to the masses, who had been encouraged by the ruling classes to hope it would provide some way out of the present unbearable hardships provoked in part by the American occupation.

The people were also profoundly shocked by the Security Pact with its clause that permits the use of American troops to put down revolts in this country. The word Nairan (civil war), which has been almost a taboo, was openly used in reference to Japan itself in the discussion in the Diet. The public discussion of such matters has done a great deal to shock the people into realizing the real nature of the treatise.

Anti-war sentiment had been crystallizing among Japanese workers as early as last summer, especially around the movement for the "Four Principles of Peace." These four principles are: Against a separate treaty, for a treaty with all the powers; against joining either bloc, for neutrality; against rearmament; against any foreign military base in the country.

The Tenth Congress of the State Railway Workers Union, one of the strongest in Japan, adopted these principles by a vote of 292 to 113 last June. The vote was especially significant because this union was the stronghold of the so-called Democratic League movement which was created to fight the radicalization of the labor movement led by the Stalinists.

Other unions that have adopted the same policy include the Teachers Union, Private Railway Workers, Transport Workers, Electric Industrial Workers, Coal Miners, etc. They thus declared their determination to fight any attempt by the Yoshida government to enslave the Japanese people for the benefit of American imperialism.

**LIBERATION BATTALIONS**  
"It is not a highly organized movement with a definite leadership," states the same correspondent who then adds: "Some

Workers of the World, Unite!

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## GI Discontent Forced Order To Hold Fire

### Generals Alarmed by Cease-Fire Action Of Troops, Say Fighting Must Be Resumed

By George Lavan

Interpreting an order from the top command in accordance with their own desires, U.S. troops in Korea brought about a cease-fire virtually along the entire battle-front for as long as 48 hours in some sectors.

The enthusiasm with which the GIs put into effect the cease-fire and the prospect of possible fraternization between the opposing armies so alarmed the top command and leading U.S. diplomatic and political circles that new orders were issued to the troops emphasizing that there was no cease-fire and that the war should go on with U.S. troops "shooting to kill."

## LIGHT BONFIRES

Soon after the firing stopped, front-line GIs in some sectors watched Chinese troops playing volleyball in no-man's land. The Chinese and North Korean attitude towards the cessation of hostilities was further shown by their lighting bonfires instead of maintaining the usual blackout at night.

Such developments in the first hours following the "misunderstanding" by the troops that an informal cease-fire existed, undoubtedly led the top brass to fear that discontent among the GIs would increase and that ratification might soon develop.

## HATE CAMPAIGN FLOPS

U.S. newspapers led by the authoritative N. Y. Times recently discussed with dismay the fact that the GIs were being "taken in" by Chinese demands for an immediate cease-fire. This was attributed to the failure of the U.S. Army to "educate" the GIs on the issues and the nature of the enemy. Attempts to indoctrinate the troops against the GIs' would increase and that ratification might soon develop.

The Defense Department casualty figures do not include so-called "non-battle" casualties, such as accidental injuries, and a very large number of serious frostbite cases, some of them amputations.

Gen. Ridgway proposes to continue the senseless slaughter until a "full" armistice. The GIs want an end to the war! Bring them home now!

hours before news of the end of firing in Korea reached the U.S., newspapers were carrying stories by United Press war correspondent Robert Vermillion, headed: "Stop Firing NOW, GIs At Front Demand" (N. Y. Post, Nov. 27). Vermillion summarized GI feeling thus: "American front-line troops feel that the shooting in Korea should halt immediately or subsidy by unspoken agreement while the truce talks continue."

## TYPICAL STATEMENTS

Among the typical statements of the GIs quoted by Vermillion was the following from a sergeant: "We want to get the hell out of Korea but we don't expect any armistice to do it. But if they're going to stop the shooting they should do it right now, while I'm still alive." A private asked the reporter: "Thirty more days? What for? If they don't want to sign anything over there in Panmunjom why not just let the shooting fade away until we decide what we're going to do — we'd all go for that. You know, let the shooting fade away and us old soldiers will never die."

This is exactly how the front-line troops interpreted the still secret order from General James A. Van Fleet, Commander of the 8th Army. They "just let the shooting fade away."

Despite the new orders to resume fighting it is apparent that, given the overwhelming feeling of the troops for an end to hostilities, United States commanders would have to think twice before ordering the reluctant GIs into major offensive operations. The GIs are thinking things out for themselves and object to being used as just so much cannon fodder by the Big Brass. Every GI, every member of an airplane crew wants to live and wants to return home. They hope that the bloody war in Korea will soon end and they believe that every further death in battle is a needless, tragic sacrifice. They are right. All Americans with the interests of the GIs at heart should demand the immediate end of the war in Korea and the withdrawal of all U.S. troops.

## 707 More

U.S. battle casualties in Korea are up to 100,883. This is an increase of 707 over the preceding week.

The more than 100,000 reported casualties include 17,153 dead in Truman's "police action." 71,307 Americans have been wounded in the Korea fighting, and another 10,856 are reported "missing" in action.

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Gen. Ridgway proposes to continue the senseless slaughter until a "full" armistice. The GIs want an end to the war! Bring them home now!

## 'Liberation Battalion' Movement Spreads Through Egypt's Cities

By John G. Wright

Egypt is in a revolutionary crisis. It was precipitated when the British, with the full backing of the American imperialists, forcibly seized the Suez Canal area. The first phase of this revolutionary crisis has been marked by a series of anti-imperialist demonstrations which saw millions pouring out into the streets of Alexandria and Cairo while other millions demonstrated from one end of the country to the other.

Almost simultaneously with these extraordinary mass outpourings came the organization of "Liberation Battalions." The rise of these revolutionary bodies appears to have been spontaneous. The Cairo correspondent of the N. Y. Times cabled on Nov. 17 that this Liberation Battalion movement "just sprang up." Apparently it has no central leadership as yet.

**LIBERATION BATTALIONS**  
"It is not a highly organized movement with a definite leadership," states the same correspondent who then adds: "Some

had arm bands; some, notably in Sharqia Province, obtained some arms."

These Battalions, armed and unarmed alike, immediately began to assume and exercise authority in their own name. In their localities these Battalions "undertook to do a certain amount of policing on their own." Other groups "representing no one knows exactly whom began to assume authority."

The profoundly revolutionary implications of such a development are self-evident. A new power, resting on popular masses and independent of the existing government, is beginning to exercise authority on its own initiative. The Egyptian government is naturally anxious to head off this movement. It has attempted to achieve this by an official announcement that it would "take over leadership and training of the Liberation Battalions."

It still remains to be seen to what extent the Egyptian authorities will be able to exercise more than a nominal control over these revolutionary formations.

of the prominent role of Egyptian Trotskyists among the class-conscious workers.)

The events in Egypt are unfolding against the background of perhaps the worst poverty and exploitation in the world. According to official figures the average income of Egyptian peasants is \$40 a year, or less than 80 cents a week. A daily wage of 20 cents for workers is considered high. Child laborers, of whom there are many, receive 20 cents a week.

The Egyptian masses correctly hold the Western imperialists primarily responsible for these inhuman conditions. "The idea is almost universal," admits the Times dispatch, "that imperialism, colonialism and foreign predominance must somehow be responsible for the frustrating poverty and helplessness that are found in the world of the Arab and Persian." This universal recognition in Egypt, as throughout the Middle East, of the unpostponable need to get rid of the imperialists has invested the unfolding struggle from the very outset with tremendous scope and power.

## Notebook of an Agitator

### SOME CHICKENS COME HOME TO ROOST!

In the heyday of the Communist Party in this country, when they were the most frenzied of all the patriots, supporting the no-strike pledge in World War II and receiving governmental favor in return, the number of Stalinist-controlled unions and central labor bodies of the CIO reached an imposing figure.

They controlled the CIO Industrial Union Council of New York City, for example, and manipulated it at will in support of the current slogans of the party. The executive bodies of such powerful organizations as the National Maritime Union and the United Electrical Workers were in their hands, along with a dozen or more other important unions. "Local 65," the big organization of Wholesale and Retail Workers in New York, was tightly controlled by the CP and operated like a dairy full of milk cows for the benefit and sustenance of the Communist Party and its various enterprises.

#### Appearance of Strength

With this line-up the Stalinists appeared to have a position of great strength in the trade union movement which would be very hard to break. The appearance, however, was somewhat illusory, as subsequent developments, following the break-up of the American-Soviet war alliance and the beginning of the "cold war," soon revealed.

The methods of unscrupulous demagogic, bureaucratic manipulation and deals with careerists, by which the Stalinists had gained control of the unions and central labor bodies from the top, were the very same methods employed by Murray and Co. to "decontrol" them, and proved even more efficacious. The Stalinists in most instances lacked the "secret weapon" of support by an ardent and educated rank and file. The dizzying speed with which they were unhooked in one union and industrial union council after another, when the government which they had supported so enthusiastically during the war turned against them, was one of the amazing wonders of recent labor history.

Years ago the Communist Party embarked on its course of expelling revolutionary militants, who can't be had at a price, and turning toward opportunists and careerists whose single principle is self-interest. For a time, in a favorable conjuncture, this method of operation brought quick, if deceptive, results. As long as things went well, with the government and even some of the biggest employers taking an attitude of benevolence or neutrality toward the Stalinists, their manipulations and deals with trade union careerists at the top and their brutal bureaucratic suppression of the ranks at the bottom paid off like a slot machine rigged to beat the sucker.

#### Change Came Overnight

This policy can work miracles in the service of a dominant power, but it is absolutely no good to create a new and independent power from scratch. That requires the principled politics of the class struggle. Everything changed almost over night with the change in the international situation, when the power the Stalinists had been serving turned against them. All the clever tricks turned into disastrous fumbles. The top careerists upon whom they relied and ostensibly "controlled" simply weren't there anymore.

Following their noses in the direction of personal interest, as this tribe always does, they promptly swung over to the stronger side and became the most virulent "red-baiters" in the business. Conspicuous examples are Quill and Curran, long regarded, with good reason, as CP labor stooges. But they are only two of scores and hundreds of major and minor functionaries who deserted the Communist Party ship as soon as it sprang a leak.

After the big purge carried out by the Murray leadership, with the open support and even at the instigation of the government, the Stalinists were left with a few "independent" unions, such as the West Coast Longshoremen, Local 65 in

## Letters from Readers

### Spurned Filipino Given Burial

Editor: Here in Los Angeles, a Filipino, Mike Valerio, a former cook who died a few days ago was taken to the Valhalla cemetery in Burbank, but was refused burial because of his race. As a result his friends had to shop around before they discovered the Evergreen cemetery in East Los Angeles which accepted his remains.

When a similar case of a Winnebago Indian from Nebraska,

who was refused burial in Sioux City, Iowa, attracted nationwide attention, President Truman tried to make it appear as though this was an unusual occurrence, and arranged for a plot in Arlington Cemetery. The case of Sgt. John R. Rice was doubly embarrassing because he was killed in Korea fighting for "democracy"; but the case in Los Angeles belies any claim that racial restrictions do not follow us to the grave. In fact, could anyone conceive of a Negro in the South being buried in a white cemetery?

S. S.  
Los Angeles

**American Workers Can Stop A-Bombing**

Editor: My friends asked me to write to you and express their appreciation of the issue of the *Militant* containing the article on Collier's war issue. Several people told me they were just waiting to see the *Militant* after seeing Collier's. They knew the *Militant* is too good a paper to pass by such an outrage in silence.

They say that's exactly what ought to be done: to rouse the American workers NOW against the planned attack on the Soviet Union, NOW before Russian cities are turned into a blazing hell, populated by the mutilated and dying.

B. M.  
Boston

## THE ROAD TO PEACE

by James P. Cannon

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# THE MILITANT

Published Weekly in the Interests of the Working People  
THE MILITANT PUBLISHING ASSOCIATION  
116 University Pl., N. Y. 3, N. Y. Phone: AL 5-7460

Editor: GEORGE BREITMAN Business Manager: JOSEPH HANSEN  
Subscription: \$2 per year; \$1 for 6 months. Foreign: \$3.50 per year;  
\$2 for 6 months. Bound Orders (5 or more copies): 3c each in U.S.  
4c each in foreign countries.

Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent The Militant's policies. These are expressed in its editorials.

Entered as second class matter, March 7, 1944 at the Post Office  
at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879.

Vol. XV - No. 49 Monday, December 3, 1951

## Deceiving the People

Ten years after Pearl Harbor, the American people are being deceived the same way they were in 1941 — they are being dragged down the road to war with deliberately false assurances that it is a road to peace. That is the charge made in the Nov. 24 Saturday Evening Post by associate editor Demaree Bess.

In 1941 the Roosevelt administration pushed through the Lend-Lease Act with the claim that it would keep America out of war. Discussing the striking parallel of present developments with those of 1941, Bess notes:

"Some of those who worked hardest for Lend-Lease and supported it most sincerely have since admitted that they knew Lend-Lease meant all-out war for the United States, although they publicly denied it at the time. These Americans still believe that the public had to be fooled, for its own good, and that the deception they practiced was justified by events."

And the same thing is happening today. "Now, as then, we are providing arms and other help to every country and every group which undertakes to oppose our avowed enemy," Bess continues. "Now, as then, Washington spokesmen express hope that we can destroy the enemy short of all-out war, while some of them show by their actions that they don't believe what they say."

The capitalist politicians in Washington don't believe what they say, and the American people should not believe them either. The issue of war or peace is too vital to be entrusted to the hands of men who expect war, want war and are preparing for war, but who think the public has to be fooled "for its own good." The power to decide this question must be taken out of the hands of the politicians and turned over to the public that suffers the consequences and has to pay the costs of war. Through a national referendum vote on this question, the public itself will be able to decide what is for its own good.

## Jim Crow at the Gate

A program pledging to "extend union contracts to the hiring gate" was adopted in Grand Rapids by nearly 500 delegates at a statewide Fair Practices and Civil Rights Conference of CIO United Auto Workers locals in Michigan. This progressive idea was in line with the recent national CIO convention resolution urging each affiliate to "seek to have incorporated in its collective bargaining agreement clauses that will insure non-discrimination in hiring."

President Walter Reuther spoke in favor of the proposal. "Most of our contracts have anti-discrimination clauses in them, and by and large we are able to police our contracts," he said. "But that isn't doing much for the worker who can't get hired because of his race." Reuther exaggerates when he claims that "by and large" the anti-discrimination clauses in union contracts are enforced. Actually, the situation varies from plant to plant, being enforced more or less in some, and ignored in others, not only in the UAW but other unions.

But Reuther spoke the plain truth when he noted that existing clauses are of little or no help to workers who suffer discrimination at the hiring gate. The broadening of union contracts to correct this defect would be a real step forward for the labor movement and would do much to strengthen the unions and promote the labor-Negro alliance that is needed to fight reaction. Like the national CIO convention, the Michigan conference drew up an appeal for Truman to issue an executive order outlawing discriminatory hiring practices in industries receiving government contracts.

The CIO has been asking for such an executive order since the Korean war began. Truman can issue it any time he wants to; in this case he can't use his usual alibi that Congress won't cooperate. How much longer will the CIO leaders continue to politely request it? When will they begin to fight for it? So far, they haven't even made its issuance a condition for their further political support of Truman.

## The Word and the Deed

A few weeks ago the Massachusetts CIO leaders attended the national CIO convention in New York and there applauded and unanimously voted for a strong civil liberties resolution condemning the McCarran Act and the Smith Gag Law. By their action the CIO convention recognized that such repressive measures are aimed at the entire labor movement.

But what is voted in New York is very different from what is done in Boston. We refer specifically to the story in this week's *Militant* from Massachusetts about the passage of legislation to outlaw the Communist Party as well as other left-wing political organizations. This flagrant police-state violation of the Bill of Rights was passed without even a mumbled protest coming from the trade union leadership.

The labor leaders of Massachusetts cannot claim they didn't know about the bill because it received long and loud publicity. Nor can they claim that their organizations have not taken a position on such legislation because the whole labor movement nationally is on record against precisely such laws.

Rather than oppose the professional red-baiters, the reactionary press and the Catholic hierarchy, the Massachusetts CIO leaders acted as if they were unaware of the police-state measure pending in the legislature. They did not even acquaint the legislature with the position of the national CIO on such legislation.

The only excuse the labor bureaucrats can claim is cowardice. And if they want to claim this they shouldn't hypocritically pose as determined defenders of civil liberties at their national conventions.

We won't argue which is the worse quality for a labor leadership — cowardice or hypocrisy. Either one renders them unfit to lead the working people. Together they make the situation a crying disgrace.

# Capitalism Means War: A Reply to Norman Thomas

By Thomas Raymond

The New Leader of Nov. 26 carries an article by Norman Thomas on the topic: "Capitalism, Socialism and WAR." Since the experience of many years has shown that these are the three things about which Norman Thomas is most ignorant, it is ludicrous for the New Leader to bill this article as "a complete revolution in socialist thinking."

The particular aspect of "socialist thinking" which Norman Thomas so boldly revolutionizes is the Marxist conclusion that capitalism breeds war, and that the only way mankind can eliminate war is by reorganizing society on a socialist basis. This is the conception, fully accepted by genuine socialists, which Thomas challenges.

Of course, nothing can be said

against evaluating or re-evaluating any of the conceptions of Marxism in the light of new experiences. Marxism is always open to challenge and ready to accept all challenges, even when they come from one who knows as little about Marxism as Norman Thomas.

However, it is incumbent upon anyone calling himself a "socialist" who challenges some fundamental aspect of Marxism to show a reason, a justification for the sudden rejection of a well established principle. He would have to show some body of experience, some facts that have cast a doubt upon a previously accepted idea, and then proceed from there to re-evaluate the idea.

Thomas wants to re-evaluate the Marxist tenet that capitalism means war. Why? Has the

capitalist world become peaceful? Have we been living in a prolonged period of peace and quiet, with no wars or talk of wars, so that we are impelled to doubt our long-standing conviction? Why should anything that has happened during the past years, or anything that is happening at the present time, raise any doubt on this matter in the mind of any socialist?

Simply to ask these questions is to answer them. Of course capitalism has not stopped breeding wars, but is spawning them at a more rapid rate than ever before, and, from all indications, capitalism is on the verge of plunging humanity into the most destructive war in history.

Thus all the evidence goes very heavily against Norman Thomas, and there seems to be no reason why anyone should re-evaluate Marxist thinking on this matter, or, as the New Leader so dashingly puts it, make "a complete revolution in socialist thinking."

The only question with which socialists need concern themselves is how and why capitalism breeds war, and, as a result, how and why socialism will end war. This whole question has been thoroughly analyzed by Marxists in the past, although Norman Thomas appears to have overlooked this work.

When the Socialist Party was split two years ago, the centrists were able to play the role of arbitrator and to patch up a reconciliation. But this time the masses did not give the centrists a chance to pull the same move. This time the centrists were swept away together with the right wingers, without uttering a single word. And the left wing leaders of the SP badly compromised themselves with the rank and file members, especially the youth, who are showing the greatest militancy at the present time.

Along with the strengthening of the movement for the "Four Principles of Peace," a new wave of labor struggle for higher wages has grown rapidly, and the Yoshida government has opened a drive to push through two repressive witch-hunt laws aimed against the unions and the anti-war movement. I will discuss both of these important developments in the letter I will send

The Militant next week.

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## Negroes and Stalinism

By Jean Blake

Wilson Record, "The Negro and the Communist Party," University of North Carolina Press, 1951.

This new book on the Negro struggle in America is an important attempt to evaluate the relation between the Negro protest movement and radical ideology, and to outline a perspective.

Although it was written in a period of tremendous government pressure against radicalism, the author displays a remarkable degree of independence and objectivity.

While the bulk of the book is a critical account of the shifting policies of the Communist Party on the Negro question and an evaluation of its effect on the Negro protest movement against second class citizenship, Wilson Record begins with an examination of early reformist socialist ideas on racial discrimination. He points out that the early socialist ideology was inadequate because of its failure to adapt itself to the peculiarities of racial oppression here, and to recognize it as a special problem, with special strategic and tactical requirements.

The Communist Party, he demonstrates, developed techniques which made a greater impact on the Negro movement, but its ideology is basically incompatible with the native American protest movement since the CP line is based on the needs of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union. The writer correctly records the history of the twists and turns in Communist Party policy on the Negro question as functions of Stalinist diplomatic maneuvers, and correctly dates it from the time Stalin secured his bureaucratic stranglehold on the Soviet state, but he fails to note that this represented a departure from Marxism. He also neglects to examine the position of the genuine Marxist tendency, represented by the Socialist Workers Party, on the Negro question.

This inadequacy of the book is important since

## "The Desert Fox"

By Charles Hanley

One of Hollywood's most reactionary motion picture companies, Spyros Skouras' Twentieth Century-Fox, has produced a movie about Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, based on a book by British Brigadier-General Young.

At a moment when the American and British governments are seeking to enlist the German military caste for their so-called western defense system, the making and showing of this film is no mere coincidence. The imperialists want to win the sympathy and cooperation of the German generals by such acts of moral reparation.

"The Desert Fox" pays tribute to those German officers who participated in the attempted assassination of Hitler in 1944 — when they became convinced that the war was lost. Fearing a possible social revolution as a consequence of total defeat, they wanted the German capitalists to negotiate with the Allies. The film even whitewashes some commanding officers who did not participate in the plot of July 20, 1944 — Field Marshal Gert von Rundstedt, for example, who consented to be a member of the Wehrmacht's Nazi "honor court" that expelled some of the unsuccessful plotters from the army before they

the author's numerous references to the Trotskyists shows that he is familiar with at least some of their work on the subject. He quotes several paragraphs from *The Militant*, for example, criticising the Communist Party's position on the Negro struggle during World War II, and observes that the SWP had developed a special position on the Negro question, but he fails to analyze it in the same scholarly way that he does the ideology of the Socialist Party and the Stalinists.

Mr. Record correctly sees a perspective for the Negro protest movement of alliance with native radical elements and the labor movement in a labor party.

"Negroes would constitute a valuable resource for any authentic third party movement built around organized labor," he writes. "To command the support of American workers — and of American Negroes — such a movement would have to be grounded in the native radical tradition. It would need more than a conglomeration of confused intellectuals, old-time pacifists, isolationists, and Communist hacks, such as the Progressive Party represented. Negroes have played an important role in shaping the American radical tradition; they are by no means loath to participate in its extension..."

This perspective, as a further consideration of SWP literature on the subject would show, is the American Marxist view of the probable next stage in the Negro struggle for equality.

To complete the examination begun in his book, of the relation between the Negro protest movement and radical ideology, Mr. Record and others interested in the problem are referred to the bound volumes of *The Militant*, *Fourth International* magazine, and pamphlets published on the subject by Pioneer Publishers. All are available at some of the larger libraries throughout the country, or may be purchased from Pioneer Publishers, 116 University Place, New York 3, N. Y.

VOLUME XV

## THE MILITANT

MONDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1951

NUMBER 49

## Progressive Party To Back Capitalist Candidates in '52

The Progressive Party is holding a number of regional conferences in preparation for its 1952 election campaign. The first of these, held in Philadelphia, gave a pretty fair indication of what can be expected from the Wallaceites — minus Wallace in next year's campaign.

The conference agreed that the party would run an "independent peace presidential ticket." It did not consider who would run on this ticket, a matter presumably to be settled at a nominating convention next summer.

## A 'FLEXIBLE' POLICY

The conference also adopted a "flexible" policy for the congressional elections. This does not mean that the Progressive Party itself will contest most of the congressional seats. While it may do so in certain districts, in most cases the party will support "Negro, labor and peace candidates either in the Republican or Democratic parties."

In other words, it commits itself in advance to support capitalist party candidates who happen to be Negroes, or who happen to hold membership in labor unions, or who happen to favor a "Big Five meeting for peace."

Erwin Rommel had already become an almost legendary figure before Hitler forced him to commit suicide — if we can call it suicide. The Fuehrer wished to avoid a public trial of Germany's number one war hero who had "betrayed" him.

Winston Churchill and Brigadier-General Young have praised Rommel's gallantry and tactical skill and his "respect" for the international rules of war.

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Most of the German generals, including Rommel, supported the Hitler regime from the very beginning, as did the capitalists to whom the military caste is closely linked. Only when Hitler's war became hopeless, a war which they had helped to prepare and to conduct, did they abandon their leader and his fascist gang.

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The true heroes of the German resistance movement were not the imperialist generals of the Wehrmacht, but the labor militants who fought fascism not only in 1944 but in 1923, 1930 and 1933 as well. These men and women, tortured in Hitler's concentration camps or hiding from the Gestapo, risked their lives in underground activities against the Nazi terror when Rommel and the rest of Hitler's generals were still dreaming of imperialist conquest and domination.

MAKES NO SENSE

If the Progressive Party were a really independent party with an independent policy, if its aim were to convince the workers to break cleanly and all the way with capitalist parties and capitalist politics and to take power on an anti-capitalist program, then its proposed 1952 policy would make no sense at all.

But that is not the nature and aim of the Progressive Party, and never has been. Its chief function is to act as a pressure agency to persuade one or both of the old parties to agree to a Washington-Moscow deal based on carving the world into two "spheres of influence" and maintaining the status quo in both.

## FOOLING THE WORKERS

That is why it is perfectly possible, and even logical, for the Progressive Party to send its members back into the capitalist parties. You can't educate workers that way to understand the need for independent labor political action, but you can use them that way, temporarily, for pressure purposes that have nothing to do with independent labor political action.

But only temporarily. Because, in the long run, the effect of the Progressive policy is to demoralize even radical workers who are influenced by it. What do they want with a Progressive Party when it tells them the way to promote peace is by working inside the capitalist parties?

## TIME WILL TELL

As for the Progressive promise to run a presidential ticket, time will tell. It is known that the Progressive Party leaders are shopping high and low to find a suitable candidate — by which they mean preferably a capitalist politician like Henry Wallace, Glen Taylor, O. John Rogge and the other opportunists who headed their tickets in the past. But it is not excluded that they may decide eventually on the same "flexible" policy for the presidential campaign as they have decided on for the congressional elections.

## Mine Wives Protest Company Holdup



Angry housewives stop miner on his way to work at mine in Harmarville, Pa., in protest against company move to force its workers to buy shacks at exorbitant prices. The miners were barred from work by their own wives and children in a demonstration to make the Consumers Mining Co., a Wheeling Steel Corp. subsidiary, lower sales prices on decrepit homes in which the workers have lived for years.

## What Was Achieved by SWP In N.Y. Election Campaign

By Michael Bartell

While the traitor "socialists" were helping "Fearless Fosdick" Halleck hoodwink the workers, the New York Local of the Socialist Workers Party was conducting the most successful campaign in its history. In 24 radio and television broadcasts, in the daily newspapers, at forums and street meetings all over the city, the real socialists levelled a powerful barrage against capitalist parties, witch-hunts, exploitation, and corruption.

For the first time, the name and some of the principal ideas of the SWP, became known to the entire politically literate population of New York City. This was the greatest achievement of the campaign. Most important, in this connection were 17 radio broadcasts over eight different stations, and seven appearances on four television channels. Two of the television broadcasts were nationwide hookups, seen by millions. The 15 minute interview on Kate Smith's program reached an estimated audience of eleven million.

## PRESS COVERAGE

The success achieved on radio and TV compelled the daily newspapers to devote more space to the SWP than ever before. The Harlem press gave a fuller coverage than ever before to the platform of the SWP. The endorsement by the SWP of two Negro candidates running for office on the American Labor Party line aroused a very lively interest in the Negro community, with the press reporting the reactions of the various political forces.

In addition, we spoke directly to thousands of people at 15 election forums sponsored by neighborhood organizations and student clubs in all boroughs except Staten Island. Thousands more were reached by SWP campaigners at 25 outdoor meetings, door to door electioneering and through the distribution of 10,000 copies of our election platform and five special leaflets directed to particular segments of the labor and radical movement.

## SPECIAL IMPORTANCE

Of special importance were the first modest campaign activities conducted in the rapidly growing Puerto Rican community, including a 15 minute speech over a radio station whose audience is predominantly Puerto Rican, the distribution of a leaflet written in the Spanish language, a street corner speech in Spanish, and a write-up of the SWP platform in a Spanish language daily.

The response of the public to the hard-hitting socialist campaign, especially to the demand that the GI's be brought home immediately was favorable beyond all expectations.

After almost every meeting the SWP candidate received enthusiastic comments such as: "It's good to hear one candidate who tells the truth and has the courage to speak out against the war and the witch-hunt. Keep it up." From a taxi-driver in Queens: "I wish there were a thousand like you out here." And from many others: "I had no intention of voting for you before I came to this meeting, in fact I had never heard of your party. But I'm certainly going to vote for you now."

## THE SWP VOTE

The vote received by the SWP, approximately 3800 (the official

## Seattle Court Action Tests Union Gag Rule

By A. Taylor

SEATTLE — Seaman John A. Mahoney's legal battle to win reinstatement in the Sailors Union of the Pacific has ended, after 19 days in court, and Judge MacDonald's decision is expected in a few weeks.

The closing three days of arguments of the attorneys from both sides clearly confirmed what the preceding testimony had shown — that the lawsuit of John Mahoney vs. Harry Lundeberg et al was a conflict between militant unionism and labor solidarity on one side, and bureaucratic privilege and union-raiding as defended by the SUP officialdom, on the other.

Mahoney's attorney showed that this allegation was nonsense and hit home on the main issue involved: Did Mahoney have the right to ask a question on union policy at a union meeting? Could the officials expel him without a proper trial and in violation of the union's constitution?

Schermer noted that the only witnesses testifying for the SUP officialdom were officials or men who had been on the pie and expected to get back again. It was literally a parade of the SUP bureaucracy. Their testimony did not stand up under cross-examination as one Lundeberg witness contradicted the next.

In contrast, Mahoney's witnesses were rank and file union members, veteran SUP militants, who had been expelled for defending Mahoney's union rights. Schermer reminded the judge of the testimony of Joe Mattsen, a member of the union since 1910, who had been fined \$500 and put on ten years' probation by the Lundeberg machine for his support of Mahoney.

"Where are Mahoney's other witnesses?" Schermer asked. "They are the 210 men who were at the meeting when Mahoney asked the question that led to his expulsion." He then read from the West Coast Sailor, the union's paper, that this slogan was a motto of the Sailors Union in the past and was repeatedly cited in many of its articles.

The slogan "An injury to one is an injury to all" was indeed one of the key principles upon which the SUP was built. But Harry Lundeberg and the rest of the officials gave up this principle when they transformed themselves into labor dictators. They expelled Mahoney and many others for continuing to believe in this slogan.

Schermer contended that Lundeberg had expelled Mahoney without just cause. The sole charge against him was that he had asked a question about union policy in a union meeting. Mahoney had asked: "Who gave the

## AL LYNN

(Aug. 28, 1918 -- Nov. 23, 1951)

By Myra Tanner Weiss

Comrade Al Lynn died suddenly Friday night, Nov. 23. A member of the Los Angeles Local Executive Committee of the Socialist Workers Party and Financial Secretary of the local, Comrade Lynn

has been active in the revolutionary socialist movement for about thirteen years. He joined the Party in New York City and worked in the New York local before transferring to Los Angeles in 1943. Since then Al functioned in the leadership of our movement here. He worked continuously in a full-time capacity, taking charge of every department of work at one time or another.

Al suffered from the heart disease of rheumatic fever since childhood. Despite this severe handicap Al knew what he wanted to do with his life. He wanted to work for a socialist society. And he did everything possible to make the maximum contribution to the movement. There was no false pride. There was no morbid pampering of self that often goes with long illness. There wasn't even a consciousness of the heroism of his way of life.

Thinking of the many times Al came to meetings with his ankles swollen and his breathing difficult, remembering his increasing grayish pallor, some may ask if he might not have prolonged his life if he had not worked so hard for the Party. First, Al would have refused to pay such a price for a longer life. A decent life in a capitalist world could only be found in struggle. Actually he prolonged his life by his work in the movement. He lived as long as he did because he had so much to live for and because he enjoyed living so much. Four years ago his doctor wanted to prepare me for what seemed then, not only inevitable, but quite imminent. "Al will live only a few weeks, perhaps months, maybe even a year," he said. The doctor didn't understand that Al just had to keep on living because there was so much work to be done. All these years I marveled at his strength, his endurance. Al, more than most, had discovered the good life. He was happy. Few of the comrades knew that he had the I.Q. rating of a genius. Only his poor, sick body stood in the way of his serving in an even greater capacity than he did. And even then, his stature as a political leader and Marxist theoretician, was continuously growing. His greatest happiness was to live in the world of ideas, to participate in the many discussions that always went on in our house. For four years he worked in my Capital class as a conscientious student and when after a great deal of study an idea would finally become clear, then he was happiest.

Al was loyal, devoted, serious and worked hard. But he also had a wonderful sense of humor. His wit was sharp and sudden. Whenever anyone made a particularly funny crack, we called it an "Alism." In the midst of the most serious discussions and particularly when we were tense over some unsolved problem, he would make some spontaneous joke that would send us into gales of laughter.

Al's life was short but it was as beautiful as life can be. From a man who knew he couldn't live long we can learn how to live well. He will be sorely missed. We who know best how much he gave to the future of humanity thank him first. We salute him with our red flag flying at half mast. The future happiness of mankind in the socialist world of tomorrow will owe him the greatest debt of gratitude.

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