

Democracy Neglects Its Youngsters

In his "Berlin Diary," William L. Shirer tells a story the rulers of all democratic nations should take to heart. In May, 1940, Shirer was traveling along the German front and seeing with his own eyes evidence of the appalling disaster which ended in the downfall of France and Belgium and swept the British to Dunkirk. In one city he encountered a group of British prisoners, and here's what he says about them: "They were a sad sight; some obviously shell-shocked, some wounded, all dead tired. But what impressed me most about them was their physique. They were hollow-chested and skinny and roundshouldered. About a third of them had bad eyes and wore glasses. Typical, I concluded, of the youth England neglected so criminally in the 22 post-war years while Germany, despite its defeat and inflation and 6,000,000 unemployed, was raising its youth in the open air and the sun. "I asked the boys where they were from and what they did at home. About half of them were from offices in Liverpool; the rest from London offices. Their military training had begun nine months before. "Thirty yards away German infantry were marching up the road toward the front. I could not help compare them with these British lads. The Germans, bronzed, clean-cut physically, healthy looking as lions, chests developed and all. It was part of the unequal fight. "The English youngsters, I knew, had fought as bravely as men can. But bravery is not all; it is not enough in this machine age war. You have to have a body that will stand terrific wear and tear." Those words were written by a friendly hand. But what an indictment of the rulers of the British Empire! With shocking stupidity they neglected the chief bulwark of their defense—the youngsters who must do the fighting in every war. But who are we to criticize the British? Our President says that 50 per cent of our own selectees are suffering from serious mental or physical weakness. How can we hope to preserve democracy if we continue to neglect human beings?—Labor.

PRIORITIES AND LABOR

Labor turns out guns, planes, tanks, and ships. Labor makes refrigerators, stoves, radios, clothing; and labor mans the transportation lines and the stores that bring these goods to every home. The armies of our own nation and the allied powers are demanding more and still more supplies. Our national buying power is at peak levels. Consumers are clamoring for more goods and more services. Why, then, is labor unemployed? Why are thousands of men finding discharge slips in their pay envelopes? What is this new specter of insecurity—priority unemployment? This war, to a degree never seen before, is a war of machines. When Napoleon's armies overran Europe one man on production could supply two men in the army with equipment. Today it takes 18 men on the production line for every fighting man. What has this to do with the new unemployment? Why doesn't our defense demand decrease instead of increase the number out of work? The answer lies in our peacetime civilization. That, too, is mechanized to a degree never seen before. We use an amazing quantity of durable consumer's goods. These require the same materials that go into equipment for mechanized warfare. We are not producing enough of a number of essential materials to supply all the demand. Naturally consumer's goods get the short end. Consumer's goods industries are, in part, being starved of materials. And in many cases there is no prospect that they can get the chief materials they have been using or adequate substitutes. Those materials will be delivered to plants filling defense orders which have priority ratings high enough to get a share of the limited supplies. What are these priority ratings? What do they accomplish? Their purpose is to assure the flow of materials to the most important uses first. The military uses get priority—that is, they come first. Even among military uses there are degrees of importance, and also among civilian goods some are more essential to good living than others. The priority ratings are graded to indicate the relative importance of the uses. Too often the hardships caused by priorities have been unnecessary, a result of bad planning, inflexibility in handling the distribution of materials, and selfishness and shortsightedness on the part of some companies which built up excessive inventories, reducing the amount available to all others. In Britain all skilled and many semiskilled men, retrained, were quickly put to work producing war materials while many of the salesmen and producers of non-essential civilian goods, who otherwise would have been out of jobs, went into military service. The need for rapid expansion of

THE MARCH OF LABOR



Worker Pays Freight

In a recent statement by the Department of Commerce nearly one-half—or 44 percent to be exact—of all taxes collected in the United States during 1938 and 1939 were paid by those whose incomes were under \$2,000. The old gag that the rich pay too much and the poor and moderately well off not taxed enough doesn't seem to stand up. Of course the 1940-41 statistics on the subject, while not available, will not lower the ratio but on the other hand increase it. Those in the lowest income group, of under \$500, contribute 21.9 percent of every dollar earned; those in the \$500 to \$1,000 group pay 18 percent; those in the \$1,000 to \$1,500 group pay 17.3 percent, it is said. Persons whose weekly earnings are under \$10 pay about \$2 a week in the form of "concealed" sales taxes, and those whose earnings are less than \$20 pay \$3.50, the department report said. Increases in these taxes, however, have been sharply increased, since the department report was put out by the new tax law, and according to all indications will be even more before it is less. War is a costly proposition, even if we are not directly engaged in it. It's the man in overalls as well as the man behind the gun who pays and pays. —United Mine Workers Journal.

A REASONABLE WISH

By Raymond S. Hofses I wish the people of America would take time out from hating Adolph Hitler long enough to view him as a horrible example—an example of what happens in a world that insists upon operating upon the class principle of competition rather than the social way of cooperation. What we Americans would discover, if we could become objective for a little while, is that the very thing we hate in Nazi-land are becoming a part of our way of life. What we would understand is that the law of cause and effect is no respecter of boundary lines. And, in the end, we might understand that even Hitlerism is the logical consequence of a world order which leads with arithmetical exactness to social controls but not necessarily to democracy. The spirit of Hitlerism is revealed in the viewpoint that the State is supreme and that the individual exists only to serve the state. The spirit of democracy emphasizes the importance of the individual and asserts that governments are instituted to serve the welfare of people. There is the theoretical gap that separates Nazi Germany from America. But despite that gap, the things we are beginning to do in this nation are startlingly similar to those that have already been done in Germany. For only a few examples: The paternalism of social security. The concentration of power in the executive or leader. The system of priorities which gives to the State the power of life or death over individual enterprise. The policy of favoring large corporations at the expense of individual business. The creeping subordination of Labor Unions to the government. I have listed the above items, not because I object to them. On the contrary, I recognize them as necessities in this nation no less than in Germany. Nor do I advance them to belittle our president's assertion that he pro-

Labor and Democracy

American labor, with greater unanimity than any other section of the population, recognizes that our national security and our rights and liberties as a free people stand in the gravest peril from the ruthless war machine of German fascism. We know that workers would be the first and worst victims of a Hitler victory. We therefore call for and will loyally participate in a broad national front, embracing every sincere anti-fascist individual and group. American labor has made its position clear in the official acts and declarations of its leading organizations. The appeasers and defeatists are not found in labor's camp. Those isolated leaders who have not voiced labor's conviction find themselves without support from the ranks. They are being repudiated by their own organizations. Recognition by labor that the defeat of Hitler is its most pressing task lays the solid basis for the organization of that defeat in a democratic way. Labor knows that the foundation of victory must be laid in the factories and workshops of America before it can be won on the battlefields of Europe. It is prepared to make any and every needed sacrifice to that end. It demands only that others be called upon to shoulder their fair share of the burden and that the sacrifices which it makes shall be devoted solely to the defense effort of any individual or group. To guarantee that its sacrifices shall not be unequal or ineffectual, it asks also continuing and widened representation in formulating and administering the program. Given these fundamental guarantees, American labor will give increasingly its wholehearted effort to the prosecution of defense production. I am confident that our democratic institutions will vindicate themselves by demonstrating the superior ability of a free and informed people to defend their way of life against forces of totalitarian terror, slavery and ignorance. Further, labor is seriously concerned with the problems of the post-war world. The rout of fascist ideology and all it stands for at home and abroad is as important as the defeat of Hitler's armies. Labor will spare no effort and shirk no burden to insure victory for democracy on both fronts.—Dorothy J. Bellanca, vice-president Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, in the Survey Graphic.

SMALL CHANGE

The Nazis evidently have many ways of milking money out of the people of the occupied countries. The Netherlands News report that in Holland, in the month of September, 43,062 Dutch householders were fined by the Nazi authorities for "excessive" use of electricity, and 28,726 were fined for "excessive" use of gas. The tax on beer has been raised. There have been many arrests on the charge of illegal production or sale of butter. In common with a great many other people, the Hollanders like butter. They are charged with abstracting some of the butterfat from the milk and making butter out of it. Like the people of all the other occupied countries, the Dutch are obstructing the invaders in every feasible way. Some obstruct them in non-feasible ways and find themselves in concentration camps, with the usual persecution.—Milwaukee Post.

Life in old Chicago

The eightieth anniversary of a Chicago store brought to light a set of rules that the employees were compelled to obey, when the store was first opened. They are of such interest that we quote them below. "Store must be opened from 6 a. m. to 10 p. m. the year around. Store must be swept; counter, base shelves and showcases dusted. Lamps trimmed, filled and chimneys cleaned; pens made; doors and windows opened; a pail of water, also a bucket of coal brought in before breakfast (if there is time to do so) and attend to customers who call. Store must not be opened on the Sabbath unless necessary, and then only for a few minutes. The employee who is in the habit of smoking Spanish cigars, being shaved at the barber's, going to dances, and other places of amusement, will surely give his employer reason to be suspicious of his integrity and honesty. Each employee must not pay less than \$5 a year to the church and must attend Sunday school regularly. Men employees are given one evening a week for courting and two if they go to prayer meeting."—Exchange.

New York Has Acute Race Problem

New York is nervous over the threat of a race war. Crime is on the upgrade in Negro districts. Two hundred and fifty extra policemen are patrolling the upper reaches of Central Park, in the vicinity of Harlem. The situation became dangerously acute when two white boys were killed by a Negro lad. In certain sections of Brooklyn, women fear to attend evening services in white churches, according to Father Bedford, a noted Roman Catholic clergyman. Protestant ministers say the situation is bad, but not as bad as two or three years ago. Economic maladjustment is largely responsible. Hundreds of thousands of Negroes are packed in residential areas which have been "going to seed" for a quarter of a century. Investigators have found five or six in one room, and some lodging houses rent their beds on a "three-shift basis," each occupant being routed out at the end of eight hours. The defense program has relieved unemployment, but hasn't ended it, by any means. Probably somewhat similar conditions could be found in other large cities in the North and West. Under Mayor La Guardia the disturbing problem is likely to be treated with vigor and intelligence. Prior to the last World War, the "race problem" was confined largely to the South. Now it threatens to assume national proportions. Its solution will require a lot of forbearance and clear-thinking by both sides. There must be a real program: Jobs for the idle, decent housing, modern schoolhouses and more playgrounds.—Labor.

UNION SHOP PROMOTES STABILITY

When men are equal, they bargain. When they're not, they haggle, and one of them frequently loses his shirt. That, in postage stamp style, is the worker's case for the union shop. Its unity gives him power. His power gives him confidence, self respect and a better standard of living. He bargains with his employer instead of wrangling, meets him as an equal instead of as an exalted being with life or death control over the food, clothing, shelter, pay check. The union shop means basically that all employees of a particular plant or industry are members of one union. The union shop is tried and established. MILLIONS COVERED Of 11,000,000 organized workers, an estimated 3,000,000 are protected by union shop contracts, chiefly in the coal, clothing, printing, building trades, brewery, motion picture, railroad and gas industries. The union shop is far older than CIO—in fact, almost as old as the labor movement. The union shop is as American as democracy. For the union is the democracy through which the worker expresses his industrial citizenship. And no such organization can be fully effective in furthering the welfare of the worker and bettering his bargaining relations with the employer unless it embodies all workers covered by its unit. Likewise, no democratic government can be fully effective unless all those within its borders are participating citizens. DEMOCRACY AT WORK This comparison has been ably put by an official of the Steel Workers' Organizing Committee, who said: "When these ideas are applied to union-employer relations they operate, with some variations, as they do in a political democracy. The union elected by a majority of the workers is any one plant represents them all. The minorities, as in any one Congressional district, are unrepresented. The majority union bargains with the employer for all workers, and the minority is required to abide by the conditions of employment favored by the majority." "All the workers are bound by the union-employer contract. The wage increases, shorter hours, and other benefits secured by the majority are enjoyed likewise by the minority. The union has to pay hall rent, postage and grievance committeemen for lost time and other expenses. "To meet these obligations every member must pay the taxes (union dues) levied by and for the support of the union. All the workers derive equal benefits from the union, and therefore they must all share equally in paying the cost of its upkeep. "A union firmly established through a union shop contract can turn its energies toward improving production, feeling that its members, with the employer, have a real stake in the plant's efficiency and output. WHY OPPOSITION This is no mere theory, but for several years has been the practice of large CIO unions, particularly in the clothing industry, where the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union has established an extensive service to deal specifically with this problem. Opposition to the union shop stems more from employer organizations than from individual employers—probably because outfit like the National Association of Manufacturers find that militant reaction enhances

He Got the Job

A farmer who lived in a certain rural village had 20 employes on his farm, and as none of them was as energetic as the farmer thought he should be, he finally hit upon a plan which he believed would certainly cure them of their lazy habits. "Men," he said one morning, "I have a nice easy job for the laziest man on the farm. Will the laziest man step forward?" Instantly 19 of the men stepped forward. "Why didn't you step to the front with the rest?" inquired the farmer of the remaining one. "Too much trouble," came the reply.

Employment Declines 200,000 in October

WASHINGTON.—Employment declined by 200,000 from September to October, with a reduction of 800,000 in the labor force during the same period, Howard O. Hunter, commissioner of work projects, announced here. Unemployment stood at 3,900,000 in October, a decline of 600,000 from the previous month. The armed forces excluded from the estimates were reported by the Office for Emergency Management as totaling 2,000,000 in October and 1,900,000 in September. The increase in the armed forces during the last year represented for the most part a withdrawal from the labor force, Hunter said. Decline in the number of available workers from September to October was confined almost solely to the rural counties, the report showed, and reflected seasonal contraction in agricultural conditions, with adverse crop conditions in some areas. Rural areas were also responsible for the employment decline, decreases in the rural counties more than offsetting employment increases in the urban counties and the five largest cities. Life is a fragment, a moment between two eternities, influenced by all that has preceded, and to influence all that follows. The only way to illumine it is by extent of views.—William Ellery Channing.