

SO GOES THE PROFIT SYSTEM

From New York City come reports of an increase in unemployment. The same can be said of most other communities throughout the nation. The figures on the country's No. 1 city are 189,485 receiving job insurance checks; 42,000 already have received all the unemployment compensation that is coming to them; 88,551 veterans on the "collecting list" of the Veterans Administration; department of Welfare relief rolls growing at the rate of 3,000 families per month.

If troubled workers are looking for "reassurance," we suggest the dictionary. We can't give it to them—not if they persist in holding fast to the capitalist private-profit economy.

There's a pattern of progression that the present economy has to follow. In order to leave a rake-off for the job owners it is necessary—yes, necessary!—to pay workers less than the value of their product. Result: a time comes when people stop buying and market are glutted. Result: Industries go on short time and resort to layoffs. Result: Still less buying, still more layoffs. And finally: along comes a demagogue to whom the people surrender their freedom in exchange for something to eat.

We oldsters saw how it worked in 1929. Men and women who were just "kids" during that collapse are certain to see the same cycle before long.

Yes, there is a way to prolong the agony.

The nation can withdraw millions of would-be workers from the job market by adopting a policy of worldwide imperialism that will require an ever-growing standing army. The government can supply a hopped-up market by sending the products of American industry to the rest of the world—without exacting payment. Such tactics will keep workers employed for a while.

But imperialism, militarism and a peacetime lend-lease, while it may delay the crack-up, also make it doubly certain. At the end of that road lies inflation, totalitarian controls, more wars and what we now describe as fascism.

Well, we Americans can go all the way with the capitalist system if we want to. We can submit to every makeshift and sanction every prop that the owning class can provide to prolong the profit game. But we can't escape the consequences of our own actions.

Neither, we fear, have we much chance of setting up a society of democratic Socialism if we wait until the old order collapses about our ears. By waiting that long we demonstrate our unfitness for freedom and invite the controls of a more-or-less-benign dictator.

Perhaps we appear rather wistful in our insistence that to be both secure AND free people must inaugurate a new order that fits with security and freedom BEFORE the old way of life flops. But we must confess that we aren't expecting much from a generation of people with votes in their hands who hold fast to a system of economic exploitation and class inequalities until the last possible patch is put upon it. — Reading Labor Advocate.

THE MARCH OF LABOR



IDLENESS OR RECORD BOOM, THAT'S CHOICE FACING U. S.

America in the years to come faces a fateful choice—either wholesale joblessness or record prosperity.

So declared Ewan Clague, director of the Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics, in an address to a conference of community groups in Cincinnati.

In the past decade, he said, the nation's labor force rose by 20 per cent. Also, productivity of labor has been mounting at the rate of 3 per cent a year. Thus, America is capable of producing far more goods and services than ever before—if the people are kept employed.

Without proper planning, the growth of the labor force and rise in productivity could lead to "great unemployment," he warned.

"On the other hand, if business, labor and government manage our affairs well," he said, "we can have a prosperity and a production of goods and services on a scale unprecedented in our history."

HIGHWAY DEATH TOLL TREMENDOUS

Efficient Traffic Control Will Reduce Casualties

In 1946, the number of men, women and children killed in highway accidents totaled about 35,000—roughly 8,000 more than in 1945. At least 1.25 million were injured, many tens of thousands of them permanently crippled.

You have readily available the corresponding figures for your own community and state. They may be above the national average, or below it. In either case, they are intolerable.

Several factors are commonly cited to explain this shocking accident increase; the reduction of traffic police personnel, for example; the unsafe operating condition of many over-age cars; the heavy damage to streets and roads caused by wartime traffic and enforced neglect; the general let-down in personal conduct following release from wartime restrictions.

These conditions and others all have played a part. But the most important factor in the 1946 accident increase was simply an increase in traffic! The records show that fatalities and travel mileage have been climbing upwards together steadily since the summer of 1945.

The total number of accidents or deaths in any given period is not a good yardstick to measure the problem. The significance of a total number depends on how much traffic used the highways in the period covered. A more reliable index is the rate of accidents; for example, the number of fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel.

Back in 1934, the national rate was 18 deaths per 100 million vehicle miles. The amount of travel was increasing enormously, year by year. If that rate had remained at 18, the death totals for the eight years before World War II would have been fantastic.

But a balanced safety program was developed in those years. It was applied by many cities and several of the states. As a result, the national rate had dropped to 12 by 1941. And although the total number of fatalities increased, reaching a peak of nearly 40,000 in 1941, the safety efforts of prewar years actually saved 95,000 lives, and spared millions of injuries which otherwise would have occurred.

IN THE WIND

FROM THE NATION

It gives this column the utmost pleasure to reproduce herewith extracts from a long editorial which appeared in the Boston Herald just 15 years ago.

The Democrats probably re-elected President Hoover last night when they nominated Governor Roosevelt. . . . They have chosen a man who . . . is deficient in the qualities of leadership and statesmanship, and in character, ability, and intellectual impact, to . . . a score of other possible candidates, including Senator Walsh.

Not since 1896 . . . has the party picked a candidate in whom the country has so little confidence. There is nothing in his career to justify a classification with his predecessors—Judge Alton B. Parker, Woodrow Wilson, James M. Cox, and John W. Davis. One of his most ardent supporters has said that he has never been associated with a man whose public career gave so little foundation for a speech of praise.

Republicans . . . think frankly that he is the weakest candidate in the Democratic Party.

What sort of campaign will Governor Roosevelt make? It is to be expected that he will have more to say about "the forgotten man." . . . The chances are that the Governor will dispense doctrines which are dear to the ("so-called progressives") and will also woo the conservatives.

We doubt that he will have the courage . . . to make an uncompromising fight for his political principles, if he has any.

On Thursday, May 8, the United States Senate met at 11 o'clock in the morning, and its chaplain, the Reverend Peter Marshall, offered a prayer, which closed as follows: "Help us to do our very best this day and be content with today's troubles, so that we shall not borrow the troubles of tomorrow. Save us from the sin of worrying, lest stomach ulcers be the badge of our lack of faith. Amen." You can look it up in the Congressional Record.

The Canadian Information Service announces that a boycott of the eight cent candy bar first organized by teen-agers in the Vancouver Island town of Chemainus is now spreading to many other centers across the country. It has already kicked back as far as wholesalers and distributors.

Retailers Also Ride "Gravy Train"

Hike Profits 110.9 Per Cent

Doubtless you've read statements by spokesmen for business that the retailer is the man between and cannot reduce prices until wholesalers bring their prices down. Well, let's see about that.

The New York "Herald-Tribune," a conservative newspaper and no enemy of business, has analyzed the 1946 reports of 479 leading retail stores operating throughout the country and comes up with these results:

Profits increased 110.9 per cent over 1945, while the dollar value of sales increased only 29.8 per cent. It looks like there might have been some profiteering there.

This was the eighth successive year these stores had hiked their profits over the preceding year.

Profits would have been substantially larger, the "Herald-Tribune" says, had not the concerns laid aside heavy reserves against anticipated inventory losses.

Profits on sales were 4.9 per cent, the highest ratio reached in the nine years surveys have been made. In 1945 sales profits were 2.99 per cent.

To round out the picture, the "Herald-Tribune" should now analyze the reports of wholesalers. Doubtless they would produce equally interesting figures.

BAD FOR SOUTH

"If labor is shackled, Southern living standards cannot move forward," declares the Southern Conference for Human Welfare.

That organization, composed of liberals in Dixie, published a special bulletin pointing out the dangers in the anti-labor legislation now before Congress. It particularly emphasized that this legislation would block economic progress in the South, condemning that region to a standard of living lower than in the North.

Morals Good

Disquieting stories of the breakdown of the morale and morals of our soldiers abroad are set at rest by Major General Luther D. Miller, chief of army chaplains.

Returning from an extended inspection trip abroad, Miller said our troops are "doing a fine job as ambassadors of good will to our former enemies" and that their "morale and morals are excellent."

WELL, NICARAGUA IS DIFFERENT

"The free peoples of the world," the President said in proclaiming the Truman Doctrine, "look to us for support in maintaining their freedoms."

The people of Nicaragua woke up the other day to find that Gen. Anastasio Somoza had seized control of their duly elected government. But there is very little chance that Mr. Truman will lead a crusade to protect the people of Nicaragua from the general.

"We cannot allow changes in the status quo in violation of the charter of the United Nations by such methods as coercion, or by such subterfuges as political infiltration," the President said last March. But he was talking about the Middle East. Coercive changes in the status quo do not bother us so much when they occur in Latin America. Somehow we do not regard an imposed regime as a threat to peace except in certain strategic areas where our influence collides with Soviet Russia's.

Mr. Truman explains our policy on Greece and Turkey by saying that America must support the freedom of peoples to choose their way of life. He spoke eloquently of that way of life which is "based upon the will of the majority, and distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from political oppression." Nicaragua evidently lacks these freedoms, but —

It all depends on where you sit.—The Chicago Sun.

Signs and Portents

More "signs and portents" on the business front:

A group of New Deal economists, headed by Chester Bowles, former chief of the O. P. A., believe we are heading into a recession and they offer a nine-point program to head it off or moderate its intensity.

Among the things held necessary are a 15-cent-an-hour wage boost, hiking the minimum wage from 40 to 65 cents an hour, tax relief for those in the lower income brackets, continuation of rent control and a housing program that will produce results.

President Truman declares an "economic cycle of boom and bust" can be prevented if the country is "kept out of the hands of the greedy and the people exercise common sense."

The President still insists prices are much too high and must come down.

New England shoe factories may have to curtail operations because retailers have placed orders for only 25 per cent of their usual requirements. Consumer resistance is given as the reason.

The Department of Commerce says it sees signs that both national income and production of goods and services are slackening off. Higher prices are blamed for the unfavorable showing.

The Toilet Goods Association declares the cosmetic industry is hanging on to the ropes and calls for repeal of the 20 per cent excise tax as a stimulant.

A meeting of credit men at New York heard reports that more checks are "bouncing," that deadbeats are on the increase and bankruptcies rising.

Values on the New York Stock Exchange continue to sag. This is said to reflect a feeling among traders that corporation profits can't be maintained at the present high levels.

When Will This End?

Up to the end of April, approximately 240,000,000 tons of hard and soft coal had been mined in the United States.

Up to the end of April, approximately 500 men have given their lives to their business of mining coal, including the 111 who died in the Centralia disaster.

When will that terrible tribute of life and limb be brought to an end? Must the coal miner go on, day after day, knowing that THIS DAY may be the day on which his own number will be called to be carried lifeless from the pits from which he ekes out his daily existence?

In what other industry throughout this broad land can such an inglorious mark of death be shown.

If other industry can be made safe — so can the coal mines.

It is time — past time, in fact — that it be done.—The Progressive Miner.

Two Years After

In the field of politics, the former allies deadlock and stall in bitter quarrels, as Hitler had predicted they would.

Here in the United States of America, we have botched and mismanaged every specific gain that we had expected victory to bring—every one of them, absolutely and without exception. . . . We have botched housing, price-control, security, health-insurance, industrial peace, the square deal for our minorities.

Our loyalty to the United Nations has degenerated into an official lip-service which makes it a mockery.

We have hampered and stultified our control of atomic energy by exposing it stupidly to the inroads of politics and personal malice.

The most reckless congress in our history is now wrecking the framework of industrial peace, inviting labor and the bosses to join battle again under conditions 50 years out of date.

This, two years after, is what we are doing with victory—the costs remain stark and clear, but the gains are blurred.

LIVING COST HIT ALL-TIME HIGH

WASHINGTON (FP) — Every major item in the Bureau of Labor Statistics index of consumer prices rose between February 15 and March 15, BLS reported May 2 bringing the retail cost of living up to a new all-time high.

The report showed that average prices on March 15 were 58 1/2 per cent higher than the August, 1939 or pre-war average and 20 per cent above the same date a year ago.

LOOKING AHEAD

By Len De Cauw

When Mussolini and Hitler set out to destroy the labor unions, as a first step toward ending all forms of democracy, they didn't say they wanted to enslave the workers and take away their rights.

No, they talked very much like Sen. Robt. Taft, Rep. Fred Hartley and the NAM are talking today.

Hermann Goering, when on trial, was asked to explain the Nazi attacks on German trade unions.

He replied that the unions were under Social Democratic and increasing Communist influence.

He said it was the leaders of the unions, not their members, that the Nazis were after.

The aim was not to destroy liberty, he insisted, but to give the German worker "real freedom."

He stressed the "right to work" as one of the reasons for attacking the unions.

Nearly everything Goering said sounded just like an NAM ad, or a speech by one of the American sponsors of anti-union legislation.

From Italy also comes warning that American anti-union bills resemble the first steps taken by Mussolini.

Giulio Pastore, Catholic member of Parliament and a secretary of the Italian General Confederation of Labor, commenting on the Taft-Hartley bills, pointed out that fascism in Italy began with the pretext of a fight against communism, but it was really aimed at the destruction of all bulwarks built by workers.

"Besides political organizations, fascism destroyed unions, including those that were Catholic-led," he said.

Oreste Lizzadri, another secretary of the Italian labor body, noted that many provisions of the American anti-union bills are just like those in Mussolini's laws, which ended in banning all union rights.

While the countries liberated from fascist rule are now intent on broadening union rights, bitterly remembering where union-crippling legislation led them before, the U. S. Congress is moving in the opposite, fascist direction.

In Italy the right to strike is written into the constitution, employers are not allowed to sue unions, and other labor-protective

measures are being enacted.

In Britain one of the first acts of the Labor government was to repeal the Trades Disputes Act, which restricted the right to strike and had other provisions similar to those of the Taft-Hartley bills.

Many Americans will say amen to this comment of Pres. Will Lawther of the British Natl. Union of Mineworkers:

"Now, when workers everywhere are moving toward greater freedom, we consider it a tragedy that the land where thousands have gone to escape oppression should introduce the most oppressive labor legislation."

One of the phoniest claims made by the sponsors of anti-union legislation is that they are fulfilling a "mandate from the people."

Senator Taft was elected by a majority of one-half of 1 per cent of some three million votes cast. And 92 other Republicans were elected by majorities of less than 5 per cent of the voters.

While some of the voters who helped them get these slim majorities may have fallen for the propaganda that Taft & Co. simply wanted to "remedy labor abuses," most of them voted as they did for many other reasons.

Certainly, there is no evidence that anywhere near a majority of the voters, even in the constituencies where reactionaries were elected, wanted legislation to cripple unions.

As a matter of fact, since Taft and his clique have revealed their real anti-union purpose, such election evidence as there has been points in the opposite direction.

In the Chicago, Minneapolis, Baltimore, Oakland, Hoboken, Passaic and other municipal elections, union-supported candidates have been uniformly elected, including several CIO leaders.

Most noteworthy also is the sweeping primary victory in Washington of Charles R. Savage, who was one of the leading pro-labor progressives in the last Congress.

In the recent Democratic primary he received more votes than the total cast for all candidates in the Republican primary.