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**ASSIGNMENT:**

**U. S. A.**

By SELDEN MENEFEE

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## INTRODUCTION

I HAVE recently returned from a 15,000-mile pilgrimage to America. It was an experience guaranteed to renew anyone's faith in democracy.

The circumstances of my trip were fortunate, especially in wartime. I was commissioned by Princeton University's Office of Public Opinion Research to visit a representative cross-section of cities, towns and villages of all sizes and types throughout the country, from Boston to Los Angeles and from Seattle to Palatka, Florida. During the first half of 1943 I visited 84 different points in 41 states. My work involved interviewing a number of people in most of these places. In my spare hours, as correspondent for several publications, I had occasion to dig beneath the surface of many cities, towns and villages.

The result was a rich jumble of impressions that fell into perspective only after my journey was completed. Hence this book, which almost wrote itself. It does not pretend to be a complete picture of America at war; but it does cut a sufficiently wide swath to give a rough notion of what is going on in the country. The book falls into three main sections—what people are doing in connection with the war effort, what they are thinking, and the main home front problems that beset them.

I am indebted to *The Nation*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Gazette and Daily* of York, Pa., for permission to use certain materials which have already appeared under my name in their columns. I also wish to thank the Office of Public Opinion Research for its cooperation in furnishing facts and figures on what America is thinking, and the American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup Poll), *Fortune* Survey, and National Opinion Research Center, whose studies were the original source of many of these data.

Grateful acknowledgment is also due to Walter Partymiller and Duane Robinson of New York City, Louise Heathers of Northamp-

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Finally, I owe a debt of gratitude to Audrey Granneberg Menefee, my wife, whose contribution as editor and critic was particularly helpful, and to Mary Maki and Joan David, who assisted in preparing the manuscript for publication.

SELDEN MENELEE

*September 1, 1943.*

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*Part I*  
AMERICA AT WAR



## 1: THE WAR IN THE MARKETPLACE

THIS BOOK is, first of all, a humble tribute to the American people from one of them. They are fighting this war wholeheartedly—with less flag-waving and fanfare than we had in World War I, but with more unanimity and with a clearer purpose. They do not know exactly what they are fighting for; but they do know what they are fighting against. They have no doubts as to the justice of this war, or its outcome. They think straight, by and large. They criticize the way the war is being conducted at times; but as one Private Hargrove has sagely suggested, Americans are often at their best when they are griping the loudest. And much of the griping occurs because the people feel they are not being allowed to do enough to help win the war.

These are scenes which reflect the spirit of America at war:

A stooped Vermont farmer of some seventy years loading chicken feed on a Model T Ford truck.

A sixteen-year-old boy from Fairfax, Virginia, who quit high school to work as a riveter's helper in a sheet metal shop in Arlington, for 70 cents an hour seven days a week.

A tiny plantation cabin along the road near Natchez, Mississippi, with five service stars in the window.

A boisterous and excited carload of WACS on their way from Texas to Des Moines to be inducted.

A sober-faced squad of Army privates—clerical workers—bound for a California port for embarkation to the South Pacific.

Two University of Washington sociology professors who spend their summers and weekends working in the shipyards.

A high school band playing a moving version of "America" and its own symphonic arrangement of "You're in the Army Now" in the Germanic-American town of Sheboygan, Wisconsin.

A girl worker in the Willow Run bomber plant asking indignantly, "What does Rickenbacker mean, saying we won't work?"

There's nothing I'd like better than a chance to put in eight hours of good solid work a day!"

A coal miner near Hazard, Kentucky, saying with tears in his eyes, "I don't want no strike. My son is in the Army and I'd be afraid it would hurt him if we closed down the mines even for a day. But if there is strike, of course I'll go out with the majority."

The picture adds up to this: here is a people ready for an all-out war. They are prepared, the vast majority of them, to sacrifice more and more if necessary to win this one for keeps.

Before I left the East in December 1942, numerous people suggested that I try to find out if the people "out in the sticks" really knew that there was a war on. Well, I found out that the war is closer to almost every crossroads village than it is to the provincial residents of Washington or New York. And for a very good reason: the crossroads villagers have a greater human stake in the war. They have more sons than city people, and a greater proportion of their population has enlisted in the services.

Offhand, for example, you wouldn't expect the people of Spirit Lake, Iowa, to be all wrapped up in the war. Spirit Lake is a town of 2100, or was in 1940. It is smaller now because of the draft. It is a farm and resort center and the county seat of Dickinson County, in the "Iowa Great Lakes" section. It would be hard to find a spot farther removed from the battlefronts.

But Dickinson County is in the war up to its neck. With 12,000 population, the county had by March 1943 sent 750 of its sons to fight against the Axis. Half of the boys were volunteers. The citizens of Spirit Lake are proud of their record.

Many lads who were raised on the lakeshore preferred to enlist in the Navy before their numbers came up, and by the time the war was a year old the draft board was taking married men with dependents to fill the Army quota.

Everyone in Spirit Lake has relatives or friends in the fight. "We lost one of the prize boys of this county in North Africa," Editor O. E. Smith of the *Spirit Lake Beacon* told me. "John Kidd was a top athlete in high school and later went on to Ames (Iowa State College). He joined the Army Air Force and went to North Africa as a pilot. He was in on the first bombing of Italian ships

in the Mediterranean. Then he was reported missing. Afterward we heard he was decorated in the hospital, and we all felt better until we learned they decorate names even when the boys aren't there. But we still have hope for him."

Every issue of the weekly *Beacon* carries half a dozen letters from local service men. Private Page, one reads, is convalescing in an English hospital from a leg wound sustained in the North Africa fighting. Young Kenneth Daniels writes from New Guinea, "Boy, this is a terrible place. The New Guinea jungle has ants by the millions; it's hot all the time and our clothes never seem to dry out. I just got out of the hospital again. I had malaria fever, but am OK now."

Then there is Jessie Wolcott, a Dickinson County nurse who was in Japan when war broke out. Since her return, on the diplomatic exchange ship *Gripsholm*, she has made frequent talks to local organizations, giving them the inside story on the Japanese.

Arnold Park, the center of the transient tourist trade on West Lake Okoboji near Spirit Lake, has been hard hit by the war. Half its permanent population is gone. Men who once worked in the tourist trade in summer and fished through the ice of the lake in winter have gone into the armed forces or into various war industries.

In other ways, too, Dickinson County—like many another rural county—is more than pulling its share in the war. It was the first Iowa county to oversubscribe its \$817,200 war bond quota in 1942, and its 1943 quota was raised by \$28,000. The bond drives are run by ordinary business men and working people in their spare time, who do a good job without having to put undue pressure on anyone.

Of course, the people of this Republican county are not uncritical of the Administration and its handling of the war effort. They can't see the sense, for example, of maintaining night watches for enemy aircraft in sub-zero weather, or of maintaining a 24-hour daily guard on a bridge out in the middle of a corn field. They think there are more useful ways to spend their time.

Although they may grumble occasionally about "Washington bureaucracy," the people of Spirit Lake and countless other communities like it are fighting the war quietly but efficiently. It is in



communities like this one "out in the sticks" that the fighting spirit of America is most evident.

## 2: EAST BY NORTH

NEW ENGLAND is living intimately with the war. The huge shipyards at Boston and Portland, the Army and Navy encampments at Camp Edwards, Providence and other places, boom conditions throughout business and industry, urban oil crises and rural gas shortages affect everyone's way of life. The dimmed-out coastal cities are crowded with soldiers and sailors on leave, and the buses and trains are as jammed here as at any place in the country.

Even the small college towns are drawn into this maelstrom of activity. For example, staid old Northampton, with a population of 25,000, has nearly 2000 names of service men listed on the honor roll in front of Memorial Hall. Upward of a thousand WAVES, SPARS and girl Marines have occupied the town. They come from all sorts of backgrounds and from all parts of the country: Lucile Kissack, a landscape architect from Cleveland; Vivian Hossack, a former deputy sheriff in Los Angeles; Gratia Closen, an electric welder and amateur flyer from Minneapolis; Frances Lanier, a commercial artist from Talladega, Alabama, are typical. These girls have taken over the largest hotel in town and a good part of the Smith College campus. The local residents heartily approve of them.

But fundamentally New England has remained very much itself, a region of picturesque towns and villages, neat white houses, close-clipped lawns and a well established social hierarchy that has hardly been touched by this war.

Here is caste on a scale unparalleled in America, except by the white-Negro relationship of the South. At the top of the social structure are the original Yankee families, now outnumbered by Americans of more recent vintage. Next are the Irish-Americans, who have risen to political power in Boston and who predominate among skilled workers in most of the industrial cities. At the

base of the social pyramid are the recent immigrants—French Canadians in Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire and industrial sections of Massachusetts and Rhode Island, and Italians, Poles and Slavs in Boston and other cities. All these, like the Irish, are of conservative Roman Catholic stock. Then, in between the Irish and the French have come the more recent Jewish immigrants who arouse much jealousy among the other working groups because of their competition in the merchandising field. The result: a virulent anti-Semitism among the Irish and the French, which has a strongly Catholic flavor in spite of the efforts of some local priests to stamp it out.

The hierarchy is clear-cut in the Lewiston-Auburn industrial area of Maine, for instance. Lewiston makes textiles, Auburn shoes. The Yankees own the plants; the Irish run them; and the French-Canadians do the work.

Wages have traditionally been so low in Maine's factory towns that fugitive industries have been attracted here, as to the South. Both areas are virtually colonial in their economics. A few years ago Maine factory workers—largely women—earned around \$15 a week. Now they earn half as much again, but still much less than workers in the larger cities. Wages are slightly higher in the textile plants than in the shoe factories because the former are unionized. The CIO has not been able to sign up the French-Canadian workers in Auburn's shoe factories, partly because State and local governments helped to prevent organization several years ago.

In the cities, Yankee conservatism expresses itself in terms of social barriers against the Irish, Italians, Poles and Slavs. Often the most bigoted people are themselves the children of Northern European immigrants. They identify themselves with the original Yankees, and overcompensate for their lack of American background by "taking it out" on other immigrant groups.

This feeling extends in wartime even to American migrants to New England's industrial areas. I heard one Bridgeport Scandinavian deliver a long diatribe against the "Pennsylvania cowboys" from Scranton and other depressed areas who have filled up all of the city's available houses. These rough persons, she said, have no manners; they elbow you around in the stores and refuse to give up

their seats to ladies in the buses. And the war migrants are criticized on the one hand for spending their money too freely, on the other hand for sending most of it home to their families in Pennsylvania.

Where the Yankee tradition is least diluted—as in the rock farming districts of New Hampshire and Vermont—the extreme conservatism of New England is most in evidence. These up-country Yankees oppose the New Deal and its reforms on general principles. They think President Roosevelt is too pro-labor; they dislike unions. One small-town editor went so far as to say, “John L. Lewis had better not come up this way or some farmer might just take a shot at him.” Yet the conservatism of New England has been constructive in its insistence on the conservation of manpower. Local labor resources are being utilized as far as possible, to prevent excess migration and over-expansion. It is said that in upstate Massachusetts nine-tenths of the farmers are doing some industrial work, full or part-time.

Greenfield, a thriving tool- and dye-making center, has only a thousand more people than in 1940, although one plant there has increased its working staff by about 3000. Farmers and formerly unemployed townspeople commute to Greenfield from as far away as Southern Vermont; a thousand women are employed in the largest plant; and white-collar workers spend their evenings in the factory office. Such arrangements should greatly ease the inevitable post-war readjustment.

New Englanders, on the economic defensive, are displaying a fiercely regional consciousness—fighting reforms in freight-rate schedules which would help the South, demanding the completion of an inland waterway from Florida to Boston, and otherwise asserting themselves as a group. Only Texans and Californians surpass old-line Yankees in regional solidarity.

### *Vermont Town*

Vermont has been fighting this war since three months before Pearl Harbor. The Legislature declared that a state of war existed against the Axis just after President Roosevelt's order to the Navy to “shoot on sight” at Nazi U-boats. Strictly speaking this was a technicality, designed to make possible the payment of the state



bonus which had been promised to the Vermont National Guard in the event of wartime mobilization. But it expresses the willingness of Vermont's people to accept a state of war.

Brattleboro, Vermont, is a "village" of some 10,000 persons, living for the most part in large, old-fashioned, white frame houses with slate roofs and generous lawns. Sprawling along the west bank of the Connecticut River, the town looks across the broad, dammed-up waters to New Hampshire's hills. This is no boom town. Outwardly it seems remote from the war. Its woodworking industries are running on war contracts now, and a small new plant has been established to make goggle lenses for military purposes. But not enough new people have come in to take the place of the young men who have been drafted.

Yet in Brattleboro there is a feeling of all-out war. From the old farmer loading feed down by the railroad station to the school girl clerking in the corner drug store, all are participating in some way. When Brattleboro had an air raid drill, the people took it very seriously. Probable damage was computed, facilities were mobilized for picking up the wounded, and the State Guard rounded up nineteen boys and girls who were playing the part of parachutists.

In town I met Alfonse Ratte, a teller in the local bank during the day, who works four hours every night running a machine in one of three small factories which are using part-time help. He is a veteran of the last war and wants to do all he can to win this one. In his spare time Alfonse compiles the town's honor list of service men and women—which numbers close to 1000 so far, or nearly 10 percent of the local population.

The women of Brattleboro are mobilized in the Red Cross. Four hundred of them are working regularly at turning out surgical dressings, thirty-two of them work in the local hospital one or more days each week, and others are busy making kit bags for soldiers and clothing for bombed-out British families.

Many Brattleboro families have returned to the old-time custom of keeping chickens, repairing long deserted henhouses or adapting unused garages to this purpose. Nearly every family has its victory garden. Some are spading up their front lawns to grow vegetables.

The people here are working harder, too, than in any place I have seen—especially the farmers, who are short of hired hands.

Twelve or fourteen hours of work a day is not unusual. One farm family of three is looking after 105 milch cows. Another farmer, Hermann Robb, milks forty cows and delivers the milk himself. There is Clint Howe, an orchard operator who drives a truck on the side. He gets up at 3 A.M. five days a week, drives fifteen miles to pick up about six tons of milk, delivers it to Springfield, Massachusetts (a round trip of about 140 miles), and returns to work his farm.

The children of Brattleboro are working almost as hard as their parents. The minimum age for leaving school is fourteen in Vermont, and about a tenth of the high school students have dropped out to go to work, according to Principal Joseph Wiggin. Of those remaining, more than three-fourths have regular jobs after school. The dime stores depend almost entirely on high school students for clerks. In the factories all too many boys are working a full shift, from 2 till 10 P.M. These boys are sleepy in their classes, and discipline is hard for the teachers to maintain.

One group of Brattleboro men commutes by bus to Springfield, Vermont, more than thirty miles away, where several large machine tool plants are located. There they work eleven hours a day, six days on and two off, turning out tools for Detroit's war industries. Springfield had only 5,000 people in 1940. Now one plant alone employs about 7,500 workers. The labor supply apparently springs out of nowhere. "Springfield ran out of labor three years ago," says the *Brattleboro Daily Reformer*, "but the machine shops kept right on expanding."

Vermont farmers, strong individualists, oppose the Administration's farm program. Most of them consider the Farm Security Administration to be a means of financing ne'er-do-wells who can't get money at the local bank. They think crop control payments—which have never benefited their dairy, poultry and truck farms very much—are a waste of money. They look back to World War I as a sort of Utopian era for the farmer, when wages and farm prices both soared. In this war they feel that labor is getting the gravy.

The Windham County Agent showed me statistics from the New York State College of Agriculture, to prove that in February 1943 factory earning stood at 362 percent of the 1910 to 1914 level, while the corresponding index of farm prices was only 182. Such figures

make Vermonters angry. They want an end to price control over farm products.

Nevertheless farm production is being maintained in Southern Vermont. And in the 1943 war savings drive, the frugal citizens of the area purchased double their quotas of bonds.

### *Boston: The Fighting Irish*

Outwardly, the war has come to Boston in much the same way as it has to other American cities. There is a large victory garden in the Common, directly in front of the State House. The want ad sections of the local papers are filled with appeals for shipyard and industrial workers. The stores are crowded. One business man told me that he had only two problems today: how to get enough merchandise and where to get enough people to sell it.

Yet every Bostonian I talked to was conscious that something was radically wrong behind the scenes. Isolationism, anti-Semitism and pro-appeasement sentiment are more rampant in Boston than in any city in the land. As one who wears the green on St. Patrick's Day, I found the role played by the Boston Irish in this disunity to be particularly disheartening.

There are three sharply separated groups in Boston, as elsewhere in New England. At the top of the social scale are the "Back Bay Brahmins," a relatively small minority of old line Yankees who have long since lost control of the city's government to the Irish. Some of them still live on Beacon Hill, around Chestnut and Mt. Vernon Streets and Louisburg Square; but most have migrated to Milton, Winchester and other suburbs.

The other two main groups—the Irish and Italians—comprise the 85 percent of Boston that is Catholic. The Irish are an absolute majority and run the city, from Mayor Maurice Tobin on down. Well informed Irish-Americans tell me that they are predominantly anti-British, anti-Russian, anti-Semitic and anti-New Deal. They have been strongly influenced by Father Charles Coughlin's paper *Social Justice*, which was sold every Sunday in front of Catholic churches and at subway entrances up to the time of its suppression.

"The Irish are anti almost everything," one long-time student of the Boston scene told me. "They are brought up to think that the



controlling powers are against them. They hate the 'codfish aristocracy,' who looked down their noses at the upstart Irish as long as they could. They don't even trust members of their own group who have been successful—the so-called 'Lace-curtain Irish.' The Irish prefer to live in their whimsical world undisturbed. The Church, after all, glorifies poverty and simplicity, and their pride makes them resent all attempts at reform as attacks on their way of life."

Thus, isolationism has lost little of its potency among the Boston Irish. One national poll taken early in the war showed that 59 percent of all Bostonians favored sending our armed forces abroad rather than keeping them at home; but only 34 percent of the Boston Irish-Americans agreed with this majority viewpoint. The Irish cordially dislike the British—because of historic memories carefully kept alive rather than because they are directly influenced by Eire's neutrality. They dislike the Japanese much more than the Nazis and favor using most of our strength in the Pacific rather than the Atlantic. They hate and fear Russia and communism more than anything else, partly because of the bitter anti-Loyalist propaganda during the Spanish War. The anti-Communist stand of the Catholic Church serves to intensify this feeling. Only when news of oil shipments to Spain coincided with the fuel oil shortage in Boston did the Irish begin to turn away from Franco.

The politicians cater to all these prejudices in an attempt to get Irish votes. In the 1942 primary campaign, Democratic candidates who opposed pro-Administration Joe Casey for Senator attacked the "Washington bureaucrats" (but not President Roosevelt, whose prestige is still great), sniped at the conduct of the war (but did not oppose the war itself), advocated tires for everyone and blamed the Administration for the fuel oil shortage. Casey was nominated, but not by a majority vote. And in the finals he was defeated by isolationist Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, who like his grandfather polled a large part of the Irish vote.

Isolationism is so strong and democracy so weak in the ruling circles of Massachusetts that even though in 1942 three Bay Staters out of four instructed their State Representatives to cast their ballots in favor of a federal world government, the legislators nevertheless refused to do so. A resolution for world federation taken directly

from the one approved by the voters, and another advocating an international police force, went down to defeat in the Legislature. Senator Charles G. Miles of Brockton said, "If these bills are passed, it means treason. We have given up everything but our country, and now they want us to give that up!" Francis P. Moran, former head of the Christian Front in Boston, turned up at the hearing to announce that he was still an isolationist and to state that "This country was doing all right until it started mixing in other people's affairs." Boston City Councilman Michael Kinsella added, "I would ring this country with steel from the Canadian border to the Mexican border, from ocean to ocean, and then say to the others: work out your own destiny! We will not fight for you, nor will we feed you!"—a classic statement of the pre-war isolationist position, especially for the year 1943.

The Boston City Council has sniped at the war dim-out regulations from time to time, and in the summer of 1943 adopted a resolution urging Mayor Tobin to ban the motion picture "Mission to Moscow" in Boston. The *Christian Science Monitor* complimented the Mayor when he refused to ban the film, and remarked that "religious rather than political prejudice has usually been the motivating influence behind the notorious Boston censorship."

One service man from Boston told me, "First we need to get America into some sort of permanent United Nations government. Then we'll have to set about getting Boston into the United States—and that will be a much harder job."

### *Anti-Semitism on the Loose*

Boston is today a focal point of organized anti-Semitism. According to competent Irish sources, at least nine out of ten Boston Irishmen are infected by this disruptive virus, chiefly owing to the propaganda of such men as Francis Moran, who still has great influence among the Boston Irish. Many of the Catholic clergy are alarmed, but they seem unable to do anything to offset the propaganda.

Here are some of the forms that anti-Semitism takes in Boston: Following the disastrous fire which killed some five hundred persons in the Coconut Grove night club, Barnett Welansky, the proprietor, was made the scapegoat by anti-Jewish propagandists.

Some Irishmen even believed a widespread story that the accidental fire was a Jewish plot against the Irish Catholics.

A violently anti-Semitic poem called "America's Fighting Jew" was widely circulated until the Army clamped down on it. The message it carried was that the Jews were not doing their share of the fighting (though the proportion of Jews in the armed forces is at least as high as that of in the general population). It ended with the hoodlum warning, "Johnny Doughboy has a date with America's fighting Jew."

Quantities of anti-Semitic leaflets have been left systematically on the seats of subway, "El" and surface cars. Patriotic posters in Boston City Hall have even been mutilated, the word "United" being changed to "Jewnited."

A wave of terrorism against the Jews swept the city in March 1943 at about the time of the Irish "Evacuation Day Exercises," at which Representative Hamilton Fish and Father Edward Lodge Curran (of Coughlinite and Christian Front fame), were the featured speakers. Twenty Jewish boys were attacked on their way home from a dance in Dorchester, and one was seriously beaten. Other acts of violence were committed against Jews at or near a skating rink in Dorchester. Two Jewish students were assaulted in front of the Brookline Public Library, and several others were attacked at a railroad station in Brookline. Three Jewish boys aged six to ten and a small Jewish girl were beaten after a school track meet.

Two months later a mob of uniformed school boys disrupted a Socialist Party meeting on the Common with shouts of "Is your name Ginsberg?" When the speaker produced a birth certificate showing he was three-quarters English and a quarter Indian, the crowd cried, "A Jew in disguise," blew bugles, threw missiles and tried to set fire to the speaker's clothes. Three policemen stood by, apparently enjoying themselves, refusing to interfere with the mob.

The local American Legion, dominated by the Irish, has sometimes contributed to the confusion. Its Norfolk County Commander precipitated an uncalled-for investigation of Selective Service when he said that "the situation of draft-dodging has become so flagrant that large numbers of a certain racial group are coming from New York



to this section where they are getting defense jobs and keeping out of the draft." Much agitation for a "manhunt" for "Jewish draft-dodgers" resulted.

### *Boston's Social Problems*

A deep-seated cynicism about the war prevails among Boston Irishmen. According to one social worker, "To the Irish, the war is something very disagreeable—something very far away, that is going to hit the other fellow." This indifference is intensified by all-too-common reports of inefficiency and profiteering at the two huge Bethlehem shipyards near the city.

Some serious social problems have arisen from Boston's reluctance to become involved in an all-out war. The U. S. O. is handicapped here by the fact that the Catholic parishes do not permit their organizations of young women to certify their members for canteen duty. Pickups in the streets and parks are increasingly common; juvenile delinquency among young girls and venereal diseases contracted by visiting soldiers and sailors are local scandals.

Religious opposition has been brought to bear against day nurseries and day care for children of working mothers. The claim is that such modern devices constitute a "danger to the American home." Apparently there is no recognition of the fact that the real danger lies in lack of supervision for children of mothers already working or in need of work.

In spite of a wartime shortage of teachers in the Boston schools, the local school board has refused to lift its ban on married women teachers. A wave of protests from Boston Catholic clergymen was the reason: they argued that Boston family life would be disrupted if married women were retained in the schools. Said Dr. Patrick J. Foley, "The birthrate is already falling off. When a woman marries and remains in the school, there will be no growth of family. And we must be very careful." War or no war, the married woman's place is in the home, according to the clergy.

Symbolic of the total situation was the dismal failure of a surprise air raid test in Greater Boston in May 1943. "Public Ignores Air Raid Alert," headlined the *Herald* the next day. "Civilian defense officials frankly termed it the most unsatisfactory test ever held, say-

ing the general public deliberately ignored the signals." The Regional Director in charge commented, "We do not blame the wardens. We do blame the public for an attitude that was amazing. They absolutely failed to obey the fundamental principles of citizen behavior by getting under cover." A *Boston Post* reporter added, "Automobile operators kept their machines in motion by the scores, refusing to pull them into the curbs. . . . Thousands of persons in downtown Boston, including both service men and civilians, completely disregarded civilian defense regulations."

Boston has more daily newspapers than any American city except New York. Not one of them is owned by the Irish, but all apparently find it expedient to avoid clashing with any considerable section of Irish Catholic opinion. A study of one Boston columnist, made in 1942, showed that he spent almost thirty times as much space in attacking domestic policies, persons and agencies as in attacking the enemy.

The chief hope for breaking down the prejudices of the Irish, in the interests of greater war unity, seems to lie in the small minority of Irish men and women who are brave enough to speak out against those who are misleading their own people. For example the *Boston City Reporter*, a crusading leaflet edited by Frances U. Sweeney, waged a campaign against the pro-fascist, anti-Semitic magazine *Catholic International*, which was later removed from the city's principal news stands.

The American Irish Defense Association, which puts out the *Reporter*, has also distributed reprints of two *Look* articles entitled "Hitler's War Against the Catholic Church." The *Reporter* often quotes such Catholic progressives as Archbishop Robert E. Lucey of San Antonio, Archbishop Joseph F. Rummell of New Orleans and Auxiliary Bishop Bernard J. Sheil of Chicago, in an attempt to offset the influence of Coughlinite religious leaders in Boston and New York.

At best, opposition to the destructive propaganda of Boston's native fascists is a discouraging, uphill fight. But it will be a richly rewarding one if it helps even a little to weld the Boston Irish into a closer unity with other Americans.



## *Bridgeport: No Farewell to Reform*

Bridgeport, Connecticut, is one city that is participating 100 percent in the war without losing sight of its social objectives for the post-war period.

Its population has jumped from 146,000 in 1940 to at least 220,000 today. Sixty thousand employees have been added to the payrolls of its booming industries, many of them migrants from New York and Pennsylvania. They work in such large war plants as General Electric, Vought-Sikorsky Aircraft, Remington Arms, the Bullard machine tool factory and the Bridgeport Brass Co., which latter leads the nation in production of shell casings.

The war influx created a bad housing shortage. Every room, garage and shanty in the town has long been filled. But the "hot-bed" situation has largely disappeared. The surplus has been taken care of in the city's 6000 units of public housing and in a similar number of houses built by private contractors. Even the 1600 apartments of Yellow Mill Village, built originally to replace one of the city's worst slums, have been taken over by war workers.

Yet Bridgeport has not found it necessary to compromise with private real estate interests. The entire public housing program up to the spring of 1943 was on a permanent basis, and will be used for the replacement of slums after the war. Permanent houses for 500 more families, and dormitories to house 1750 single persons, were still to be built.

I visited the Success Park Housing Project, on the edge of the city, and was struck by the real beauty of the neat, two-story brick apartments along newly-christened Pearl Harbor, Wake and Manila Streets. In Success Park there is also a modern recreational center, an essential part of good community living that is unwisely omitted from many war housing projects.

Other emergency housing developments in Bridgeport feature duplex dwellings of brick and frame construction, with spacious lawns. Bridgeport has also built two additional schools in the newer sections of town and doubled the size of a third to care for the children of war migrants.

A municipal victory garden program is now under way. The city has plowed and harrowed 200 acres of its land, and rents garden

plots 50 by 60 feet to its citizens for \$3 a year. Facilities for canning the produce are to be donated whenever they are obtainable.

The secret behind this success in meeting war problems seems to be that Bridgeport is governed not by politicians but by honest men, who happen to be Socialists. For ten years the so-called "Republican Socialist" Mayor Jasper McLevy has held sway over the city. Since 1935, in fact, all elective officials have been Socialists; but under Bridgeport's strict merit system, which Mayor McLevy obtained from the State Legislature soon after he first took office, Republicans and Democrats have been appointed to city jobs without prejudice, in accordance with their qualifications.

Jasper McLevy became a Socialist and started running for minor public office in 1900, when he was only twenty-two. A roofer by trade, with only a grade school education, he finally talked himself into the job of Mayor in 1933 when the city was bankrupt and the voters were sick to death of corrupt machine politics. A lean, sharp-featured, quick man with a dry Scottish twang in his voice, the Mayor is called simply "Jasper" by literally thousands of his constituents. "We like Jasper because there's nothing snobbish about him," one Bridgeport woman told me. "He can be Mayor as long as he lives, or as long as he wants the job," said a Republican business man. And indeed it looks that way, for his vote rose from a small plurality a decade ago to an absolute majority of 68 percent of all votes cast in 1941.

Second to McLevy is City Clerk Fred Schwarzkopf, a stocky carpenter who was the first Socialist elected to the Board of Aldermen, in 1931. Rumor has it that this inside position enabled him to dig up all sorts of ammunition for McLevy to use against the old machine in his first successful mayoralty campaign.

The Bridgeport Socialists are strictly a working class group. Of the sixteen Socialists who make up the present Board of Aldermen, all but one (a lunchroom proprietor) are wage earners. They include a factory foreman, two factory workers, three machinists, a toolmaker, a truckman, a carpenter, a painter, a printer, a railroadman, a book-keeper, a salesman and a saleslady. They draw no pay for the time they put in as Aldermen.

There are only about 400 members of the Socialist Party in Bridgeport, and they are not of the orthodox variety. They split away from

the national Party some years ago because they were critical of its isolationist policy. Since then they have remained completely independent of all left-wing factions. Bridgeport's Socialists are interested mainly in proving what good clean government can do for an industrial city, in war as in peace.

### *Problems Here, Too*

Of course, Bridgeport has not solved all of its war-born problems. There are "street-wolves" that prowl by night, accosting lone women. They are hard to control because of the dimout and because Selective Service has cut the Bridgeport Police Department roster by forty men, while population has risen by 50 percent. City officials argue that policemen are essential and should be deferred. But even with this handicap, crime and delinquency have been held to a level much lower than in World War I, when the situation got far out of hand.

Bridgeport, like Boston, has a large number of Catholics. But here there is no organized opposition to married women working or to day nurseries for their children. The Catholics argue that women with small children should not work if they can possibly avoid it; but thousands of Catholic mothers have gone to work in the city's war plants. The local school system operates two day nurseries for employed mothers, and community chest agencies three more.

One survey of school children showed that a quarter of them have both parents employed. These are the "latch-key children" found in war centers everywhere. To help keep them off the streets during the summer months, the city opened not only playfields but also school grounds wherever supervisors could be found. And in addition to the regular summer school courses, special summer schools for music, arts and manual training students were kept open.

Migration from outside has tapered off; but there is still a need for more manpower in the huge war industries. A committee of local citizens is wisely seeking to meet this need by a "Work Will Win The War" campaign, to tap the labor that is still unused in the Bridgeport area. A quota of 5000 additional employed women has been set. "If you can drive a car, you can run a boring machine," the committee advertises. One factory, the Acme Shear Co., has had



the foresight to open a day nursery for the children of its women workers. Mayor McLevy is urging all men and women with time still on their hands to contribute their "patriotic effort" to work in industry or retail trade. Already Bridgeport's war industries are hiring hundreds of teachers and white collar workers for a short evening shift. -

When this war is over and the war migrants leave Bridgeport for their old homes, present war housing projects will be opened to low-income families. The remaining slums will be torn down to make way for new parks and boulevards. The city has plans for investing 80 to 100 million dollars in new streets, sewers (which must be blasted out of rock in the newer sections of town), parks, schools, and other public improvements to take care of post-war unemployment. Bridgeport is one city that can see beyond the war boom. It is already planning for the peace.

### *Lights Out On Broadway*

The war has worked great changes in the face of New York City. A visitor who has not been there since Pearl Harbor finds it a weird experience to come into the Big Town by night. The fairyland of blazing lights is gone; the dimout makes it impossible to see the city as you approach it unless the moon is bright.

Pennsylvania Station's glass-enclosed midway is dark. The traffic lights outside peek through narrow slits. Traffic is thin and moves slowly—a welcome novelty to New York pedestrians, despite the rise in traffic accidents. Gone are the garish advertising displays of Times Square, although the sidewalks seem as jammed with theater-goers as ever.

It is somewhat presumptuous for an outsider to try to get beneath the surface of the biggest city in the world. So I did the next best thing—consulted social scientists and public opinion experts who have their fingers on the pulse of New York's wartime attitudes.

The authorities I talked to were generally agreed on these points:

1. A great majority of New Yorkers support Roosevelt and his war Administration. Gripping is at a minimum, and not of a subversive sort.

2. Because of New York's nearness to Europe as a seaport, and

because more than three-fourths of all New Yorkers are foreign-born or have at least one parent born abroad, consciousness of the war is much higher here than in most large American cities. Characteristically, the immigrant groups of the slum districts are most active in scrap drives and conservation programs. They have many sons in the war, they are the only New Yorkers who really know their neighbors and they are close enough to Europe to realize the meaning of the Nazi invasion. "Down in the tenement districts, they flatten their tin cans religiously. Uptown they toss 'em out as is. The farther people get from the kitchen the less attention they pay to such matters," one public opinion field worker told me.

3. There is a definite gradation in war spirit, with the most intense feeling among Jews and people from Axis-Occupied Europe and the least interest among those of Irish derivation, as in Boston.

Close to a third of New York's seven million people are of Jewish background. Their children make up at least three-fourths of the students in New York's City College. These students—typical of the Jewish community as a whole, though more sophisticated and articulate—are completely wrapped up in the war, according to their teachers. Students participate in every sort of war program open to them, and complain because their opportunities to do war work are limited. They write letters to their Congressmen about our failure to admit European refugees and become inordinately upset over discrimination against Negroes at home.

The Catholics, who account for another third of the city's people, generally remain much more aloof. Their most typical comment on public opinion questions regarding the war is, "I wish it would get over in a hurry." Questions on post-war policy often get the reply, "It's no concern of mine." The 410,000 Italian-born New Yorkers, however, seem relatively enthusiastic about the war. And they are almost immune to fascistic, anti-Semitic and anti-Negro propaganda. Perhaps the example of Mayor LaGuardia and the leftist influence of American Labor Party Representative Vito Marcantonio are responsible for the fact that New York Italians are friendly toward other nationalities and races. It is interesting to note that in Newark, just across the river, Italian-Negro friction has reached a dangerous pitch. The Italians feel that the Negroes are their competitors, and

violence is common. One Newark Negro boy was shot and killed by a fifteen-year-old white youngster in the summer of 1943.

Most New Yorkers of every race and creed read the war news avidly. One reason for New York's concern with the progress of the war is apprehension over air raids. Most people believe that it is just a matter of time before the Nazis try a token bombing of this country, and they see their city as the logical target. On Easter Sunday of 1943, when the streets were crowded, tens of thousands fatalistically expected a raid. Shortly afterward, Mayor LaGuardia and Civilian Defense Volunteer Organization Chief Grover Whalen called for 500,000 additional volunteer workers to help meet the air raid danger. The spirit of the Civilian Defense Volunteer Organization in New York is excellent, although CDVO has received some criticism from labor organizations on the score that it is dominated by socialites. Some people have grumbled about the dimout; people in general thought that Mayor LaGuardia's order to dim out the subways was going a shade too far. But for all this, cooperation in the nightly dimout and in the frequent blackouts is more generously given by "sophisticated" and "cynical" New Yorkers than by the residents of many another more flamboyantly "patriotic" town.

### *Brooklyn and the Irish*

Brooklyn, where much of the Irish population is concentrated, has its own community spirit and civic pride, built mainly around the Brooklyn Dodgers. When a war bond auction was held at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, with the bidding based on the baseball pennant race, the Dodgers drew more money than the Yankees and the Giants put together—in spite of the fact that the newspapers had been saying for weeks that the Dodgers didn't have a chance.

Although Yorkville, the German community on Manhattan Island, used to be the center of pro-Nazi, anti-Semitic and anti-United Nations propaganda, when war came the Nazis and their followers quieted down. The focus of anti-Semitic and anti-Allied agitation moved to Brooklyn. Even before Pearl Harbor, Irish had been active in the Christian Front along with Germans; at least seven of the eighteen men who were arrested on charges of sedition bore distinctly Irish names. (They were not convicted, although proof was produced



by the FBI that they had stolen Federal guns in preparation for an armed revolt.) Anti-Semitism has abated very little if at all among the Irish; at least seventeen Brooklyn synagogues have been "desecrated," some of them many times, according to a publication of the Friends of Democracy.

Indeed the Brooklyn Irish, like the Boston Irish, have a regrettable weakness for the isolationist, fascistic and anti-Semitic preachings of Fathers Charles E. Coughlin and Edward Lodge Curran. The latter, it will be remembered, early in 1943 attributed our "defeats in North Africa" to the equipment sent to Russia. His chief outlet is a column in the *Gaelic-American*.

Patrick F. Scanlan, editor of the *Brooklyn Tablet*, is one of the men who have given aid and comfort to Brooklyn's pro-fascist elements. Scanlan and Father Curran were featured speakers at a breakfast held in 1941 to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of Father Coughlin's ordination as a priest, and served together in organizing a birthday ball for the Royal Oak priest. They also worked together in arranging mass meetings for Franco during the Spanish war. Scanlan has served as an intermediary between Father Coughlin and one of his more prominent New York sympathizers, and was actively associated with the Christian Front.

When seventeen of the Christian Front boys were brought to trial, Scanlan raised thousands of dollars in their behalf, and at a protest rally termed Dennis Healy of the FBI a "Judas Iscariot" for having testified against the Fronters. *Commonweal*, a liberal Catholic weekly, commented that "Father Coughlin, the *Brooklyn Tablet*, *Social Justice*, and their abettors and sympathizers must bear direct responsibility for the plight of these seventeen young men."

Fortunately the followers of Scanlan and Curran are not a majority of Brooklynites, nor of Brooklyn Irish for that matter. Brooklyn has an excellent record in all phases of war work. Every backyard and vacant lot with a fence has its victory garden. Brooklyn houses are studded with service stars, and Brooklynites, like Texans, are continually popping up in the war news.

Even the children of Brooklyn are getting in their licks at Hitler. A gang of small boys, aged eleven to thirteen, sent this letter to the *New York Post*:

Dear Sirs:

We a group of kids living in the neighborhood of Grafton St. and Dumont Av., Brooklyn, organized ourselves into a Social Athletic Club called the 'Eagles.' Besides our various activities we also formed a war committee to help our country and the alleid nations in the fight against fascist barbarions.

Through a raffel we made 14.00 dollars and we want you to be so kind and send it away to the U.S.O.

Thank you very much

From the EAGLES Social Athletic Club boys of Grafton St. cor. Dumont Av. B'Klyn.

Investigation showed that the "Eagles" had also collected 200 books for the Victory book campaign, and innumerable pots and pans for the scrap drives. Every week they use their dues—seven cents apiece—to buy a present for someone they know in the armed forces. They raised \$2.71 for the Navy Emergency Relief Society by setting up a shooting gallery. Said one of the boys, "Now we'd like to help Russian War Relief and Chinese War Relief."

### *Harlem: Sore Spot*

Harlem is perhaps the weakest spot in New York City's home front. It is a good illustration of the fact that residential segregation of Negroes is even more extreme in some Northern cities than in those below the Mason-Dixon line. Harlem represents the ultimate in segregation. Its population has multiplied by six in the last twenty-five years; conditions are atrocious, with overcrowding, sickness, delinquency and unemployment rates much higher than elsewhere in New York City. Harlem's tuberculosis death rate in 1940 was 184 per 100,000 population, compared to 43 for the city as a whole.

In Harlem indifference toward the war is largely a product of discrimination. After an anti-Negro incident in one of our Army camps, the *Amsterdam News* ran a cartoon showing a dead Negro at the feet of a tough-looking military policeman with a smoking gun. The caption: "Thanksgiving, U. S. A." A letter from a Negro soldier in an Army camp quoted in another Negro paper, *The People's Voice*, said, "Just yesterday they hanged a soldier only three



miles from camp for no reason at all . . . I am scared to leave the camp.”

Negroes are displaying ever stronger resentment against being excluded from certain hotels and restaurants and a new inclination to stand their ground in the crowded subways. Harlem leaders are saying: “If we don’t fight for our rights during this war, while the Government needs us, it will be too late after the war.”

Feeling has risen among the whites as a reaction to this new aggressiveness. It has broken out in a pox of race “wars” among gangs of teen-age children. The clashes, mainly around the edges of Harlem, have reached a point where knives, clubs and even home-made pistols are used, with injuries to both sides.

On August 2 the smoldering situation broke out into a destructive riot. A minor dispute in which a Negro soldier attacked a white policeman and was shot in the shoulder was magnified by rumor into an “atrocious” in which a soldier had been killed in the presence of his mother. Mobs formed, hoodlums started looting stores owned by whites, and before the trouble was over five Negroes were dead, perhaps 500 persons were injured, and Harlem’s main thoroughfares were masses of broken glass and wreckage.

The New York papers pointed out quite correctly that this was no race riot; there were no organized attacks by white mobs upon Negroes, or vice versa. But the riot had a racial basis in Negro resentment against discrimination in the armed forces and against economic underprivilege at home. Unless these conditions are corrected by the joint efforts of whites and Negroes, the same sort of thing can happen again.

### *Impact of the War*

In the first months of World War II, New York City seemed destined to become an industrial ghost town. Long after other cities had started to talk about the manpower shortage, the Big Town found itself with 400,000 people still unemployed.

The reason was that most of New York’s manufacturing industries, such as clothing, food products and publishing, were distinctly non-war industries. Two-thirds of all industrial employment was in such factories. And three-quarters of the city’s 27,000 factories

employed fewer than twenty workers each in 1940. Not only have these plants had trouble getting war contracts, but war priorities have also seriously affected businesses employing half the city's factory labor. The result: thousands of enterprising New Yorkers left for greener pastures in the first year of the war. Many who had never been farther from home than New Jersey or Connecticut packed up and went "out west," and now the tough, expressive speech of the city is heard in Pittsburgh, Detroit and even farther afield. Between this exodus and the draft, New York probably suffered a decline in population in the first war year.

A New York butcher, faced with meat shortages, closed up shop and went to see a recruiting agent for the Kaiser shipyards. He was sent to Portland, Oregon, where he has already advanced two notches up the pay scale. He writes glowing letters to his wife and children, and has sent home the money for them to move west—as soon as he can find a place for them to live.

In Seattle there is a boy from the Bronx. He had never been outside of Greater New York until two years ago. He learned sheet metal work when the defense training program first began to operate. He got a job in Rome, N. Y., and from there went to Seattle where he is now helping to build naval vessels.

The authors and journalists who used to cluster in Greenwich Village are scattered to all parts of the world—representing American magazines in England, working for the OWI in Asia, following the armies in Africa.

Late in 1942 the Federal policy of giving preference in war contracts to areas with pools of unemployment really began to affect New York. By April the War Manpower Commission reported that there were 365,000 workers in the city's 325 leading war plants, turning out everything from warships to cotton underwear for the WACS. One company making precision instruments had increased its employment from 700 to 8000. "The business grew so fast they haven't caught up with themselves," one of its employees told me. "Sometimes they train girls faster than they can place them. Then in the departments where they don't have enough to do, the girls take time off or go looking for other jobs. Turnover and absenteeism are plenty high."

Some war plants still avoid hiring Negroes. The *New York Post*

said in April 1943 that 300,000 Negro men were available for the Army or for war jobs in Upper Manhattan—either unemployed or in service jobs which might well be filled by women. The draft boards have “refused” to induct many of them, and “until now the war plants have refused to take them, preferring to keep 300,000 white men out of the Army.”

Shortly after this statement appeared, the Sperry Gyroscope Company opened an employment office in Harlem. This was the first attempt to go directly to the largest source of available manpower remaining in New York. “It’s about time,” was the prevailing reaction in Harlem.

New York was still classed as a city with “adequate labor supply” in the summer of 1943; but only 68,000 were listed as unemployed job seekers by the U. S. Employment Service. And in the last half of the year at least 116,000 new workers were scheduled to be hired by the town’s war industries, 28,000 of them women. Some of them may have to come from the 60,000 “unemployables” still on relief, for even “unemployables” are now being hired in large numbers. Midgets are prized for tight jobs in plane factories, and the lame and halt are finding sedentary jobs where they are just as capable as anyone else.

Even the Bowery Bum of legend is being rehabilitated. Of 513 men brought in by New York police in the winter of 1943, 284, or more than half, were successfully trained and installed in useful jobs by welfare agencies. One man picked up on the Bowery turned out to have been a one-time successful chemical analyst, whose family troubles had driven him to drink. He was eager enough to help with the war effort. Given a decent suit of clothes and a refresher course in his field, his talents were quickly put to use by a war chemical plant. His case might well be remembered in peacetime.

Everywhere in New York the constriction of manpower is evident. The Automats once employed young men almost exclusively. Early in the war they shifted to hiring girls, and now gray-haired grandmothers are succeeding the girls. Many small stores have closed, here as elsewhere. In one window is a sign, “Hank is joining the Army. Watch for the sacrifice sale.” Restaurants display such



signs as this: "Be kind to our waitresses. We can get plenty of customers, but we can't get plenty of help."

Domestic help is also scarce. One desperate housewife on the Jersey side, advertising for a maid, offered candidates the privilege of wearing her mink coat on their days off. She got a hundred replies; but how many of these seriously wanted the job and how many were interested in acquiring a mink coat the following Thursday hasn't been determined. More of them asked about the size of the coat than about the size of the pay envelope.

Despite all this, in the summer of 1943 many able-bodied men were still selling newspapers or hawking gardenias on the sidewalks of New York. Unlike most of our big cities, New York could not claim to have exhausted all its manpower.

The extent to which New York will regain its traditional predominance in small manufacturing and merchandising is questionable. In 1943 a committee appointed by Governor Herbert Lehman to study this problem released a report which pointed with alarm to the city's loss of manufacturing employment in the last ten years. It blamed high taxes and assessments, high labor costs, traffic congestion, alleged "hostility of the Federal Government to the city," obsolete machinery, lack of progressive management in industry, failure of the city and State to seek new business, and the decline of Wall Street.

Most New Yorkers ignored this report. Some businessmen criticized it, refusing to believe the handwriting on the wall. But sociologists accepted it, knowing that the day of Megalopolis is over. New York will be doing well from now on if she holds her own.

### *Pennsylvania Dutch Town*

York County, Pennsylvania, provides a sharp contrast to New York City. It has some of the richest, most beautiful rolling farm land I have ever seen. Its people are nearly all of the old colonial stock, many of them "Pennsylvania Dutch" descended from the frugal German settlers of the 1740's. Here and there in the small towns are quaintly dressed Dunkard farmers and their bonneted wives.

York itself is a pleasant, neatly kept city with a happy balance

of industry and farm-market trade. I was fascinated by the scraps of local history I ran across. Continental Square, in the center of town, is named after the Continental Congress that met there in the darkest days of the Revolution. I saw the house where Tom Paine lived and wrote—now, sadly enough, a rundown slum dwelling. And I heard the strange story of how the citizens of York raised a ransom of \$100,000 to keep the Confederate Army from sacking and burning the town just prior to the Battle of Gettysburg.

Outwardly York is today a typical American small city. Yet if you look sharply you find that it has a character all its own. The Pennsylvania Dutch influence, evident in the older architecture, in the way people speak, the types of food they prefer sets York apart. People have a way of saying, "The coffee is all," when they mean they've used up their ration stamp's worth. They say, "I belled and I belled, but the door didn't make, so I bumped," which means, "The bell was out of order, so I knocked." The Yorkers have a droll sense of humor, based on their half-belief in the old superstitions their forefathers brought from Europe several generations ago. Here and there, you may still see the sign "Word-Healer" in a window, and many natives of York still visit these "Word-Healers" or Hex Doctors to be "tried for" what ails them.

Almost everybody works in a war plant—ex-insurance agents, ex-salesmen, ex-Congressman Harry Haines, ex-merchants—and they all wear their war plant badges around town. I found that the wife of a young business executive runs an engine lathe in the York Safe and Lock Company, and the wife of a prominent physician who entered the armed forces is working in a machine shop. The day nursery sponsored by the city and county takes care of the children of working mothers.

The thing that impressed me most about York, however, was the progressive spirit shown by most of its people. The county's farmers are quick to adopt modern practices in agriculture. The potato growers are organized into a cooperative body for handling spraying and other problems. They have been active in introducing new strains, chief of which is the Allegheny Mountain, one of the finest flavored and also one of the most productive potatoes.

York, unlike most Pennsylvania places of its size, usually votes Democratic in national elections—which means that it supports the

war Administration, although not always agreeing with it. The Republican candidate for U. S. Representative lost York in 1942 by 4500 votes, and was elected by only 50 votes when neighboring counties came to his aid. His Democratic opponent might have won hands down, in the opinion of his supporters, had he not confused the issues by soft-pedaling his support for the New Deal.

There is in York a small but powerful old guard consisting of the Rotary Club, the Manufacturers Association, the Chamber of Commerce, the bankers, the York Water Company and the directors of public and quasi-public institutions, who want to maintain the status quo. Even this group, however, is leavened with a generous sprinkling of liberals and progressives.

An outstanding citizen is Herbert B. Cohen, "the smartest young lawyer in Pennsylvania," who unselfishly fought for seven years the Hopson Utility empire and finally licked it in the Supreme Court of the United States. He has saved the people of York \$1,570,000 in utility rates, and through his efforts York has one of the lowest utility rates in the country.

I have seen many hundreds of small city newspapers, but never one with as complete news coverage as the York *Gazette and Daily* in a city of less than 100,000, nor one as fearless and independent. Editor J. W. Gitt, a lean, middle-aged man of independent means, told me that it was his ambition to run one of the freest newspapers in the country. He has achieved that aim. His support of all progressive reforms is uncompromising.

I was also greatly impressed by the success of the 1943 drive conducted by the schools for clothes for the bombed-out Russians. The enthusiasm with which thousands of York residents responded, filling three storerooms with their contributions in the first day or two of the collection, was a good indication of admiration for the stalwart Red army and of sympathy for the people behind it. When the drive was over 7,860 pounds of clothing, plus 5,593 other garments and 91 pairs of shoes that were not classified by weight, had been collected. To me this was another indication that the people of Southern Pennsylvania are by no means the Tories some politicians have made them out to be.



## *Decline of the York Plan*

York is a metal-working city. Drawing on a large pool of rural labor which has had some past experience in factory work, it has been able to boost employment by a third, while increasing its population by only a thousand or so from the 52,000 it counted in 1940.

One reason I went to York was to find out what had happened to the much-publicized "York Plan," whereby local manufacturers pooled their resources in order to get and to fill war orders. The original stimulus for this plan was an editorial campaign for all-out war production waged by the *Gazette and Daily* just after the fall of France.

In those days none of the local factories had more than 2000 employees and none was equipped to bid against the big corporations for war contracts. So the business men got together, took inventory of the community's machinery and equipment and agreed to take war jobs on a city-wide basis, farming out the work to the smallest shops where necessary to get the job done.

On the strength of this arrangement the late Forry Laucks, president of the York Safe and Lock Company, got a \$75,000,000 war contract. This company, which specialized in making bank vaults, was on its last legs in 1933. The bank holiday reduced the number of banking institutions from 31,000 to 15,000, throwing some 16,000 bank vaults on the market. The result: employment dropped to a dismal low of 250 persons. Today York Safe and Lock has 7000 employees and is busy turning out anti-aircraft and anti-tank guns and shells in a \$9,000,000 Naval Ordnance plant financed by R.F.C.

The York Ice Machinery Corporation, with 3200 workers, is making refrigeration and air-conditioning equipment, and is starting to build engines for Corvettes. Another big plant is making Weed chains for the Army. York factories, down to the smallest machine shop, are turning out war goods almost exclusively.

The York Plan did much to bring war business to the town. And it is still felt. At least a third of the war manufacturing in York is still on a subcontract basis. But the York Plan, as originally developed, has fallen far short of its mark. The idea of pooling machinery through a system of cooperative subcontracting has worked to some extent. But it has not been equally satisfactory to all parties.

Some proprietors of small shops, which are working the clock around making a single machine part, complain that the prime contractors take advantage of them. By setting low subcontract prices the prime contractors were able to hold the profits of their smaller competitors to a comparatively low level. In addition, under this arrangement basic wages were virtually frozen at unbelievably low minimums. One worker whom I met started in a war plant two years ago at 40 cents an hour, received several increases, and was still earning only 48 cents in the summer of 1943.

York was an open-shop town until recently, and the workers, now generally unionized, are chafing at the widening gap between prices and wages. In May 1943 seventy-two employees of the Pennsylvania Saw Corporation struck for higher wages. They had been earning as little as 35 cents an hour until the War Labor Board granted them an increase to a 40-cent minimum. Skilled workers who had been employed for twenty-five years were earning only 60 cents. The CIO union asked for a basic rate of 70½ cents an hour, which it had already established in another large York plant, with extra rates for overtime. But the company used strikebreaking methods rather than negotiate seriously for a contract. In cases like this an adjustment of wages sharply upward is needed if production is to be maintained.

The original York Plan contemplated a pooling of labor as well as machines. This would have necessitated a guarantee that any worker who was "borrowed" for a war job could have his old job back, with full seniority rights, when he finished the war job. But this guarantee was rarely given, and the potential labor supply of York's war plants was sharply curtailed as a result.

Finally, there was a need for the building of houses and other facilities for war workers. A government survey in 1941 showed a vacancy rate of less than one percent, and 960 defense housing units were allocated to York. But representatives of the Chamber of Commerce and other conservative interests actually went to Washington to protest, claiming that large housing projects were not needed. They won their point, temporarily at least. Only 210 units of public housing were built.

York did convert, or adapt, a very large number of eight- to ten-room row houses for extra living units. In 1942 alone more than



300 such units were made available. In the same year the Farm Security Administration started to put in a trailer village of 150 trailers. Everybody, it seemed, wanted to cooperate with the FSA engineers, but they were stalled along for months in an effort to secure a satisfactory site. Finally a site was found just outside the city and fifty trailers were placed. But the trailers have not been fully utilized, and this is used by the critics of housing expansion as proof that the housing situation is not critical.

York business men now say, "We told you so—private housing has been able to keep up with the demand, and now we won't have a large surplus population to worry about after the war." But their critics point out that war housing plans were tied up with the plan for further industrial expansion, and both died together. They argue that York would have profited by the immigration of additional workers, and that jobs could have been found for them during and after the war.

In spite of all its faults, the York Plan did have a healthful effect on industry in the community. Many shops, which would have been lost in the rush of the WPB and the armed services to place contracts in the hands of the big industries, were saved and were enabled to continue in business. Moreover, in the early days of the war preparations York's machinery pool was an oasis of production in a desert of plans and plant construction. While the big industries were building tremendous plants and purchasing extensive equipment for those plants and holding up the production of war materials, York's industries were turning out production with the tools at hand. Now York's war boom is leveling off while the newer plants are increasing their backlogs.

The York Plan had this weakness: it was never sufficiently organized and coordinated so that the entire equipment pool of the community could be used in bidding on contracts. It never worked out its labor pool in a way that the maximum labor supply could be brought into the production picture. Moreover, it was a paper plan which, once set forth, was not administered. No one person ever gave the direction of the plan his complete attention.

Conditions for the perfection of the York Plan into a highly efficient program of war production were ideal. There was a closely knit community. There was an abundance of metal-working plants.

There was a considerable variety of machinery. And there was an unusually large supply of skilled labor, not at that time employed in war plants. But the plan's achievements were small in comparison with its potentialities. A coordinated and well-directed program never materialized. What success the plan did attain was the result of the individual initiative of certain industrialists.

### *Washington, U. S. A.*

To many people in this country Washington, D. C., is a faraway never-never land peopled by the President, a quarrelsome Congress, some long-haired, communistically inclined professors, and a great mass of incompetent bureaucrats who rarely work. To others, Washington is the dynamic nerve center of everything that goes on in these strained days, and anyone living there has his finger on the pulse of the whole world.

A Connecticut housewife told me, "I know a girl from Bridgeport who got a government job in Washington and came back home two weeks later. She couldn't stand it because she didn't have anything to do."

A North Carolina editor remarked, "The inefficiency they have in Washington is awful. Did you see the article in *Reader's Digest* a few months ago?"

On the bus from Beatrice to Lincoln, Nebraska, the lady sitting next to me said, "Isn't this shoe rationing terrible? There's something communistic about it. It's those radicals in Washington. I think it's disgraceful."

And a Michigan professor queried, "Isn't there some place in Washington where I'd fit into the war effort? I'm sick of teaching these days. It must really be exciting to live in Washington, to know everything that's going to happen before it happens and to know you are helping to run the war."

The common view of Washington as a haven for bureaucrats and parlor pinks is a natural result of the publicity this city gets. The magazines dote on articles which expose the least favorable aspects of Washington's official life. Capitol Hill itself has a generous quota of committees whose chief mission seems to be the harassing of New Deal government officials. The press in general gives space

to such attacks because they are "news." They are also useful ammunition for those whose chief interest today is fighting a fourth term for Roosevelt.

Some of the specific criticisms of Washington inefficiency are all too richly deserved. The article cited by my North Carolina friend forcibly called attention to the fact that stenographic "pools" are often idle while stenographers in other offices are overworked. There is, for example, the story of the War Department girl who made herself a complete trousseau on office time for lack of anything else to do. Such cases as the official who was saddled with 40 percent more employees than he required, in order to conform to an "organizational chart" and so justify his own position, need to be exposed, if they are to be corrected. Any Washingtonian can tell similar stories, most of them well founded in fact.

The red tape involved in "going through channels" in the government hierarchy is another wonderful but awful experience to the government novice. The "channels" are most devious not in the so-called New Deal offices but in the old-line and war agencies. I just received a scientific monograph, the actual writing of which was done three years ago; it took a year to "clear" through all the channels and two years to get through the Government Printing Office.

But this much should be said: we are getting on with the war—in fact, production miracles have been wrought despite all handicaps. Washington, by and large, compares very favorably in the efficiency of its offices with the situation in many mushrooming war industries that are under private management. I have seen well-authenticated evidence of the waste of manpower, poor allocation of materials and inadequate supervision of work in aircraft plants and shipyards in every major region of the country—conditions that make most government offices in Washington seem like models of efficiency.

Most of the government employees with whom I am acquainted—mainly professional and technical people—are working harder in Washington than they ever did before. I know many Federal workers who put in 60 or 70 hours a week; and I have known very few who were at a loss for enough to do, at least for any considerable length of time. This is pretty generally true of the three million Federal workers throughout the land.



The thing that people in the country at large do not realize, because of the one-sided reports they read and hear, is that Washington is pretty much like any other war boom town—except that Government workers under the merit system are an above-average lot of people drawn from every part of the nation. On the average, government employees are if anything more conservative than the groups from which they are drawn; for the callow investigators of the Civil Service Commission view any sort of liberal, pro-labor or pre-Munich anti-fascist activities as dangerous, while usually ignoring reactionary or even pro-fascist leanings. As *The Nation* put it,

*“Do you like Tschaikowsky? Do you read the New York Times? Do you oppose lynching? Were you against Hitler before the war?”*

“If the answer to these questions is ‘yes,’ it’s a sign of weak character. It’s a sign that you have Communist leanings. It’s a sign that you are not fit to work for the government.

“Don’t laugh. This is no joke. If you are a government employee, the wrong answers to questions of this type may cost you your job. You see, Tschaikowsky was a Russian; if you like his music you’re probably a Communist. A rabid Southern Congressman once described the *New York Times* as ‘a Jewish Communist paper’; since then the finger of suspicion has been pointed in all seriousness at government employees who ‘habitually’ read it.

“Are you ‘excessive’ in your opposition to fascism? Have you ever criticized Vichy France? Have you ever studied anthropology? Do you have ‘too many Jewish friends’? Liberals are being weeded out of the government on the basis of such questions. Most of the weeding is done not by the Dies committee or the Kerr committee but by the Civil Service Commission and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.”

I once knew a minor executive in a “New Deal” agency, who was so bitter against That Man in the White House that he expressed regret that the ship on which the Atlantic Charter was born did not sink in mid-ocean with Churchill, Roosevelt and Harry Hopkins on board. He also suggested as a solution to the race problem that all of Washington’s colored population be locked up in the White House grounds, because the President and “Eleanor” loved them so dearly. The violence of his sentiments against the Adminis-

tration, Jews, Negroes, and even the aims of the agency for which he worked, constituted no menace to his government livelihood. Had he expressed leftist views with half as much vehemence, however, the Dies Committee and other "guardians of our civic morality" would have been hot on his trail.

War consciousness is probably less acute in Washington than in Mobile or San Francisco, although the capital bristles with reminders of the war. With the seacoast more than a hundred miles away there is no dimout. But uniforms are everywhere, gasoline is scarce, food is high. Dinner parties and large receptions are a thing of the past, except in the Embassies of some Latin American countries. Lunchtime is almost the only occasion for friendly contacts. The average Washingtonian "knows there is a war on," if only because his life is so restricted these days.

It is the gentlemen on Capitol Hill, many of whom seem more interested in the next election than in the war, who give the impression of not knowing there's a war on. A British journalist in Washington told me, "I thought I was coming to the capital of the world when I came here two months ago. But it's more like a visit to the village pump. One Congressional investigation after another. Why don't they get on with the war?"

### *Permanent Transients*

Wartime Washington is about as difficult a place to live in as you can find. Federal employment in the District was running around 280,000 in June 1943, and the population of the metropolitan area had jumped from about 900,000 to 1,181,000 people since 1940. While Government employment had dropped 7000 in the preceding three months, there was still a shortage of 7000 houses and apartments in mid-1943. Huge dormitories and hotels have been built for "GG's"—government girls who can find no place else to live. Only the "cave dwellers," or Washington Socialites, have been little affected. They have stayed on even after the President labeled them "parasites."

Living costs are as high in Washington as in San Francisco, Mobile or any other boom town. The streetcars and buses are jammed; and on Thursday night, when the stores remain open

for government workers, the downtown streets resemble Times Square on New Year's Eve—without the gaiety.

If you think that the average government employee has an easy time of it, glance over the budget of one Ruth Edwards, who divided the \$1620 salary she earned at the Navy Department in 1943 as follows: Rent, \$315; food, \$395; clothing, \$235; clothing upkeep (including dry-cleaning), \$55.74; personal care (including one trip to the hairdresser per month), \$43.20; health, \$30; vacation, \$40; Red Cross and other charities, \$25; transportation, \$65; miscellaneous (wedding presents, etc.), \$15.94; War Bonds, \$150; retirement fund, \$81.12; income tax, \$144. This left Ruth just \$25 with which to paint the town red over a period of a year.

There is a strange air of unreality about Washington, it is true. This springs from the fact that most of the population is only "camping" here, psychologically at least. Genuine natives of Washington are a curiosity. People think of such places as Pittsburgh, Omaha or San Jose as their homes even after they have been in Washington for years.

Many who came to Washington for a "temporary" job ten years ago have stayed on through the depression and the war program. But on the average, turnover is terrific; in the first eight months after Pearl Harbor, the Civil Service Commission hired 189,000 workers in Washington, but 118,000 of these were replacements for employees who had quit or been fired.

Washington is the biggest "company town" in the world. All of its people either work for Uncle Sam or work for someone who works for Uncle Sam. It is a white collar city; industries are lacking, and the only real working class consists of the Negroes who do the city's menial labor.

And in this center of "democratic government," no one can vote unless he does so by absentee ballot in the old home town. As far as local affairs are concerned, even the permanent resident has no more say than a Negro in Mississippi or a Spanish Republican in one of Franco's prisons.

Small wonder, then, that there is little civic pride in the glorified rooming house atmosphere that is Washington. Red Cross drives and War Bond purchases frequently fall below the city's quota; the



average government worker feels no responsibility to the District of Columbia.

A boom in private housing has modernized the way of life of Washingtonians having more than the average amount of income. The suburbs have blossomed in recent years with neat brick "Colonial" houses, small and large. Arlington, Virginia, grew from 26,000 people in 1930 to 57,000 in 1940, and is near 100,000 now. One development alone—a barrack-like set of two-story apartments called Buckingham—houses over 2000 families.

These suburban homes are an asset to the city. They have decentralized living, putting an end to the trend toward stabilized crowding as represented by Georgetown. In this part of Northwest Washington, older than the capital itself, mansions encroached on slums during the '30's, and to this day wealthy families live crowded against members of the humblest working class on its narrow streets and alleys. Persons with social aspirations will stretch their Government salaries to the limit in order to have a "good address" on one of Georgetown's smelly, dirty streets. Houses are bought for \$3000, renovated a bit, and sold for five times that amount.

In contemporary Washington thousands of Negroes live in alley tenements without plumbing or electricity. Many of these date back to Civil War days and have long since been condemned; but they are still occupied and are so hidden from sight that few Washingtonians even know where they are. The National Capital Housing Authority has replaced some of them with modern buildings, but most of the tenements remain, breeding filth diseases, social diseases and crime. A Congressional committee found that 450,000 people, both white and Negro—half of all those in the District of Columbia—were living under slum conditions in 1943.

Almost literally in the shadow of the Capitol lies notorious "Census Tract 48" where 12,300 Negroes and 1400 whites were already living in comparatively uncrowded 1940. Here girls of twelve solicit in the streets and many single rooms contain two families.

Under these circumstances, the street is home to the younger generation, and the children's "gang" results. J. M. Montgomery, who made a careful investigation of the district, tells of rescuing a tiny boy who had sold two cents worth of waste paper and was attacked

as he left the store by the "Purple Cross Gang." Bootblacks, newsboys and children sent on grocery errands are never safe from this gang. Other gangs owe their names to figures ranging from Ali Baba to Al Capone. The "Forty Thieves" draw their membership from older boys and once maintained a house—something like a college fraternity, with jungle ethics their major study. The "Fastest Runners" is composed of very small boys whose "chief credential of membership is a pocket knife." Still another gang, the "Protective Association," for a nickel a week will guarantee non-members against being beaten up by outsiders or by members of the club.

Washington tuberculosis and venereal disease rates are among the country's highest. The U. S. Public Health Service estimates that there are 54,000 syphilitics in Washington, and probably three times that number of gonorrhea cases. Washington led the nation in the last half of 1942 in the number of service men acquiring venereal diseases for every 100,000 population—158, as compared with 72 in Baltimore, 65 in St. Louis, 24 in New York and only 17.5 in Chicago. The venereal disease rate among soldiers visiting Washington rose 147 percent from the previous six months, while in the country as a whole the rate fell 42 percent.

These facts are far more scandalous than the minor inefficiencies of Washington "bureaucrats," to my way of thinking. And very little is being done about them.

### *Unity in Diversity*

The net impression one gets in the Eastern and Northeastern states is good. There are dissident groups, as in Boston and New York; but something like 90 percent of the people realize that this is their war, and are pitching in to win it.

There is less homogeneity and a wider variation in the war spirit in the Northeast than any place in the country. The Yankee farmer and the Boston Irishman, the Harlem Negro and the York factory worker, the New York student and the Washington government girl—these are far more different from each other than the East is different from the South and West. But the great mass of them have this in common: they want to win this war as rapidly as possible.

### 3: THE WARRING SOUTH

SOUTHERNERS are by all odds the most belligerent of Americans. They are ready to fight at the drop of a hat, and often do. Their patriotism in support of the war is open and enthusiastic. It struck me with special force when I visited the mountain farming districts of Eastern Kentucky. When I first arrived in Jackson, the county seat of Breathitt County, I thought the townsfolk were on a holiday because there were so many flags mounted in sockets along the sidewalk. But I was informed this was the usual thing.

This is not an empty gesture. In World War I the fighting mountaineers of this region volunteered in droves, and local citizens relate that Breathitt County was the only county in the nation where not one man had to be drafted. In this war much the same thing has recurred. In a typical month, thirty out of thirty-one boys who went into the Army from Jackson were volunteers. At that time there was only one able-bodied boy of eighteen still left in town. He drove a logging truck, and the scorn heaped on his head for accepting deferment because of his essential employment was such that he probably enlisted soon after.

In Henderson, N. C., I asked Henry Dennis, editor of the *Daily Dispatch*, whether the people there were much interested in the war. Said he, "Interested? It's practically all they talk about any more. On the street, in the stores and barbershops, wherever people get together."

Nevertheless, the South is fighting the war much harder abroad than at home. Not only do some areas feel that they have been unfairly passed by in the allocation of war industries and Army camps, but large sections of the population are apparently more interested in keeping the Negro in his place than in keeping Hitler and Tojo in their places. They seem to feel, too, that the rest of the country is ganging up on them to keep the South in *its* place. The resulting dissension must be very gratifying to Dr. Goebbels.

#### *The South's Case*

Now, it is easy—too easy—for the Northerner to condemn the South for its sectionalism and its prejudices. But this solves no problems. The fact is, the Southerner has a lot of facts on his side. The



South has been held in economic bondage by the North ever since the industrial revolution. Northern capital has milked the region of its resources and given little in return except low wages.

Governor Ellis Arnall of Georgia has stated the South's main economic grievances most eloquently. They are: discriminatory freight rates; unequal Federal expenditures under the "matching" provisions of many government agencies; and failure to develop Southern harbors and the trade routes which logically take off from the South. Arnall and others have every intention of staging a revolt within the Democratic Party in order to get remedies for each of these inequities written into the Party platform. Governor Sam Jones of Louisiana has gone so far as to predict that the South will bolt the Democratic Party if it does not get equal freight rates with the North. Georgia and Louisiana have even threatened to withhold all funds for the 1944 campaign unless they get their way.

The Democratic politicians will not revolt against Roosevelt or the Democratic Party itself, however, for two reasons. First, they couldn't swing the people of the South against this Administration or against the Party, and most of them know it. Mayor Maestri of New Orleans, who ought to know his own constituency, said, "The people of New Orleans are for President Roosevelt. We think he's doing a good job." In this, New Orleans agrees with most Southerners. A poll of Southern Democrats in mid-1943 showed that 80 percent favored Roosevelt for a fourth term.

Second, Southern Democratic leaders have no real intention of leaving the Democratic fold, for they have found the one-party system cozy and congenial in the Deep South. They will sell their support more dearly in terms of commitments on policy than ever before. But they found most alarming the Gallup Poll which showed three Southerners out of five favored a two-party system for the South.

The economic grievances of the South are real, and should be remedied. Take the railroad freight rate differential. For the past seventy years or so, the South has been handicapped by inability to ship goods to Northern markets on equal terms with the North or Northeast, mile for mile. To use an example cited by Governor Jones of Louisiana, it costs \$1.69 to ship one hundred pounds of goods from Boston to Chicago; but it costs \$2.68 to ship the same



amount from Lake Charles, La., to Chicago, although the latter distance is shorter by twenty-five miles. Or again, a Vermont stone quarry can sell its products in Chicago more cheaply than a Georgia quarry, even though the stone costs less in Georgia and shipping distances are much shorter. Originally this differential may have been justified by the sparser population and the single-track railroads in the South, but today it operates to give an unfair advantage to Northern industry while holding the South back. By hampering industrialization it has kept wages down, and this in turn has kept the South poor and unable to help itself. Yet the Interstate Commerce Commission for years refused to take action on the question.

All through the South I heard this story, and I had to admit that if I were a Southerner I too would be bitter about it. Southern leaders now demand that something be done—not after the war, but now, so that the South will be on equal terms with the remainder of the country during the post-war economic reorganization.

I had to come back to Washington to learn that the President and Congress have already taken steps to end this unfair discrimination. The agitation in the South ignored the fact that a three-man board created by Congress in 1940 to study the question had brought in a report asking for the removal of existing differentials. It recommended Congressional action to amend the Interstate Commerce Commission Act so as to give the Commission a clear mandate to carry out this proposal. Since the President has appointed three Southerners to the ICC during his administration, favorable action may confidently be expected soon.

The second grievance, against the system of matching State and local funds with Federal funds for social security and other programs, seems equally well founded. The matching system is one way of decentralizing control over our government programs. It is thoroughly consistent with the Southern theory of States' Rights. But theories go out the window when the pocketbook begins to suffer, as it does in the South. For the Southern States, full of needy persons, are low in tax receipts; and they cannot always raise funds for matching purposes. The result: in California an old-age pensioner gets \$30 a month, of which \$15 come from Federal funds; but in Georgia he gets only about \$8 a month, and only \$4 comes from Federal funds.

In short, "them as has, gits," and the poorer areas are made relatively even poorer. What is needed, obviously, is some minimum Federal standard of social security, health and education, with more money going to the South if necessary to raise it to the level of the rest of the country. Until that can be done the penalties placed on poverty in the South must be a vicious circle, except so far as the war boom breaks it down.

Governor Arnall's third proposal—the development of commerce based on the South—is less a grievance than a program for future action. Latin American trade, by ship and plane, will come to be based more and more on the South because of the logic of geography, and both Federal and private development of Southern commercial facilities will be inevitable.

Southern politicians have other complaints, of course, but they are less logical and more demagogic in nature. The "States' Rights" issue is still talked about. Actually it is dead as a dodo. Even the bellicose Governor Arnall has declared that this question was settled once and for all in 1865. But the old-fashioned rabble-rousers still use it, with some effect.

### *Race and Politics*

The most burning issue of all is the racial question. In part, this too is the creation of demagogues, who use the slogan of "white supremacy" to get votes. They have viewed with alarm the Federal anti-lynching bills, the anti-poll tax bill, the anti-discrimination clause in war contracts and even the inclusion of Negroes in our WPA and Social Security setups on the same basis with whites. All these things, they argue, represent the New Deal's attempt to "impose its hothouse theories of social and economic equality for the Negro upon the South."

The lowest point reached by any Southern politician in seeking to use race prejudice to undermine the Administration was an editorial in the Jackson, Mississippi, *Daily News*, which was inserted in the *Congressional Record* for June 28, 1943, by Representative Frank W. Boykin of Alabama. It reads, in part, "There is blood on your hands, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt. More than any other person, you are morally responsible for those race riots in Detroit

where two dozen were killed and fully 500 injured in nearly a solid day of street fighting.

"You have been personally proclaiming and practicing social equality at the White House and wherever you go, Mrs. Roosevelt. In Detroit, a city noted for the growing impudence and insolence of the Negro population, an attempt was made to put your preachments into practice. . . ."

For the most part, however, the people of the South don't blame the Administration for their racial problem. In June 1943 Gallup Poll interviewers asked a cross-section of Southerners what they liked least about the Roosevelt Administration, and its racial policy came out a poor fourth on the list of complaints. The labor problem seemed four times as important to them. One Southerner out of three had no criticism at all; 22 percent kicked about mis-handling or "coddling" of labor unions, 11 percent about extravagance and waste of public funds, 11 percent about "inefficiency, bureaucracy and red tape" and only 5 percent about "sponsoring too much equality for Negroes." This poll, however, was taken just after the coal strikes, and may therefore not be representative of opinion subsequently. A poll in August showed that 35 percent of Southerners thought the Administration had done a poor job in dealing with the Negro problem.

Anti-Negro feeling is certainly high, whether or not it is focused against the Administration. It is a menace to unity on our home front, for hatred of the Negro is much stronger in the South than the anti-Jewish feeling to which Hitler appealed in pre-Nazi Germany.

### *South Carolina: Growing Unity*

There is no solution for the race issue as long as narrow sectionalism persists in the South. The wonder is that, with all the pulling and hauling that is going on down there, the region still gives its full support to our war against the enemy overseas. One reason is that most common people of the South—including those millions who have not been able even to scrape together enough money to pay their poll taxes—still strongly support the Administration.



While attention has been focused on the resurgence of anti-Negro and anti-New Deal sentiment in many parts of the South, the counter-trend toward greater unity has gathered strength. In many towns of the industrial South the New Deal, the labor movement and the war have combined to produce a virtual revolution in attitudes and ways of life.

In the textile town of Gaffney, South Carolina, unity is based on recognition of organized labor's new role, and on willing cooperation among all elements of the population to help win the war. Most of Gaffney's mills are located just outside the town, with their company houses clustered like chicks around mother hens. The population of Gaffney itself was only 7,636 in 1940, but about as many more live in the company towns near by, free of city taxes and police control. In the old days these company towns were run by the "aristocrats," as the union terms the mill-owning Hamrick family and their followers, with little regard for fine points of the law.

High-handed policies were made possible partly by the individualistic background of the Gaffney labor force. Recruited fresh from the mountains nearby, most of the textile workers toted guns and used them with little provocation. In those days scarcely a court session went by without its quota of six or eight murder cases. It was easy for the company to discourage unionization by inciting these workers to fight among themselves.

Less than a decade ago Gaffney was known as "the roughest place this side of Harlan County" so far as unions were concerned. Five years ago union organizers were threatened with mob violence if they dared "invade" Gaffney or Cherokee County. Today, the CIO Textile Workers' Union of America is a recognized part of the town's life. In 1942 the union asked for an increase of 10 cents an hour in the base pay of workers in one of the Hamrick chain of mills. The War Labor Board awarded an increase of 7½ cents, bringing the minimum wage for unskilled workers up to 47½ cents per hour. The union and the Hamrick management then proceeded peacefully to negotiate the details of work loads, wages and other conditions of work under the provisions of the union contract.

This transformation is not unique. All three plants of the big



Clifton Manufacturing Company of Clifton, S. C., fifteen miles from Gaffney, are under contract with the Textile Workers' Union. The union has also successfully penetrated Greenville, Spartanburg, Columbia and other cities and towns of South Carolina and the industrial South. Huntsville, Alabama, is strongly unionized, for example, and in Danville, Virginia, the 12,000 employees of the Dan River textile mill—one of the largest in the country—recently voted to join the CIO union by a majority of nearly two to one.

All of the Gaffney mills are running full blast day and night, filling war orders. There have been only two minor work stoppages since the war started and these were quickly remedied. The strength of the union locals in Gaffney is such that they have been able to send their own men to the State Senate and House of Representatives. Three unionists are on the Gaffney police force, which totals twelve policemen. The union has its representatives on the school, hospital and ration boards. In November 1942 a textile worker, Lee Allison, was elected Sheriff of Cherokee County by a margin of 8 votes over the candidate of the "aristocrats."

The trend toward unionism in Gaffney and similar towns has been strongly reflected in South Carolina state politics. In 1934, the year of the textile workers' strike, Olin D. Johnson was elected Governor with labor's backing. In 1938, after he had incurred the wrath of the politicians and the industrialists, he was defeated. In 1942 he came back, helped by labor's votes, and took office for a four-year term.

Labor utopia has not arrived, of course, even in Gaffney. Unionization is incomplete, and die-hard resistance to it continues. But to an increasing extent anti-union violence is disappearing, and unions are coming to be an accepted part of the community life in many parts of the South. In Gaffney it required the CIO, several Federal Government agencies, and the war to bring this state of affairs about. But as one labor leader there told me, "We're makin' headway. We'll make Gaffney a good place to live before we're through."

The Gaffney unions have been criticized by the "aristocrats" for being "too friendly" with the Negroes in allowing them to join the locals. At the union's inception members of both races met together occasionally, but in the face of hostile criticism the whites

backed down and tried to appease the racialists by setting up a system of Jim Crow sub-locals. Here is a problem not yet solved, and one that will grow more and more intense as Negroes demand the rights of citizenship. The union must eventually face this issue.

### *Georgia Farm Town*

Even in the smallest town in Georgia, the war doesn't need to be brought home to the people by propaganda or wartime regulations. In Lawrenceville, a village just northeast of Atlanta, talk used to center on the crops. Now there are two main topics of conversation: crops and the war.

When I visited Lawrenceville, nearly everyone was discussing the fate of the Lawrenceville boy whose plane was reported down on a Japanese-held island in the South Pacific. This was important to them not only because they all knew the lad, but also because most of Lawrenceville's large families have one or more members in the armed forces. Many of these youths had not waited for their numbers to come up, but had volunteered long before Pearl Harbor. The people of Lawrenceville have a direct and personal interest in this war.

For the farmers of Gwinnett County, of which Lawrenceville is the county seat, the war has been brought home by another crisis—the manpower shortage. Most of them are one-horse (or one-mule) farmers, which means they till only about thirty or forty acres of land. The largest farmers, however, lean heavily on their families for labor, and their sons are in the Army or going in. One farmer told me, "We're worrying now about *making* this year's crop. We'll worry about harvesting it later."

Cotton is the main crop, and the schools close during the cotton-picking season. In September 1942 the whole town closed up shop—except for the drug stores—and went out into the fields to pick cotton. That helped, but still the rains got some of the year's bumper crop before it was in. In 1943 the townspeople were prepared to turn out for a picking-bee lasting most of the season, if necessary, to save the crop.

More and more tenant farms are vacant because of the shortage of men. Arnold Huff, who carries mail from the railroad station

to the Post Office and clerks in the drug store in his spare time, owns a 122-acre farm. He has one tenant farm family working his land, but half his farm is going to seed because he can't find a second tenant.

In spite of such difficulties, Gwinnett County farmers are more prosperous than ever before, and Lawrenceville's stores are booming. Baled cotton brought \$18 to \$20 a hundredweight early in 1943. This was not all profit, of course. The price paid to pickers averaged \$1.25 to \$1.50 a hundredweight (compared to 50 cents at the depth of the depression). Since it requires about 1300 pounds of raw cotton—before the gin removes the seeds—to make a 500-pound bale, labor costs are quite an item. Furthermore, prices of the goods which farmers have to buy are so high as to cancel out much of the 1942 rise in farm prices. But come inflation or depression, Gwinnett County will never again be in such straits as it was in 1932 and 1933. The New Deal farm program has made too much of a revolution in local farming methods.

For one thing, the farmers have learned to conserve and build their farm resources. The county agent and the AAA program have taught them to plow their hillsides in contours conforming to the drainage slopes. The triple-A office with its staff of ten people, in the basement of the fine new Post Office building, was the busiest place in town when the farmers flocked in to get their 1943 acreage allotments. For most of them quotas were unchanged despite the labor shortage.

The Farm Security Administration had made its own unique contribution, also with the help of the county agent. Gwinnett County once was virtually a one-crop cotton area. The FSA started making loans for seeds and equipment to encourage diversified farming. Now many farmers are in the chicken business, some are starting peach orchards and still others are changing over to soy beans or other war crops. Commercial truck farming is also coming in, and the farmers are nearly all producing enough fresh and canned vegetables and berries for their own use. More than that, many are raising small stands of wheat, which they bring to town to be milled into flour for home use.

The local FSA office reports that it takes in more in loan repayments than it gives out in new loans. Twenty Gwinnett County



farmers finished paying off their loans in 1942. The war will help the remainder to do the same.

In Lawrenceville itself, the war has boomed the mills. The local shoe factory is now running three shifts, and the pants factory and the small sawmills nearby are doing almost as well. The local Office of Civilian Defense is plastered with war posters, and has done a thorough job of organizing the community for any emergency. The OCD office is quieter now than at the beginning of the war, but that is because its initial job of training people in first aid and emergency work has already been done.

### *Florida Backwater*

Not all Southern towns, of course, are equally wrapped up in the war. Most of the 7000 citizens of Palatka, Florida, for example, feel that the war prosperity has passed them by. They are bitter about it. And their bitterness has aggravated sharp antagonisms already existing among them.

Palatkans have sent their sons to war, and have exceeded their quotas in war bond sales and salvage drives. But aside from a few war orders given to what was at one time the world's largest cypress mill, and a small yard that is making a few "pocket" boats for Coast Guard use, the town has felt the effects of the war boom very little. Worst of all, the scuttling of the project for a Florida Ship Canal—which was to have taken off from the St. Johns River near the town—has laid to rest Palatka's fondest dream.

There are two types of cities in Florida—the tourist center and the traditional Southern town with its sleepy atmosphere and its clusters of Negro shanties along the railroad tracks. Palatka is a Southern town. Such tourist trade as it formerly enjoyed consisted of motorists staying overnight en route from Jacksonville to Tampa, or stopping to visit the five-mile-long Ravine Gardens, with their 105,000 azaleas and 100,000 chrysanthemums. A few stayed over to fish in the broad St. Johns River.

Now, with gas rationing in effect, even this small trade is gone. The Ravine Gardens are closed for the duration. The four hotels are deserted; one can get a furnished apartment for \$32.50 a month and board and room for a dollar a day. Fishing is re-



stricted; one must have a Coast Guard permit to take a boat out on the river. Business people dependent on the tourist trade are angry at the way gas rationing has been handled, believing that free use of A rations should be permitted in Florida because of its nearness to the Gulf.

Palatka's daily paper publishes articles pointing out jealously that nearby Orlando, DeLand, Sanford and Ocala have their air fields, Starke its Camp Blanding, Daytona Beach its WACS, and St. Augustine its Coast Guard station. Every week or two another retail store closes its doors. The paper satirically suggests a National Cemetery for Palatka.

When I was in Palatka a large air base had been started nearby, but work on it was at a standstill; a circumstance for which each of two local political factions blamed the other. The factions are united only in a common bitterness over the killing—or delaying—of the Ship Canal. When work starts on the big ditch once more, but not before, Palatka will feel that it is playing its legitimate part in the war effort.

### *Mobile: Boom Town*

No city in the deep South has felt the war more sharply than Mobile, Alabama. Here is an historic town that slept for 230 years, then woke up in two. The population of Mobile's metropolitan area has increased by 60 percent, from 79,000 in 1940 to an estimated 125,000 in the spring of 1943.

Entering the city by bus from the east the first thing one sees is a huge trailer camp, nine miles across the bay from Mobile proper. Next come two dozen giant shipbuilding cranes, standing like soldiers in a row along the bay south of the city. Then through the tunnel, and up into a city that looks more like a Western mining camp than a Southern seaport.

Mobile's hotels are perpetually filled, and her rooming houses display "no rooms" signs to ward off inquiries. Through living-room windows old iron bedsteads can be seen. Three downtown buildings have been converted into "hot-bed" dormitories, with beds available in shifts for 25 cents and up.

The breadline has returned to Mobile, but in a different form:

at mealtimes, queues half a block long form on the sidewalks outside the larger cafeterias. One literally has to fight for any kind of service. Long lines also form outside the theaters and liquor stores, and throngs crowd the sidewalks with no place to go. A Nazi Messerschmidt plane in a tent in the city square draws curious crowds. And everywhere are new arrivals from the hinterland, carrying bulging paper suitcases and tired-looking children.

The magnet that draws these people is employment in the great shipyards of Mobile. In 1940 the city had 17,000 industrial workers; in 1943 it had more than 65,000. The two main shipyards, the Alabama Drydock and Shipyard Co. and the Gulf yard, employ close to 40,000 workers. Their production schedule calls for a cargo ship every four to five days.

The shipyard workers are unionized, mainly by the CIO. Wages start at 50 to 65 cents per hour for unskilled labor, and the workers say that if you can't be making \$1.17 an hour in a month or two you might as well quit. Yet morale is none too high. On one occasion the Alabama yard's employees staged a brief strike against having to pay a 5-cent ferry fare to work. It was here that the Mobile race riot (discussed elsewhere in this book) took place. The rate of absenteeism in the yard has run as high as 25 percent.

Until recently, at least, one reason for this absenteeism was the housing situation. Families with two or more workers, earning a total of \$100 or more per week, lived in one-room shacks. Thousands lived in tent colonies north and south of the city. The Government's defense housing program called for building over 16,000 units, but by the end of 1942 only 4860 of these had been completed. Nearly all the new housing has gone up around the western fringes of the city, leaving virtually untouched the eyesores inhabited by the 37 percent of the population that is Negro. After the war boom is over, and some of the workers go back home, perhaps these slums can be torn down. Certainly even the temporary war housing projects offer far better living conditions than Mobile's ancient slums. But plans for post-war slum clearance are lacking, and some Mobilians believe that only a good rousing fire can do the job.

School facilities are overtaxed. Beautiful Murphy High School, built for 2200 students, now has almost twice that many. In the

first two years of Mobile's shipyard boom only eight new rooms were added to the city's schools, although at least seventy-five were needed. When I was there the schools were running on shifts—one from 8:30 A.M. to 12:30 P.M., the other from 12:30 to 3:30. Under these conditions, only the barest essentials of reading, writing and arithmetic could be taught, and not very well at that. The teachers were tired, discipline was hard to maintain, and school attendance was unenforced. An estimated 2000 children did not go to school at all because space was lacking.

To make matters worse, Mobile cannot hold its teachers. A white grade school teacher with two years of college gets \$800 a year, and a college graduate only \$950. The maximum pay in the grades is \$1300. High school salaries start at \$1150, with a maximum of \$2100 for men and \$1700 for women. Federal typists, by way of contrast, usually earn \$1440, and Mobile shipyard workers \$2600 or more, including overtime.

Juvenile delinquency is rife in Mobile. According to an article by Mrs. Agnes Meyer in the *Washington Post*, girls as young as eleven are picked up for sex offenses; one fourteen-year-old was picked up for operating as a prostitute in an auto trailer, in partnership with a taxi driver who brought trade to her. Three boys, eleven to thirteen, were arrested for breaking into a Woolworth store to steal marbles and causing a fire which nearly destroyed the building. Boys twelve to sixteen have been stealing cars, robbing jewelry stores and drug stores, to say nothing of coming to school drunk.

If these conditions are to be brought under control a comprehensive system of day care for the children of working families is absolutely necessary. The schools, new and old, should be open from 6 A.M. to 6 P.M. to keep the children off the streets.

### *The "Poor White" Issue*

Many Southerners are inclined to blame the breakdown of community controls in places like Mobile on the shiftlessness of their country cousins. A Mobile teacher told me, "These are the lowest type of poor whites, these workers who are flocking in from the back woods. They prefer to live in shacks and go barefoot, even when two or three workers in a single family earn as much as \$500



a month. Give them a good house and they wouldn't know what to do with it. Why, I heard of one family from Tennessee that tore up the front porch of their house for firewood when it got cold. They are the ones that jam the liquor stores, and let their kids run wild on the streets. I only hope we can get rid of them after the war."

I am always suspicious when I hear such sentiments, because I learned long ago that few people live under conditions of poverty simply because they like it. So I picked out a cluster of rough board-and-tar paper shacks in the south end of Mobile to conduct a little investigation of my own.

At the first shack, an unkempt, middle-aged woman in an old cotton dress and denim apron met me at the door. She said she had arrived only a week earlier from upstate Alabama to join "her man," and had moved into the shack he had built. She knew nothing of the houses the Government was building, and apparently was not much interested. "We may not be around these parts for long," she said. "We got a house and piece of land back home, and we figger to go back there soon's this here job is over."

The second place was fixed up more attractively, with flowered cotton curtains in the windows, a rock-lined pathway leading to the front door, and a little garden between the house and the privy in the rear. A discouraged-looking young woman was sitting on the steps, and a dirty year-old child was crawling on the ground nearby. "We're makin' out the best we can," she said. "Leastways it's no worse than it was back home. We'd like to get one of them new houses, but they told us we couldn't get in for four or five months yet, and it's farther off from the yards anyhow, so we're sittin' tight. But it sure does get blazin' hot in this here house. Wish we had a tree to shade it."

Next door I found a man at home, and with liquor on his breath. "No work today?" I asked. He looked at me out of the corners of his eyes and grunted, as if to say, "What business is it of yours?" When I tried to lead him on, he launched into a tirade against snoopers, the slave-driving shipyards and Mobile in general. "I'm gettin' out of this hell-hole soon as I get enough money to take a little stake back to Meridian. I just don't like nothin' about this shipyard mess. They told me I could get me a house to bring my



family down to, but there just ain't any, 'ceptin' a shack like this."

The following day I sat on the arm of a seat on the bus from Mobile to Pascagoula, Mississippi, another shipyard boom town. Beside me, or rather below me, sat a blond, sunburned youth with a shipyard worker's helmet and a lunch bucket in his lap, and a picture badge on his work jacket. His story was much more encouraging: he had come down from Hattiesburg a few months earlier to work at Pascagoula, and with his wife and baby son got a brand-new Government house to live in. He was earning about 90 cents an hour and living better than he ever had before. Then he heard that the Mobile shipyards were paying \$1.04 for his particular grade of work. "I figgered that I owed it to my family to look into it," he said. "In Mobile they said I could get a house inside of three days, so I went to work there. That was three weeks ago, and I haven't found a house yet. I'm plumb disgusted, goin' back and forth to Pascagoula two or three times a week and sleepin' in a dirty old hotel when I'm in Mobile. I was expectin' to get a lot of overtime in Mobile, but I haven't got enough extra to pay my bus fare. Lucky I left the wife and baby in our house in Pascagoula. I'm going back to stay this time."

One Pascagoula man was quoted by Mrs. Agnes Meyer as saying, "Those folks in houses think trailer people are vermin." The trailer folk fiercely resent this cleavage between them and the housed population. They feel insecure and impermanent, and largely make up the 25 percent which Dallas Smith, the personnel manager of Ingall's Shipyard, characterized as "totally lacking in a sense of responsibility. They come from the swamps, pea-patches and woods. Many of them have never lived in a real house, and they don't want to; they prefer to be free to leave when they feel like it."

Some of these people, it's true, are practically illiterate. They have brought their backwoods way of life with them and are reluctant even to change to better housing until they are shown that their families will be happier. But once they do begin to change, many of them learn willingly and soon disprove the glib generalizations of those who look down on them. The poorest of the poor whites, it should be remembered, are backward not entirely through their own shortcomings. It may not be their fault if they have never had a house to live in and have become so accustomed to being held down

economically that they are suspicious of anyone who tries to help them. If they are inefficient workers—as many of them are—it may be because they have had hookworm from lack of shoes, or pellagra from lack of a decent diet. If these “poor whites” are full of anti-Negro prejudices, as they are, unfortunately, it is because the whiteness of their skins is the one thing that gives them a degree of social status. They have little else to be proud of. There may be some bad human material among them; but I was impressed with the evidence I saw that most of them—especially the younger ones—are eager to get ahead. In short, there is nothing wrong with most of these people that a decent education and good living conditions can't correct.

### *Vicksburg: The Old South*

Near the other economic extreme from Mobile and Pascagoula, among the cities of the Old South, is Vicksburg, Mississippi. To the average inhabitant of Vicksburg, World War II still seems less tangible and real than the “war between the states,” for the present war has touched the old city very lightly. There is a small shell casing plant at Vicksburg employing some 400 people. The U. S. Employment Service has sent several hundred skilled workers and semi-skilled graduates of vocational training courses to Mobile, Pascagoula, and other centers of war industry. And the draft has taken a large number of the city's youth. The war boom atmosphere is entirely lacking.

There were still marked traces of the depression in Vicksburg in 1943. The Employment Service had a thousand registered job-seekers, half of whom were actually unemployed. The end of WPA created a real problem in Vicksburg, especially since Mississippi had no provision for cash relief.

But most of the people were uninterested in these issues. Ask the average Vicksburg citizen about his city and he will immediately describe to you the Vicksburg National Cemetery, with its 1300 acres of monuments and breastworks carefully preserved since 1863, when General Grant outflanked the defenders and swept up from the south to capture the city and cut the Confederacy in two. He will proudly point out to you the old Warren County Courthouse, built in 1861 with slave labor and badly scarred by Grant's cannons.

He may offer to take you on a tour of "ante-bellum" houses, such as the Klein home, where a cannon ball fired by a Federal gunboat is still embedded in the woodwork.

Down by the riverfront you will get an even better picture of the city's lingering past. Along the banks above the levee are ramshackle houses about to collapse. The waterfront looks much like it must have looked in Mark Twain's day, except when the flooded river immerses De Soto Island to join Vicksburg's Yazoo River Canal to the Mississippi. The ancient river boat *Vestal* is tied up to the bank, a fishing barge is just below her, and a raft across the channel displays the sign, "T. M. Morrissey, Liquor Dealer."

### *Racial Fears*

It was in Vicksburg that the racial issue struck me with full force. To local residents, the Negro question is the town's burning problem at present. Southern women unused to doing any of their own housework can no longer get full-time maids for two dollars a week, and their fury is unbounded. Many of them wholeheartedly believe the rumors about "Eleanor Clubs" among the Negroes and some subscribe to wild stories about projected Negro rebellions.

These morbid fears seem to be directly related to the proportion of Negroes in the population. Several citizens pointed out nervously to me that whites are outnumbered by Negroes in Vicksburg itself. Just upriver in the Delta cotton region, they added, the colored population is over 90 percent of the total. The fear that these Negroes may soon object to being "kept in their place" preys on the minds of many whites. As an issue it looms larger than the war in their distorted vision.

What causes fear to erupt into violence is any attempt to organize Negro workers in the South. Shortly after I left Vicksburg the International Woodworkers of America (CIO) tried to organize the 1200 employees of Anderson-Tully Lumber Company, 90 percent of them Negroes. The union sent two men to do this work: Claude Welch, a white man, and Frank Davis, a Negro. Their efforts were sufficiently successful to cause the NLRB to order an election in the plant.

Late in March, 1943, according to a sworn affidavit by Davis, he



was pointed out to city police on the street by one Hattaway, the mill superintendent. He was taken to the city jail and kept there for twenty-four hours, without any food, and without any formal charges being made against him. At the end of that time, he heard someone at the rear of the police station say, "I'm ready for your CIO man." The chief of police then took Davis from his cell and pushed him out the back door, where three armed men were waiting for him. They slugged and handcuffed him, threw him face down on the floor of a car, and took him out into the country. Here he was handcuffed to a tree and the three men took turns beating him with weighted rubber hose, meanwhile asking him about his work for the CIO and threatening to kill him if he ever came back to Vicksburg. After a heavy beating he was put back in the car, driven to another place, flogged again, and finally released and told to run for his life. Shots were fired after him. Davis was so badly beaten that he required hospitalization in Memphis.

The experience of Welch was similar. He was decoyed out of his lodging house by word sent in that Frank Davis wanted to see him. According to his sworn statement, a man named Lum, chief guard of the lumber company, then stuck a revolver into his face and forced him into a car driven by a deputy sheriff named Lucket. Several other men were in the party, one of them the brother of the mill superintendent, Hattaway. Welch, also, was taken into the country, handcuffed to a tree and beaten to the accompaniment of a stream of obscene abuse by Lum. He, like Davis, was threatened with death if he stayed in Vicksburg.

Finally, the floggers told Welch they were going to let him off because he had a wife and children, provided he would leave Warren County. Lum, the company guard, warned him, "If you are in town when the sun goes down tomorrow night I'll kill you." He added, according to Welch, "If it wasn't for people like the CIO we could still have slavery and get along without working." Welch was finally left in the National Cemetery, about three miles out of town. The affidavits on which this account is based were brought to the attention of the Department of Justice by the Southern Workers' Defense League of Atlanta. Thanks to this action, the Anderson-Tully workers had the courage to vote 572 to 42 for the union in the NLRB election.



When I was in Vicksburg there was much discussion of the Federal indictments recently returned against several leaders of a mob which lynched a Negro at Laurel, Mississippi, in 1942. The better educated people of Vicksburg almost unanimously expressed the hope that the lynchers would be convicted, in order to discourage mob violence in the State.

What was probably the majority sentiment, however, was voiced by a lard salesman who told me, "They'll never get enough evidence to make it stick. If they do, they can't get a jury together that will convict 'em." (He was right; the charges were dismissed in May, after a sensational trial—the first in nearly fifty years in which men were actually brought before a jury on a charge of lynching. A fund had been raised for the defense of the lynchers by a committee which included two bankers and the mayor of one of the towns in that part of the State. The Government produced overwhelming evidence that Deputy Sheriff Luther Holder and two leaders of the lynch mob had conspired to get their victim, Howard Wash, out of jail to hang him. But the all-white jury was swayed by such statements as this one by the defense attorney: "We intend to have in the South white supremacy until Gabriel toots his horn.")

My lard salesman friend described with many a chuckle, as we rode the bus to Natchez, how some years ago he took part in the mass killing of eighteen Negroes, some of whom were alleged to have killed a local law enforcement officer. When I ventured the opinion that the law should take care of such cases, he merely looked at me with amusement and dismissed the subject with the Southerner's time-honored answer to damyankees who have "ideas" on the race question: "If you lived down here awhile you'd understand."

### *Texas vs. The Administration*

Texas is a region, almost a nation, in itself. It includes parts of the deep South, the Mexican border region, the great plains and the western range country, and it partakes of all of these. You can find almost anything you look for in this sprawling State. Texans' attitudes are equally divergent, and often paradoxical: on the one hand, a fighting spirit unsurpassed by that of any other State; on the other,

mean and frivolous criticism of the domestic war program louder than one hears anywhere in the South or West.

In 1940 President Roosevelt carried Texas by better than a four to one majority. Today he would still carry the State, but the margin would be much smaller in the opinion of most Texas politicians. The growth of anti-Administration sentiment is traceable to several things:

(1) The Negro issue is acute in Eastern Texas, and its seriousness is blamed by some on the Administration.

(2) Individualistic Texans are prone to resent rationing and other forms of "regimentation from Washington." Governor Coke L. Stephenson, a well-to-do rancher, leads the criticism of gasoline rationing. Rubber shortage or no rubber shortage, he argues, this is an oil-producing State. "B" and "C" stickers are almost universal on Texas automobiles, and the Governor has refused to enforce the thirty-five-mile-an-hour national speed limit. Lt. Governor John Lee Smith, in the same spirit, called Speaker Sam Rayburn of the House of Representatives "the chief apologist for the bungling policies of Washington bureaucrats, and especially of the labor-coddling policy of the Administration which has brewed the broth of strife which now threatens our war effort." This was on the occasion of a speech by Rayburn to the Texas Legislature.

This general attitude has spread to other domestic war regulations as well. In May 1943, when potato growers and shippers created a shortage by refusing to sell their products at the OPA ceiling price of \$2.50 per hundredweight, State Agriculture Commissioner McDonald told Texas growers simply to disregard the ceiling and sell the potatoes for \$3.50. He told Texans that when he tried to get the ceiling raised "a divided authority and buck-passing is all I found." So, in the Texas tradition, he took matters into his own hands.

(3) That portion of the populace which can pay its poll taxes several months before elections (thereby becoming eligible to vote) has shown a consistent tendency to elect demagogues by a small majority. Typical are Senator W. Lee (Pass the Biscuits, Pappy) O'Daniel, who entered politics as a flour salesman and rose to political prominence by singing hill-billy ballads; and Representative Martin Dies, master exhibitionist of them all. Once in public office

such men, however ridiculous they may seem, exert an influence on the electorate by their public acts and statements. O'Daniel, for example, shrieks early and late that the Roosevelt Administration has been "coddling organized labor and the labor racketeers," and his constituents have come to believe him.

(4) A new but growing influence on the Texas scene is the Christian American Association, a native fascist group with headquarters in Houston. This body has been campaigning for anti-strike legislation along lines advocated by Senator O'Daniel. Texas and Mississippi have passed such laws already. When the Louisiana State Legislature refused to take similar action the Association printed leaflets announcing that "From now on, white women and white men will be forced into organization with black African apes whom they will have to call brother or lose their jobs." A favorite device of this group is the wholesale distribution of a picture of Mrs. Roosevelt with a group of Negroes. These "Christians" circulate anti-Jewish and anti-alien as well as anti-Negro literature. The Louisiana Legislature called upon the FBI and the Dies Committee to investigate this new form of Ku Klux Klanism, but without results when this was written.

### *Fort Worth: Army Camp*

Despite such influences, however, Texans have taken the armed forces to their hearts. At Fort Worth, for instance, the Army has swooped down and taken possession of the town, and the local citizenry loves it. The 36th Division was trained there in the first World War, and when the armed services returned in this war, the town welcomed them with open arms. The boys in numerous nearby Army camps come in to Fort Worth to spend their week-ends off, for this is the last large city in the Southwest: there is nothing beyond but small towns, farms and open range.

Fort Worth is proudest of being the headquarters for the Army Flying Training Command and the center of air training activities in the nation. But here also are the huge Fort Worth Quartermaster depot, which brought over 3000 families to the city; one of the largest seaplane bases in the country at nearby Lake Worth; a



new Marine Corps Glider Base at Eagle Mountain Lake; and numerous smaller Army projects.

On the civilian side Fort Worth's great Consolidated Aircraft plant is as big in point of floor space as any in the world. Its B-24 Liberator Bombers and C-87 Liberator Express cargo planes have made history in this war. Globe Aircraft, a much smaller plant, was set up to make plywood training planes and has been so successful that its staff has been doubled in the last year.

As you might expect, the housing situation is critical in Fort Worth. Priorities for military men and war workers have actually resulted in old Texas residents being more or less put into the street. This is how it works: John Smith, employed in a Fort Worth department store, has rented a furnished house in the north end of the city for years. Suddenly the owner sells it from under him. He agrees to move within ninety days. But he can't find a place to live because he is not in war work, although he sells things to war workers and their wives all day every day. So he takes a room in an old house—if he can find one. The advertisements of furnished houses and apartments are scarce, and some of them quite insulting; this one appeared in the *Fort Worth Shopper*: "Fur. Apt., no street walkers, home wreckers, drunks wanted; Couples must present marriage certificate."

### *Pride and Sensitivity*

Texas has an almost fanatic pride in its contribution to the Armed Forces. In the little town of Carthage, in East Texas, by early 1943 some 28 percent of all men from eighteen to sixty-five years of age were in the services. The draft board there is tough, but the people don't resent it. Many married men have enlisted. The superintendent of schools volunteered; and when one of the local teachers subsequently asked deferment because he had one child and another en route, many Carthage citizens with relatives in the services stopped speaking to him.

The men and boys of Texas have volunteered for military service in such numbers that they are far ahead of any other State in proportion of men in the armed forces. They are in the thick of every battle on every fighting front in the world. They don't believe in



hiding their light under a bushel; their newspapers are full of the exploits of their native sons. They are also inordinately sensitive to implied criticism on any score whatsoever.

I ran afoul of this sensitivity in a curious manner. Early in my trip across the South I wrote a column for the *Washington Post* in which, among other things, I reported that because poverty was so widespread in the South many Southern youth found Army life attractive compared to life back home. Southern youth had volunteered by the thousands, as a result, I said. Texas was never mentioned in the column. I had not yet arrived there when I wrote it.

On the day after the column appeared, two Texas members of the United States House of Representatives rose to denounce me from the floor. There followed a wave of violent Texas editorials and a deluge of letters from angry Texans. The following, from a Dennison, Texas rancher, was typical:

“. . . Have you ever been to Texas? I wouldn't advise you to come now!

“You have made some nasty remarks about people in the South, people who are just as white as you, if not more so. You said living conditions were horrible! Have we ever complained? You, Mr. Menefee, said everyone was poverty-stricken! Have we ever begged you for anything?

“. . . You damn Yankees are always trying to start something. You got your ears 'pinned back' once before and you'll get it again if you keep bemeaning us. Texans are people just like you, much better, and have a greater understanding of human feelings. . . . It's a good thing there are so many Texans in the service because if winning the war was left to the Yankee, where do you think we would be?

“. . . You send out propaganda in a futile attempt to demoralize us. You are fighting a losing battle, bud, but I can tell by your speech that you haven't enough intelligence to quit when your beaten.

“Have you been investigated for espionage (sic) yet? You should be! . . . There's a bastard like you in every government seat, trying to demoralize the people.

“I'm just one of the many cattle ranchers in Texas who have boys in the service. I am backed by every loyal Texan alive. I know

and if you don't, that you'd better never come to Texas, or someone will take your silly comment serious, and assassinate (sic) you. I hope. Some loyal Texan may meet you in Washington and pay you a visit. . . ."

My skin is somewhat thinner than that of an alligator, and since I seemed inadvertently to have stirred up a hornet's nest of sectional bitterness, I decided that the incident had gone far enough. So I sat down in a Western hotel lobby and wrote the editors of the *Dallas News* and the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* asking them to print my answer to all the criticism. I pointed out that my information on the controverted point was gleaned from Southerners, that I had referred mainly to pre-Pearl Harbor enlistments, that my article in toto was really a tribute to the South's war spirit, and that I had neither visited Texas as yet nor meant to refer to it when I wrote that much-maligned column.

The letter was duly printed, but the mail kept coming. Some of it was kindlier, however. A self-styled "working stiff" from Dallas wrote in a scrawling hand to say that everything I had written was true. A rancher from Athens, Texas, went so far as to state that I had performed a great service by focusing attention on the basic problems of the South. He offered, furthermore, to furnish the names of boys and men whose enlistments were attributable largely to poverty at home, if I needed them to prove my point. Said he:

". . . I own four thousand acres of land in 70 miles of Dallas, and farmed this land with tenants, for many years, and it makes me burn with shame to think of how the finest young men on earth went to the Army and Navy. I knew why they went. Simply that they had no opportunity or advantages and had worked all their life for nothing. The hardest work on earth and longest hours, with no chance of getting the yoke of slavery from their necks.

"Certainly you could not question their patriotism. They certainly had nothing else to fight for. No homes, no work or chance in life . . .

"This is certainly the saddest chapter in the history of a great, rich and Christian country—it is stained with human blood. I have often wondered why some of you did not take up the fight. Think of the inequalities and injustices of tariff, freight rates, in-

terest rates on money and all the other things we have had and still have. And how these fine young men give their lives and make the best soldiers on earth for an economy like theirs.

"No selfish motive prompts me in writing you, as they found oil on my land—which freed me—but in interest of truth and fairness, I felt you should have the facts from one who knows. . . ."

### *The Changing South*

Looking at the South as a whole, one fact stands out like a landmark: the war has wrought a long-overdue economic revolution in the region, and the changes that have come will outlast the war. Gone is the story-book South of plantation verandas, mint juleps and leisurely living. It has long been on its way out, as factories have migrated Southward in the last generation; but the war has delivered the final blow to the old way of life.

In 1942 alone, six billion dollars were invested in the five Southern States of Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana for industrial plants, depots, training bases and war supplies. Poor whites and Negroes have swarmed into the war boom towns by the tens of thousands from the back country. The result has been the industrialization of Southern cities on a scale hitherto undreamed of. Many of the new plants will be converted to peacetime use after the war, since the South offers great advantages in raw materials, favorable climate and an abundant labor supply.

Georgia had ninety shipyard workers in 1940; three yards in Savannah alone employed over 30,000 workers by mid-1943. The figure for Alabama and Mississippi together increased from less than 3000 to over 50,000 in the same period. Louisiana jumped from 2000 to over 30,000. The aircraft industry in the Southeast already employed about 25,000, with peak employment expected to double that. Panama City, Florida, has grown from 12,000 to 25,000, and Key West from 13,000 to 30,000 in two years. A dozen other Southern cities have similarly burgeoned under war boom conditions.

Many thousands of ex-farmers and sharecroppers who have learned new skills in the war centers will want to use them after the war, instead of returning to farm work at subsistence standards of living. Most of them will stay in the cities, even if unemploy-



ment threatens. For here they have had a taste of living on a level of comfort which they will not want to give up. Men who have been paid up to \$300 a month, with overtime, in the shipyards of the South will never be satisfied to go back to earning \$300 or so a year on a cotton farm. The South has long suffered from a surplus of farm labor, and the draining of manpower from the farms will help to correct this condition after the war.

Southern agriculture, too, has been transformed by the war. Cotton farmers have stubbornly held on to their customary crop, but despite this, peanuts, soybeans, potatoes, vegetables and other feed crops have increased tremendously. The vast variety of uses for such crops as soy beans for plastics, paints, dyes and other chemical products provides a guarantee against any complete reversion to cotton as the one big cash crop in the South. The poverty which went with the one-crop system in the past is on its way out, and the South as a whole will vastly gain thereby.

Perhaps the realization that wartime changes have permanently transformed the South accounts for some of the resentment displayed by nostalgic upper-class Southerners against the Negroes and poor whites of Dixie's new industrial centers.

Perhaps, also, talking with these limited groups has led certain reporters to misjudge the South's war temper. For example, Paul Mallon—after a trip through five Southern States—claimed that he had "irrefutable evidence" that "all of the Southern and border states, with the possible exception of Florida, were in an extreme condition of psychological political revolution" against Roosevelt, his administration and Washington's "use of totalitarian methods."

It is my conviction that the great majority of the common people of the South are supporting the Administration and its war effort wholeheartedly, and with far less "beefing" over minor restrictions than I had grown used to hearing in Washington.



## 4: THE ALL-OUT WEST

THE WEST is the first region in America to go more than knee-deep into the war. Pearl Harbor hit the people of the Pacific Coast like a sock in the jaw. From that morning on, they were ready for anything.

There was no panic. The people of Los Angeles still argue about whether enemy planes were really overhead one night early in the war. Some claim to have seen them; others maintain that only a balloon and puffs of anti-aircraft fire were visible. But they were out watching the show, not cowering in their cellars.

In Seattle the people tell of Japanese submarines sunk in Puget Sound in that first exciting month. Seattleites firmly expected to be bombed and calmly prepared for it. The shelling of Santa Barbara, the Oregon Coast and Point Estevan on Vancouver Island, together with scattered attacks on American shipping off the coast and the bombing of Dutch Harbor, brought the war even closer to the Northwest. An official Japanese spokesman predicted an early attack on Seattle when Attu and Kiska were occupied. Mayor William Devin said in 1943, "Seattle is the number one target of the entire U.S. Our city is within bombing distance of Kiska and Attu Islands. It is no coincidence that these boasts should come at a time when the Japanese are completing airfields on these Aleutian Islands."

It is commonly believed that in the first days of the war the people vented their rage and alarm upon the Japanese on the Coast. Reports circulated in the East about mob actions against Japanese-Americans. Well qualified observers assured me that these were not true. The evacuation of all Japanese from the coastal region was a military measure pure and simple. A majority of the public in the evacuated districts approved the action, because the military had felt it necessary and because they saw no quick alternative. Many Westerners who backed the evacuation now feel, however, that it was unwise not to distinguish between aliens and loyal American citizens.

Evacuated Japanese from Seattle have told me that they heard no catcalls, saw no disorder of any sort, as they gathered to leave the city. Indeed, person after person called on them to express sympathy and regret that such a step was considered necessary, to offer help

in storing goods and providing transportation, or to leave farewell gifts. This spirit no doubt accounted for the refusal of most Nisei (second-generation Japanese) to grow bitter over their enforced evacuation—at least in the first year.

In California feeling ran somewhat higher. A few Japanese were killed in the early weeks of the war by enraged Filipinos. Even here however, anti-Japanese feeling was tempered by reason and sympathy before the evacuation had been completed.

In the spring and summer of 1943 the Hearst newspapers in Los Angeles broke out with a rash of items about the opposition of the Sons and Daughters of the Golden West, the American Legion, the American War Mothers, and the Los Angeles Women's Republican Study Club to the release of Japanese from relocation centers or to their return to the West Coast. Hearst reporters got anti-Japanese statements from Mayor Fletcher Bowron and other prominent figures in Los Angeles and played up the Dies Committee's "exposures" of the relocation centers, to arouse sentiment against the Japanese-Americans. But a trained observer in Los Angeles said to me, "You ask whether there is a wave of anti-Japanese feeling out here, as the press would seem to indicate. I have detected none in the people with whom I come in contact. . . . However, many of them feel it best that, since they have been evacuated from this area, they be kept away until after the war. . . . Hearst owns the *Herald* as well as the *Examiner* here and as you know he has always been anti-Japanese. His campaign now seems very systematic, and undoubtedly has some effect."

A Gallup poll at the close of 1942 showed that 31 percent of the people in the three West Coast States were still opposed to allowing any of the evacuated Japanese to return to their former homes after the war, as compared to only 17 percent in the nation at large. Another 24 percent of the Westerners favored letting only the citizens return, 29 percent were for letting all Japanese return, and the remainder were undecided. Especially significant was the fact that more than two-thirds said they would be unwilling to hire a Japanese servant and more than a half said they would not trade at a Japanese store after the war. The anti-Japanese feeling stirred up by the war will probably last for many years, and the policy of the Federal War

Relocation Authority of scattering the American-Japanese through the East and Middle West would seem to be a wise one.

The people of the Pacific Coast look on the war in the Pacific as their war. They feel strongly that we should concentrate more of our forces against Japan. "If China and Australia fall, we know that we should be Japan's next objective," said Mayor Angelo Rossi of San Francisco in welcoming Madame Chiang Kai-shek. The apparent reasonableness of General MacArthur's plea for one-seventh of American fighting planes strengthened this sentiment. The West is more than a little ashamed of its own record in shipping scrap iron and oil to Japan during the years 1931 to 1941. It feels that our failure to launch a strong offensive in the Pacific theater of war is not only dangerous but also a slight to our valiant Chinese Allies.

Popular feeling toward the Chinese and Filipinos has changed greatly since the war began. A few years ago, for example, Filipinos were subject to more racial discrimination than Japanese. The epic of Bataan and Corregidor changed all this. People now show much more respect for these Far Eastern allies of ours, whose stamina and fighting strength were once sadly underestimated.

### *The Booming Southland*

The three Pacific Coast States, with ten million population in 1940, have gained two million people since war began. They are building over half the ships produced by this country. In aircraft manufacturing they are almost as high on the list. Nearly every family is involved in war work, either in factories, in shops servicing war workers, or on farms. Every city on the coast is booming. The war seems very close; it is, in fact, impossible to forget it for long because it pervades every aspect of life. Food shortages, labor shortages, housing shortages are everywhere apparent. This, one feels, must be a little like wartime Great Britain or Australia.

The place of women in the West's wartime economy hits you first. When your train pulls into Los Angeles' magnificent Union Station, a lady cab driver picks you up. Women are taking over many of the streetcars which haul lady riveters to and from the huge aircraft plants in the outskirts of the city. Half the workers in the big aircraft plants of Southern California are women. They are of all ages;



the employers cannot get enough from the eighteen to twenty-five age group to meet their needs. These women are efficient. Early in 1943 Consolidated Aircraft in Los Angeles was producing 2.3 airplanes with the same number of man-hours it took to build one plane a year earlier.

Absenteeism is higher among women than among men, because they have more home responsibilities. Many are doing a double job: keeping house and working full time in the factories. Those who have children—and a majority of them do—must take time off frequently to look after them. Domestic help is virtually impossible to obtain, and day nurseries are not adequate. Some women lock their babies up in their cars outside the plant while they are at work, and others send their older children off to school and then to the movies to keep them busy until the day's work is done. It is small wonder that many women report for work somewhat irregularly.

Even the children are under terrific pressure to go to work these days. By the middle of 1943 more than 18,000 high school students had gone into war industry in the Los Angeles district alone, according to the school superintendent's office. Over 14,000 of these had full-time jobs. The educators have been worried, especially with 1400 Los Angeles teachers on leave, in the armed forces or in war plants, and with new teachers practically unobtainable. The principal of a Los Angeles Junior High School said, "Thousands of able young people who might be clamoring for jobs in our schools are no longer to be found. And every day we have greater need for them. The faculty service flag of my school has seventeen stars, and there will be more. These seventeen represent the cream of our faculty. In addition, two men are in defense work and two women on military leave to be with their husbands who are in the service." To prevent the breakdown of educational standards Los Angeles school officials were working through the office of the War Manpower Commission to get employers of children under eighteen to sponsor part-time educational programs in the plants.

In the region stretching from Santa Barbara to San Diego, allotment of copper, steel and aluminum to factories broke all previous records in the summer of 1943. The War Production Board had utilized more small plants here than anywhere in the country; 90 percent of the qualified small manufacturers were doing war work,



compared to 58 percent in the country as a whole. The smallest were a two-man welding shop and a five-man factory making airplane tools. In one month 193 small plants, none with more than 500 people, received airplane contracts. Even the exclusive Del Mar Turf Club, of which Bing Crosby was president, was to be turned into a factory making warplane parts. Its officers planned to convert its groom quarters into rooms for war workers.

San Diego is one of the great boom towns of the West. Since 1940, the number of industrial workers has jumped from 25,000 to over 90,000, and the total population has soared from 200,000 to more than 400,000. The growing pains have been terrific. The huge war housing projects have always been one or more laps behind the influx of war workers and Navy men's families. Houses are so scarce that it has become a common practice to offer a reward ranging from \$10 to \$150 to the landlord or agent who can find shelter for the desperate advertiser. Here are some typical ads from a local newspaper:

\$25 REWARD—Permanent couple desire 1 or 2 bedroom furn. house to \$55; reliable references. F-0989

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\$20 REWARD—Naval officer, wife want furn. apt.; no children or pets. Handy North Island. Ph. Henley 3-3430 anytime.

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\$10 REWARD—2 or 3 bedroom house or apt., with garage, to \$100; 3 adults; permanent. Mr. Edwards. J-2827.

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YOUNG naval officer, wife and 4 mos. baby, assigned permanent duty destroyer base, desire furn. 1 or 2-bedroom house or apt. Quiet, refined, no pets. Will keep home in excellent condition. Ph. M-4011.

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\$40 REWARD—Young couple, no children. 1 or 2-bedroom house or furn. apt. to \$65. Phone B-3557 evenings.

Sprawling Los Angeles—where, in March 1943 industrial employment was over three times as high as in 1937—has begun to realize that few additional migrants can be expected because there is no place for them to live. Even Mrs. Colin Kelly, widow of the Amer-

ican aviator-hero, had trouble finding a place to live when she came to Los Angeles to take a job in a warplant. Landlord after landlord turned her away because of the "no children" ban, not realizing that her three-year-old son "Corky" was the boy whom President Roosevelt has nominated for West Point in 1956. After the newspapers published her story, Mrs. Kelly said: "My phone has been ringing constantly. It's not a case of finding a home any more, but one of deciding which one I'll take. . . . But I can't help realizing that hundreds of other families are having the same difficulties I had."

The hotel shortage has been especially hard for the service men who abound in Los Angeles. The city finally made 6000 additional beds available to them in May 1943, so they no longer had to sleep on park benches, in hotel lobbies and telephone booths.

### *Golden Gate's Shanty-Towns*

In the San Francisco area housing conditions have been even more critical. In the first year and a half of the war, population increased by about half a million, and the shipbuilding industry had come to employ close to 200,000 workers. More than 1,200,000 tons of ships were constructed in the Bay area in 1942, and 3,250,000 tons were scheduled to be built there in 1943.

Early in the year the *San Francisco Chronicle*, in a special section devoted entirely to housing, told of people living and sleeping in tents, shacks, basements, refrigerator lockers, trailers and automobiles. A San Francisco city official said in May, "Families are sleeping in garages, with mattresses right on cement floors. And three, four and five to one bed."

One result of this congestion is, of course, lowered morale and increased labor turnover in the shipyards. People hired outside the Bay region frequently tell public housing officials upon their arrival, "Here I am—where is my house?" When they learn they have been misled in expecting to find housing easily, they try to find a place—any place—to live. But before long many of them leave, saying, "We just won't live as we'd have to live here."

The OPA had a battle royal in trying to enforce rent ceilings under these conditions. In Vallejo a number of landlords went on strike, refusing to rent their apartments at the fair prices set by

Uncle Sam. The Lawyers' Guild then stepped into the picture, offering to take free of charge any cases of this sort involving service men. Landlords were prosecuted under a law providing that tenants may recover three times the amount of any illegal overcharge, or a minimum of \$50.

A good part of the housing trouble, moreover, is the fault of the real estate interests. At the outbreak of the war, realtors were stoutly maintaining that no war housing was needed, since there were some 10,000 vacant dwellings in the Bay area. Today they blame the Federal government for not building enough houses. The same interests have demanded that the Federal Public Housing Authority build only temporary war projects which can be torn down as soon as the war is over, so that real estate values will not be impaired. As a result, except for those projects built under the sponsorship of the Maritime Commission, practically all of the current war housing is so temporary that it becomes a slum before it is ever lived in. Yet if more permanent structures are built, they can be used as low-rent housing to replace the city slums after the war. Seattle, for example, built only permanent housing, to the number of 3700 units, in the first eighteen months of the war. Now, of course, shortages of material make it virtually impossible to build anything but temporary war dwellings, but even these are built in such a way that their usefulness will far outlast the war.

The National Housing Agency has done its belated best to meet the needs of the San Francisco Bay area. Large projects have already opened up at Vallejo, Richmond and other places. A total of 73,700 new housing units had gone up from April 1940 to April 1943, of which about a third were public housing.

Richmond is just north of Oakland and Berkeley on the East Bay shore. Four huge Kaiser shipyards lie around the town, and it was in one of them that Kaiser hung up his record of assembling a Liberty ship in four days. To man these plants the Kaiser management has scoured the country for workers, from New York and Washington to Spokane and Grays Harbor. Some of these men and their families live under conditions worse than in any depression "Hooverville."

The greatest menace to health is the trailer camp area in the unincorporated town of San Pablo, next to Richmond, where people live



in trailers, tents and shacks without sewage facilities. In one such camp I saw children wading in a stagnant pond adjacent to several outdoor privies. Along the Dam Road, farther out, people are living in chicken coops. A shack 8 by 10 feet in size, furnished only with two cots and one full-sized bed, was providing shelter for four adults and seven children.

One Richmond public housing project has 6000 apartments for Kaiser shipyard workers. The first group of twelve units was completed, with furnishings, fourteen days after the foundations were poured. But Richmond's population has jumped from 23,000 in 1940 to 110,000 in 1943, with a prospect of 145,000 by the end of the year. San Pablo has soared from 3100 to 35,000 in the same length of time. Thus present housing plans are by no means adequate.

Marin City, a war housing project at Sausalito just north of the Golden Gate, is an example of what can be done to meet the needs of shipyard workers. The community has about 4500 people and the housing project includes some 700 apartments, 800 demountable homes, and dormitories for 1250 single men, all of whom are employed in the Marinship Yards. The low rentals include health insurance, with no restrictions on obstetrical cases.

The health service at Marin City is administered by Dr. Julius Ahlsberg, a refugee physician, who commented that "people are pretty well satisfied. We have four nurses—one head, one visiting and two office nurses—and a specialist for children up to fourteen. The service is prepaid, and depends on the size of the family. Couples pay \$4.50 a month, and families with children \$5, no matter how many children. There is free X-ray service and hospitalization, and maternity cases pay a flat fee of \$50." An infirmary was being built for women and children; the dormitories already had some provision for male patients.

The community is self-governing, with its own elective city council. A cooperative spirit is everywhere evident. When a ninety-mile gale accompanied by a ten-inch rainfall hit Marin City in January 1943, the tarpaper roofs of most of the temporary dwellings were ripped off. A handful of housewives who happened to be attending a nursing training class in the project's community center stepped in to take charge, and within three hours had procured and cooked food and provided lodgings for the families who were "rained out."



Most impressive of all in this ultra-modern project is the care provided for children. A nursery school, elementary school and playground are operated by trained teachers filled with enthusiasm for their work. Not only are these children happy in their new environment, after having been "pushed around" for many months, but their parents are better workers in the knowledge that their children are well cared for. It would be a beautiful picture, except for the fact that the management at the Marinship Yard is one of the most wasteful and inefficient in the country. But more of that later.

In addition to its large-scale public projects, the National Housing Agency has a program aimed at converting some 5000 Bay area houses into small apartment dwellings at no cost to the owner, who leases his property to Uncle Sam for the duration. Drives are also under way to get home owners to rent rooms to war workers and to persuade non-essential residents to move to such non-war centers as Fresno and Santa Cruz, where vacancies are numerous.

The success of these various programs will not only affect the morale and efficiency of shipyard workers, but also determine whether the government will be forced to step in and commandeer private housing facilities in order to enable the shipyard industry to fulfill its production quotas.

### *Portland: More Shipyards*

Portland, Oregon, is one huge dormitory for shipyard workers. In the first two years of the war program 125,000 new jobs opened up in Portland war industries, about half of these in Henry J. Kaiser's three ship yards. In March 1943 Portland's industrial employment was 430 percent of the 1937 level. Before the war Portland was an overgrown small town of 305,000 people. Now it has close to 450,000. Its streets are jammed with people day and night; the movies feature "swing shift matinees" from midnight to 4 A.M. Men and women wearing dungarees, war plant badges and tin hats are everywhere. Women are working as Western Union "boys," as truck and bus drivers. The railroads and bus lines urge people to stay at home; restaurants ask them to eat at home. The battleship *Oregon*, long a floating museum tied up at the east bank of the Willamette River, is gone—broken up for scrap metal. Owners of small pleasure craft

are mobilized and assigned to definite patrol locations in the event of air raids. War bond sales regularly pass their quotas. In the second war loan drive, Oregonians bought \$153 million worth of bonds, or \$53 million more than the quota originally set. Patriotic feeling is strong; two weeks after the fall of Tunisia, all Portland took a half holiday and tens of thousands of enthusiasts watched a military parade—a worthy substitute for the customary Rose Festival parade (which is out for the duration).

It is not unusual to find half a dozen members of a single family working in the shipyards. The prize example of multiple earnings is the family of John H. Braukmiller, which has been dubbed "the shipbuildingest family in America." They came to Portland from Sioux City, Iowa, in waves, some twenty-five strong, and at last reports fifteen of them were working on the graveyard shift in Henry J. Kaiser's Swan Island shipyard: Mr. Braukmiller, his eight sons, one daughter, one son-in-law, and four daughters-in-law. All the men in the clan are shipfitters and the girls are welders, welders' helpers, and shipfitters' helpers. In addition the Braukmillers have a son in the Army, another doing defense work in the east, and a daughter who has gone to live near her husband's Army camp. Mrs. Braukmiller stays home to look after her house, her youngest daughter, some of her eight grandchildren, her pup and her canary. She also has three boarders, and rents two furnished rooms on the side. She figures that she doesn't need to work in the shipyard, for the total family payroll averages \$996 a week, minus deductions, and a good part of that comes to her particular household. The various Braukmillers invest from 10 percent to well over half of their pay in war bonds.

The shipyard workers are crowded into every available room in Portland. But the pressure has been relieved somewhat by the public war housing program, which totals 27,000 dwellings in Portland and 21,000 in Vancouver across the Columbia River. This program is one of the best to be found in any war center of the country. A good example is Hudson House, a dormitory development built by Kaiser in Vancouver to house 5000 workers, both men and women. It is well constructed, of wood with a cement finish. It furnishes not only sleeping quarters, but also facilities for feeding 1500 persons,

and recreational arrangements that include a community center with a gymnasium, game rooms, library and theater. Dwarfing Hudson House is the huge McLoughlin Heights apartment in Vancouver, which is a city in itself with 6000 units and a population of 25,000. But most spectacular of all is the new 9,914-unit Vanport housing project, popularly known as "Kaiserville." Built on what was still waste land along the Columbia River in the fall of 1942, "Kaiserville" is now the largest housing project in the world and the second largest city in the State of Oregon, with over 35,000 people. And it is built to last at least 25 years.

To Henry J. Kaiser an employee is a human being, not an automaton to be used eight hours a day and left to shift for himself in a strange and overcrowded town the other sixteen hours. Kaiser has rediscovered the old principle that men and women will work more efficiently if they live under conditions that do not violate all concepts of human dignity and decency. Of course, Kaiser is not paying for these developments out of his own pocket; the taxpayers will ultimately foot the bill. But he has the social vision to see the need for housing his workers adequately.

Symbolic of the way Kaiser does things is the million dollars he is spending on three day nurseries to take care of the children of his women employees. Each of the nurseries will adjoin one of the Kaiser shipyards, will cover about four city blocks, will be staffed by sixty trained women, and will handle at least 500 children. The mothers are to pay less than \$1 per day per child, including all three meals. Buses will pick up and drop mothers and children who don't have private cars. A pre-cooked main course for the mother's dinner is to be thrown in for good measure.

The Portland shipyards have tapped every available source of manpower. The little town of Forest Grove, an hour's bus ride west of Portland, is no longer the quiet college and farm market center that it was a few years ago. Workers commute daily from there to the Portland shipyards. The local superintendent of schools told me that even his school teachers were studying welding, attracted by higher wages and year-round employment offered by the shipyards.



## *Seattle: Ships, Planes, Men*

Seattle is experiencing a boom almost equal to Portland's, with more than 40,000 workers in the four huge Boeing Aircraft plants and another 65,000 in the shipyards. You can tell when Boeing's changes shifts by the rush of traffic from one end of town to the other. Seattle's downtown section, like Portland's, has taken on the appearance of one large "skidroad" with its beer taverns, night clubs and workmen's stores.

Again in Seattle the war is brought home to you everywhere. Barrage balloons are moored in groups, ready at a moment's notice to defend strategic war production. Stores and restaurants are closed for lack of goods and help. Some display signs, "Will reopen after the duration." Lem Ah Toy, a Chinese laundryman, hung this sign on his door: "Gone to war. Closed duration. Will clean shirts after clean Axis. Thank you."

It is the little business man who has really felt the squeeze. A small retail dairyman in Seattle told me, "I've delivered milk from my own herd for twenty years. But I can't keep my hands on the ranch now; they've all gone to the shipyards. I have to pay more for my feed, and I can't raise the price of my milk. So I'm selling my herd and going to work for one of the big companies."

And across Puget Sound is Bremerton, once a sleepy town of 10,000 but now a bristling boom city of four times that size. The Navy Yard and other war projects have swelled the population of that part of Kitsap County to at least 75,000 people. Here are hundreds of cheap defense houses, all alike, standing in neat rows. Here too are crowded tent and trailer camps, and even some workers sleeping in their cars. Hotel rooms are always filled, and tenants in some of them clean up their own rooms.

## *Food is Short*

You have to fight for food on the West Coast. In California oranges were scarce and high in price, although a good part of the 1942 crop rotted in the groves. Vegetable crops have gone the same way, where local labor was scarce. Los Angeles County still has 34,000 acres in truck crops, but most farmers have limited their

plantings to what they and their families can care for. Because this means a threat of higher prices, Southern Californians are frantically going in for victory gardening; in a two-month period 18,000 of them, from San Diego to Santa Barbara, joined a "Victory Garden Club" started by the Los Angeles *Times*. One group of gardeners has opened a "Barter Market," in which garden fans can swap products of which they have a surplus for those they need.

The meat situation was worse. The supply was running 1,600,000 pounds per week short of the level needed to "pay off" all the red ration stamps in the Los Angeles area in April 1943. In four months the amount of meat shipped in had been cut by a third. Steps were being taken to regulate the killing and preparation of horses for animal food, to prevent the spread of disease in the community. In Seattle Frye and Company, the city's largest packing house, was destroyed by fire early in 1942; and the other meat wholesalers were finding it impossible to operate on a paying basis because of the high price of beef on the hoof and high freight rates from the East.

The West Coast meat shortage was intensified by two Federal blunders. OPA allotments did not always take into account the increase in population in places throughout the country where new war industries have sprung up; in Bremerton, the meat supply was long based on the 1940 population figure of 10,000. And the regulations ignored the freight differential between the West Coast and the regions further East. The freight allowed by OPA from Chicago was \$1.75 a hundred pounds, whereas it costs \$2.68 a hundred to ship meat from Chicago to Portland or Seattle.

Vegetables were also scanty and high. The Northwest even more than California was dependent on Japanese farm labor. When the Japanese were evacuated they arranged with Filipinos and whites to take over some of their land. But the exodus came at the beginning of the growing season, and farm labor was scarce. It was commonly remarked, "You'll never get the white farmer to work from sunup to sundown as the Japanese has done, with his whole family helping in the fields."

An initial move to have city workers take up evacuated land and operate it on the side failed dismally. But cooperative groups of business men took over many small truck farms and worked them as

large units in the Puyallup and White River Valleys. High school boys in these rich valleys, organized in the Future Farmers of America, farmed smaller units on a cooperative basis. Farmers from Minnesota, North Dakota and Kansas also stepped into the breach.

The white farmers worked shorter hours than the Japanese; they planted such crops as cabbage, corn and snap beans, which required less hand labor. Housewives, high school children and clerical workers on vacation supplied most of the needed seasonal labor. But despite all these efforts, production of truck crops dropped while population soared. One result was the multiplication of victory gardens.

A prevalent reaction to the food muddle in Seattle was anger. Thousands of people believed that shortages were a result of mismanagement by the Government and greed on the part of the growers and distributors. Criticism of the rationing system was more widespread here than anywhere I had been—except possibly for the bitter opposition to gasoline and oil rationing in Texas and New England. Workers in a logging camp near Lewiston, Idaho, actually went on strike for more meat ration tickets in July 1943.

The people, I found, were willing to accept shortages if they felt the shortages were real and unavoidable. But when meat practically disappeared from the market in Seattle, and when cabbage suddenly jumped to 65 cents a head and oranges to a dollar a dozen, the people began angrily to ask, "Why?" Butchers were threatened with violence by irate customers unless they brought out "some of that meat hidden in the back room." One shopkeeper, frightened by the massing of several hundred customers before his counter, called in the police to preserve order.

Resentment was focused against the wealthy, who were alleged to have hoarded great quantities of food in cold storage lockers, and against the Army for wasting food. "In the Army, they prepare a meal and when some of the men aren't there, they just throw it away. That isn't right, when some people can't get food enough to keep them going at home," one educated woman said. Others began to question the wisdom of sending large lend-lease food shipments to our Allies.

Oil rationing, which did not begin on the coast until March 8, 1943, caused some panic among people who thought their allotments



were inadequate. Local rationing boards were so swamped with requests for adjustments that they issued an appeal for calm through the daily press. One Seattle woman told me, "I can stand just about anything as long as my feet don't get cold. What gets me is that there is so much oil down in California and yet we can't get it up here. And the rations they gave us are just enough to get by on in a normal year, but this is the coldest spring we've ever had in Seattle."

Despite these criticisms, however, most people accepted the principle of rationing, looking on it as a necessary protection against complete chaos and deprivation. One man told me, "Even if we weren't in such a jam for meat and vegetables, I'd be in favor of rationing because it wakes people up to the fact that we're at war. Anyone can get along on the rations we have now; in fact, it would probably do us good if we had to get along with a lot less." People typically tempered their approval with criticisms of the way the rationing program was handled. A gray-haired longshoreman stopped sucking at his pipe long enough to observe for my benefit, "Those birds back in Washington just don't know how things are this far away. They think a shoe salesman in Chicago should have as much meat as a logger out here on Puget Sound. Matter of fact, we get less, because of those blundering so-and-sos who sit at their desks and make the rules. They ought to come out this way once in a while."

### *Manpower Trouble*

The shortage of goods and resultant skyrocketing of prices in the Northwest led to demands for higher wages, especially in the aircraft industry where hourly rates have always been low. Where raises were not forthcoming, absenteeism and turnover increased. Throughout the region the shipyards, logging camps, aircraft plants were vying among themselves for workers, with 71,000 additional men being needed in mid-1943. The sum total was chaos on the manpower front, with ineffectual "freezing orders" from time to time only adding to the confusion. "I'll go back to the camps if they make all loggers do the same," one former woodsman now working in a

shipyard told me. "Otherwise, why should I play the sucker? I make more money in the yards, and the work is easier."

Besides the wage and food problems workers in both aircraft and shipbuilding plants were very critical of their employers because of inefficient management and use of manpower. In San Francisco, CIO unions asked for an increase in working time from 40 to 48 hours. Less than 40 percent of the warehouses in that city had shifted to a 48-hour week voluntarily. According to Joe Muzio, business agent for the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union in the Western Sugar Refinery, "Forty-eight hundred man hours are lost each week at this plant by the refusal of the company to shift to a 48-hour week. We want to help win the war in every possible way. We are convinced that continuance of the 40-hour week constitutes hoarding of labor, much of which could be freed to meet the serious labor shortage on the San Francisco waterfront by giving workers a chance to work longer hours each week. And also, they need the wage increase that working an extra day would give them in order to meet the sharply rising costs of living. At present many workers are unable to buy bonds, because their salaries are eaten up by exorbitant living expenses."

Along the waterfront the longshoremen have chalked up new records for efficiency. Under Harry Bridges' leadership, work stoppages have entirely ceased. Bridges, I found, was in very good odor with the waterfront employers, even while Attorney General Francis Biddle was trying to have him deported for alleged past Communist activities. The pressure is now on the employers to improve their methods. Longshore union leaders threatened to telegraph to President Roosevelt every time the men were forced to stop work through circumstances that could have been remedied by the management. One union man said that if this plan were followed strictly, it would mean several hundred wires per day.

In the American Federation of Labor the picture is not so bright. The boilermakers' union, which dominates the shipyards, has refused to participate wholeheartedly in labor-management committees. In Seattle and Richmond, the union actually withdrew from such committees for a time. But the AFL Metal Trades conference repudiated the strike policy of John L. Lewis, as embodied in a

resolution calling for "direct action" in the shipyard industry, by a vote of two to one. And the AFL teamsters and CIO Warehousemen have composed their long-standing differences for the duration in Los Angeles and other coastal cities. The rank and file of labor in both the AFL and the CIO are out to win the war first of all.

Such dissatisfaction as there is does not mean any lack of understanding of the war itself. Rather, it is an expression of dismay that war production is not as effective as it should be. Westerners want this war to be fought harder. They want a fair deal for themselves in war industry; but they want also to increase production of ships and planes as rapidly as possible and they resent anything which interferes with the process.

Far Western Republicans do not snipe at the Administration nearly as often as those in the Middle West and they are not afraid to pass "social" legislation. In 1943 a predominantly Republican legislature in the State of Washington passed a bill to enable the public to take over private utilities, and another bill providing equal pay for equal work for men and women. A few years ago such legislation would have been considered radical; today it is all part of the war effort.

### *Civilian Defense In the West*

Throughout most of the country, the civilian defense program seemed to me to have fallen far short of its mark. People generally simply could not get excited about a program which started out principally as a precautionary device against air raids, when there had been no air raids anywhere in the country. But in most parts of the West the civilian defense program is very much alive.

In some typical Western towns enthusiastic local leadership has turned the program into a vital, living thing. You wouldn't expect thinly-settled Wyoming and especially Rock Springs, a town of some 10,000 people just west of the Continental Divide, to be greatly concerned about the immediate dangers of the war. Yet this State and town rank among the best in the nation in the calibre of their civilian defense work.

Sweetwater County is 140 by 100 miles in size—as big as some



New England States—and has less than two persons per square mile. Fifteen percent of its people were active in civilian defense organizations early in 1943—twice as large a proportion as that for the entire country. When there is a practice blackout, lights go out not only in Rock Springs but in the irrigated districts and sheepherders' camps a hundred miles to the north. In the sprawling range country, every rancher and cowhand is a self-constituted defense warden; and while the danger of a blitz in Sweetwater county may not be great, it is useful to have these Westerners on the watch in case one of our own planes goes down in distress in the Wyoming badlands, or in case grass or brush fires get out of hand.

In December 1942, Wyoming exceeded its \$1,400,000 war bond quota by \$244,000. Sweetwater County's quota was \$136,000, but its citizens bought \$183,000 worth of bonds. In April 1943 the quota was raised to \$647,000, and this was again passed by a \$100,000 margin.

Rock Springs also produced more aluminum for the salvage drive than any other Wyoming town. Three hundred women in the town are working regularly at folding surgical dressings, and nearly a hundred high school boys are making model planes for use in air training schools.

The local civilian defense director, Harold Tannehill, gives credit for this impressive record to the people of Sweetwater County. He points out that there are some here, as everywhere, who are unwilling to do their part. "They don't have time to do anything but make money, entertain and amuse themselves," he said. "If all of our people were equally selfish, you could slate America for slavery within ten years." But my impression was that this type of citizen was far rarer in Rock Springs than in many American towns and cities.

Rock Springs is one of the richest small towns in the country, though you wouldn't guess it at first glance. Hemmed in by the barren foothills of the Rockies, 6200 feet above sea level, it is cut in two by the prosperous Union Pacific Railroad, which gets its coal from rich captive mines nearby. It is one of the leading woolshipping points in the country, as well as the center of the largest bituminous coal area west of the Mississippi.

The town is noted historically mainly for the insurrection against

Chinese laborers which took place there in 1885. The Union Pacific had brought 600 Chinese in from the West Coast to replace white miners at lower wages. The displaced workers rose to vent their wrath against the helpless coolies, burning their homes and driving them into the hills.

The Chinese were brought back under National Guard protection, but today they have been replaced in turn by Slavic, British and Scandinavian mine workers who now outnumber people of American parentage in Rock Springs. Of 797 members of the Old Timers' Club, which consists of men who have worked for twenty years or more in the U.P. coal mines, only 285 were native-born Americans in 1940. There were 115 of Slavic nationalities, 80 Austrians, 62 Finns, 61 Englishmen and 47 Italians. Forty-seven different nationalities are represented in the county, and thirty-one in the Old Timers' Club.

The children of these immigrants now predominate in the schools and are as fine a looking group as you can find anywhere. They are well-dressed, too, for their fathers in the mines are earning up to \$300 per month with time-and-a-half for all time over thirty-five hours weekly.

Rock Springs is strongly unionized by the United Mine Workers and the Railroad Brotherhoods. It is the one Democratic Party stronghold in the state. All elected officials in Sweetwater County are Democrats and many of them are union men. The editor of the tabloid *Daily Rocket*, one of the best small newspapers I have seen, told me that his paper could never run Westbrook Pegler because its readers would not stand for Pegler's anti-union frothings.

The miners and railroaders are buying bonds almost unanimously under the payroll allotment plan. The carpenters' union has spent so much for bonds out of its local treasury that it is now hard put for funds. The U.P. Coal Co. itself has been contributing to war bond sales by offering a prize of a \$1000 war bond monthly at a lottery, in which 675 out of 2900 U.P. miners were eligible in a typical month by virtue of perfect attendance on the job.

The absentee rate in the one mine for which figures were available averaged around 7½ percent early in 1943. This was considered bad in Rock Springs, but it looked good to me beside figures I

had seen for the aircraft and shipbuilding industries on the West Coast.

The U.P. and Rock Springs are booming today. On the average, one train every six minutes passes through this small railroad nerve center. The miners are working seven days a week. To supplement the labor supply at least sixty women workers are being used on the tipples, grading and sorting coal after it comes from the mines. In addition some 300 families have been brought in, mainly from Arkansas, and are being housed temporarily in box cars near the mines.

Rock Springs and the West don't need to be told that there's a war on. They are already doing just about all they can to help win this war.

## 5: THE COMPLACENT MIDWEST

COMING from the Far West to the Middle West is almost like traveling from the line of battle back to a rest billet behind the front. As you go East the trains become less crowded, the people are more relaxed; you are struck by the bright lights at night after the coastal dimout, and you sense the spirit of "business as usual" to a degree long since forgotten around the rim of the country.

The transition is gradual. Salt Lake City and Denver I found crowded with soldiers from nearby camps. (Both are noted for their hospitality to service men.) Salt Lake City also has its war plants, and Denver has become a "Little Washington" as government bureau after government bureau has migrated there. It is not until you leave the Rocky Mountain States that the war really begins to seem distant.

Traveling from East to West in May 1943, a friend of mine got the converse impression. He found himself part of the swirling tide of migrants headed for the West Coast to take war jobs. As far east as Wisconsin this human current begins to form. To quote my friend, "In Milwaukee an older boy told me that thanks to the request of his Sunday School teacher, a group of about twenty of his friends were getting out of high school early



this year and were driving private cars to Seattle. From there, their way was to be paid by the lumber people to Alaska to work in the lumber camps of Alaska at \$1.05 an hour. About mid-November they will return with their 'stake' to attend high school again. This chap was only sixteen years old. Many people from Milwaukee have gone to the coast, I am told.

"In North Dakota and Montana, thousands have left for the West. In Bismarck one woman related how she knew of over two hundred people who had gone to the coast. Many were girls trained as welders by NYA.

"Once I was westward bound from St. Paul, in fact, it seemed as if EVERYONE was westbound. With the hum and rhythm of the bus there was an undertone of talk—words—Seattle—Portland—San Francisco—Seattle—shipyards—Seattle—Vancouver—how about housing—do you know any one there?—I have an aunt in Olympia—we'll go there first—then we can look around in Tacoma and Seattle. It wouldn't take any imagination at all to think that you were going west on a covered wagon and were a pioneer again. It made me think of 'The Grapes of Wrath,' minus poverty and hopelessness.

"By comparison with the excitement and tension on the west-bound bus, the towns where we stopped en route seemed sleepy and indifferent toward the war."

### *Dustbowl Republicanism*

Omaha has been affected remarkably little by the war—perhaps less than any other major city. It has two small Army camps, a large Glenn L. Martin assembly plant and some lesser activities. But the population has grown only about 10,000 since 1940, the hotels have plenty of rooms, and war problems are not pressing.

One thing I wanted to investigate in Omaha and Nebraska was the meaning of the strong Republican trend in those parts. The whole tier of Western Plains States, from North Dakota to Kansas, went Republican in 1940, anticipating a nation-wide trend in the same direction in the 1942 Congressional elections. Many Easterners have been inclined to view this as a sign of the persistence of iso-

lationism. There have also been reports of the spread of anti-Semitism in this region.

Both reports were unfounded, so far as I could determine. Isolationism is almost as dead here as it was the day after Pearl Harbor, in spite of Nebraska's distance from the fighting fronts. As for anti-Semitism, it is true that a specimen of the "vermin press" called "American Danger" was once published in Omaha; but it never sold more than a handful of copies, and its editor is now under indictment.

The people of this region after all are largely descendants of German, Scandinavian or other immigrants. Especially in the rural areas is this true. They knew the meaning of intolerance in the last war, and are not apt to pervert the purposes for which this new war is being fought by going in for persecution of any sort.

The trend toward Republicanism is not a sign of growing isolationism, then, as is sometimes glibly assumed. Insofar as this trend is related to the war, it shows dissatisfaction with the way the war was fought up to election day of 1942 (which was just before the invasion of North Africa). Since the United Nations have taken the offensive almost everywhere, this feeling has largely disappeared. The real reasons for the trend from the Administration in this region are purely domestic:

(1) The Plains States which went Republican in 1940 are farming States. The seven lean years of drought turned their western reaches into dustbowl country, and their population actually declined from 1930 to 1940. In the deep depression years they reacted against the Republicans by voting Democratic. By 1940 farmers in all parts of the country had been helped by the Federal farm program, but crops were still none too good on the Western Plains. So the farmers once more turned against the "ins" and voted Republican this time.

(2) Then too, there has been an exodus of farm population from these dustbowl States. When a region loses population it is usually the younger people and especially the working people who leave. Since these are the very groups which are predominantly Democratic, relative Republican strength has grown by a process of elimination.

(3) The farmers out this way are strong individualists. They welcomed the AAA's cash payments during the lean years, but never

stopped resenting the crop control which accompanied such payments. When crops improve, as they have in the past two or three years, the farmers want to go back to their old ways.

(4) There is a widespread feeling here against the "growth of bureaucracy" in Washington. This was particularly marked during the "meat crisis" of 1943, in which the meat packing industry suffered severely because wholesale and meat prices were held down while the price of beef cattle to the farmers was allowed to soar. The slowness of the Office of Price Administration in correcting this situation raised caustic comments, especially among packing house workers.

(5) Generally critical attitudes are also fostered by the press, particularly in Nebraska and South Dakota. The Omaha *World-Herald*, Nebraska's only large paper, supports the war but continually criticizes the Administration. This paper has had an absolute monopoly in Omaha since Hearst sold his *Bee-News* to it several years ago. Other large cities have a monopoly of newspaper ownership (notably Des Moines and Minneapolis), but at least publish two or more papers; Omaha is probably the largest city in the world with only one daily.

(6) Finally, these Plains States are traditionally Republican. But they are by no means "solid." When they swing, they swing fast and far. Recently the swing has been away from the Democratic Party. The Nebraska voter is probably as independent a cuss as can be found anywhere and when he changes his mind about something he is apt to go "whole hog."

The Nebraskan votes a split ticket as often as not, frequently electing a Republican governor and a Democratic senator or vice versa. And two things Nebraska will not tolerate: a political machine, or a buffoon politician of the Huey Long or "Pass the biscuits, pappy" type. When certain Republicans tried to organize a machine in Omaha in 1940 they received a terrific set-back from the voters. And when Terry Carpenter, a showman-politician, ran against Senator Norris on the Democratic ticket in 1936, he was snowed under.

Numerous Nebraskans asked me not to judge their State by Norris' defeat in 1942. It is true, they say, that the vote was influenced by the general Republican swing; Norris' more conserva-



tive supporters have preferred to think of him as "Independent," and of late they believe he has been too much a part of the New Deal.

But basically the retirement of Norris was his own doing and was in no sense a rebuke to his personal qualities or views. For two elections, Norris had said that he was too old to run again. This time he made no campaign, and the voters were disposed to take him at his word. None of Norris' opponents campaigned against him. They spoke highly of him.

As in the South, many people of Omaha and Nebraska seemed to have two airtight compartments in their heads—one for attitudes toward the war abroad, and another for those concerned with home front issues. By all objective criteria—war bond sales, Red Cross and salvage drives—criticism of the Administration has affected support for the shooting war very little. Nevertheless, I felt in talking to people in this region that their emotions were much less in the war than those of their brethren of the West, South and East.

### *St. Louis: Midwest Model*

St. Louis, more than any other city, typifies the Middle West. It has all of the major problems of other cities, many of them in accentuated form. The impact of the war on these problems and on attempts to solve them is indicative of what is happening throughout the Midwest and America today.

This eighth-largest city of the United States, like most American cities, has experienced great economic changes as a result of the war boom. The huge St. Louis Ordnance Plant north of the city is manufacturing billions of rounds of ammunition for small arms yearly; the Curtiss-Wright plant is turning out combat planes by the thousand; the electrical equipment plants of St. Louis are working day and night; and the steel mills of East St. Louis, across the Mississippi, are humming with war orders. An estimated 180,000 people have come into metropolitan St. Louis from the Ozarks, from Arkansas and other areas with a surplus labor supply, and industrial employment has risen more than 100,000 since the war began.

The war has brought changes in the attitudes and ways of life

of St. Louisians. Before the war they could buy a one-pound, inch-thick steak on a sizzling platter for 55 cents. Today in the same modest restaurants they pay 95 cents for a steak only half as large—when they can get it. The meat markets are now displaying horse and shark meat where once they showed only prime cuts of baby beef. People flock into the theaters of Grand Boulevard and the downtown district, and spend their money freely in the clothing shops and liquor stores. Victory gardens have appeared in vacant lots and backyards everywhere.

Transportation facilities are overtaxed. Even in the small hours of the night the streetcars are jammed with workers who have gone off shift at midnight. The Public Service (streetcar) Company's net earnings for 1942 stood at \$1,650,000, or nine times the 1941 figure. The company has made a voluntary reduction in fares in the hope of sidetracking further cuts by the State Public Service Commission. "Service cars," slick limousines which charge slightly higher fares for fast transportation along the main arteries, are allowed to continue in operation. But the pressure on the streetcars and buses steadily increases.

Yet in some ways St. Louisians seem to the outsider hardly conscious of the war. There are no nightly dimouts, there is no feeling of imminent danger, even though they are buying bonds and their boys are being sent off to war in the same proportions as in other cities. St. Louis ran New York City a close run for first honors in fulfilling its quota in the bond drive in April 1943, and the city has a reputation for hospitality to service men. Despite all this, the war seems somehow remote to the people of St. Louis and Missouri.

### *"The Good Old Days" Remain*

In 1939, St. Louis was grappling with half a dozen knotty problems: unemployment, labor conflict, racial friction, housing, city finances and smoke. The war has helped to solve two of these: unemployment and labor conflict. It has intensified the racial issue, however, and created new problems such as school truancy, delinquency and a shortage of day nurseries and day care facilities for children. It has delayed the replacement of slums by modern public housing. The thorny problem of financing the city's government has

been virtually untouched. What has been done about the smoke problem will appear presently.

Before the war, St. Louis spent less on its unemployed and assisted fewer of them than any other city with more than 400,000 population. Today relief is almost a dead issue, and will probably remain so for the duration of the war. With WPA a thing of the past, the Red Cross is stepping into the breach where it can. Public assistance is available only for unemployables living in the most dismal poverty. Two excerpts from the St. Louis Social Security Commission's latest Report on General Relief will illustrate the low standards which still prevail:

Mr. C., white, is 71 years old. His old-age assistance application was rejected last June, since he was out of the State between 1935 and 1940. He will not fulfill the residence requirement until the end of 1944. He is in very bad physical condition (arterio-sclerosis, hernia, partial deafness), yet manages to earn about \$3 a month at odd jobs. Mrs. C., 42, has a deformed leg and arm from infantile paralysis and has had two strokes in recent years.

The couple occupy two rear rooms on the second floor of a flat. The rooms are separated by a porch on which is the only running water on the floor. There are no relatives who can help.

Actual needs, \$40.34; income, \$3.25; deficit, \$37.09; February relief, \$22.31.

Mrs. E., a colored woman, 51, lives in two rooms on the second floor of a large building. She is housekeeper and cook for an old-age assistance recipient on this floor in return for her rent. She has heart disease and could not obtain a job elsewhere. Mrs. E. has no relatives and no other resources.

Actual needs, \$18.49; February relief, \$6.

U.S. Employment Service officials in St. Louis estimated in mid-1943 that 20 percent of the people still in service or trade occupations are qualified and available for war work. These, together with unemployed Negroes and several tens of thousands of married women who would take jobs if they felt they were needed, constitute a sizable labor reserve, despite much talk of a local manpower shortage.

Many thousands of women are willing to work but unable to take jobs until adequate nursery and day care facilities are provided for their children. There were in St. Louis early in 1943 only



eleven privately-operated day nurseries with facilities for 600 children, and three part-time day nurseries caring for ninety children operated by the WPA which has since gone out of existence. A survey made in May 1942 showed that even then women workers in St. Louis had 1200 children under school age, and 6200 aged six and over, for whom care was needed.

### *Industrial Peace*

Labor trouble has virtually disappeared in the River City. St. Louis employers have learned that it is futile to buck the process of unionization; and the war has put an end to squabbling over minor matters. No major shutdown has occurred in St. Louis since the beginning of the war. The large electric plants are now tightly organized. A leader of one of their unions, who was bitterly attacked five years ago as an avowed Communist, is now applauded by the employers as a capable labor leader whose work has kept morale high in the plant.

Many of the plants doing war work have labor-management committees. At the Curtiss-Wright plant, the committee had submitted 3003 ideas to increase production, and 556 of these had proved practical and been put into effect by April 1943. The same committee launched a successful drive against voluntary absenteeism.

Most of the electrical plants have also set up special committees to study war problems. The Emerson Electric Company commissioned a special group of four experts to make a study of absenteeism, in collaboration with the labor-management committee. Union officials report that over half of all absences are caused by illness, injuries (factory injuries in Missouri rose 60 percent from 1940 to 1942), shortages of materials, lack of adequate planning and supervision in the plants, and transportation difficulties. Absenteeism has been found to be most common in plants where wages are lowest and hours are longest. This sane approach has averted most of the hysteria that has arisen over absenteeism in other places.

### *Bordertown Race Relations*

The racial problem is far from solution. St. Louis' 110,000 Negroes exhibit a strange mixture of northern militancy and southern sub-

servience. The Colored Clerks' Circle has often resorted to picketing to persuade large stores to hire Negro workers. Negroes have long voted freely in St. Louis; their vote, traditionally Republican in the past, has gone to the New Deal in recent years. There are no formal legal restrictions on Negroes' places of residence in St. Louis, though many restrictions written into property deeds become law with police backing. Several outlying communities, such as Maryland Heights, have become incorporated for the express purpose of barring Negro picnic parties.

Education for Negroes has been an uphill fight. In order to get legal training, a few years ago a Negro student brought suit against the University of Missouri law school. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that he must be accepted unless equal facilities were provided by the State for Negroes. Finally \$200,000 was appropriated for a two-year period, and a law branch of Lincoln University, the "Jim Crow" institution, was opened in an old building which had formerly housed a hair tonic factory.

Colored people find it hard to adjust to the unpredictable reactions which they encounter in St. Louis. They know they have more rights than would be accorded them farther South. They are encouraged by their own race-conscious groups, as well as by liberal whites, to demand those rights. But if they do so they are accused by the whites of becoming too independent, and they are apt to be "put in their places" almost as ruthlessly as in the Deep South. A Negro told me, "Colored folks would be a lot happier if they knew just where the line was drawn."

Since July 1942 the St. Louis Ordnance Plant has employed some Negroes, but carefully segregates them in one of its several buildings. Other large plants either hire no Negroes for skilled production work or similarly segregate them from the whites. Segregation has had one good result, however. It has destroyed the myth of Negro inferiority in production work. At the Ordnance Plant, Negro workers have proved to be well above average in quantity and quality of production, and in their low rate of absenteeism. But of course segregation also has its dangers. Inevitably it gives rise to increased race-consciousness. In June 1943, the 2500 Negro workers at the plant, resentful over the segregation policy, went on strike. They refused to work longer under white foremen, and asked that

members of their own race, who were already being trained, replace the white foremen immediately.

David M. Grant, a Negro lawyer, told the St. Louis Institute of Race Relations in April 1943 that race relations "are probably at their lowest ebb right now." The St. Louis Negro, faced with discrimination in war industry, is asking himself, "If we are excluded now, where will we work when the war emergency is over?"

### *"Slums and Smoke"*

St. Louis has simply exploded into the surrounding countryside. From 1920 to 1930 the city proper gained 6.3 percent in population, while St. Louis County gained 110 percent. From 1930 to 1940 the city actually lost one percent of its people, while the County increased its population by a third. The residents of suburban Clayton, University City and Webster Grove have deserted the rundown buildings and the tax rolls of the city which gives them their livelihood.

"The reasons for the city's relative decay and decline," said the *St. Louis Star-Times* a few years ago, "may be summed up in three words: slums and smoke." The soft coal from the Southern Illinois coal fields, burned in factories, apartments and homes, blanketed the downtown areas for six months of the year. Motorists had to use their headlights in broad daylight. Curtains rotted from the dirt, lawns had to be replanted each year, and trees in the Municipal Center died from gas poisoning. Even Pittsburgh took second place to St. Louis whenever the wind fell to six miles an hour in the River City. The smoke became a symbol of class stratification. Residents with money escaped into the prevailing west wind which swept the smoke across town and into Illinois. Only those who were too poor to move away from the sections near the river continued to live there.

After a rousing press campaign in 1939, a Smoke Commission was set up to educate the public and to prosecute conspicuous offenders under the general nuisance law. Smoke consumers were put on factory smokestacks. Lookouts were posted on roofs to spot homes and buildings belching smoke. Owners were warned to use a better grade of coal or to repair their furnaces and stoke them properly.



Those who refused were fined, usually \$50. Eventually home owners came around to buying specially treated coal from the Pennsylvania and Arkansas coal fields. It cost more, but there was little grumbling. The net result of this campaign is a city amazingly free from smoke, except when the wind blows from East St. Louis across the river. It is regrettable that equally forthright measures have not been taken to solve some of the city's social problems.

For the slums of St. Louis remain among the worst in the nation. Miles of ancient ugly red brick houses, with foul-smelling alleys, are jammed with Negroes, Poles, Italians and poor whites from the Ozarks. A survey by the City Plan Commission of five slum areas around the central business area revealed that 70 percent of all dwelling units had no baths and only 41 percent had inside toilets. Here, as in every city, poverty and poor housing are associated with a thousand ills which make the slums an economic and social liability. So many slum-dwellers (especially Negroes) have been rejected by Selective Service because of tuberculosis in the past two years that St. Louis draft boards have been ordered to report "T.B." cases to the Tuberculosis Association for follow-up work.

Large-scale housing developments have done a little to check the dry rot and social decay in old St. Louis. First the Neighborhood Gardens project, built with private funds several years ago just north of the downtown section, helped to revive a bad slum area. More recently Carr Square Village, the one USHA low-rent housing project for Negroes, opened the last of its 678 units for occupancy. It is located in a district so run down that it was considered good for nothing except parking lots. The revolution in the lives and outlook of Negro residents of this project is a story in itself. Its effect on the surrounding district is also striking. But modern housing has made only a little headway in the slums as yet.

St. Louis officials planned to ask for \$50 million from the USHA to rehouse families with incomes under \$1100. But by 1943 only two low-rent housing projects had been completed, and there is no hope for further progress along this line until after the war. The slum problem has indeed been intensified by the war, for a serious housing shortage has so far been avoided only because the migrants from the hill regions have moved into substandard dwellings that had previously been deserted. One slum apartment of three rooms was

recently found to contain two related families with four adults and eight children.

A new set of educational problems has arisen with the war. Children from the Ozarks crowd the schools of the poorer districts, and under boom conditions new thousands are quitting the classroom at the age of sixteen or earlier to find jobs. Regularity of attendance is declining, and delinquency has risen in inverse ratio. No increase in the teaching staff adequate to meet these new conditions has been possible under wartime conditions.

### *Democratic Tradition*

When the war is over, St. Louis—like all American cities—will once again have to face its unsolved, chronic problems. Unemployment, labor unrest, racial conflict and the assorted ills associated with bad housing will again come to the foreground.

One intangible trait will give St. Louis an advantage over many American cities in meeting such problems: its carefully nurtured tolerance of political and social dissenters. The spirit of St. Louis is, in part at least, the spirit of American liberalism. The casual visitor may be shocked by the sight of the sprawling city, its many decaying tenements and ancient buildings. But under the moth-eaten surface is a democratic tradition that has persisted for generations in the face of formidable odds.

If one factor could be singled out as the fountain-head of the progressive spirit of St. Louis, it would be the German people of the community. The first wave of German immigrants were refugees from the 1848 revolutionary uprisings in Europe. Many of them were socialists. They brought with them such radical notions as organizing trade unions, establishing cooperatives and abolishing slavery and capital punishment. The descendants of those German refugees are some of the staunchest progressives of the Midwest.

The city's liberalism has its roots deep in local history. To this history belongs, for example, Carl Schurz, a forceful immigrant leader, a Union army general and later an outstanding liberal statesman. Second to Schurz in national importance but first in influence on St. Louis was Joseph Pulitzer, who, coming from Hungary as a penniless youth, was largely responsible for the tradition of

journalistic liberalism in St. Louis. America knows him for his Pulitzer prizes in journalism, letters, drama and music, and for the Columbia School of Journalism which he endowed; but in St. Louis he is remembered as the founder of the *Post-Dispatch*.

The *Post-Dispatch*, now run by Pulitzer's son, Joseph, Jr., has long been rated one of America's half-dozen best papers. It has grown increasingly conservative in recent years, but it is usually found on the side of democratic reform. The *Star-Times* is one of the most consistently liberal newspapers in the country. Thus two of St. Louis' three newspapers have been outspoken foes of reaction and political corruption.

St. Louis has its eye on the postwar period today. Plans have been developed for public works projects running into tens of millions, with a view to modernizing and integrating the city. They include plans for slum clearance and public housing; extending the sewer, water and lighting systems; expanding the facilities of the fire and police departments, hospitals, schools, library and parks; and a forty-seven million dollar project to extend into the city center and along the riverfront the main highways from the southwest, west and northwest, with grade separations at all intersections. The over-all plan is one of the soundest and most complete yet developed by any large city.

### *Minnesota: Isolationism Out*

Some remnants of isolationism persist, of course, in the Midwest. Strangely enough, however, such states as Minnesota and Wisconsin are less isolationist than the East Central States—Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and Michigan. The polls bear this out, both in terms of pre-war isolationism and more recently in terms of attitudes as to whether Russia can be trusted after the war, and as to whether the United Nations should set up a post-war international police force.

In Minnesota, the sharp trend of opinion away from isolationism is symbolized by the tremendous popular support given to former Governor Harold Stassen. The young Minnesota governor was re-elected in 1942 by an overwhelming majority, even though he announced his intention of resigning within a few months to go



on active duty in the Navy. Elected with him were Ed Thy, whom Stassen had chosen as his candidate for Lieutenant Governor and successor to the governorship, and U. S. Senator Joseph Ball, whom Stassen had previously appointed to succeed Farmer-Laborite Ernest Lundeen upon the latter's death.

Stassen devoted much time in his last months as a civilian to advocating a United Nations government. The world organization, as he explained it, would administer the airways and strategic sea straits, stimulate world trade, increase the literacy of backward peoples and establish a world court and international police force. Minnesotans feel that Stassen is more realistic than Ely Culbertson and other theorizers, in that he starts with an association of nations that is already in existence—the United Nations—and simply advocates the extension of its scope and functions to prevent future wars.

Stassen's advocacy of this plan, and Senator Ball's effort to put the Senate on record as favoring an international police force, have been acclaimed by Minnesotans of all political parties, including prominent Farmer-Laborites with whom I talked. The forthright position taken by Minnesota's young Republicans has in turn had its effect upon opinion elsewhere in the near Northwest.

A dramatic example of the new trend of thinking in Minnesota is the story of the election to Congress of Dr. Walter Judd. Dr. Judd had been a medical missionary in China. His wife and week-old child fled to America to escape the advancing Japanese Army in 1938, while the doctor stayed behind until the following year, picking out of Chinese war patients bits of shrapnel bearing U. S. trademarks. Then he too came home to work for American aid to China. He visited the State Department, but failed to convince officials there that they should act before it was too late.

Judd also appeared before the Senate and House foreign affairs committees on behalf of a proposed embargo on shipments of war materials to Japan. He found that two-thirds of the Congressmen he talked to favored such action; but they said that the people weren't ready to support it. So Judd embarked on a speaking tour that lasted a year and took him to all parts of the country. His advocacy of aid to China was so forceful that State Department

officials have admitted receiving thousands of letters from the citizens who heard him.

In January 1941, Dr. Judd moved to Minneapolis to take over the practice of a doctor who was entering the armed forces. He continued to lecture on China and world affairs in general to various groups there whenever he had a chance. If he was unable to keep an engagement his wife spoke in his place, with equally good effect. Speaker's fees were turned over to China Relief by the Judd family.

Being a former missionary, Judd spoke in numerous Minneapolis churches, and since the flour city is also a city of churches he became well known. Probably the peak of his fame among churchgoers came when on the morning of December 7, 1941, he told the assembled membership of Mayflower Congregational Church that Japan would not hesitate to attack the United States, and soon. After the news of Pearl Harbor came over the radio that afternoon, Judd was regarded as a minor prophet by many a Minneapolis citizen.

In the summer of 1942, young Republicans of the Minneapolis Fifth Congressional District were racking their brains for a candidate to oppose isolationist incumbent Oscar Youngdahl in the Republican primaries. Youngdahl had voted against lend-lease, reciprocal trade, fortification of Guam and every other collective security measure to come up in the House. He claimed that his mail proved he was truly representing the wishes of his constituents in so doing. The young Republicans wanted to put this to the test, and at this point someone thought of Walter Judd. No one knew his politics, and Judd had been in Minneapolis such a short time that he was not even a registered voter. Eleven weeks before the primary he registered and five weeks later he agreed to enter the Congressional race.

Even Governor Stassen didn't think Judd had a chance against the apparently well-entrenched Youngdahl. But his enthusiastic supporters, from society dowagers to union men and women, embarked on a whirlwind bell-pushing campaign that reversed the odds in a few weeks.

Judd campaigned on two issues only: first, he told the voters that Minnesotans had a stake in the international situation, their prosperity and welfare being dependent on a sane world order, and

second, he announced that he intended to vote according to his lights and not according to the mail.

When it was all over, he had won over Youngdahl in the primaries by some 10,000 votes, and over his combined opponents in the finals by a majority of nearly two to one. Today Judd is already becoming one of the leaders of the liberal young Republicans in the House, at least in international affairs.

### *Impassive Minneapolis*

Minneapolis, unlike most Western and Midwestern cities, is highly stratified along class lines, with little social intercourse between the major social groups. This makes it difficult to gauge public opinion accurately, except when polls are made, and occasionally at election time if the issues are not too complex. The most prominent Minneapolis citizens, financially and socially, have little in common with the great Scandinavian- and German-stock middle classes. The labor groups are both strong and articulate: the city's famous teamsters union has been a powerful force for higher wages and unionization, while at the same time causing an anti-union reaction on the part of the middle class.

One Minneapolis high school teacher told me, "The longer I live here the less I know about the city. It seemed all very clear-cut at first. I do think that I can say accurately, however, that there is a stolid, impassive quality about the people that I have never seen equaled anywhere. To give an example, I went to a meeting of about 7000 Victory Aides (women OCD block workers) assembled to hear Mrs. Roosevelt recently. It was as good a cross-section of the city as one could find. They didn't like Mrs. Roosevelt; neither did they dislike her. They didn't cheer, nor boo, nor laugh, nor hiss. They just sat. But these same people support war bond drives, the Red Cross, the community fund and Army enlistment drives with amazing vigor."

Signs of militant anti-Semitism I found to be almost entirely lacking in the Middle West, as in the South and West—except for Minneapolis. I inquired frequently and in many places about such sentiment, but found very few who considered it to be a serious



problem. The well-worn anecdote to the effect that the first American soldier to set foot on overseas territory was named O'Shaughnessy (or McGuire or Flannigan, take your choice), but that the first American businessman to get a defense contract was named Finkelstein (or Rubinstein or Levy), turned up in several places but few people told it seriously. An Omaha social worker asked me, "Why look for anti-Semitism out here? When I was in New York and Washington last summer I was shocked at the anti-Jewish talk I heard. I'd never heard anything like it in these parts."

In Minneapolis, however, a professional man of liberal viewpoint told me, "Anti-Semitism is stronger here than anywhere I have ever lived. It's so strong that people of all groups I have met make the most blatant statements against Jews with the calm assumption that they are merely stating facts with which anyone could agree. After more weeks of mere listening than I am proud of, I finally began taking a stand every time an anti-Semitic statement was made in my presence. The bomb-shells have been something to see and hear."

The strength of anti-Semitism in Minneapolis—and, I am told, other Minnesota cities as well—is surprising in view of the fact that this State was a stronghold first of the Nonpartisan League and then of the Farmer-Labor Party. The Midwestern variety of anti-Semitism is less rabid than that of Boston or Brooklyn; it is, rather, a matter of more subtle social discrimination. It is most apparent in upper-middle-class circles. It is rife, for example, in an exclusive club, where there has been informal discussion of how to get rid of the Jews who now hold life memberships in the club. Minneapolis is probably the only city in the country where the business uplift clubs exclude Jews from membership. (In St. Paul, by way of contrast, the Automobile Club had a Jewish president when I was there.) In one select suburb of Minneapolis, a shotgun shell was fired into the home of a Jewish family, in an attempt to get them to move from the neighborhood. This was an indication that social discrimination against the Jews of Minneapolis might very easily turn into anti-Semitism of the violent type.

## *Wisconsin: Germanic Americans*

I expected to find more isolationism in Wisconsin because of its pre-war reputation. My first contact in the State seemed to bear this out. A school official in the little dairy-farming town of Stanley expressed great suspicion of the Administration and other forces which were allegedly trying to propagandize us into joining "some new League of Nations." We should devote all our efforts to winning the war, he said, and not worry about the post-war world. He had particular hatred for Vice-President Wallace and repeated the myth that Wallace had come out for "a quart of milk for every Hottentot." But this man's views were by no means typical, even in the heavily Germanic towns and cities of Wisconsin.

In the last war there was considerable pro-German sentiment in Wisconsin; it would be only reasonable to expect some such feeling to persist in World War II. Sheboygan seemed to be a good place to watch for it. This is as German a city as you can find in the United States. A vast majority of its 40,000 people are German or of German descent. Yet not more than one percent of these people are pro-Nazi today, according to several authoritative local sources.

The reason is simple: these Americans of German stock are descended mainly, like those in St. Louis, from German democrats who staged abortive revolts in 1848 and 1872 and subsequently took refuge in America where their political beliefs were more welcome. A few pro-Nazis are found among the handful of immigrants who came here in the 1920's, after the Hitler virus had begun to take effect in Germany. Local residents know who they are, and can tell you which of them still have pictures of Adolf Hitler hanging in their living rooms. The few who are suspect have carefully disclaimed any Nazi beliefs, but they are being closely watched by the authorities.

True, before the war broke out in Europe as many as 2000 Sheboygan people could be found celebrating German Day in the local park with the swastika flying overhead. On one occasion a German vice-consul came up from Chicago with a corps of storm-troopers to deliver an address. But most of the people who clustered in the park to hear him did not endorse his views. They were gathered

there as Germans, not as Nazis, according to local officials of non-Germanic descent.

The Germanic-Americans of Sheboygan do feel more sympathetic toward the German people than does the average American. They regard Germany today as a country "occupied" by the Nazis, and they hate Hitler as much as any other group of American citizens.

Proof of this is to be seen in Sheboygan's war record. In 1942 the city oversubscribed its USO quota by 50 percent, its Red Cross quota 100 percent. In 1943 community war fund and war bond drives likewise went over the top. Workers in every major factory are buying bonds on the payroll allotment plan—no mean achievement, in view of the fact that the average paycheck here is only \$28 a week.

Walking about Sheboygan, one cannot escape this feeling: Here is some indication of what Germany might be like, if she could rid herself once and for all of her Nazi-militant overlord. These are thrifty, friendly, hospitable people, running their affairs efficiently and bothering no one.

Here are two old *Hausfrauen*, shawls over their heads, smiling and chatting in German. Even among the younger people, German colloquialisms persist. They speak of a vacation as "my off," and "all gone" is reduced to "all." "My vacation is over" therefore becomes "my off is all." They say they are "going by," rather than going to, Prange's—the huge department store where farmers still trade in their eggs, butter and fruit for "due bills" which are as good as Uncle Sam's currency in Sheboygan.

The names on the stores in a single block of the main street tell the story: Klein, Dietz, Hauser & Kuplic, Koenitz, Kruse, Schuelke, Steinert, Kessler & Kuck. Most of the clerks in these shops are bilingual; knowledge of German is a prerequisite to employment in some of them.

Here is a people 80 percent of whom own their own homes. There are no slums in Sheboygan. Every householder has his neat vegetable and flower garden and manicures his lawn carefully in season. More than half the houses have outdoor fireplaces in their backyards for roasting *bratwurst* sausages, and picnics take place almost nightly. (In 1943, however, *bratwurst* was almost unobtainable because of meat rationing.) Everyone drinks beer—even the deacons of the lo-



cal churches. Few ask anything better than two drinks of beer and a game of "sheep's head," a pastime which occupies many a winter evening for the oldsters.

But all this is gracefully combined with the American way of life. These Americans are giving their sons and their money as cheerfully as anyone else; perhaps they even sacrifice more willingly, knowing how fortunate they are to be here rather than in Germany. For them the motto of the local daily, the *Sheboygan Press*, is real: "The past is gone; we face today."

### *Detroit: War Production Capital*

Detroit, despite its racial strife, has made a magnificent contribution toward winning this war. More than 700,000 workers are now engaged in war industry there. The Detroit area—including parts of four different counties—has close to three million residents today, and in 1943 was scheduled to produce fourteen billion dollars in war goods—close to a sixth of the Nation's war production. Detroit's atmosphere is more warlike than that of any city of the Middle West; it resembles more closely San Francisco or Mobile in the tempo of its life and the nature of its problems.

In August 1942, *Life* magazine published a report on the automotive center entitled "Detroit Is Dynamite." It told how bad morale, wildcat strikes, material shortages, poor planning by industry and Government indecision were holding up war production, and warned, "Detroit can either blow up Hitler or it can blow up the United States." In June 1943 the truth of this statement was suddenly brought home to the nation—but of that, more later.

By and large, Detroit's war industries are efficient—more so than most of the newer war plants that have suddenly blossomed forth in other sections of the country. The reasons are simple: the methods and personnel of the automobile industry have been carried over into war production with a minimum of dislocation, and Detroit had a large enough reserve of workers and houses so that overcrowding did not become a serious problem in the first year of the war. One result was that absenteeism averaged only 4 to 5 percent in Detroit, compared to about 8 percent for the nation.

## *Help Wanted: Male or Female*

But another crisis was in the offing—a crisis in manpower. Another 100,000 workers were needed. In consequence the housing surplus had disappeared by the spring of 1943, and a survey showed that there were 121,000 more families in Detroit than there were housing units available for them. Thousands of workers were using beds by shifts, living in tents and “fox-hole homes” in the foundations of ruined buildings or in trailers. Yet the snobbish city of Grosse Pointe, just north of Detroit, kept on its books an ordinance prohibiting the renting of rooms. Mrs. Pearl Adams, who had a twenty-room house and insisted on renting rooms to war workers, was ordered by the local court to evict her renters or spend two years in jail.

War plants had drained so many workers from other Detroit industries by mid-1943 that there was a need for 25,000 more workers in the city’s “non-war” businesses, according to officials of the War Manpower Commission. Laundries, restaurants and similar establishments were unable to keep up with the demand for their services. This was a problem almost as pressing as the need for workers in war industries.

The demand for labor could only be met by importing workers, or by hiring married women and members of minority groups still not fully employed. Already every eighth person in Detroit had come into the city since the war boom began; there was no place for additional workers to live, and war housing plans were like a drop in the proverbial bucket. Women were already being hired extensively; they accounted for 75 percent of the new “hires” in the Detroit area. Over 40 percent of the workers at Willow Run were women. At least 30,000 more women were available, but nursery and day care facilities were lacking to free many of them for war work as was true in every American war center.

Negro leaders in Detroit, meanwhile, reported that many plants still refused to hire colored workers. And large numbers of aliens, even those not of enemy origin, were having great difficulty in getting Army-Navy clearance for war jobs. Detroit’s problem, then, was to utilize its existing labor supply by hiring women, Negroes

and aliens, in order to avoid the need for further extensive migration from outside the city.

One advantage Detroit workers have over workers in many another war center is their relative feeling of security against post-war unemployment. Once the war is over, there will be a tremendous demand for new cars—a demand which has been accumulating all through the war years. The industry will take up where it left off after war broke out, with a minimum period of unemployment for reconversion—four months, according to one industrialist. Detroit workers know this, and since most of them have some war bonds to help bridge the gap from war production to civilian employment, they are relatively immune to the “post-war jitters.”

### *A Bouquet for General Motors*

General Motors is probably one of the best examples of efficiency in the automotive industry. With 386,000 employees—a new high—G. M. was turning out ten million dollars' worth of war goods daily in mid-1943. The company had 17 different operations in the Detroit area alone.

G. M. President C. E. Wilson explained his company's success by the fact that it had started the process of conversion long before Pearl Harbor. “We also have good work standards, and trained foremen who know how to handle men. That's why we got mass production instead of mob production.” Not to be ignored, either, is the fact that average weekly earnings of G. M. employees rose from \$43 in 1941 to \$55 in 1942, while the company's profits were actually less in 1942 than in the previous year.

Of basic importance is the G. M. labor policy that gives the union a fair chance to negotiate grievances and make suggestions to increase production. By May 1943, workers had submitted a total of 86,922 production ideas, of which one in five had been accepted by the management.

The G. M. Cadillac Division plant, which makes Allison engine parts and M-5 tanks, is a good example of how a sound labor policy works. Charles Trout, chairman of Cadillac local 174 of the United Auto Workers union, told Mrs. Agnes Meyer of the *Washington Post*:



"We look back on our record of accomplishment with pride. In four years of war production we have never been behind our schedule. . . . Our production last week was 101.2 percent.

"Proof of labor's interest in the war effort is the fact that production was increased 25 percent in the Cadillac plant immediately after Pearl Harbor. That increase has been more than maintained up to the present time and we are determined to increase it as much as possible.

"We were one of the first big plants to get the Minute Man Flag, which is given for a 90 percent quota in the bond drive. The union got behind this drive and made our quota 100 percent.

"As for the blood bank, we gave 150 pints a day in any given shop for five straight weeks, and our record is 211 pints during five hours in a single day. Now we are trying to get the blood bank returned.

"Our men have received over 100 special awards for suggestions for outstanding improvements in production methods. Seven of these were given recognition by the Government. Our labor-management committee has accomplished more than any other production committee in town.

"We feel very strongly that labor gets blamed for all the bad things, absenteeism, turnover, constriction of production, where actually these things are not labor's fault. And management is given the credit by the public for all the good things, including high production, which, after all, is the product of labor.

"Our union recognized a year ago—on May 3—that we were confronted with a problem in absenteeism that was bound to become more serious. We drew up a plan there and then and published a leaflet to fight absenteeism.

"We also had meetings in Union Hall to combat absenteeism, interviewed the absentees one by one, and found that most of them were curable cases.

"At the time 70 percent of these people were absent for reasons over which they had no control. One had a wife in the hospital and had to stay with the children, another was a sick man with five dependents, too sick to work, but couldn't afford to lay off for an operation. Lots of them had to spend days in court because they are hounded now they have a little money, for debts they made while on relief."

The Cadillac labor-management committee meets twice weekly,

and the company has two men who do nothing but follow up suggestions for greater efficiency that come from the workers. The management treats absenteeism as a symptom, not as a disease, and pays tribute to the union's efforts to track down the real causes of the trouble. This cordial atmosphere between labor and management accounts for the plant's efficiency and for the fact that there has been no major strike at G. M. plants since 1937.

### *Willow Run: Ballyhoo and Brickbats*

At the other end of the scale, in terms of effective participation in the war effort, is the Ford Motor Company's bomber plant at Willow Run. Despite the ballyhoo it has received, Willow Run had fallen down miserably by the spring of 1943. Originally Willow Run was to have at least 100,000 workers and turn out a bomber an hour by the use of assembly-line production methods. But after a year it had succeeded in building a staff of only 35,000. In one month early in 1943, the management hired 2900 workers and lost 3100. "Quits" were averaging 2500 per month. Production was still not much more than one bomber a day. WPB officials still predicted a production of "500 planes a month by the time the next snow flies," but in May 1943 the company quietly started moving some 5500 machines with their various manufacturing operations out of the plant. The bomber factory was to become just another aircraft assembly plant, with manufacturing to be done in Ford plants in Missouri, Minnesota and other places.

Actually the assembly-line method of putting bombers together has great possibilities, and it is quite possible that the plant may assemble 500 planes a month when its peak production is reached. This will be quite an achievement, even though the original plans for manufacturing as well as assembling the planes have gone by the board.

But the fact remains that Willow Run failed in its original objectives. It went sour for two main reasons: lack of manpower and high labor turnover, because of the plant's location and the failure to provide housing and transportation facilities; and bad employee-management relations. The Ford management seems to be responsible for both. This plant, built at Government expense, is

an outstanding example of how the war production program can fall down when private interests are allowed to operate without regard for the common welfare.

Willow Run is situated in Washtenaw County, thirty miles from downtown Detroit, the nearest large source of labor supply. The plant's eastern end is only twenty-five feet from the Wayne County line. According to William H. Jordy in *The Nation*,

“Ford explains this careful tailoring as an effort to simplify his tax structure and protective services; of course these benefits, plus added accessibility to labor, could have been obtained by locating the plant entirely within Wayne County. But the Washtenaw site has other advantages. In the first place, he has been steadily acquiring land in Washtenaw County for soy bean cultivation after the war. It is to his advantage to have amid his bean rows a government-financed factory which can later be converted to the manufacture of plastic planes. Secondly, as the largest landowner in a predominantly rural county, Ford dominates Washtenaw politics and thereby enjoys judicial sanction for his anti-labor practices, which would not be the case in labor-dominated Wayne County. Thirdly, by forcing his workers to travel long distances he makes labor organization extremely difficult.”

Under present conditions, with jobs galore in Detroit itself, workers are not disposed to spend an extra hour every morning and evening for the glory of working at Willow Run. One small group of workers commutes from Toledo, driving 170 miles a day. But they are the exceptions. Most workers want to live near the plant where they're going to work. And there's the rub.

For there is no adequate supply of housing near Willow Run. The CIO United Auto Workers proposed a 6000-unit permanent housing project to be arranged in accordance with modern principles of town planning. A mile-wide “greenbelt” was to provide space for recreational activities adjoining the town.

The Federal Public Housing Authority was preparing to go ahead with construction of the full 6000 units when Ford's attorneys protested, telling the Truman Committee that Bomber City might become a “ghost town” after the war. This implied that the plant was to be abandoned, although Ford himself had said, “When the



war is over we are going to retain the building . . . and construct airplanes on a mass-production scale."

Some 2500 family dwelling units, 900 trailer "apartments" for childless couples, and dormitories for 3000 single men and women have been built, all of temporary or prefabricated materials. Meanwhile the population of nearby Ypsilanti township has grown from 4,000 in 1940 to more than 10,000 today, and is still growing.

Sanitary conditions are outrageous. Between Ypsilanti and Willow Run, for example, is Lay Garden subdivision, consisting of 200 jerry-built frame houses with no water or sewage disposal system. Each house has a privy and a shallow well in the back yard—a condition which is an invitation to epidemic. In one of these houses a family of five lived on the first floor, five men slept in the basement, four on the second floor, nine in the garage, and four families in trailers in the backyard.

Albert Deutsch, reporting for PM, found that:

". . . More cases of syphilis were reported in Willow Run during the first three months of 1943 than in all of 1942—which witnessed an alarming rise in venereal infection. Population increase in the area explains only part of the rise. Prostitution accounts for only a small proportion of the venereal infection rate. Organized vice, it appears, can't find a firm foothold in the Willow Run area. The amateur competition is too keen. Most of the immigrant workers have been imported from Southern hill areas, where the venereal disease rate has always been extremely high.

"Lack of wholesome recreational facilities and the generally drab social environment at Willow Run has stimulated private-party types of entertainment, featured by heavy drinking and promiscuous sex relations among fun-starved workers. In a migrant population where venereal infection was already high, the rapid spread of syphilis and gonorrhea was an inevitable consequence of promiscuity.

"One of the worst sources of venereal infection, until recently, was Willow Lodge, the Federal housing project for unmarried Ford workers. When the project was opened, the FPHA set aside one dormitory building for a small-scale experiment in co-occupancy. Men occupied the first story, women the second. Professional

gamblers and fast girls quickly moved in for a clean-up, and a scandalous situation ensued. The experiment was abruptly ended.

"Now men and women workers occupy separate buildings. The self-policing organization installed recently by the Tenants' Council, with the consent and cooperation of the FPHA officials, has done much to restore order and decency to the project, with a resulting check of venereal infection."

### *Managerial Shortcomings*

Bad housing and recreational facilities share responsibility for the high turnover rate at Willow Run with several other factors. Earlier, the Ford management had insisted on hiring many young men, particularly those eighteen to twenty years of age. As could have been predicted, some 5000 of these youths were lost to the armed forces. Subsequently Ford began to hire women in larger numbers and even made plans for day nurseries in connection with the plant.

Other causes of Willow Run's slowness were the frequency of changes in Army specifications for the Liberator bombers, difficulties in getting materials, and lack of flexibility in allocating manpower within the plant. Often idleness and "made work" resulted, with bad effects in terms of worker morale. These troubles were gradually being ironed out by the summer of 1943. Idleness became less prevalent as production rose. The workers could now see bombers being turned out daily, although at far from the originally announced rate of one per hour; and the turnover rate dropped sharply—from 11 to 6 percent per month, according to one report.

Alan Strachan, union representative at Willow Run, told me that his organization had great respect for the Ford management from a strictly engineering point of view. From the human point of view, however, Strachan criticized the management strongly. Among other things, he said that Ford's Director of Industrial Relations, John Ringwald, had no conception of give-and-take negotiations with the union; the foremen had been badly selected and inadequately trained; minor restrictions, such as the bans against smoking and against women wearing sweaters or bright colors, were irritating; and excessive penalties—usually temporary suspension

from the job—were placed on infractions of plant rules. Willow Run had no labor-management production committee.

The union is doing all it can to minimize the damage done by the Ford management's disregard for the human element. It is organizing dances, clubs and athletic competitions. One union official told me that under the conditions prevailing at Willow Run, and with the ban on wage increases, the union's "social work" function was fully as important as its economic one.

The union has offered its own nineteen point program for Willow Run, to overcome at least some of the handicaps under which the plant still operates. One point—the decentralization of manufacturing operations, so that fewer workers will be required—has already been put into effect, as noted above.

The union has offered its own nineteen point program for Willow the many agencies dealing with housing, health, recreation, and child care; expansion of government housing near the plant from 2500 to 10,000 units; commandeering of unused private housing in the Willow Run area; liberalization of hiring standards, and especially the abandonment of discrimination against hiring Negro women, hundreds of whom are available in the Ypsilanti area; establishment of a railroad shuttle line to Detroit; relaxing of the 35-mile speed limit for bomber plant workers on the highways; freezing of shifts so that "share the ride clubs" can function effectively; better bus service to Detroit and other towns; payment of an additional hour's wages for travel time, to allow the plant to compete with Detroit factories for labor; and renting of summer camps in Southern Michigan for the children of Willow Run workers, as a means of cutting down juvenile delinquency.

If some or all of these constructive proposals were accepted by the Ford management, Willow Run might yet become an example of American efficiency in the mass production—or at least the mass assembly—of war goods.

### *Midwestern Indifference*

Throughout the East North Central States—especially Illinois, Indiana and Ohio—I felt that people were far removed from the war. In Chicago, for example, there was more talk of black market



activities than I had run into elsewhere. The newspapers were full of them, and one interviewer for a public opinion poll told me that her friends openly discussed ways and means of getting around OPA regulations. Everywhere I could feel the oppressive influence of the *Chicago Tribune* obscuring the issues of the war: trying to divert American hatred from Germany to Japan and from the Nazis to the Communists at home and abroad, and otherwise sowing confusion. Civilian defense activities were at a low ebb; interest in the opening of the new subway was much higher.

Divisive and blatantly nationalistic groups of the proto-fascist sort are bold and noisy in Chicago. The organization "Friends of Democracy" reported in June 1943 that isolationist meetings were held almost nightly: "Some of these 'patriots' have heavy German accents; some are Irish who hate the British more than they love their own adopted country; many are the frustrated, disheveled 'mothers' who followed Elizabeth Dilling to Washington and begged for the impeachment of President Roosevelt. And there is a new element: men and women who have been brought to believe that our government and the prosecution of the war have fallen into the hands of extravagant and bungling 'bureaucrats,' 'dreamers,' and 'professors.' 'Action!' is the cry of this polyglot mass and the action they want, needless to say, is against international collaboration, against the British and the Russians, against the Administration, against democracy, and against the Jews." Fortunately, the followers of this viewpoint are a small minority in Chicago and an even smaller minority elsewhere in the Midwest.

"A will to fight and win was born on December 7, 1941, but an understanding of the complexities of an interdependent world does not come as quickly," the Illinois League of Women Voters has stated. One sign that this understanding is growing, slowly but surely, was the formation in 1943 of the Republican Post-War Policy Association, aimed at converting the leadership of the Illinois Republican Party to an international point of view. It has received strong support from the rank and file of the Party.

The most prevalent attitude throughout the East Central States was a lack of enthusiasm for the war, rather than any real reversion to pre-war isolationism. This apparent indifference is neither typical

of nor confined to the Middle West, I hasten to add—it is merely a little more prevalent here than in other regions.

In Toledo, Ohio, I tried to dig beneath the surface to get at this attitude and the reasons for it. A Toledo newspaperman told me that when he wrote in his column about the anniversary of Pearl Harbor or of Hitler's rise to power, he got no reaction from his readers. When he wrote about catching a mouse in his house, however, or about the death of the man who has always reported the first robin's arrival, he got a strong reader reaction. His friends, he said, rarely talked about the war. They tried to get away from even discussing it when they met socially.

"All we ask is to get this war over as soon as possible so we can get back to cultivating our gardens," my Toledo newspaper friend summed up. "The Government's information policy is partly responsible for this. Then, too, there is a feeling that the President has lost interest in domestic affairs. He's lost the common touch he used to have. Something more than an occasional fireside chat is needed to dramatize the war." His one suggestion was that the President now and again follow Lincoln's example and write a "Bixby letter" to an unknown citizen. "A little more emotionalism in our Government's appeals to the country would do no harm," he added.

Next I talked to an interviewer for a public opinion poll. She stoutly maintained that newspapermen often created apathy simply by referring to it as the accepted viewpoint of most people. It is, rather, the viewpoint of a minority of middle class people who were isolationists before the war and are cynical about it now. Most people in Toledo, she said, were intensely interested in the war and are thinking a good deal about post-war problems. This was particularly true of industrial workers; and Toledo is an industrial city.

"I feel that the majority of people here are perhaps not as aware of the war as they should be," she told me. "But I think they are waking up more all the time. Unfortunately, war spirit must come largely through sorrow, for it is only now, when the casualty and fatality reports come in, that people are beginning to know what war is and what it will take to win. The Jap execution of American flyers, though actually no worse than much of what has happened before, has gone a long way toward rousing the general public to

act. You can see this in some of the letters to the newspapers. At the same time, a soldier here on furlough feels that we are as yet a long, long way from participating in the war effort.

"It seems to me natural for this part of the country to be rather unemotional since it is almost entirely industrial, and does not hold the glamor of training camps and naval bases, or even shipyards. I use glamor advisedly, because that's what it takes: color, life, something to fire the imagination. For example: here at the Willys-Overland plant is a branch in which women are making airplane wings. They all do everything in putting together the wings, from painting to riveting. They love it and are proud of being on the assembly line there. They really feel part of the war effort. At the same time, the girls at the Champion Spark Plug, who do nothing but trim wires on tiny spark plugs all day, a job many of them did in peace times, too, (one gal has operated the same machine for 14 years!) cannot possibly know the same sensation of vital connection with the war as the girls in the airplane factory. Yet even there all those I interviewed said 'yes,' definitely, to the question 'Do you feel the work you are doing is helping to win the war?'

"I should say, at any rate, that the outlook is definitely improving. The war bond quota here was exceeded; many people that I know have switched to defense jobs; and the response to calls for Red Cross workers has increased. But there is still room for improvement."

A CIO official supported this analysis in every detail. Payroll allotment plans for buying war bonds are almost universal among Toledo's industrial workers. Labor strife is at a minimum. The CIO has pledged its friendship for the AFL and the Railway Brotherhoods, proposing united action on these points: united effort to win the war; a fight against rising prices; the seeking of adjustments in wage scales through the War Labor Board; and a united front against anti-labor movements.

The workers in Toledo's plants resent attacks on the Administration's labor policy. In the 1942 elections the Toledo unions waged a publicity campaign to get their members to vote. But in spite of all such efforts, a large number of war workers didn't bother to go to the polls. They simply were not much interested in



politics in an off-year election. They were too busy working, their jobs were secure for the time being at least, and they didn't feel that their own welfare was at stake in this particular election. Without a doubt, this frame of mind partly accounts for the sweeping Republican majority of that year. But when it comes to war work itself, these same workers are interested and are doing all they can to speed the day of victory.

A good sign of the times in Toledo was the striking success of the Toledo Peace Forum in May 1943. Featuring such speakers as Sumner Welles, James T. Shotwell, Clarence Streit and Ely Culbertson, the Forum drew an enthusiastic audience of 7000 people. They were a fair cross-section of the city. The meetings aroused much discussion in the press, most of it favorable to the general idea of planning now for the peace. A local poll of opinion made before the Forum was held showed a majority of people favoring "winning the war first" before worrying about the peace; but after the Forum, a majority were for "planning the peace now."

### *Illinois Monologue*

By way of summarizing the feelings of common people in the Middle West toward the war, let me cite the remarks of a gray-haired lady from Southern Illinois. She boarded the eastbound bus at Mattoon, a small factory town where she lived, and settled her ample proportions into the reclining seat next to me. She had so much on her mind that needed saying, and such an urge to say it, that before the bus had started rolling out of Mattoon she was pouring her story into my receptive ears—the way of people on buses the world 'round. Leaving out my casual remarks, this is what she said, as I wrote it down that evening:

"I just got a letter from my boy Johnnie. He's gained thirty pounds since he joined the Army. Used to weigh 140, now he weighs 170. I guess they feed 'em good. Says he likes the warm weather down South.

"He found a boy from Lexington, Kentucky, where we used to live, and they pal around together. The boys from around here

wanted to stick together but they wouldn't let 'em. So it's good he's found a particular friend.

"Johnnie wanted to go join up long before he finally made it. A year ago, nearly, he come to me and said, 'Mom, what should I do? I don't want to see the other fellows do all the fighting and have all the fun.'

"I didn't hardly know what to say. He had a war job that would keep him from being drafted for a while, but he wasn't happy. So I said, 'Well, son, I hate to tell you yes, but I can't tell you no either, so I guess this is one thing you'll jes' have to decide for yourself.'

"After that he tried to join the Navy, but they turned him down because he's deaf in one ear. Then he tried the Marines and the Army, and still couldn't get in. I tell you, he was feelin' mighty bad, but then they lowered the requirements for the Army and he got in.

"When I saw him off at the station, I couldn't say goodbye—I hate that word—so I jes' said 'So long. Take care of yourself.' I felt like cryin' but I couldn't cry, though I guess I'd of felt better if I had. Some of the womenfolks at the train, though, they was wailin' and carryin' on something terrible. I don't think that's right—it makes the boys feel bad.

"After Johnnie was gone I had a heart attack and was laid up for a couple weeks in bed. I like to pass on. Then as soon as I could sit up I wrote Johnnie a letter—told him I was feelin' fine, 'cause I didn't want him to worry none about me. If he knew I'd been sick, he might worry about me when he gets sent overseas, and that wouldn't be so good.

"But after he got my letter, he wrote right back and said, 'What's the matter Mom? I could hardly read your writing, it was so shaky. Have you been sick or something?' So I wrote him I was sick then, but I was all right now.

"Since he's been gone, there's a lot more work for me to do these days—chores he used to do after he got home from work. I never thought I'd be sloppin' the hogs myself. But I guess us women will be doin' a lot of things we never did before, by the time this war is over. They're tryin' to keep the boys on the farms by deferrin' 'em, but they won't stay. They want to join up like their pals have done.

"We're gettin' on all right, though. Got a good lot of layin' hens,

and we'll have more this year after we get the incubator workin'. Can't see why we only get 32 cents for our eggs, though, when they're bringin' 48 and 50 cents in town. . . .

"Y'know, I think folks are gettin' a lot more neighborly these days, what with havin' to help each other out on this and that. Poolin' rides to town, for instance. Only thing that bothers me is why we can't get tires. They got substitutes for 'most everything else—why haven't they got enough imitation rubber?"

"But I guess we can get along with less ridin' around anyhow. We got to get along without a lot more things that we're used to. I guess we're lucky to have a little farm. If we get hungry we can always eat a chicken or butcher a hog or a calf. It's folks in the city that should be worried.

"And I guess they are, too, the way the newspapers are full of stories about black markets. They ought to clap them profiteers in jail. I'd hate to think they can go on makin' money out of the war with my boy in the Army and goin' off to war one of these days. . . .

"One good thing that's come out of this war, though, is the way folks are learnin' to save things. Law, the way we used to waste food and such used to hurt me to see it, bein' a mighty savin' soul myself. After this war we'll be in the habit of savin' things, and I hope we never go back to wastin' 'em again. . . .

"Folks say there has to be a war every so often. I hope that ain't so. I wish they'd get busy and do something to keep all this from happening again. I'd hate to think of my grandsons traipsin' off to war too. . . ."





*Part II*

WHAT THE PEOPLE ARE THINKING





## 6: THE POLLS TELL THE STORY

THE OPINIONS of the people who did the working and the fighting in World War I are shrouded in mystery. "Public opinion" was merely a phrase, representing whatever the politicians and journalists wanted it to represent. This war is different. Since the American Institute of Public Opinion began operation in 1935, it has become possible to gauge roughly nation-wide opinion on nearly every important issue.

The tools of opinion measurement are still far from perfect, of course. Theoretically a "sample" of 3,000 people, or even fewer, is large enough to give an accurate picture of the nation's attitudes if the sample is carefully chosen. To qualify, it must be a faithful miniature of the total population in regional location, size of towns, proportion of farmers, age, sex, race, and especially occupational and economic status. Actually, biased interviewers or incompetent interviewing in only a few areas may throw the results off; and if no election is in the offing to provide a check on the measurement of opinion, the "uncontrolled variables" may never be found out.

There are other pitfalls, too, including (1) prejudice in the selection of questions to be asked; (2) biased wording of the questions: (the "Have you stopped beating your wife?" type of question, which the polls try to avoid, but which occasionally slips in); (3) the reluctance of some people to express their frank opinions on controversial issues, especially when the person interviewing them comes from a different economic class; (4) lack of time for a well-considered reply where the issues at stake are complex; and (5) misinterpretation of results by the polling agency, consciously or unconsciously—as by failure to take the "don't know" answers into account where they bulk large, or by giving undue weight to opinions on questions concerning which the public is ill-informed.

But allowing for these possible shortcomings, and taking the exact wording of every question into account, the public opinion

poll can be extremely valuable as an index to what the people are thinking. We know that the polls are reasonably accurate—usually within four percentage points on election results. Dr. Gallup over-estimated the Republican vote by about 6 percent in the 1936 presidential election, but by 1940 he had reduced his error to half that figure. The *Fortune* poll missed the 1940 election results by only two-tenths of one percent. Compared with the unscientific *Literary Digest* poll, these predictions are something to crow about. And where a check has been made by two or more polling agencies on the same question, or on similar ones, the results have usually turned out to be almost identical.

Let's take a look at the state of American opinion toward the war and the home front in the year 1943. The figures used below are taken from Gallup, *Fortune*, National Opinion Research Center and Office of Public Opinion Research polls, some of which have not hitherto been published. They are supplemented by a few observations of my own.

### *The War and the Enemy*

The American people do not question the necessity of fighting this war through to the bitter end. Less than one in ten favors seeking an immediate peace through some sort of compromise. Nevertheless only two-thirds of the people claim to have a clear idea of what we are fighting for. And most of these think in negative terms—of beating the Nazis and Japan, rather than of establishing a just and permanently peaceful world order. This is an improvement over the early months of the war, when only half of us had a fair notion of what it was all about; but it still casts a grave reflection on (1) lack of specific war aims, and (2) our government's inadequate information policy. In the summer of 1942, less than two-tenths of the people were able to name the Four Freedoms correctly.

Four-fifths of the people feel that they are doing something to help win the war. But a great many also feel that all of us should buy more war bonds, sacrifice more through stricter rationing and participate more in the Red Cross and other war organizations. Less than half of us think that "the people of this country are

taking the war seriously enough." Two-thirds of us believe that business executives and workers are doing all they can to help win the war, and over half feel that government officials are doing likewise. But only a third think that labor leaders are pulling their share in the contest.

As for the war itself, in the summer of 1943 most people agreed that Hitler would be beaten in the last half of 1944, but that Japan would hold out for another year. The invasion of North Africa had brought a drop in the estimated over-all length of the war, from almost three to less than two years.

Mainly because of the belief that it will take longer to defeat Japan than Germany, most people think that the Japanese are the greater military threat to this country—over half, as opposed to a third who believe Germany is the principal menace. Racial feeling is high against Japan. In one poll, the Japanese were characterized by various interviewees, among other less printable things, as "barbaric, evil, brutal, dirty, treacherous, sneaky, fanatical, savage, inhuman, bestial, un-Christian and thoroughly untrustworthy." Only a few more than half of us feel that the Japanese government is our major enemy, not the people of Japan. But in the case of Germany, nearly three-fourths of us hold that the Nazi government, rather than the German people, is the real foe.

Two-thirds of us believe that we will be able to get along better with Germany than with Japan after the war is over. If the people of Germany and Japan were starving after the war, most Americans would be willing to give or sell them food. But one-third of us would oppose sending any food to Japan, while only one-sixth would take such a stand toward Germany.

Only 39 percent of us would allow Japan to join our post-war union of nations, and 44 percent would admit Germany; three-fourths favor joint action with Britain and China.

Anti-Japanese feeling runs highest on the Pacific Coast, of course, but it is strong in every region. When the execution of American flyers by the Japanese was announced, war bond sales took a sharp jump throughout the country. There is strong agitation against the evacuated Japanese in such States as Colorado, Wyoming and Arkansas. In Jackson, Michigan, I found that the town had been almost torn asunder by a proposal of the YWCA to allow a Jap-



anese-American girl to attend Jackson Junior College. The local press fought the plan, which was finally killed by the board of education.

### *What We Think Of Our Allies*

We have a realistic attitude toward Russia. More than four-fifths of us firmly believe that we should try to work with Russia as an equal partner both in fighting the war and in working out the peace. This in spite of the fact that many of us expect trouble around the peace conference table. Half of us think the Soviets "will make demands that we can't agree to." About forty percent think that Russia will try to bring about Communist governments in other European countries, and nearly thirty percent couldn't make up their minds on this question. But only about a fourth of the people think that Russia is likely to make a separate peace with Hitler as soon as she finds it to her advantage. After years of mutual suspicion and fear, attitudes toward Russia are growing constantly more friendly, even in the Northeast where Catholic elements are strong.

I found Bridgeport citizens enthusiastically cooperating in writing individual letters of friendship to the citizens of Gorky, in the Soviet Union, in a campaign sponsored by Russian War Relief. In Northampton a committee headed by a Congregational minister was conducting a city-wide drive for clothes for the Russian people. (In Toledo, Ohio, and other places, the Parent-Teachers' organizations have conducted similar drives through the schools.) In Greenfield, Mass., I asked a local editor what the Republican people of Franklin County thought about Russia. "They're very favorably disposed," he answered. "We have some White Russians in this town, and they've been interpreting their country to the people hereabouts. Even the Poles here are inclined to favor Russia, in spite of their government-in-exile." These reactions could be duplicated in nearly any city in the land.

Nonetheless feeling toward Russia remains colored by fear of communism—a fear long reinforced by conservative propaḡanda. When the people were asked, "On the whole, which country do you like best today—Britain or Russia?" over half said Britain,

one-sixth said Russia, and close to one-third couldn't make up their minds.

Despite strong anti-British feeling in such centers of isolationism as Boston, a vast majority of our people heartily approve of the British war effort. This friendly attitude, though qualified somewhat by sympathy for the Indian Nationalist movement, has grown as the British war machine has gathered strength. Our strongest, most unanimous admiration, however, is reserved for China. After the first dismal half-year of our war in the Pacific, we have come to realize fully the valor of our Chinese allies in holding out alone against Japan for six long years.

### *Wanted: A Decent Post-war World*

This war differs from the last in one very important respect. This time our eyes are on the post-war world. We are determined to prevent future wars, and two-thirds of us believe that there is a fairly good chance of doing so. We are also worried about the economic slump which may follow this war. At the turn of the year Dr. Gallup asked this question: "Aside from winning the war, what do you think is the most important problem facing this country today?" Here are the main answers:

Solve economic situation, prevent inflation and another depression .....	16%
The food shortage, here and abroad; need for more food production .....	12%
To make a lasting peace, to end future wars.....	11%
Farm labor shortage; manpower problem.....	10%
Postwar conditions; reconstruction of the world.....	8%
A job for everyone after the war; prevention of unemployment	7%

Four out of the six most common answers, be it noted, were concerned with post-war conditions at home and abroad. This realistic attitude is one reason for the relative lack of emotionalism, the soberness with which we are fighting this war.

In 1937 only 23 percent of the people in this country favored joining the League of Nations. By the fall of 1942, the proportion had risen to seventy percent. The strength of public opinion on our

post-war policy is shown by the finding early in 1943 that 76 percent thought we should "take an active part in world affairs" rather than "stay out of world affairs as much as we can." This was a new high in internationalism; the minority (isolationist) view dropped from about 26 percent of all persons questioned in October 1942 to 14 percent in January 1943. The *Fortune* Survey revealed in June 1943 that sentiment for playing a larger part in world affairs than before the war had risen from 58 percent just before Pearl Harbor to 77 percent, and that the group who held the opposite view had dropped from 18 to 12 percent.

Seventy-four percent of all persons questioned by the Gallup poll in April felt that the countries fighting the Axis should set up an international police force after the war is over to try to keep peace throughout the world. Only one person in seven opposed the idea. The strong sentiment for this proposal, which had grown from 46 percent in August 1939, stands in glaring contrast to the refusal of the U.S. Senate to commit itself on the same issue when it was polled by the Associated Press in April 1943.

The sentiment for a world organization to prevent future wars is almost universal, regardless of political affiliation. In November 1942, when the State of Massachusetts conducted a referendum on the question of calling "at the earliest possible moment a convention of representatives of all free peoples to frame a Federal Constitution under which they may unite in a Democratic World Government," three people out of every four voted "yes," regardless of whether they supported isolationist Henry Cabot Lodge or pro-Administration candidate Joseph Casey for the Senate in the same election. In another local referendum held at the same time in Boulder, Colorado, 79 percent of the people voted for joining a union of nations after this war. It will be hard for the politicians of either party to ignore such clear expressions of public opinion.

The Ball-Burton-Hatch-Hill proposal for a United Nations government to police the world provoked widespread discussion throughout the country. This was the first definite post-war world plan offered in high official circles, and the way the people grasped at it was an indication of their psychological need for more definite and positive war aims.

On the steps of a Kentucky hotel I heard an Administration Dem-



ocrat deliver himself of a diatribe against Roosevelt for not giving his full support to the Ball resolution. "He ought to hang his head in shame," he said. "Here he's been advocating collective security and quarantining the aggressors all these years, and when some Republican Senators offer him their support what does he do? Plays party politics, instead of accepting it like a gift from heaven. He's courting trouble. If he doesn't change his ways the same thing will happen to him that happened to Wilson."

A little later, Representative Fulbright of Arkansas introduced in Congress his resolution stating "that the Congress hereby express itself as favoring the creation of appropriate international machinery with power adequate to establish and maintain a just and lasting peace among the nations of the world, and as favoring participation by the United States therein."

This proposal, much vaguer than the "B2H2" plan, was approved by 78 percent of the population, opposed by only nine percent. What the public was saying, in effect, was: "We think the general principle of participating in world affairs is preferable to a general policy of isolationism such as we followed after the last war. Just how this new policy is going to be worked out and be put into effect, we do not know; but we favor trying to arrive at some basis for full American participation in enforcing the peace that will follow this war."

And if it comes to delegating the power to make the peace, twice as many of us would prefer to entrust the President (58 percent) as Congress (28 percent) with this great responsibility.

### *Wanted: A Just Peace*

A small opinion poll in Valparaiso, Indiana, using return post-cards, obtained an 83 percent favorable reply to the question, "Should the government take steps now, during the war, with our Allies to set up a world organization to preserve the peace?" The important thing, however, was the relatively high degree of interest shown. On this question 27 percent of the people queried—a new high record for the Valparaiso poll—took the trouble to mail back their ballots, compared with less than 10 percent on questions concerning voting age and other domestic issues.

The National Opinion Research Center found that 74 percent of

us were generally favorable to the notion of joining a "union of nations" after this war. Three out of every five believed that "the Allies should start talking and preparing *now* for the kind of peace we want after the war." In order to "try out a union of nations as a possible way of preventing wars," a clear majority of us are willing: (1) "to stay on a rationing system in this country for about 5 years to help feed the starving people of other countries"; (2) "to pay more taxes for a few years while the new union is being organized, even if people in the other countries can't afford to pay as much"; and (3) "for part of the American Army to remain overseas for several years after the war to help establish order."

The things most of us are not willing to do include (1) considering most of the Lend-Lease materials as aid to the Allies and not expecting any payment for them; (2) giving up our Army, Navy and Airforce, if all other nations do the same; (3) forgetting about reparations payments; and (4) "allowing foreign goods to come into this country and compete with the things we grow or make here—even if the prices are lower." The inconsistencies of these views show the need for further education if popular enthusiasm for post-war planning is not to be sidetracked by misunderstanding of what is needed for a permanent peace.

*Fortune* found, however, not only that three-quarters of us favor sending money and materials to help other nations get back on their feet after the war, but that about three-fifths think that by doing so we will increase trade, making this country more prosperous than ever. Only one in five thought that such a program would lower living standards in this country. Here is a sign that our desire to collaborate in the post-war world has a stable basis in self-interest. If those who write the peace build their program on this basis, the danger of relapsing into post-war isolationism should be minimized.

We have no widespread desire to annex territory after this war. Six-sevenths of us think we should have more military bases outside the country than we had before the war; but aside from this, less than a third want to acquire other types of territory.

Nor do we have much of the vindictiveness that we displayed against Germany during and after World War I. Here are the percentages choosing various proposals as to what should be done with Germany after she surrenders:

Set up a United Nations council for ten years or so, and eventually make her adopt a democratic government and see that she sticks to it .....	37%
Bring to trial and execute all found to be leading Nazi officials	31%
Make Germany use all her available men, money and materials to rebuild the damage done in other countries .....	27%
Set up an international government in Germany for 100 years	21%
Do nothing to Germany but see to it that she stays within her own boundaries .....	13%
Carve Germany up and divide her among some of the United Nations .....	11%
Kill a Nazi for every person killed by the Germans in occupied countries .....	4%

The fact that only 4 percent of the people want to take revenge on the rank and file of Nazis, and only eleven percent want to carve Germany up, shows that we are inclined toward a reasonable rather than a vindictive peace. We can't agree on all the details of the peace, but we do know that the kind of peace we made after World War I is not good enough this time.

### *Wanted: Jobs And Social Security*

There is less apparent interest in domestic than in international post-war problems, judging from the polls. But I found in talking to people that fears of inflation, post-war depression and unemployment were common and that government planning is relied on to prevent a collapse of our home economy after the war. These fears will be intensified as victory draws closer.

Our people are incurable optimists, however, particularly in good times. Four-fifths of those now employed believe their jobs will continue after the war is over. Of those who don't think so, only one in three expects to have enough money saved up to tide his family over; but only one in twenty anticipates much difficulty in finding a new job. *Fortune* found that 46 percent believe "young men after this war are going to have a better chance to get ahead than young men had before this war," while 17 percent think the opposite will be true.

Once the war is over, the public believes, a year or more will be required before war plants can be changed over to making peace-



time goods and the armed forces drawn back into civilian life. There will be lots of unemployment, or at least some unemployment, in this period. Two thirds of our labor leaders think that unemployment will be "extensive," while two-thirds of our business executives feel that unemployment will be only "moderate," according to a survey made by the Office of Public Opinion Research. Enforced savings now, through Social Security, would be the best way of taking care of this problem, rather than relying on government-made jobs, relief or charity. If there is widespread unemployment after the war, seven people out of ten believe the government should provide assistance to the unemployed until they find jobs again.

The people feel strongly that it is the Government's responsibility to see that our service men get jobs after the war. Three out of four Americans told interviewers of the National Opinion Research Center that "If there aren't enough jobs after the war for all the men in the armed forces, it should be up to the government to guarantee jobs for them." Of these, about half favored a public works program which would not compete with private business to bridge the gap, and another quarter were for government subsidies to business. Less than a tenth thought that the government should "take over and run some private businesses" if unemployment got out of hand.

During the transition period, wage and price controls will continue to be essential to keep our economy running, according to an NORC poll. Food rationing will have to be continued for a time, but gasoline rationing can safely be abandoned, most people think. High taxes are taken for granted after the war by 95 percent of us.

There will always be some Americans in need of the basic necessities of life, according to the representative American. To help care for them we should continue to have old-age and unemployment insurance, under the present Social Security law, and extend it to include all workers in all occupations. Furthermore, a similar plan should be worked out to take care of working people when they are sick. Close to nine-tenths of the people expressed these views. The Gallup poll found in April that only a third of the people had heard of the National Resources Planning Board's proposal for "cradle-to-the-grave" social security, but of those who had, 70 percent were in favor of it. In August, a third of the people

wanted to see "many changes and reforms" after the war, while 58 percent wanted to have the country remain "pretty much the way it was." But some of the latter group probably thought of the New Deal period when they wanted to go back to pre-war days.

### *Opinion On the Administration*

The people by and large approve the job the President is doing, although not without qualifications. The percentage expressing approval dropped from about 80 percent to less than 70 percent during the Congressional election campaign, rose sharply after the North African invasion, and stood at 75 percent early this year. A clear majority of voters in every social stratum except business executives favored Roosevelt for President in 1944 if the war is still on—but not if it is over. A *Fortune* Survey taken in the spring showed that 70 percent thought that the President had been doing a good job of running the war, but only 56 percent similarly approved his wartime record on the home front. In July 1943 the Gallup poll estimated that 73 percent approved the way Roosevelt was handling our foreign policy, but the vote was only 49 percent in favor of the President's handling of home front problems, with 42 percent opposed and the remainder undecided. Apparently the coal strikes and Congressional attacks on the Administration had had at least a slight effect.

Criticisms of the Administration fall into three main categories, according to Gallup: inefficient and sloppy administration; too much politics in home front affairs; and poor handling of the labor situation.

My own impressions check closely with this. I heard very frequently that "bureaucracy is getting out of hand; the Government has too many employees, and there is too much duplication of functions." The Administration is also accused of vacillating on questions which affect the lives of almost everyone. Resentment is especially high because of the delay in settling such problems as the control of manpower, the size of the Army and the drafting of fathers.

According to the Gallup poll, four-fifths of the people approve of the Selective Service system, a slight majority favors drafting man-

power for our war industries where necessary, and three-fourths of all war workers and others alike are willing to work a minimum 48-hour week. In the light of these figures, it is easy to understand the widespread criticism of Washington's failure to adopt long ago an all-out war policy on manpower, and to let the average American know just where he stands in the picture.

Five-sixths of the people accept rationing as necessary. But only 45 percent thought that a good job had been done in rationing food stuffs, while 37 percent said "a fair job" and 13 percent "a poor job." The dissenters didn't like some of the methods by which rationing had been placed in effect. Most people favor the surprise technique, as in the case of shoe rationing. Announcements ahead of time that coffee and canned goods were to be rationed seemed to most people a major blunder, since nothing was done to prevent hoarding by an unscrupulous minority. Minor nuisances such as the "tire inspection racket" and the ill-considered temporary ban on sliced bread seemed to be most irritating of all.

Political bickering in Washington came in for a good share of homespun cussing. Congressional sniping at the President was resented by his supporters, and conservatives were outraged by Roosevelt's alleged ambitions for a fourth term. All factions joined in deploring personal feuds among Washington executives. The Jeffers-Patterson dispute, the argument between Secretary Knox and the Truman Committee over ship losses, the Wallace-Jones fight and the Hull-Welles affair left a bad taste in the mouths of most people to whom I talked.

In March 1943, Dr. Gallup asked the people whether they would like to write a letter to a Government official about some aspect of the war program. Almost half said "yes," and mentioned most prominently these problems, in the following order of importance: rationing, food production, the draft, post-war plans for the international scene and post-war plans for social security at home. Personal, immediate problems came first, as might have been expected.

### *On Taxes and Incomes*

The slowness of Congress in passing some form of pay-as-you-go tax legislation was hard for most citizens to stomach. A Virginia



woman said, "Why don't they get together instead of squabbling all the time? The people are for it. But Congress is holding it up just like it did the \$50 pay for soldiers."

The Gallup poll showed that two-thirds of the people were for changing to a current basis as long ago as November 1942, and by March 1943 the proportion had risen to three-fourths of all employed taxpayers. The 1942 income tax rate was accepted as fair by five out of every six employed taxpayers, but they wanted it deducted from their paychecks. The eventual change to this new policy was a tribute to the effectiveness of the public opinion poll as a means of democratic pressure on Congress. But Congress did not go as far as it could in closing the inflationary gap between income and consumer production; for most people were ready to take an additional deduction of 15 percent from their paychecks for war bonds.

Three out of four people definitely favor a limit on the amount of profit a business can make during wartime, the National Opinion Research Center found. And almost as many favor some limit on wages. More than half thought that the incomes of such people as industrialists and movie stars should be limited to \$25,000 after their taxes had been deducted. When Congress overruled the President's executive order limiting incomes to this figure, there was bitter criticism in labor circles. According to one union leader, "That's class legislation of the rankest sort. They put a ceiling on our wages, and at the same time take it off of the big shots' salaries. Why?"

A Seattle shipyard worker put it more forcefully: "I don't mind paying my taxes. What I do mind is seeing them rich so-and-sos get away with murder. I saw in the paper where they knocked down that \$25,000 limit. That's the way it is. A guy like me tries something and where does it get him? In jail, most likely. But them rich guys get away with it every time."

### *On Labor and Business*

Two-thirds of the people are critical of the Administration's labor policy, to which they attribute jurisdictional disputes and wild-cat stoppages in war industry. Four-fifths of the general public and

of union members alike think that unions should be required to register a financial statement with the Government each year. A general ban on strikes in war plants was favored by four-fifths of the general public and two-thirds of the war workers themselves, according to a Gallup poll in May. Three-fourths of the general public and two-thirds of the union members registered their approval of making it a crime to advocate a strike in a government-operated war plant. After the first coal strike, over a third of the people said they were less in favor of labor unions than they were a year earlier. Few of them had much use for John L. Lewis—only nine percent were favorable, while eighty-seven percent were disapproving.

Businessmen and workers alike think that business men would be better off under a Republican regime than under a Democratic one. And a plurality of business men and workers alike feels that the workers will be better off if the Democrats win the 1944 election than if the Republicans win.

Small business men feel discriminated against under the present system of letting war contracts. "The little fellow hasn't got a chance today," one Bridgeport contractor complained to me. "He depends on quality of work, and he can't outbid the big companies on war jobs. If he does get a contract, he hasn't got the pull that's needed to get priorities on the material he's got to have. I found it cheaper to go out of business."

A Government survey early in 1943 showed that only one small businessman out of every eight was using his equipment at capacity. Nearly a third claimed they could more than double their production without new machinery or equipment—if they could get the labor and materials they needed. They felt that the Government favored big business, that Government red tape had stopped them, and that they weren't given sufficient time to prepare bids for war jobs. "Contracts ought to be let by negotiation, to give the little plants a look-in," one machine shop operator told me.

The polls show that an alarming amount of latent anti-Semitism exists in this country. Early in 1943 the question was asked, "Do you think that Jewish people in the United States have too much influence in the business world, not enough influence, or about the amount of influence that they should have?" Half of the people said

too much, a third said about the right amount, and only 2 percent said not enough. Another poll showed that three people out of five believed "the Jews have too much power in the United States." The danger in this situation is pointed up by another poll result: a third of the people think that "there is likely to be a widespread campaign in this country against the Jews."

### *On Our War Information Policy*

At the end of 1942, only 69 percent of the people felt that the Government was giving them as much information as it should about the war. A few months later, a *Fortune* poll showed that 43 percent thought the government had done a good job in giving out news about the war, 36 percent rated our news policy as fair, and 11 percent thought it was a poor job. There is a strong feeling that our military bigwigs hold up unfavorable news much longer than is justified as a precaution against aiding the enemy. Resentment was especially rife over the suppression of shipping losses in the winter of 1942-1943. "My God," one indignant Indiana shopkeeper exclaimed, "What do they think we are? Babies? Let us know the worst. We'll fight that much harder. Their excuse is that they don't want to help the enemy. Well, the way I figure is the enemy knows about how many ships he's sunk. And he adds a few for good measure when he brags about them. Looks like we could at least be honest with ourselves." I heard widespread discussion, all of it adverse, when the story of Japanese losses in a naval battle in the South Pacific was released a day earlier than estimates of our own losses.

The most violent criticism of our information policy, however, came when the complete story of the 1942 raid on Tokyo was released more than a year after the fact. Silence for a few weeks or even months was admittedly sound strategy if it helped American airmen to escape from the Japanese-occupied areas of China. But the censorship continued long after it had any utility, in the opinion of most people who follow the war news closely.

On the whole the picture is encouraging. The American people are ready for whatever sacrifices are necessary to win this war. They are critical of anything that stands in the way. They may not be



well informed on every issue, or always consistent in all their opinions. But they are basically in agreement on all major democratic aims of the war and for the peace to come. This is in a very real sense a people's war, and our citizens are determined that it shall be followed by a people's peace, both at home and abroad.

## 7: REGIONAL VARIATIONS ON A WAR THEME

FIGHTING SPIRIT is by no means equally distributed throughout the country, as I have already indicated. Differences in tradition and in geographical nearness to the battlefields make this inevitable. Clear-cut regional gradations of opinion toward the war existed before Pearl Harbor and to some extent they have persisted.

A good statistical index to attitudes regarding intervention and isolation before the war came to America was this question: "Which of the following do you think it is more important for the United States to try to do: stay out of war, or help Britain even at the risk of getting into the war?" A national poll made late in 1941 yielded the following results in seven major regions of the country:

*Percentage for helping England even at  
risk of war*

South	70
West:	
Rocky Mountain	68
Pacific Coast	62
Northeast:	
New England	60
Middle Atlantic	59
Middle West:	
West Central	57
East Central	53

The relative position of these regions remained the same even when the question was focused on the Far East rather than on

Europe. In response to the query "If the Japanese sink American ships carrying gasoline to Russia, should we go to war with Japan?" the various regions fell into exactly the same pattern.

On the basis of impressions gained in traveling through the country, I would have ranked the regions in much the same order in 1943 with respect to war morale or "fighting spirit." The differences are not large—in fact they have diminished, according to the polls—but they are still evident.

The reasons for the divergencies are not so clear. In general, farmers and people of low income and low educational level are most isolationist. Yet the South, which has the highest percentage of farmers and the lowest average income and educational standards of any region, is actually the least isolationist. Only by breaking the figures down for each region can the reasons be accurately discerned.

First the Northeast: *New England* has usually been a bit more isolationist than the average for the nation. This is explained statistically by the high proportion of Catholics, especially those of Irish stock, the large number of people in low income brackets and the fact that only 45 percent of the people in the region have parents both of whom were born in the United States.

This tendency toward isolationism is mitigated by the fact that New Englanders are above average in educational level and in the amount of information they have about the outside world. A high proportion of them are also of English or Scottish ancestry, which helps to offset the large number of Irish.

*The Middle Atlantic States* (New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Maryland and Delaware) are similar in make-up to New England. They have many Italians and Central Europeans in addition to Irish Catholics, which fact also throws them in the direction of isolationism.

*The South's* strong pro-war sentiment is the result of three things. First, nineteen out of twenty of its people are native-born Americans, and Protestants to boot—and these are our least isolationist groups. Second, the South has historically always leaned heavily on foreign trade (especially on cotton exports) and this has given it a predisposition to defend the freedom of the seas. And finally, the Southerner has a warrior tradition which goes back even farther than the

“War Between the States.” These three factors outweigh the relatively low economic and educational status of Dixie. Pro-war sentiment in the South is also bolstered by an unusually strong belief that the Nazis would attack our shores if they won in Europe.

In the West, the thinly-peopled *Rocky Mountain States* (Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, Nevada, Arizona and New Mexico) rank next to the South in relative freedom from isolationism. But here the main factors seem to be a high level of education and information, as well as a high proportion of English and Scottish stock. The pioneer tradition of individual freedom is very important to these people; they are more acutely aware of the fact that a fascist world would mean the loss of personal, economic and religious freedom. For example, when the National Opinion Research Center asked the question: “If you were living under a dictatorship instead of under our present form of government, in what ways do you think you, personally, would be most affected?” Loss of personal freedom was mentioned by the following proportion of people in each area:

Rocky Mountain	74%
Pacific Coast	70%
South	62%
East Central	59%
Middle Atlantic	58%
New England	56%
West Central	54%

People on *the Pacific Coast* have the highest average level of education in the country. They are also better informed, and above average in economic status; and they have a more-than-average proportion of people with English and Scottish ancestors. These traits tend to swing them away from isolationism. Westerners are also acutely conscious of Japan’s aggressive intentions in the Pacific.

The traditional isolationism of *the West Central States* (the Dakotas, Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin) is in part the product of their large numbers of Germans and of strongly pacifistic Scandinavians. In addition these are farming States, and farmers are inclined toward isolationism. The Plains States were the first outside of New England to break with the New



Deal and therefore were often critical of the Administration's foreign policy. Sheer distance from the war fronts also has its effect.

*The East Central States* (Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and Michigan) are most isolationist of all—though even here, isolationists have usually been a minority. Farmers here are more isolationist than farmers anywhere else. Distance from the fighting fronts and resurgent Republicanism contribute to the picture. But the relative lack of enthusiasm for military intervention before the war, and for all-out war today, can be explained only in psychological terms. The people of the East Central States have always been opposed to "mixing in" European affairs, just as the people of the South have traditionally been more warlike. Such attitudes do not easily disappear.

### *The Line-Up On the War and Peace*

On questions related to the actual prosecution of the war, once we were in it, the regions have often emerged in somewhat different order. Four months after the war broke out, a Gallup poll showed that a larger number of people in the Pacific Coast and the Middle Atlantic States than in the rest of the country felt that we ought to defend our own shores first of all, rather than send the bulk of our fighting men overseas. The air raid scares to which these regions had been subjected undoubtedly had something to do with this.

The exact wording of the question was, "Which of these two things do you think the United States should do: send most of our Army abroad to fight the enemy wherever they are, or keep most of our army at home to protect the United States?" The first alternative—send most of the Army abroad—was chosen by these proportions of all persons questioned:

South	62%
New England	59%
East Central	56%
West Central	56%
Rocky Mountain	56%
Pacific Coast	53%
Middle Atlantic	51%

On the political aspects of the war the lineup is still different. The South is willing and anxious to fight hard, but Southerners are less

trustful of our Russian allies than the people of any other region. The consensus seems to be something like this: "Those Russians are bang-up fighters. But when the fightin's over it may not be so easy to get along with them."

On the question, "Do you think Russia can be trusted to cooperate with us when the war is over?" the South ranked below even the East Central States in percentage of positive responses in February 1943:

West Central	48%
Northeast	45%
West	45%
East Central	41%
South	39%

But Southerners were also less informed and more open-minded than the people of any other region, as measured by the number who were undecided on this issue.

New England and the Pacific Coast led the nation in willingness to take a more active part in the post-war world in a Gallup poll taken in June 1943. The South fell in the middle of the scale, and the East Central States brought up the rear as usual. The following proportions in each region voted for "taking an active part":

New England	81%
Pacific Coast	80%
Rocky Mountain	79%
West Central	78%
South	76%
Middle Atlantic	76%
East Central	71%

The differences were surprisingly small, however, and no region can be labeled isolationist on the basis of responses to this question.

The South is less willing than other regions to make definite, positive plans for the post-war world. In January 1943 the National Opinion Research Center asked, "If a union of nations is formed after the war, do you think it would be a good idea or a bad idea for the United States to join it?" These percentages of people said "It's a good idea":

West	78%
Midwest	73%
Northeast	72%
South	60%

Westerners also led in willingness to "prepare *now* for the kind of peace we want after the war," with Southerners bringing up the rear. This many said "Prepare now":

West	70%
Midwest	60%
Northeast	60%
South	53%

Sentiment for post-war economic isolationism is strongest in the South. The NORC asked, "After the war, should the United States try to develop its own industries, like rubber and sugar, to such an extent that we don't have to buy *any* products from foreign countries, or do you think that we should keep on buying from other countries?" In the South 60 percent favored the first course—developing our own industries—compared to only 45 percent in the Northeast, 39 percent in the Midwest and 36 percent in the West. The South was lowest in willingness to give food to starving people in Axis countries after the war, although not averse to selling it to them.

In order to try out a post-war union of nations, however, the South is more willing than any other region to continue rationing for five years after the war, to allow part of the American Army to remain abroad for several years, to pay higher taxes than any other country to support such a post-war union of nations, to write our Lend-Lease shipments off the book, and to disarm if all other nations will do the same. It is least willing to see our protective tariff system be drastically modified, or to forget about collecting reparations from Axis nations. Southerners are usually found at one extreme or the other on any opinion scale.

The Middle West was still behind the East and West Coasts in willingness to take a positive stand on post-war foreign policies in April 1943. A Gallup poll on the question, "Should the countries fighting the Axis set up an international police force after the war



is over to try to keep peace throughout the world?" brought these percentages of favorable votes in the more populous States:

California	79%
New York	77%
Pennsylvania	74%
Ohio	69%
Illinois	68%

Few of these regional differences were very great. On the surface, and especially since war broke out, opinions are pretty uniform over the country, as measured by the polls. The figures do not always take one thing into account, however: intensity of opinion. And this is important. The wandering reporter gets the definite impression that the people of the Northeast and South and West are much more *strongly* in favor of an all-out war than the people of the Midwest, and particularly those of the East Central States. This impression is based on what people in those regions are doing, rather than on what they are saying in response to questionnaires. First-hand observation of Americans at war in all regions may be even more revealing than cold statistics in getting the feel of our war effort on the home front.

*Part III*

THE CHINKS IN OUR ARMOR





## 8: RACIAL BUGABOOS

IN MY TRAVELS I found much more right than wrong in our war effort. But there are some mighty serious flaws, too. A person doesn't need to be an alarmist to get worked up about them; for anything that interferes with wartime efficiency can prolong the war, thereby sending thousands upon thousands of American boys to needless death.

We need to get hopping mad over everything that disrupts our efforts on the home front. We need to get so angry that we won't rest until we close up some of the chinks that are so woefully apparent in our armor.

I believe that the weakest point on our domestic battle-front is the racial issue. In the South, the Negro question is the number one point of friction. In the North, East and West also discrimination against Negroes interferes with the full and effective use of our manpower and causes low morale in the colored section of our population. In the West, our treatment of the Mexicans and Orientals causes friction and lays us open to criticism from our Allies. Everywhere race prejudice can be used when all else fails to stir up trouble on the home front. By the summer of 1943 it had become apparent that dissident groups were playing on latent prejudices to interfere with our war effort. Here was a method of sabotage that produced results with a minimum of danger to the provocateurs. It was infinitely safer and more effective than blowing up an occasional munitions plant. And Americans were falling for it by the millions.

Nor is that all. Our treatment of minority races puts us on trial before the whole world. Great Britain has its India, and we have our Negro problem. Both are used by Axis propagandists to prove that we are not sincere when we say we are fighting for the Four Freedoms. Tokyo radio says, for example, that "Americans prove by their actions that they have completely forgotten that Negroes

are just as much a part of humanity as they are themselves." The wily Japanese tell India, "Democracy as preached by the Anglo-Americans may be an ideal and noble system of life, but democracy as practised by Americans is stained with the bloody guilt of racial persecution and exploitation." The day after a lynching at Sikeston, Missouri, Asiatics were told about it as an example of how Americans feel about colored people. The anti-Negro riot in Detroit was similarly exploited. This is powerful propaganda for alienating millions of Orientals whom we need as our Allies.

The racial question is important, then, as a symbol of our attitudes toward democracy. In a speech at the North Carolina College for Negroes, Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles spoke out against racial discrimination in the post-war world. But until our own house is put in order, such words will carry little weight. If we want to produce and fight efficiently and to command the respect and affection of our Allies in Asia and Latin America, we must show our good will by fair treatment of our racial minorities. And this means not only Negroes, but Mexicans, Chinese and loyal Japanese-American—and Jews, although it is a mistake to classify them as a race separate from our own.

I can do no better in concluding my little sermon than to quote from Pearl Buck's address to the colored graduating class of Howard University in 1942:

"We will not win this war unless we win it as a nation where human beings are equal and human rights are respected. The peace will be no peace unless it is based upon the principles of human equality.

"In profound belief in democracy, thus, in deepest love of our country, let us now realize that when we work for democracy in our own nation we are in the most important sense working for victory in war and in peace.

"Therefore today I believe that discrimination in our country must go, because until it does, we will not have won the war. We cannot fight for freedom unless we fight for freedom for all. We are not better than fascists if we fight for the freedom of one group and not another, for the benefit of one race and not another, for the aggrandizement of a part and not the betterment of the whole. And we must be better than fascists. We cannot allow

in our nation the evil root of something which Hitler has developed into a system of slavery the like of which the world has never seen, where the individual is nothing but a piece of property seized and used and tossed aside by a robber government. . . .”

### *The Battle of Detroit*

Race friction seriously interfered with war production in the early summer of 1943, when we experienced a whole series of riots, each of them a major victory for the Axis. The Battle of Detroit was the high point in this hysteria. It was the bloodiest example of race war since the Chicago riots of 1919, in which thirty-eight people were killed.

The story of the riot itself was simple. A fist fight touched it off on June 20—a fight between a white man and a Negro on the bridge to Belle Isle, Detroit’s amusement park. A brawl started, which quickly spilled over into the city. Rumors spread like wild-fire; the whites in Detroit heard that a Negro had killed a white girl on the island, and the Negroes heard that a colored mother and child had been killed. Mobs of violently resentful Negroes formed first, and shortly afterward white mobs with pipes and beer bottles for weapons invaded “Paradise Valley,” a Negro quarter. They ambushed Negroes driving home from war plants, beat and stripped them and burned their cars. Negro soldiers were attacked, Negro homes were burned. The Negroes retaliated in some cases, despite the efforts of their leaders to keep them under cover. But for the most part they were the victims, not only of the mob but of the Detroit police. The police killed nineteen persons—all of them Negroes.

There were a few incidents, too, that are pleasanter to record. For example, in front of City Hall a gang of white youths began to close in on a Negro. Three sailors, none of them more than twenty, stepped in and broke it up.

“He’s not doing you any harm,” one of the sailors said. “Let him alone.”

“What’s it to you?” snapped one of the mobsters.

“Plenty!” barked the sailor. “There was a colored guy in our



outfit and he saved a couple of lives. Besides, you guys are stirring up something that we're trying to stop!"

After martial law had restored peace to Detroit, and the injured had been treated, the score stood:

34 dead—25 of them Negroes.

800 injured—most of them Negroes.

Over 1800 persons arrested—more than 1200 of them Negroes.

1,250,000 man-hours of work lost in Detroit's war industries.

Commented Berlin radio smugly, "Washington observes with great anxiety the consequences of riots in war production. The first disagreeable consequences have been already registered."

The trouble in Detroit had been brewing for some time. Local and Federal officials had been warned of it by investigators from the Office of War Information a year earlier, but no preventive action had been taken. All the elements of racial warfare were present: the white working population of Detroit had been recruited largely from the hill regions of the South, as were most members of the police force. The largest group of immigrants in Detroit, the Poles of Hamtramck and Highland Park, have strong anti-Negro prejudices. And a large group of Negroes were anxious to extend their opportunities for employment in war industry. This combination of prejudiced Southern whites and aggressive Northern Negroes made an outbreak almost inevitable.

About two weeks before the riot, a strike at the Packard Motor Car plant in Detroit provided an advance notice of what was to come. The walkout, which lasted for several days, was a protest against the upgrading of three Negro workers. It took place in spite of union, company, Air Corps and Department of Labor pleas that the men observe the President's executive order against racial discrimination in war industries. Its result: 95 percent of the plant's production of Rolls Royce engines for bombers was halted.

Ironically enough, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was holding a Negro "Win-the-War" conference in Detroit at the same time. R. J. Thomas, president of the CIO United Auto Workers, told one of its sessions that the walkout was "actively promoted, organized, and carried out by agents of the Ku Klux Klan or its successor body in Detroit." He said the union had in its possession a formal order signed by the "ex-

celled cyclops," ordering certain Packard workers to attend a Klan meeting in April. "Enemy agents," said the union official, "are using this nightshirt Axis to do their work in the arsenal of democracy." Specific evidence, such as conversations among known Klansmen regarding the part they had played in the agitation, was turned over to the FBI by Thomas.

Here are some examples of the rumors and clichés circulated in the Packard plant, as collected by a reporter for PM:

"'The Union is throwing out white workers and giving their jobs to blacks. We got to teach them our trades, so they can grab our places.' (The upgraded Negroes were not displacing whites. Detroit has an acute labor shortage, with jobs for all.)

"'We don't mind letting Negroes get better jobs and more pay. But we don't want to work with them. Let them work on separate assembly lines.' (If carried through, this Jim Crow arrangement would require duplicate machines, one set for whites, the other for Negroes.)

"'Whites and Negroes don't mix. It's against human nature.' (The foundry division at Packard, manned by hundreds of whites and Negroes working side by side in complete harmony, operated without interruption throughout the strike.)

"'Negroes may be all right now. But when the war is over, they'll undercut our wage rates and take away our jobs.' (Another slick argument, designed to sow distrust and fear in workers not now bitten by the prejudice bug.)

"'Nearly all Negroes have syphilis. Diseased blood runs out of their fingers onto machines where they work, and you catch syphilis if you handle the same machines.' (This 'bleeding-finger' fiction is so widespread, not only at Packard but at other plants, that it appears to be inspired by industrial fifth columnists. As for syphilis, it is infectious only in the 'active stage' and then only through actual sexual intercourse, with very rare exceptions. Again, syphilis is less common among Northern Negroes than among whites in many Southern areas. Would the Detroit Kluxers refuse to work with Southern whites from these areas?)"

There are known to be at least 18,000 Klansmen or former Klansmen in Detroit's war factories. The fact that production could be disrupted simply by using the racial issue, in a plant like Packard which has one of the strongest unions and most advanced labor

policies in the country, shows what dynamite the Klansmen are employing.

Investigators could find no evidence that the Detroit riot itself was started by subversive elements, although one observer testified that it bore signs of organized leadership as it developed. "The whites," he said, "had a car loaded with bricks and iron bars on Woodward Avenue, and were going to it for supplies. Their leaders were directing them as they pulled Negroes from passing cars and beat them. The police did nothing to interfere."

It seems probable, at least, that certain organized fascistic groups took advantage of the riot once it had started. Detroit has always been a hotbed of such groups. Besides the KKK there was the Black Legion, which was exposed in 1936 but remnants of which still exist in other forms. Father Charles Coughlin, whose headquarters are in Royal Oak, near Detroit, has helped to stir up local hatreds. Gerald L. K. Smith, who got his training from Huey Long, has built up a considerable following among anti-Negro, anti-Jewish and anti-labor elements of the population. (Smith turned up in Washington, after the riot, to tell the Dies Committee that the Rev. Claude Williams, who is known for his constructive work in race relations, had caused the riot.)

The Nazi Bund long flourished in Detroit, where Fritz Kuhn and many other prominent Bundists found jobs in the Ford plant. When it was suppressed it continued to work through other organizations. It had friendly relations with the Ku Klux Klan; in August 1940, the two organizations staged a joint meeting at Camp Nordland, in New Jersey. The National Workers' League, which fomented an anti-Negro riot at the Sojourner Truth housing project early in 1942, had a distinct Nazi orientation. Three of its leaders were indicted for inciting the riot, but at this writing had not been brought to trial.

It would be strange indeed if some of these native fifth column groups had not helped at least to spread the riot. If they did not, they indeed missed a wonderful opportunity.



## *Negro Reactions in Detroit*

On the Negro side, there has been great resentment against discrimination in war industry. Negroes made up 10 percent of America's population, but only 7 percent of employment in war industries, in April 1943. The Negroes, in Detroit and elsewhere, are better off today than ever before. But they still chafe under conditions of racial discrimination that keep them from getting war jobs.

Some Detroit war plants, such as Ford's River Rouge factory and the Briggs Body plant, have proved that colored and white workers can work alongside each other without friction. Nevertheless, the prevalence of discrimination and segregation still prevents the Negro worker from contributing his fullest energies to the war effort. Some employers still refuse to hire Negro workers, and others refuse to use them except on the traditional types of custodial jobs. White workers are brought in and put on machines, while after years of demonstrated loyalty the Negroes are expected to continue "sweeping" cheerfully. To them it is an empty answer to say that "the time isn't ripe" for change, when day in and day out they and their sons are called into the armed forces to protect our American ideals of democracy. They know that their jobs will be the first to be eliminated when the emergency is over. They know further that if industry will not make full use of them now when the future of the nation is at stake, it will not make use of them later when peace returns.

Federal and local governmental agencies deny Negro workers the right to live in war housing projects near their jobs, as at Willow Run; and lunch rooms near places of employment refuse to serve Negroes. I found a paternalistic attitude toward Negro labor in one place, opposition in another, and indifference or ridicule in others. One employer stated, "this plant has had a 100 percent increase in the employment of Negro labor; we had one Negro worker last year—we have two now." A few—but very few—employers use Negro men and women at their highest skills.

The more educated Detroit Negroes have been working with liberal whites to solve these problems. Others have sometimes shown their resentment of white discrimination in more direct ways—by independence on the job or by rudeness on streetcars. But there

is no reason to believe, as the Dies Committee has charged, that fifth-column elements among the Negroes were responsible for the riot. It was a Negro newspaper, the Michigan *Chronicle*, which exposed a Japanese agitator named Takahashi who was working among the Negroes a few years ago. Since then Axis-inspired propaganda has made little headway among the Negroes. In any case, the Negroes stand only to lose by racial disturbances, and most of them know it.

Nor, obviously, is there any basis in fact in Dies' charges that "misunderstandings between the various races" have been "aided and abetted in this program of spreading racial hatred for political purposes or because of misguided social ideas." It was in the segregated Negro areas of Detroit, not the mixed areas where Negroes and whites are neighbors, that rioting got out of hand. It is precisely because inter-racial cooperation to combat prejudices and discrimination has not gone far enough that such outbreaks can occur. Yet despite this obvious fact, a month after the riot a special prosecutor blamed the Negro press and Northern Negro organizations for the whole affair. And very little—aside from the arrest of four whites and a Negro on murder charges—has been done to prevent a repetition of the riots, as this is written.

A sane approach was suggested to President Roosevelt by fourteen national organizations, including the CIO, the National Conference of Christians and Jews, and several Negro bodies. They urged the President to sponsor new legislation and see to it that the Department of Justice vigorously enforces existing legislation, so that seditious activity may be stamped out, violence checked, and civil liberties guaranteed. The committee also asked that the Federal Government inaugurate a campaign of public education, looking toward better relationships between the races.

### *Mobile: Great Day for Hitler*

In the South, race riots are even easier to stir up, and more frequent although less bloody than the Detroit affair. They have been occurring mainly in shipyard towns where they were very effective in damaging our war production. These are also the boom towns, where overcrowding is most rife and friction therefore most intense.

No better locale could be found by subversive rumor-mongers intent on sabotaging our war effort.

The first major disturbance was in the Alabama shipyard at Mobile on May 25. The day before, a group of Negro painters who had been working for 63 and 75 cents an hour applied for an increase to \$1.25, the rate paid to white painters. Several white painters objected strenuously. Some of them said that if the raise requested by the Negroes were granted they would "kill the Negroes and throw them in the river."

That night, eighteen Negroes were put to work as welders. They worked through the shift without incident. The next morning at nine o'clock, however, a group of white welders accosted several Negroes and told them to get off the ship where they were working. The Negroes paid no attention until the whites began to throw scraps of metal at them, whereupon they retreated from the ways.

By now, news of the fighting had spread to other parts of the yard. One white man started to harangue his fellow workers, telling them to "get every one of them niggers off this island." Another man shouted, "No nigger is goin' to join iron in these yards." The Negroes passed the word along to their fellows that they'd better "beat it." As they tried to leave the ways through the narrow entrances on the land side, groups of whites gathered at these bottlenecks, armed with bricks, clubs, bars, and, as one Negro put it, "everything killable." The frightened Negroes then had to run the gauntlet to get to the ferry that would take them back to Mobile. Estimates of the number of whites involved ranged from 500 to 5000.

There was no evidence that the Negroes fought back. Two or three whites were hurt in the rioting, but they had been attacked by other whites for having tried to protect the Negroes. At least eleven colored workers were treated at the city hospital, and an unknown number by private physicians. Company guards in the yards apparently made no serious attempt to stop the violence.

The net result: for the ensuing week the production of tankers, vital for war shipping, was cut by half. Some 10,000 of the yard's 26,000 employees quit work. Six thousand of these were Negroes, of whom 4000 applied to the War Manpower Commission for transfers to other jobs. But releases were refused them; the Government could



not be intimidated by mob violence. Of the several thousand whites who stayed away from work, some did so as a protest against the upgrading of Negroes to skilled jobs, others because they "wanted no trouble."

The company, Government officials and the CIO shipyard union all combined their efforts to get the workers back on the job, but it was a slow process. The dislocation caused by the riot and work stoppage lasted for some time. As Charles Hanson, representative of the union, remarked, "It was a great day for Hitler and the Mikado."

Responsibility for the disturbance is not easy to allocate. In part, it can be attributed to the raw prejudices of the poor whites who have swarmed into Mobile to take shipyard jobs. They failed to see that Negro as well as white labor of all types is needed in the shipyards if the war is to be won. Anti-Negro feeling has been strengthened by Alabama politicians who have been saying that "white workers will never work with Negroes." Former Governor Dixon has charged that President Roosevelt's order abolishing racial discrimination on war jobs and his Fair Employment Practise Committee were "dynamiting" the social structure of the South; and Governor Chauncey Sparks is agitating for a "white supremacy" plank in the 1944 Democratic platform, which would be a great asset to General Tojo's propagandists.

In this situation only a touch was required to set off the percussion cap of mob violence. There is some evidence that the touch was supplied when someone started an unfounded rumor that a Negro welder had killed a white woman the night before. But this was not the essential factor; the riot would probably have occurred anyway.

In part, too, the company would seem to be responsible for the chaotic situation. Although it had signed a contract with the union, the management had refused to meet with the grievance committee up to the time of the riot. There had been no effective labor-management program, and waste and inefficiency were so commonplace that the workers had become cynical and demoralized. Less than half of the employees were buying war bonds through the company. They felt little responsibility for keeping things humming.

Two of the mob leaders were arrested, but one was freed and the other merely placed under a \$2000 peace bond for a year. The *Mobile*

*Register* commented, "These defendants either were guilty of something or they were not guilty. If they were guilty of violating the law, they should have been given jail sentences. If they had violated no law, they should not have been haled into court. Nor, in our opinion, should Judge Tisdale J. Touart have resorted to a peace bond as a toss-up between conviction and acquittal, as he did in the case of one defendant." Immediately the publisher of the paper, Ralph B. Chandler, was charged with contempt of court, but he refused to back down. He was fined \$10 and sentenced to six hours in jail, but immediately appealed the case and won a major victory for the freedom of the press when the case was dismissed.

Both the company and the union have declared their determination to see that qualified Negroes continue to be placed in skilled jobs. The present plan, which was set forth three weeks before the riot by Government officials but apparently was ignored by the company, calls for the separation of Negroes from whites in the yard. Colored welders, shipfitters and other skilled workers would be used on the unfinished hulls in certain ways, but in effect excluded from some of the highest-paid skills such as electrical work and pipe-fitting. This step would seem to be a backward one. But many Negroes welcomed segregation after the events of May 25, and all parties agreed that this was the most practical method of getting ships built.

### *Beaumont: More Murders for the Enemy*

In Beaumont, Texas, a few weeks later, the results were even worse. Trouble had been building up there for weeks. Late in May rumors began to circulate among both whites and Negroes that race riots were coming. The whites were told that the date set for the "revolution" was June 19, a Negro holiday commemorating the emancipation proclamation. While these rumors were spreading, a young Negro attacked an eighteen-year-old white girl. Police shot him, and he died in the hospital before a hastily-formed lynch mob could get him. Then, on June 15, a young woman reported that she had been attacked in her home by a Negro. A medical examination indicated that her report was not true. But the story had gone around, and the damage was done.

The whole town went wild; the Pennsylvania Shipyards were virtually deserted when the white workers trooped out. All night long packs of thrill-seeking white boys and men surged through the Negro quarter, destroying everything they could lay their hands on. Two blocks of Negro houses—at least a score in all—were burned; the entire Negro section was “literally stomped into the ground,” according to Col. Sidney Mason of the militia. One white carpenter and one colored worker were killed and more than fifty Negro workers were treated for injuries at the hospitals. Defense guards escorted Negroes working in the shipyards to their homes. Restaurants and laundries were closed when Negroes were afraid to go outdoors, and even the mail service was disrupted for lack of Negro postmen. The city was placed under martial law. Only a firm and courageous stand by the Sheriff, the Chief of Police, and their men, augmented by the Texas Rangers and the militia, prevented further violence.

The editor of the *Beaumont Enterprise* reported that the “better class” of people deplored the riots, and legal authorities said that saboteurs may have been working in the shipyards to inspire the riot. The existence of the fascistic Christian-American Association in this part of Texas, and the rumor epidemic preceding the riot, seem to bear this out. In any case, the shipyards were closed down for several days in Beaumont and also as far away as Orange, twenty-five miles to the east. And at least a thousand Negro workers, who were badly needed in this labor-shortage area, left Beaumont for parts unknown.

On the same day, a mob broke into the jail at Marianna, Florida, seized a Negro who had been convicted of murder, and beat him to death.

### *Southern Whispering Campaign*

Throughout the South the racial question is the number one topic of conversation—and people speak of it in hushed tones. From Virginia to East Texas, in my trip across the South, I heard evidence that wild anti-Negro rumors were rife. There were rumors of Negro plots for uprisings, either when the white soldiers are off to war or after the colored soldiers have returned; of Negro soldiers



trying to break down the barrier separating them from white women; of white men saving their ammunition for the day when it will be "open season on niggers"; and occasionally, of actual outbreaks.

The commonest type of rumor, I found, was that directed against Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt. Because of her outspoken liberal attitude on the race question she is cordially hated by a majority of middle and upper class people in the South. All sorts of stories are told—and believed—about her fraternizing with Negroes, addressing Negro meetings, and inciting those attending to demand higher wages or equal rights with whites.

Southern women, especially of the servant-employing class, were particularly bitter against Mrs. Roosevelt and prone to accept anything that reflected discredit upon her. In the deep South the great majority of them believe the rumors about the organization of "Eleanor Clubs" by colored servants, aimed at forcing the whites to pay high wages or do their own housework. When I protested that the FBI had investigated such reports and found no basis for them whatsoever, I was usually told, "Niggers won't talk to FBI men. But a friend of mine has a maid who said she knew of such a club, and some of her friends belong to it."

Many Southern newspapers have exposed these rumors, and others like them. Typical is an editorial entitled "Let's Stop Being Suckers," from the Norfolk *Virginian Pilot*. "It is time to haul these things out of the whispering gallery, identify them for the fakes that they are and stop peddling them. It is the belief of City Manager Borland that these rumors are planted and propagated by enemies of our domestic peace. . . .

"This community, we believe, is in not the slightest danger of racial violence, during blackouts or between them, if the rumor-mongers, chiefly white, will stop being suckers for enemy-serving propaganda, and behave accordingly. It is falling for this propaganda, repeating it and magnifying it that moves people to become jittery, to lay in firearms, to organize themselves into bands of vigilantes and to go about with chips on their shoulders. This is the fear psychosis that lays the ground for acts of violence. Let's get rid of it and begin to apply to all rumors of racial difficulty the

skepticism that the times warrant, instead of the recent examples of simple, nitwitted gullibility.”

In a similar editorial called “No Ostrich Philosophy,” the *News and Observer* of Raleigh, North Carolina stated: “The South has come a long way towards good sense and good will in race relations. But, even where race relations are best in the South, sensible men know how the growth of rumor may threaten us all with the rise of the furies. Feed antagonism on false report and no man can count the dangers which may grow for white men, black men, the South, the whole nation which needs now more than before to be unified and strong in unity. . . . Loose tongues are not going to win this war. The careless repeating of unchecked stories will not serve strength and unity in the South or anywhere else. But the South can turn false fears into its own peculiar furies. It can feed its own dangers on its own lies. Hitler could ask no more. And home security is threatened so much by nothing else.”

In spite of these level heads actual hysteria has developed in many a Southern city, based on vague whisperings which inspire irrational fears of the unknown. In Memphis, late in 1942, rumors of a Negro revolt were so widespread that on the date when trouble was expected shopkeepers closed their doors early, and Negro and white people generally locked themselves in their houses. A concerted campaign by press and radio calmed the populace and, when nothing happened, the people sheepishly emerged. But soon afterward, the same thing happened all over again.

How scare stories grow is exemplified by reports I heard in Baton Rouge of an attempted revolt by Negro soldiers at an aviation training station near the town. Some Negro privates had got into trouble in one of the more disreputable sections of the town and white police picked them up. Negro officers or military policemen offered to take over the prisoners, but they too were arrested. Word of this got back to the camp. Other Negro soldiers, incensed at the high-handed action, were about to leave the post, but were detained to prevent possible shootings.

From there the story grew by leaps and bounds. One version had it that the Negroes at the post were about to take a jeep and two machine guns to the rescue of their colored brethren. A later edition claimed that they were making off with six jeeps and twelve ma-

chine guns to take over the town. In any case, feeling was high on both sides, and a violent outbreak might easily have occurred.

In May 1943 rumors of Negro violence spread through a large part of Washington, D. C. These started with a campaign by Negroes in the community against the failure of the Capitol Transit Company to hire Negro bus and street car operators. On the night of May 7 a parade and outdoor demonstration were scheduled. Stories began to spread like wildfire through the white community, telling of race disorders and impending clashes. Here are some of the fantastic rumors, all groundless: All the banks in the city were to be robbed by Negroes. The parade preceding the mass meeting was to become a full-fledged invasion of the Capital. A gang of 800 "roughnecks" had been brought from New York to invade downtown theaters and hotels. Buses had been overturned. Leaves of Negro soldiers had been canceled because there was going to be rioting in Washington.

One woman of my acquaintance was told by a hairdresser in a beauty shop that no ice picks could be bought in Washington because the Negroes had bought them all up and were saving them for the revolution.

District of Columbia authorities took the sensible course: sanctioned the demonstration, and attended it themselves to guard against possible attacks on the demonstrators. The meeting went off quietly, and Washington Superintendent of Police Edward J. Kelly observed, "I should like to praise the conduct of the Negro people throughout this week. They were exemplary, and conducted all their picketing and other demonstrations in a quiet manner."

Concerned over the spectacular wave of rumors, the Washington Federation of Churches investigated and found that a majority of Washingtonians had been "convinced that racial strife was inevitable," and that the rumors had been "planted" with the idea of sowing dissension between races. The Committee on Jobs for Negroes, which sponsored the rally, said in a letter asking for an official investigation, "The speed and efficiency with which such tales were spread . . . suggests that the rumor campaign was deliberate and well-organized." Evidence supporting this conclusion included a number of anonymous warnings received via telephone by the



Stage Door Canteen and other business and public institutions, telling them to close their doors on the night of the rally.

Instrumental in spreading the rumors, once they had been started, were the streetcar employees (who were bitterly opposed to hiring Negroes), theater ushers and the guards of public buildings. But the wealth of rumors, adapted to the psychological needs of every age and occupational group, indicated that many were deliberately invented to fit the situation.

To prevent the outbreak of violence in Washington, leading white and Negro citizens got together after the rumor campaign and formed a Citizens' Committee on Race Relations. Its purpose is to remove the causes of friction and by education to create better understanding between the races. Similar committees have been formed in Boston, Richmond, Los Angeles and other cities. This is one constructive approach to the problem.

### *The Causes are Deep*

Here are the main elements behind the emotional excitement and hysteria so prevalent in the South:

First, the Southern white has had drilled into him from childhood that he belongs to a superior race, and that the Negro must be kept "in his place." But most Southerners, especially those with some education, sense the injustice of this caste arrangement. A few react by taking steps to help the Negro; but this is contrary to the Southern pattern and leads to social disapproval. Most Southerners prefer to indulge an irrational fear that the Negroes will some day take matters into their own hands, and an emotional resistance to anything that would raise the status of the Negro and therefore make him more of a "menace."

The sex element is strong in this fear. One Southern woman told me that there is a repressed feeling of guilt among Southerners for the misdeeds of their forbears. Six million brown men and women in America today bear testimony to the system that permitted and even encouraged white men, but not Negroes, to cross the racial line in sex relations. Today there is less intermixture, but the fear that Negroes will some day retaliate in kind frequently crops out.

Among "poor whites," who usually make up the bulk of Southern

mobs, an additional factor is the fear of losing social and economic status. They have little to give them status except the color of their skins. They feel the need for someone to look down on, so they take it out on the Negro, according to one Southern (white) sociologist. That is why race rioting breaks out when Negroes are promoted to skilled jobs alongside of white. The white workers don't mind working with Negroes if the latter are limited to the status of helpers. But as soon as they are promoted to jobs on an equal level, the friction starts: the white worker is no longer able to assert his superiority by giving orders to the colored man. Then, too, although there are plenty of jobs for members of both races today, the white worker fears that he will have to compete with the Negro for skilled jobs when war production tapers off.

Some Southern demagogues have capitalized on these feelings, adding fuel to the smoldering fires of prejudice. For example, Horace Wilkinson, a Birmingham lawyer and former Klansman, said in a speech to the Kiwanis Club of Bessemer, Alabama, "The white men of the South who oppose dragging the white man down to the level of the Negro must organize. If there is room for a National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, there is need of a League to Maintain White Supremacy. . . . The time to act is now. An organization should be formed, so strong, so powerful, and so efficient that this menace to our national security and our local way of life will disappear rapidly. It can be done. It should be done. Alabama must lead the way."

### *New Irritants*

Against this background, it is easy to understand how wartime changes have caused unrest among both whites and Negroes. First of all, the Negro has achieved a new economic independence, with plentiful jobs and higher wages. He is less obsequious than he used to be and less willing to work for a bare pittance. In Gaffney, I saw a Negro night clerk in the hotel boldly reading a copy of the *Pittsburgh Courier*, a militant Negro newspaper. Ten years ago this would have been almost unthinkable. Throughout the South, the Negro's attitude is changed somewhat with the new self-respect that comes from knowing his services are in demand.

The Southern white, understandably, resents this change. It has upset his way of life. In Carthage, Texas, housewives who have always been able to hire part-time domestic servants to "get breakfast, clean up the house and cook noonday dinner" for \$2 or \$2.50 per week now have to pay at least twice that amount, and even then help is scarce. They are furious at the "independence" of the Negroes. Local cotton growers who were accustomed to paying Negro cotton pickers 50 or 75 cents a hundred pounds have had to raise their rates of pay and still find help is scarce, because many Negroes have gone into the Army or migrated North or West to better-paying jobs. "We're losing our labor supply so fast that it's not funny," the editor of the Panola (Texas) *Watchman* told me. "Four hundred of our 'niggers' have gone off to California alone."

Many Southerners are inclined to blame their wartime Negro labor problem on the New Deal. They argue that the Social Security Act and the \$50 monthly pay for soldiers should never have included Negroes, since unemployment insurance, old age pensions and soldiers' pay look so big to the local colored population that families with these sources of income refuse to work. This is undoubtedly true in some cases; but it is a reflection of the low wages paid to Negroes in these parts.

In one East Texas town several people said ominously that they will deal with the lazy colored population in their own way. Not so long ago in this town a Negro accused of raping a white woman was shot by a white posse, and the incident never reached the press. (It would be difficult to estimate how often this has occurred in the South, but there must be many such cases.) In 1942, a sheriff was elected by the people of this same county mainly on the strength of his threat to "put the niggers to work or run 'em out of the county."

Since the gasoline and rubber shortage, racial resentment has been intensified by the crowding of Negroes and whites together in public buses. This may seem a minor matter, but Southerners have assured me that it is a constant irritant, keeping racial feelings chafed and raw. I observed this at first hand in Baton Rouge and other towns. Under Jim Crow laws, the Negro passengers are herded to the back of the buses, and whites jammed in on top of them. But the Negroes usually live in slum areas around the busi-



ness sections, and so have to get on last going toward town, and off first coming home. When they wish to get on they must crowd to the rear, and upon getting off they are forced to shove their way forward to the single entrance at the front of the crowded bus, to the accompaniment of much mumbling among the whites—and sometimes among the Negroes as well. The solution usually offered for this problem by Southerners is the old one of segregation—separate buses for Negroes, war or no war, rather than any modification of the Jim Crow laws which cause the trouble.

### *Southern Army Camps*

The Southerner is, furthermore, fearful and resentful of the influence of Northerners—both white and Negro—on Southern Negroes. This accounts for part of the resistance to labor organization in the South, especially before the unions adopted a policy of using Southerners for organization work. Today, a new problem has arisen: the Northern Negro soldier, who flouts the Jim Crow laws whenever he has a chance and spreads word of better conditions for Negroes outside the South.

In New Orleans, several violent fights have occurred over the refusal of some Northern Negro soldiers and Northern whites to observe the Jim Crow regulations. In the middle of each streetcar are two “screens”—portable bars, fastened to the back of a seat half way back on each side of the car, to denote the separation point between the races. (Recently these screens have been disappearing with increasing frequency—apparently chucked out of the window by those who resent such segregation.) I was told of one Northern Negro soldier who boldly took a seat in the front of the car, and when the conductor told him to move back of the screen, removed his coat and said, “I’m supposed to start fighting for democracy soon, so I might as well start now.” With the help of several passengers, the Negro was forcibly removed.

There have been several violent outbreaks against Negroes in Southern Army camps—notably at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, Gurdon, Arkansas, and Alexandria, Louisiana. The Alexandria incident was particularly bloody; Negro troops refer to it as “Little Pearl Harbor.” It started when a white military policeman tried to

arrest a Negro soldier. Negro M.P.'s got into the argument. The Negroes were unarmed, the whites armed. When the white soldiers and the local white police were through, twenty-nine Negroes, twenty-one of them soldiers, were injured. Ten Negroes died. The Negro soldiers were from the Northern States. Southern politicians at one time requested the Army to refrain from stationing Northern Negro soldiers in the South, but this was turned down flatly by the military authorities.

The Negro question is the most serious home front problem of the South—and perhaps, because of its symbolic significance, of the Nation. Until it is at least alleviated, it will continue to sow dissension on an ever larger scale, thereby hampering our war production.

### *Negroes Moving West*

On the West Coast, anti-Negro feeling is less prevalent than anywhere in the country. A *Fortune* poll of young people late in 1942 showed that only 12 percent of Western youth, compared to 49 percent of those in the South, would refuse to work with a Negro on a job where he had an equal position and worked side by side with them. Negroes made up only one to three percent of the population in most Western cities in 1942. But even here race has suddenly become an issue, with the immigration of Negroes seeking war jobs. They are getting the jobs; in the shipyards of San Francisco Bay they constituted 8 percent of all workers in May 1943—twice as high a proportion as eight months earlier. As elsewhere, however, they are usually channeled into unskilled work from which they have difficulty escaping, and when they are upgraded they are barred from leadermen's positions. This, and housing restrictions which result in serious overcrowding of colored workers—often twenty-five persons to a six- or eight-room house in San Francisco—have caused much resentment among the Negroes.

In the AFL shipyard unions up and down the Coast Negroes pay dues, but are not allowed to attend meetings or vote. In Richmond, California, the boilermakers' union requires a year's residence before joining the union—for Negroes only. In Portland, several hundred Negro workers refused to pay dues for membership in a

colored auxiliary of the shipyard union. Under the AFL closed shop contract the Kaiser management fired them, causing the Federal government to intervene.

President William Green of the AFL has repeatedly declared his opposition to all such racial discrimination. But the boilermakers and some other craft unions have refused to follow his lead.

Negroes have made more progress in the West than anywhere else in the country, however. In 1942, a Negro-owned and operated war plant—the Pacific Parachute Company—was established in San Diego, with capital furnished by Eddie Anderson—"Rochester" of radio fame. One-third of this company's employees are Negroes, one-third Mexicans and the other third whites, and they work alongside each other without friction. In San Diego and Los Angeles the color line is blurred, as compared with the South; public housing projects do not exclude Negroes, nor are they segregated in the schools. It is small wonder that thousands of Southern Negroes have migrated to Southern California since the war began.

### *The Jim Crow Services*

One of the sorest points in the racial picture, so far as Negroes are concerned, is the way they are segregated in, or excluded from, the armed forces. Some progress has been made here. Negroes have been admitted into the Marines, Coast Guard, Navy reserve, WAC's, and Army Air Corps. But the flying training program turns out only sixty or seventy Negro pilots per year, for an Air Force that will eventually total at least 250,000 pilots. There are no Negro commissioned officers in the Navy, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard. Negro women have not been admitted to the WAVES and SPARS in spite of their excellent showing as WACS.

Camp Stewart, Georgia, has shown how segregation and mistreatment lead to trouble. Negro soldiers there have long complained that there is only one bus line into Savannah, and they are able to ride it only when an occasional bus marked "For Negroes Only" comes around. The white soldiers in the area have excellent recreational facilities in the camp, while those for Negroes are almost completely lacking. Negroes have even been refused treatment by some white civilian nurses in the camp hospital.



When 211 picked men from the all-Negro 369th Regiment of New York were sent from war duty in Hawaii to Camp Stewart to act as instructors in the spring of 1943, they resented these conditions. Southern white officers immediately tried to put them "in their place," and tension grew. Rumors circulated to the effect that the white men had been molesting Negro girls, and in the flareup that followed Negro troops shot and killed one white M.P. and wounded four others.

In the first three months of 1943, five Negro soldiers were killed by white civilians. These are the things that make Negro soldiers and civilians alike violently resentful.

### *How Negroes React*

Under these circumstances, the wonder is that the American Negroes—13,000,000 of them—have not become completely embittered and indifferent toward the war. Some of them are. Take this letter to the editor of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*: "I will begin by asking, 'What are we fighting for?' I am a Negro woman. My husband is working in a war plant and he is buying war bonds. I have two brothers who are in the Army. One is in New Guinea.

"Today I read where a man and daughter in Texas were convicted of holding a poor Negro man in a condition of slavery. This man testified that he had been bull-whipped like a mule.

"I still ask, 'What are we fighting for?'"

Dr. Ira Reid, Negro professor of sociology at Atlanta University, said recently that four fears, not four freedoms, "dominate the Negro in America. They are fear of physical violence (lynchings and race riots), fear of further discrimination, fear of appeasement (the granting of minor racial concessions to forestall major adjustments), and fear of revolution from the right that would destroy democratic rights now held."

The Japanese have tried to utilize Negro resentment here in the United States to weaken the American war effort. The influence of the Black Dragon Society has been uncovered by the FBI in the "Pacific Movement of the Eastern World," a Negro organization functioning in New York, Chicago, East St. Louis and Washington, D. C. Negroes were said to have been promised arms and

ammunition against the day "when Japan attacks the West Coast." Negro speakers told their audiences that they should not participate in the "white man's war," and that Negroes would be "better off under Japanese rule than under white rule." Best estimates were that some 50,000 Negroes were reached more or less directly by this sort of propaganda.

One poll of 1000 Negroes in a Southern city showed that 9 percent thought that "Negroes would be treated better here if the Japanese conquered the U.S.A.", and 25 percent thought they would be treated worse. This was with Negro interviewers. Only 2 percent admitted to white interviewers that they thought Japanese rule would be better, and 45 percent said they thought they would be treated worse. Negro interviewers also found that 35 percent thought it was more important to make democracy work at home than to concentrate on beating the Axis. Again, the wonder is that disaffection was not greater.

### *Negroes in the War*

A trend worth watching is the new interest Negroes are showing in the Indian technique of passive resistance. Indian speakers have been invited to tell numerous Negro conferences about Gandhi's philosophy and methods. Some Negro leaders apparently feel that this method might hold possibilities for their people. But the principal Negro organizations continue to support the war.

In spite of segregation in the Army and dissatisfaction with conditions here at home, Negroes in our armed forces have acquitted themselves well. Dorie Miller, the Negro messman who was decorated for bravery at Pearl Harbor, William Pinckney of Beaufort, S. C., Negro cook on the aircraft carrier *Enterprise*, who was awarded the Navy Cross for saving a shipmate's life in the battle of Santa Cruz, the three Southern Negroes who were given similar high military honors for going through burning gasoline to save an American pilot who crashed in a river in New Guinea, and the record of the Negro engineers in Liberia and the South Pacific bear this out.

At home, the Negroes have done equally well in volunteer Civilian Defense work. In 1943 Negro deputy air raid wardens

directed fifteen of the sixty-six civilian defense areas in the District of Columbia. They are active in nearly every community in the United States, from New York on down to the smallest towns. They have pushed conservation, war bond and stamp sales, air raid protection, and other OCD activities wherever they were given a chance to do so. OCD Director James Landis paid special tribute to them, adding, "the Civilian Defense program affords an unusual opportunity for neighbors of all races and creeds to become better acquainted with each other. Every time an American works side by side with an American of another race or color, he gives the lie to Hitler's racial nonsense."

The overwhelming majority of Negroes are loyal to our Government and country. That doesn't mean they are satisfied with things as they are. But only the more articulate Negroes are able to speak out clearly. One such group is Alpha Kappa Alpha, a Negro sorority, which recently launched a campaign to publicize the aspirations of their race. Under the heading of "Listen, America!" here is what they said:

"Listen, America! American Negroes want to win this war, perhaps more than any other minority group, for we have no other home. We cannot go 'back to the old country,' because for us there is no 'old country' to which we can go. America is our home. We know no other.

"Listen, America! We are not being allowed to put into this war the skills that we have that this Nation needs. We still are being discriminated against in war industries.

"Listen, America! We can fight better in an American army—not a Negro army. We can die with better grace and higher morale in an American army.

"Listen, America! We want to go into an American navy, not a Negro navy.

"Listen, America! We want to go into the American WAVES, not be excluded. We want to go into the American WACS, not Negro WACS.

"Listen, America! We want the four freedoms right here in America; then we will have the heart to fight for the four freedoms for the Poles, the Czechs, and the Slovenes.

"Listen, America! We want equality of opportunity. We want



what every American wants—no more, no less—only this is democracy.

“Listen, America! We want decent homes.

“Listen, America! We don’t want to be lynched, and segregated.

“Listen, America! We are tired of exploitation and disfranchisement, inferior schools, and being politically lynched. . . . What we want is action, in every Federal department. This, and this alone will make democracy work at home for all Americans. . . . America, how would you feel if you were in our place?”

### *How to Heal the Sore Spot*

What can be done to lessen anti-Negro feeling and racial discrimination, in order to strengthen our war effort here and abroad?

First of all, certain immediate steps can be taken simply to keep war production going. A speech by the President, directing attention to how race riots help the Axis, would be a beginning. Some Federal agency—the Office of War Information would be best, if Congress hadn’t scrapped its domestic functions—should continuously track down and expose the sources of the rumors that stir up hatred. And the agitators who lead race riots should be treated like the traitors that they are.

It is my conviction after talking with hundreds of Southerners of all classes that the basic caste structure in the South will be changed only by Southerners themselves. A social system as ingrained as this cannot be altered overnight. And detailed plans for reform imposed from the outside—especially by “damyankees”—would probably only arouse distrust and antagonism if they threatened to alter the pattern of racial segregation.

Although many Northerners do not realize it, there is a large and growing body of liberal Southern whites who are acutely conscious of the race issue and anxious to do something about it. They are the ones who have elected such progressives as Senators Lister Hill of Alabama and Claude Pepper of Florida, Representatives James Fulbright and Brook Hays of Arkansas. They are the Southern Church women who have waged a campaign against lynching that helped to bring the figures tumbling down in the last ten years. They are the ones who organized the Southern Conference for

Human Welfare. These Southern liberals are worried about the present state of excitement over the race issue in their section of the country. They hate the demagogues who feed on this hysteria.

Small beginnings have been made in the South toward giving recognition to the Negro. In the boom town of Pascagoula, Mississippi, the whole war program is based on the idea of giving the Negro an equal break with the whites. Most Pascagoula Negroes have always owned their own homes, and Jackson County has the highest ratio of Negro taxpayers in the State. The Negroes have the respect of their fellow citizens and get their full share of housing and education. Pascagoula's Negro schools have the highest salaries for colored teachers in the State. Recently a new Negro school was built, and it is the only one in town that is not on a double-shift basis.

Pascagoula's Superintendent of Schools Wells told Mrs. Agnes Meyer of the *Washington Post*, "The Negro was planned for all the way through on a percentage basis. Our local committee saw to it that he was treated fairly. We have a deep conviction in our educational system that we cannot go much higher socially and educationally unless we lift our Negro citizens proportionately. This is just as true economically speaking."

Social workers in this same town added: "It is impossible to build a sound social foundation on a submerged class. The reason why many Southern cities do no social work is because they do not wish to do it for the Negro population. It is the poor whites of the South who make most of the trouble between the two races. They sustain their sense of superiority to the Negro by treating him cruelly. That's where lynching gets its origin."

Most important is the growing trend toward collaboration by Southern white and Negro leaders to lay down certain principles for the solution of the race problem in the South, where 77 percent of America's Negroes live. The latest move started with a conference of prominent Southern Negro educators, labor leaders and journalists in Durham, North Carolina, late in 1942. They issued a statement setting forth the present hopes of their people for a fuller share in American life and pointing out the dangers in the current situation.

The following April, an outstanding group of liberal whites met in conference at Atlanta and responded by stating:

"These Negro leaders rightly placed emphasis in their statement on discrimination in the administration of our laws on purely racial grounds. We are sensitive to this charge and admit that it is essentially just. From the Potomac to the Rio Grande there are some ten million Negroes. While all citizens are governed by the same laws, it is recognized that Negroes have little voice in the making and enforcement of the laws under which they must live. They are largely dependent upon the will of the majority group for the safety of life and property, education and health, and their general economic condition. This is a violation of the spirit of democracy. No Southerner can logically dispute the fact that the Negro, as an American citizen, is entitled to his civil rights and economic opportunities. . . .

"The white Southerner has an obligation to interest himself in the legitimate aspirations of the Negro. This means correcting the discrimination between the races in the allocation of school funds; in the number and quality of schools, and in the salaries of teachers. In public travel where the law demands a separation of the races, primary justice and a simple sense of fair play demand that facilities for safety, comfort and health should be equal. The distribution of public utilities and public benefits, such as sewers, water, housing, street and sidewalk paving, playgrounds, public health and hospital facilities should come to the Negro upon the basis of population and need.

"It is recognized that there is often practical discrimination by some peace officers and in some courts in the treatment of Negro prisoners and in the abrogation of their civil rights. There is no such discrimination incorporated in the law of any of the Southern states. False arrests, brutal beatings and other evils must be stopped.

"In the economic field, unquestionably procedures should be undertaken to establish fully the right to receive equal pay for equal work. To do otherwise works a wrong to our entire economic life and to our self respect. With so large a proportion of our wage-earning population belonging to the minority race, if we cannot plan for a well-trained, well-employed and prosperous Negro population, the economic future of the South is hopeless.

"Most of the Negroes in the South are on farms and in rural communities. Failure to provide for them all the facilities for improving agricultural practices through schools, county agents, supervision holds back all of the South. Fair wages, longer tenures of



leases and increased opportunities for farm ownership are also necessary.

"All men who believe in justice, who love peace and who believe in the meaning of this country are under the necessity of working together to draw off from the body of human society the poison of racial antagonism. This is one of the disruptive forces which unless checked will ultimately disturb and threaten the stability of the nation. Either to deny or to ignore the increased tension between the white and the colored races would be a gesture of insincerity.

"That there are acute and intricate problems associated with two races living side by side in the South cannot be denied. But these problems can be solved and will ultimately disappear if they are brought out into an atmosphere of justice and good will. If we approach them with contempt in one group and with resentment in the other group, then we work on hopeless terms. The solution of these problems can be found only in men of both races who are known to be men of determined good will. The ultimate solution will be found in evolutionary methods and not in ill-founded revolutionary movements which promise immediate solution.

"We agree with the Durham Conference that it is 'unfortunate that the simple efforts to correct obvious social and economic injustices continue, with such considerable popular support, to be interpreted as the predatory ambition of irresponsible Negroes to invade the privacy of family life.' We agree also that 'it is a wicked notion that the struggle by the Negro for citizenship is a struggle against the best interests of the nation.' To urge such a doctrine, as many are doing, is to preach disunity, and to deny the most elementary principles of American life and government.

"It is futile to imagine or to assert that the problem will solve itself. The need is for a positive program arrived at in an atmosphere of understanding, cooperation and a mutual respect."

The most significant thing about this statement was the calibre of the people signing it. They included Protestant, Catholic and Jewish leaders, the editors of Atlanta's two main newspapers and prominent educators and writers from all parts of the South. While the conference laid down no strong program of reform, it did appoint a committee to meet with the leaders of the Durham conference for further action. The widespread approval given to these two meetings in the Southern press made this first step toward

large-scale inter-racial cooperation extremely valuable in offsetting the disruptive influence of unscrupulous demagogues and rumor-mongers.

In August a permanent regional council to promote inter-racial cooperation was formed in Atlanta, with Dr. Howard W. Odum of the University of North Carolina and Dr. Charles S. Johnson of Fisk University as co-chairmen. The organization's aim is simple: ". . . The Negro in the United States and every region is entitled to and should have every guarantee of equal opportunity that every other citizen of the United States has within the framework of the American democratic system of government."

### *The Militant Minority*

A much smaller group of Southern whites is willing to go further in breaking down discriminatory laws and customs. Here—from the pen of a Southern woman, Lillian Smith, who edits the little magazine *The South Today*—is a list of suggestions entitled "The Simple, Undramatic Things We All Can Do":

1. "We can give ourselves a first-aid course on the South. We can learn where the racial pressure-points are. We can learn the names of the economic groups who have a stake in race tension and are exerting pressure to keep the white man and the black man afraid of each other. . . .

2. (a) "Let's urge every Southerner to stop using the words 'nigger,' 'darkie,' 'coon.' Stop telling 'nigger jokes.' They're not very funny these days except to the Germans. Little things? Yes. But the little things do as much as the big things to wear out the Negro's nerves.

(b) "Use courtesy titles when speaking to educated Negroes or about them. Some day when the world becomes democratic and civilized, surely we shall accord courtesy titles to all human beings regardless of skin, color, or the wages they make. We can begin now in a small way by conferring upon Negro college presidents, teachers, ministers, lawyers, community leaders, artists, the simple decent word 'Mr.' or 'Mrs.' or 'Miss.'

3. "Write a letter to your newspaper (not to be published—if you wish it so) suggesting that Negro jokes be avoided in its pages for

the duration of the war at least, that courtesy titles be used for living Negroes as well as for dead ones. . . .

4. "In conversations with friends, make a point of suggesting how ridiculous you think it is for Southern whites who pride themselves on their manners to refuse to use the courtesy titles when speaking of or to Negroes. How familiar and intimate it is to dare call a strange Negro by his first name. . . . Suggest how difficult it must be for Negro mothers to give their sons to a jim-crow army and then be pushed around by us at home; how torn and conflicting must be their feelings of patriotism and race pride and justice; how injurious to morale it is when whites make unfair demands of Negroes in the buses and trains and street cars.

5. "Spend a little time thinking. Thinking how it must feel to be a Negro in our South today. How it must feel to be jim-crowed on buses, on street cars, in dining cars, in theaters, in elevators, in churches, in schools, hotels, restaurants, in the armed forces, in jobs. . . .

6. "Write a few letters. Write to several Southern radio stations urging that Southern Negro colleges be invited more frequently to put on programs, that Negro speakers and artists when announced be accorded courtesy titles, that Negroes be invited to participate in the forums which many radio stations promote. . . . Write to your newspaper and suggest that photographs of Negroes be published: Negro heroes in the armed forces, Negro artists and scientists, and educators, and others who have achieved to a newsworthy level. . . .

7. "If you are unable to speak out publicly for racial democracy, or to write for publication, or to act democratically before others, there is still something you can do. Commend those who do these things which you don't dare do. Praise your minister for his sermon on brotherhood (or hint to him that it's about time to preach one). Write your editor and commend him for that democratic editorial (or suggest to him that it is time to write one); subscribe to the magazines which are trying to do a good job for democracy in war time. . . .

8. "There is another thing which any well-bred man or woman can do. It is in the best tradition of the South. Seek out among the Negro race a few individuals with whom you can become good friends. You can easily find many that are equal to you in education, intelligence, appearance, charm, ability, social poise, sensitive good-breeding. The great chasm between the two races must be bridged—for the sake of 'winning the war,' for the sake of building



a prosperous good South, for the sake of peace and the new world order, for the sake of our own souls. . . .

9. "Subscribe to a Negro magazine or a Negro newspaper. Remember as a white person in the South you likely know very little about any Negroes except those who have worked for you in some menial position. . . .

10. "Whenever you have a chance of not being segregated, quietly take it. Such as sitting by a Negro on bus or street car, or standing by a Negro in an elevator. A 'gesture'? Yes . . . but a gracious one.

11. "Pay your cook more. Shorten her hours. Treat her with more consideration. She is not your slave. Remember, she owes you nothing. On the contrary, you are probably heavily indebted to her for many work-hours she has given you free.' . . .

12. "Work through whatever means you have, for the abolition of the poll tax for voting; for the abolition of the white primary; for non-segregation in the armed forces, for non-discrimination in defense jobs and in labor unions; for a federal law against lynching; for the removal of segregation laws from Southern State codes. . . .

13. "Write your present governor and tell him that you do not like fascistic statements about White Supremacy; that you do not like discrimination against Negroes in schools and defense jobs, in mental hospitals and training schools; that you want racial equalization of teachers' salaries.

14. "Find for yourself some racial project that fits your temperament and talents. Negro health, adequate hospitalization, maternity centers are among the South's most glaring needs; training schools for Negro youth (the only decent one is in Kentucky); church interracial group projects; Negro housing; the Negro's recreational needs; library facilities for the colored race; the abolition of the poll tax and white primary; mental hospital facilities;—all of these, and many more are waiting your energy, your imagination, your goodwill.

"These are simple, undramatic, decent individual acts, none of which is too difficult for the average white Southerner to undertake. None of them is in bad taste. None will entail loss of job, social ostracism, curtailment of your 'usefulness,' violent uprising, or sacrifice. But done by tens of thousands of Southern individuals they would change the South."

For the few who have courage, self-control and wisdom, this

Southern writer advocates more startling action, to furnish a sort of "shock therapy" to prejudiced whites. For example:

1. "More and more white Southerners, who have poise and self-control, must speak clearly and publicly against segregations of Negroes on buses, street cars, elevators, in concert halls, in dining cars, in school systems, in defense plants, and especially in the armed forces. More and more respectable white Southerners must break the taboo of silence: in the pulpit, in public speeches, in newspaper columns, in magazines, in conversations. More and more must break the taboo of action: by eating with Negroes, by sitting by them in public places, by having them in their homes. This kind of speaking and acting must be done with dignity, with awareness of the whole situation, with full awareness of 'the cost.' More and more Southerners must be willing to risk losing a job thereby (after all, our soldiers have lost theirs); to be criticized even by Negroes themselves. Their best protection is their tact, their dignity, their sense of humor, their quietness as they speak or move, and the 'bullet-proof armor' of democracy itself.

2. "More and more Christians must protest segregation in their churches. They must insist upon God's House being God's and not headquarters for white supremacy. . . .

3. "Southern leaders must take an open stand for democratic labor unions, realizing that racial justice and strong labor unions are inseparable."

The constructive influence of the CIO unions in breaking down prejudice where it is strongest—among the poorer whites—is of tremendous importance. The unions, under Southern leadership, often segregate the Negro in separate locals or in one section of the meeting hall. But at least white unionists have discovered that it is possible to bring the Negroes into the unions without letting them "marry your daughter." The raising of Negro wages to the white level means that the colored workers at last have a real opportunity to improve themselves. Southern union leaders, while compromising with racial segregation in some cases, are laying the groundwork for the economic emancipation of the Negroes and poor whites alike.

The Negroes themselves, with the full approval of liberal whites in the South, are taking legal steps to eliminate inequalities. In

1935-36, Negro school teachers in the fourteen Southern States with separate schools systems earned just half as much as white teachers. Legal action has since brought equal pay for teachers of both races in Virginia and several other States. Negroes have also obtained the right to first-class railroad passage in the South and many another reform through the courts.

### *Poll Tax Abolition*

I have said that reforms imposed from without—and especially from Washington and the North—may do more harm than good, because they would antagonize the white people of the South. That is not entirely true. The Southerners themselves—those who are “men of good-will”—stand solidly behind certain basic national reforms.

One prerequisite to effective action in the South, as many Southerners recognize, is the abolition of the poll tax—by Federal action, since in seven of the eight States where it persists it is written into the constitution, and to change this would be a long and painful process. Once the poll tax is done away with, the democratic base of the South will be broadened by hundreds of thousands of new voters—mostly whites—many of whom will vote against those Congressmen who have opposed all liberal reforms. Politics in the South will be revitalized, given a new tinge of democracy. That is what poll-tax supporters, such as Senator Bilbo and Representative Rankin of Mississippi, fear most. And poll-tax abolition would be the best possible propaganda—that of the deed—to establish the fact that we are really fighting for democracy, at home and abroad.

A second step approved by liberal Southerners is Federal aid to education on the basis of need, not of tax money available. Southerners of all viewpoints appear to favor this, and it would help to bring the Negro schools up to a decent educational level, which is necessary before segregation in the schools can be modified.

Again, most Southerners and all liberals in the South approve the Government's low-rent housing, social security, wage-hour and similar programs. Some Southerners complain that the New Deal has benefited relatively more Negroes than whites—which it has, since Negroes were most needy. But only a few would scrap these programs or exclude Negroes from them.



## *Equality of Opportunity on the Job*

The President's executive order against racial discrimination was welcomed by most thinking Southerners. They also expected big things from the Fair Employment Practises Committee, which was appointed to enforce the order. The FEPC functioned well for a short time; but when it seemed about to take drastic action on behalf of Southern Negro railroad workers early in 1943, it was forbidden to act by Chairman Paul McNutt of the War Manpower Commission, who then had jurisdiction over the Committee. Apparently pressure from the opposition—the Railway Brotherhoods, the employers, and the Southern Democrats in Congress—was too great. This fence-straddling position brought bitter criticism from the Negroes and also disillusionment among some of the President's liberal supporters in both North and South. In May 1943, therefore, the FEPC was restored to independent status outside the War Manpower Commission, and Monsignor Francis J. Haas, social scientist of Catholic University, was appointed to head its work. Immediately FEPC took a new lease on life, and its influence began to be felt in racial disputes in Detroit, Mobile, Washington and elsewhere, to the relief of its supporters.

The most far-reaching action of the Federal Government to remove economic discrimination was the War Labor Board decision on June 1943, which instructed a Texas company to pay equal wages to Negroes and whites for equal work. This contains real benefits to whites as well as colored workers, for it means that employers can no longer use the threat of employing Negro labor to displace white workers at lower pay. The Board's unanimous decision—written by Dr. Frank P. Graham, a Southern liberal and president of the University of North Carolina—bears quoting:

“In this small, but significant case, the N.W.L.B. abolishes the classifications ‘colored labor’ and ‘white labor’ and reclassifies both simply as ‘laborers’ with the same rate of pay for all in that classification without discrimination on account of color. The Negro workers in this classification are hereby granted wage increases which place them on a basis of economic parity with the white workers in the same classification. This wage increase is made without regard to the ‘Little Steel’ formula but with regard simply for

the democratic formula of equal pay for work equal in quantity and quality in the same classification. This equalization of economic opportunity is not a violation of the sound American provisions of differentials in pay for differences in skill. It is rather a bit of realization of the no less sound American principle of equal pay for equal work as one of those equal rights in the promise of American democracy regardless of color, race, sex, religion or national origin.

"The unanimous decision is in line with the President's Executive Order 8801; with the general policy of the board; with the union's request; . . . and with the cause of the United Nations. To the credit of the company, this decision, along with other decisions in the case, is accepted by management in good faith and spirit.

"Economic and political discrimination on account of race or creed is in line with the Nazi program. America, in the days of its infant weakness the haven of heretics and the oppressed of all races, must not in the days of its power become the stronghold of bigots. The world has given America the vigor and variety of its differences. America should protect and enrich its differences for the sake of America and the world. Understanding religious and racial differences makes for a better understanding of other differences and for an appreciation of the sacredness of human personality, as basic to human freedom.

"The American answer to differences in color and creed is not a concentration camp but cooperation. The answer to human error is not terror but light and liberty under the moral law. By this light and liberty the Negro has made a contribution in work and faith, song and story, laughter and struggle, which are an enduring part of the spiritual heritage of America.

"There is no more loyal group of our fellow-citizens than the American Negroes, North and South. In defense of America from attack from without, they spring to arms in the spirit of Dorie Miller of Texas, the Negro mess boy, who when the machine-gunner on the *Arizona* was killed, jumped to his place and fired the last rounds as the ship was sinking in Pearl Harbor.

"It is acknowledged that in spite of all the handicaps of slavery and discrimination, the Negro in America has compressed more progress into the shortest time than any race in human history. Slavery gave the Negro his Christianity. Christianity gave the Negro his freedom. This freedom must give the Negro equal rights

to home and health, education and citizenship, and an equal opportunity to work and fight for our common country.

“Whether as vigorous fighting men or for production of food and munitions, America needs the Negro; the Negro needs the equal opportunity to work and fight. The Negro is necessary for winning the war, and, at the same time, is a test of our sincerity in the cause for which we are fighting. More hundreds of millions of colored people are involved in the outcome of this war than the combined populations of the Axis powers. Under Hitler and his Master Race, their movement is backward to slavery and despair. In America the colored people have the freedom to struggle for freedom.”

Neither of these Federal moves, be it noted, tackles the question of Negro segregation, either residential or social. Both are concerned at this stage with giving the Negro more equality of economic opportunity. And this, I submit, is the wise approach. For until the Negro gets a better chance to be educated and achieve higher living standards, white prejudices—based partly on depressed conditions existing among the Negroes today—will never be removed. What Washington can best do, therefore, is to press for better wages, education, and political opportunities for poor whites and Negroes alike. Federal authorities cannot make a frontal attack on racial segregation in the schools or in public housing projects of the South without damaging these programs and stirring up new racial feelings.

Changes in the pattern of segregation in the South will only be brought about by emancipated Southerners themselves, as individuals and through their churches, unions and political groups.

### *Keep It Out of the North*

Outside the South, the problem of discrimination against the Negro is easier to solve. Here a firm stand against prejudice and segregation is the main thing that is required.

In Washington, the need for trained Government personnel has led to the hiring of many Negroes in technical or professional jobs. I know of several cases where Southern white men and women at first refused to work with them; but when they stayed, the whites



without exception quickly got over their indignation and even grew to like the Negroes.

Federal housing programs have usually not challenged the principle of racial segregation in places where it is a major issue, as in Detroit. But there are at least twenty-four mixed housing projects in the States of California, New York, Washington, Illinois, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Connecticut, and no serious friction has developed. In one project in California, whites, Negroes, Mexicans, Chinese and Indians live side by side, in harmony with each other.

A good example of how a strong stand against intolerance carries the day is that of the Marin City housing project, just north of San Francisco. At the outset, there was some rumbling among Southern whites in the men's dormitories because Negroes were admitted; but this was ended when the project management sent the following letter to every occupant:

**"TO THE MEN OF MARIN CITY DORMITORIES:**

". . . Marin City is part of the Federal Government's housing program for war workers. In more than 150 communities throughout the country similar housing is being provided for the men and women who are turning out the war winning materials. Naturally many of the people who will live in the Marin City dormitories will come from different sections of the country. Remember they have come here to help you and all of us toward the only important task in the world today—to win the war. Remember that they may have different ideas, different religions, and they may be of different races or color than you. Remember that tolerance and cooperation are as important in victory as are guns, planes, tanks and troops.

"We must tell you that it is the policy of the management to house all Marin County shipyard workers for whom we have accommodations, irrespective of their religion, race, color or position in the shipyards. We must further tell you that when any difficulty arises as a result of racial prejudice, the management will be forced to request the originator of the difficulty to move immediately.

"All colors, all races, all people must and shall live here in peace and in such comfort as we can provide. The project is governmental property and its civic order must be well established. . . ."

Marin City houses 1000 single men and 1500 families; of these, 108 single men and 32 families were Negroes early in 1943. To keep

order in the dormitories, a council was chosen by the men; and three of its members were Negroes, elected from buildings where a majority of the men were white. Negroes participate fully in all social affairs. Three Negroes serve on a tenants' committee which manages all athletic and recreational affairs. Two are on the editorial committee of the *Marin City Journal*, the tenants' publication. Said the *Journal*, "On the fields of Bataan . . . [and] at Pearl Harbor . . . men of both races fought and died with no thought of the well-known 'color-line.' All races and creeds are sacrificing their lives on the basis of complete equality. In justice, they should live and work here at home on the same terms." Here is democracy at work.

In the Army, the Officers' Candidate Schools provide a demonstration of the fact that whites and Negroes can get along well together. They eat at the same mess halls, sleep in the same barracks, and use the same toilet facilities. Some Southern boys have objected to this, but the Army has refused to burden its training program by providing additional segregated camps for Negroes. One boy who went to the quartermaster school at Camp Lee, Virginia, and to anti-aircraft school at Camp Davis, North Carolina, informs me that the bi-racial arrangement worked very well, even in the South.

One of the things that is most irritating to all parties in the racial question is the lack of decent manners on both sides. Whites, especially in the South, feel no obligation to be civil to Negroes. And when the Negroes begin to assert their rights, they are apt to be rude to the whites who they feel are infringing on them. This builds up new resentments. Since it is the Negro who is always "on trial" whenever he makes a step ahead, an important responsibility of Negro leaders is to discourage rudeness and emphasize the importance of good manners. Equally important is the need for both white and Negro leadership to prevent such irresponsible behavior as that which occurred in Detroit and Harlem in 1943.

### *Latin Americans Too*

There are perhaps a million and a half people of Mexican or Spanish-American descent in the United States. Concentrated in the Southwest, from Texas to California, they form a class almost comparable to the Negroes in the deep South.

The Mexicans of Texas are experiencing virtually full employment for the first time in fifteen years. The war has, in fact, almost revolutionized the lives of San Antonio's 100,000 people of Spanish blood. In 1938 the Mexican pecan shellers were working for about 5 cents an hour in this pecan-shelling capital of the world. The average income of 512 Mexican families was \$251 apiece for the entire year. The number of pecan shellers has since dropped from a peak of 10,000, when the work was all done by hand, to less than 1,000 in today's mechanized plants. But those who are still employed earn a minimum of 30 cents an hour. And those thrown out of work because of technological changes have found other jobs at better pay.

Domestic workers, who were lucky to earn \$5 a week four years ago, now earn \$10 or more for full-time work—if you can find them. Mexican laborers have found employment by the thousands at Duncan Field, which now encompasses San Antonio's famed Kelly Field. And in 1942 some 24,000 Mexicans left San Antonio to work in the crops—a much larger number than went four years earlier.

The results are obvious even to the casual visitor. Four years ago you could scarcely walk a block on Houston or St. Mary's Street without encountering Mexican beggars. Now there are none. The Mexicans one sees are better-dressed and happier-looking than ever before.

Out West Houston Street are ferris wheels and other carnival contraptions to attract the younger generation, who are spending money as never before. Prostitution is much less evident than it was four years ago, when economic need drove Mexican girls as young as twelve into the cribs of Monterey and Matamoros Streets. Only one thing remains little changed: the atrocious slums of the Mexican west side.

The religious-fascist Sinarquist movement of old Mexico, which has worked closely with the Nazis and the Spanish Falange, made some headway in the lower Rio Grande district up to the time of Mexico's declaration of war. But in San Antonio it had little following, chiefly because labor and Catholic leadership there has been progressive.

During the depression Fathers Mann and Lopez of the Congregation of the Redemptorists helped to organize Mexican women into the garment workers' union. Father Carmelo Tranchese led the



movement for slum clearance and housing in the Mexican quarter. And the present Archbishop, Robert E. Lucey, is known as an outstanding liberal Catholic leader.

Father Tranchese's dream has come true, at least in part, with the completion of Alazan and Apache Courts, with 1180 modern housing units for Mexicans. They are of neat, two-story Spanish architecture with iron-railed balconies. In 1939 many Americans in San Antonio said that the Mexicans would ruin any new housing built for them. But today these Mexican projects are among the best-cared-for in the country.

Father Tranchese is somewhat disillusioned about the situation, nevertheless. He admits that the death rate has fallen sharply in the near west side, where the new projects are located; funerals in Our Lady of Guadalupe Church have dropped from an average of 350 a year to only 220 in 1942. But the good Father points out that the projects have failed in their cardinal purpose: rehousing the poorest of the slum dwellers. Those who were displaced when the slums were torn down hauled salvaged boards and sheets of tin out to the city limits and built new shack towns even more unsanitary than the old. They were used to paying rents of 50 cents to a dollar a week and couldn't meet the new rentals of \$8.75 to \$12 a month. Only the upper economic stratum among the Mexicans could afford these rents.

Now that the Mexicans are earning more, the rentals of the five-room units have been increased to \$19 monthly—which is a quarter or less of what they would bring in an open market, but again too high for the poorer slum-dwellers. And the Mexican population of San Antonio is still growing. Here is a job for post-war planners. So far only about 5000 San Antonio Mexicans have been rehoused, while at least ten times that many still live in terribly substandard houses and shanties, without hope of better conditions unless the Government steps in.

### *Zoot-Suiters In California*

Los Angeles has an even larger Mexican colony than San Antonio, with some 240,000 members. Here too, the war has brought higher wages; but housing and sanitary conditions are almost as bad as in

San Antonio, and the racial problem has been intensified since the war began. Things came to a head in the so-called "zoot suit riot" of June 1943, in which 150 persons were injured and 500 placed under arrest—most of them Mexicans.

The roots of the trouble go deep. Los Angeles Mexicans are an underprivileged group, brought into America as cheap labor and "kept in their places" by a strong racial prejudice against them. Carey McWilliams, in his book "Brothers Under the Skin," says that "a large second generation born of parents of Mexican nationality is only now coming to maturity. Unlike their parents this generation knows nothing of Mexico. They have been born, reared and educated (after a fashion) in this country. But they come from Spanish speaking homes, they live in Mexican shack-town slums, and, as a group, they are violently maladjusted.

"As youngsters," writes McWilliams, "they have been denied educational and recreational facilities, while at the same time, their appetite for the excitements of American life has been inordinately stimulated.

"Mexican family life and Mexican culture have become disorganized and chaotic while the Church has ceased to be a dominant influence in their lives. Social discrimination has, also, served to make them extremely race conscious. . . ."

In recent years, the Sinarquist movement has acquired an organized following of about 500 members among disgruntled Mexicans in Los Angeles. Felix Diaz Escobar, a member of the Chamber of Deputies in Mexico City, has alleged that Sinarquism had 50,000 partisans in California. This is considered far too high; but it has been charged that Sinarquists, in league with the Spanish Falange and the Nazis, have furnished money to some of the Mexican-American youngsters, inspired them to violence against members of their own community and filled them with hate for Americans. Whether or not this was true, boys' gangs flourished in the Mexican quarter, as in the slum areas of every city. Occasionally they got into street fights, mostly with each other.

In 1941 the zoot suit made its appearance and achieved great popularity among Mexicans and Negroes. It was in no sense a "uniform for gangsters," however, as has been popularly assumed; it was,

rather, a symbol of defiance, a declaration of independence from convention, worn particularly by jitterbugs.

High feelings were aroused in the summer of 1942 among both Mexican-Americans and Anglo-Americans by the widely-publicized Sleepy Lagoon murder case, in which 600 Mexican-American youth were arrested and seventeen sentenced to long prison terms for the death of one man, José Diaz, although there was no proof that he had been murdered. Many Los Angeles citizens believe that the youth were not guilty but were victims of race prejudice. The case was used by Axis propagandists in Mexico and other Latin American countries to prove that we were not sincere in our good neighbor policy. I am told that a wave of prejudice against the Mexicans swept the community at this time, stimulated by tirades against the Mexican "gangs" in the Hearst papers. The Los Angeles police abetted the Hearst campaign and anti-Mexican feelings by making indiscriminate arrests of Mexican-American youth, especially of those in zoot suits. The facts show that the percentage of juvenile delinquency was 3.0 among Mexican-American youth in 1942, compared to 1.6 in the city as a whole. This is not a high rate; the wonder is that it is so low, in view of conditions in the Mexican quarter. Furthermore, the delinquency rate had been increasing more slowly among the Mexicans than in the city as a whole. But there is no doubt that some of the Mexican youth were getting out of hand. They naturally grew more and more resentful, pushed around as they were by the police under the needling of Hearst's reporters. They felt that they were being unfairly treated because of the color of their skins.

In May, a rumor was spread in Los Angeles that an American sailor had been stabbed by a Mexican boy. There was no evidence for this. Another rumor, circulating among high school students, had it that the Mexicans were planning to invade the Venice beaches in force, and that the students should organize to meet them. At the same time, the Mexican community heard that anti-Mexican riots were going on at the beach and that their help was needed. All these reports proved false. Apparently they were started with malicious intent.

On May 8 a mob of 2500 persons, including service men and high school gangs, attacked a group of Mexican-American boys wearing



zoot suits. Police dispersed the mob, and arrested "Mexican" youngsters but not their attackers. The youth were taken to the police station, booked and held incommunicado. Later they were dismissed by the court for lack of any evidence against them. The immunity of this mob from arrest no doubt helped to encourage the larger mob which formed a month later.

Toward the end of May the Mexican community was aroused by a lawsuit filed by six landowners at Fullerton, near Los Angeles, against a Mr. and Mrs. Alex Bernal, who had bought a home there earlier in the year. The suit was based on a deed restriction that none of the property should ever be "used, leased, owned or occupied by any Mexicans or persons other than of the Caucasian race." The Mexican Consul entered a demurrer in the case, since Mrs. Bernal was a Mexican citizen. Her husband was American-born, a member of an old California family.

Unfortunately for all groups concerned, such incidents as these made a few of the Mexican-American youth so angry that they turned against all Anglo-Americans, and particularly those in uniform. Forty boys attacked a service man from the Naval Marine Corps Training Station at Cavez Ravine, and a special police squad was organized to wipe out "zoot suit gangs" in the north Main Street area where the attack took place. Street gangs stopped fighting against each other and united to resist the attacks from the outside. A few youth armed themselves with knives. Then the blow-up came. It was inevitable.

At first with the tacit encouragement of the police, and later in spite of them, gangs of American sailors and soldiers roamed the streets and broke into theaters, stripping and beating every Mexican (or colored) zoot suit wearer they could find—and many others not in zoot suits. The "zoot suiters" retaliated, and there were bloody injuries to both sides.

The Hearst press in Los Angeles made great capital out of the attacks, calling them a "Battle of Gangland," and telling how "zoot suits smoldered in the ashes of street bonfires where they had been tossed by grimly methodical tank forces of service men. . . . The zooters, who earlier in the day had spread boasts that they were organized to 'kill every cop' they could find, showed no inclination to try to make good on their boasts. . . . Searching parties of soldiers,

sailors and Marines hunted them out and drove them out into the open like bird dogs flushing quail. Procedure was standard: grab a zooter. Take off his pants and frock coat and tear them up or burn them. Trim the 'Argentine ducktail' haircut that goes with the screwy costume." This sort of reporting, needless to say, did nothing to discourage the mob. But thanks to the leadership of Attorney-General Robert W. Kenny and a small group of leading Los Angeles citizens, the situation was brought under control.

The Mexicans will not forget the treatment they got; nor will the people who attacked them, for rumors greatly exaggerated the injuries inflicted on members of the mob by their Mexican-American quarries. More trouble can be expected, unless steps are taken to remove the causes of the tension.

### *Some Solutions*

To get at the root of the problem, conditions must be improved in the Mexican community. Better housing and sanitary facilities are needed, first of all; the segregation of the Mexicans in the poorest sections of town has resulted in a tendency to overlook the slum conditions prevailing there. Establishment of organized recreational facilities—nursery schools, day care facilities, study classes, play grounds, swimming pools, dance halls—in areas where these are lacking would give Mexican-Americans something better to do than organize into street gangs. An end to police discrimination against Mexicans is essential. And new steps must be taken to include the Mexican-Americans in the war effort, from which they are now largely isolated. They need to be brought into Selective Service boards, rationing boards and civilian defense organizations, bodies that have virtually ignored them in the past.

It is worth speculating as to why violence broke out against the Mexicans of Los Angeles, who make up only about a tenth of the population, rather than in San Antonio, a third of which is Mexican. In both places the Mexicans are segregated in slum areas and subjected to economic discrimination. But San Antonio has these advantages:

1. Economic conditions improved sharply early in the war in San Antonio, an Army boom town.

2. The Mexicans have a certain status in San Antonio. They were there, a few of them, before the first American settlers came in, and they are accepted. There was no drive to send them back to Mexico during the depression, as there was in Los Angeles. The politicians woo them for their votes, and educational and civic leaders take real interest in improving their conditions.

3. Union organization has made much headway among the Mexicans of San Antonio and has provided a constructive outlet for their economic aspirations.

4. As noted earlier, Sinarquism has practically no following in San Antonio.

5. Special credit for the relatively favorable conditions in San Antonio is due to local Catholic leaders. Their progressive viewpoint has done much to avoid the sort of disharmony that developed in Los Angeles.

San Antonio is no Utopia for Mexicans. But it does suggest the conditions that make for better race relations.

### *Segregation By Shape of Eye*

Even more important than the Mexican issue in its international implications is our treatment of the smaller minorities of Japanese- and Chinese-Americans in the United States. This provides a basic test of our statement that we are fighting a war against aggression and for the Four Freedoms, and not a racial war against the Japanese.

The evacuation of all Japanese on the West Coast was probably inevitable, in view of our lack of preparations for the Japanese attack. From the point of view of the 70,000 American citizens of Japanese ancestry who were evacuated, however, it was hardly fair. To some it was demoralizing, especially since the second generation—the vast majority of whom are loyal to this country—was not segregated from the Japanese-born group. They could not help but compare their lot with that of the 300,000 Germans and 700,000 Italians of alien birth living in this country, who were not segregated after our entrance into the war.

The War Relocation Authority, after a delay of many months, finally began to release those Nisei, or American-born Japanese, who



were proved loyal upon investigation. Selective Service boards began once more to accept them into the armed forces. We were belatedly giving these loyal citizens a chance to work and fight for the democracy which they supported.

Once this course had been taken, however, certain groups who were looking for a chance to stir up racial antagonism and to discredit the Administration embarked on a campaign to discredit the War Relocation Authority. They gleefully seized upon the inane statement of General John L. DeWitt of the Western Defense Command that "A Jap's a Jap. It makes no difference whether he's an American citizen or not." The Hearst newspapers and certain overzealous patriotic groups began agitating for the Army's taking over the Japanese internment camps, for the return of those Nisei who had been released, and for the exclusion of Japanese-Americans in the U.S. Army from the West Coast.

Next the Dies Committee, looking for a new excuse for its existence after the dissolution of the Communist International, pounced upon the Japanese-Americans. It started out with the conclusions it was trying to prove—that Japanese spies and saboteurs had been released from the relocation camps. This made headlines, much larger than the counter-statement of Dillon S. Meyer, director of the War Relocation Authority, that among the 12,000 Japanese who had left the camps by June 1943, "to our knowledge, not one instance of disloyal activity has been reported." The Dies Committee pressed on to paint the blackest picture possible of the interned Japanese. The result could only be to stir up new prejudice against them, to retard their release to useful jobs in agriculture and other fields and to embitter those who had held out against the ridicule and persecution of the pro-Japanese minority in the camps.

### *Chinese Exclusion: Grist to the Enemy Mill*

As for the Chinese, the main issue is not one of racial prejudice. Chinese-Americans, of course, have plenty to complain about on that score, but the larger issue of whether the Chinese shall be treated as full-fledged Allies is more important.

Early in 1943 several Congressmen introduced bills to repeal the Chinese Exclusion provisions of our immigration laws. Representa-

tive Ed Gossett of Texas later introduced a bill to take the place of all of these. The debt of gratitude we owe the Chinese for keeping open a second front against our common enemy should have removed this reform from the realm of debate, especially since only a few more than a hundred Chinese would be admitted into this country each year under the regular immigration quota system. But quite the contrary was the case. The American Legion and even the American Federation of Labor opposed the change, as did the Hearst press. (Earlier, on April 23, Hearst's *San Francisco Examiner* had editorialized, "The war in the Pacific is THE WORLD WAR, the war of Oriental races against Occidental races for domination of the world.")

The Japanese have used our exclusion laws as propaganda weapons to prove to the Chinese that we are hypocritical in our claim to be fighting for a free world. The Chinese Government itself watched the controversy with much interest. The *Central News* of Chungking pointed out during the hearings that no influx of Chinese would result from the repeal of exclusion; after the war, in fact, the Government's ten-year plan for developing the Western Provinces of China will absorb all excess labor, as well as much American capital. China's keen interest in the matter is shown by the fact that when the San Francisco CIO council passed a resolution approving the repeal bills, it received a message of appreciation from Chungking. It rapidly became apparent that to turn down the bills, once they were introduced, would have serious repercussions in China, especially since Japan would trumpet the news to all parts of Asia and might even use it as an argument for Chinese acceptance of a negotiated peace.

We owe it to ourselves and to our Allies, especially in Asia, to strengthen our position at home and abroad by treating members of all races like fellow human beings, on their individual merits, not as members of inferior racial groups. Failing to move in this direction as rapidly as possible, we continue to play into the hands of our enemies.

## 9: INDUSTRIAL UNREST

IN MAY AND JUNE 1943, the nation was shocked to hear that production of war materials of certain classes had fallen off slightly. Our over-all war production had failed to show an increase in the same period for the first time since the war began. And by the middle of 1943, only 43 percent of the year's production goals had been achieved.

In spite of this sad showing, Government and business leaders were beginning to talk of reconverting some of our war industries to production of civilian goods. Critics therefore blamed "complacency" for the let-down in war production. They were partly right; but there was more to the problem than that. The rise of industrial unrest in 1943, with consequent damage to our industrial output, was a clear indication that something was wrong with the morale of workers in certain of our war industries.

Absenteeism, labor turnover and strikes are all symptoms of low morale. And low morale means dissatisfaction with existing conditions, lack of confidence in Government and business leadership, and failure to see the need for subordinating personal aims to the winning of the war.

America has done a good production job in this war compared with the last one. Ships and planes and tanks are being turned out in such quantities as to leave little doubt about the outcome of the war. Nevertheless, on my trip around the country I saw enough to convince me that production could be even greater, and cost in terms of money and manpower much less, if the causes of industrial unrest were located and remedied. A glance at some specific cases of low morale in our war industries is therefore in order.

### *A Case in Point: Shipbuilding*

The shipyard industry illustrates very well both the strength and weaknesses of our wartime industrial economy. In 1942 the nation's shipyards reached their goal of eight million tons of merchant ships. In 1943 they were given a quota of about nineteen million tons.



In May, 1,782,000 tons of ships were actually delivered, or enough to beat the 1943 quota if production were maintained.

But in June merchant ship deliveries were off by 100,000 tons. And in the first half of the year only 44 percent of the quota was filled.

I talked to dozens of shipyard workers and technicians on the West Coast, trying to find what was wrong in the yards. With one exception (a timekeeper in a small Portland yard) the men felt frustrated and angry at the shortcomings of their foremen, supervisors and management in general. Common laborers earn 95 cents an hour and master mechanics a base pay of \$1.20 on the coast. The shipyard unions under the terms of their agreements ask for annual wage adjustments as the cost of living rises; the War Labor Board turned them down in 1943. Yet their chief complaint was about the inefficiency of the yards. They resented the waste of manpower and material, and even more they resented the attacks on the patriotism of shipyard workers during the recent hysteria over "absenteeism." They felt that absenteeism was used by the shipyard owners as an excuse for their own shortcomings.

One Negro worker in a Seattle shipyard said, "Absenteeism, absenteeism. It's all you hear. I've missed two days in seven months. One time it was getting a paper served on me to show up in court. The other time I had some personal business I had to attend to." A welder contributed this: "The only absenteeism I've noticed—and we got it—is due to management. Good God, I've gone two days at a stretch on a hull without so much as lightin' up my torch."

I do not intend to minimize the problem of absenteeism in the shipyards. It is a serious one; in December 1942 alone 16,700,000 man-hours were lost by unexcused absences in shipyards throughout the country. (During all of 1942, on the other hand, only 430,000 man-hours were lost in shipyard strikes). The fact that absenteeism is much less frequent than it was in the last war, when it averaged 18 percent in the shipyards, is no reason to excuse conditions such as this.

In January 1943, the Maritime Commission figured that shipyard absenteeism still amounted to 10.2 percent of scheduled time, with "illegitimate" absences accounting for 6.4 percent. In Portland, Oregon, there were about 102,000 shipyard workers at the

turn of the year, and their unexcused absences would theoretically have built at least four more Liberty ships in January. The rates of absenteeism in the various Portland yards ranged from 3 to 17 percent in that month.

Portland, however, showed how the problem can be tackled sanely. A committee consisting of representatives of the unions, employers, Government agencies and the public was set up to study absenteeism early in 1943. It found that some absenteeism had been caused by "shiftlessness" or dissolute habits of workers not accustomed to hard work and prosperity. But it also concluded that far too little attention had been paid to such important causes as unreported sickness, often due to inadequate housing and lack of community facilities; bad transportation, causing workers to be late on the job so that they are denied admittance; taking time off to shop, go to the bank, or conduct other personal business which could only be attended to during working hours; and finally, dissatisfaction with the job, the management and working conditions generally.

"It isn't all our fault," said one of Henry Kaiser's Portland employees, who gets every eighth day off. "Did you ever try cramming eight days of chores into one? We have to file our income tax, see the ration board, fix the car, clean the house, plant our victory gardens, all on one day. Shipyards are crowded and hard to get home from. We don't have long evenings like on our old jobs. We try hard to stay on the job, and most of us do, but it isn't easy."

Then there is the increasing age of workers. One construction foreman said: "I had six men in their 60's in key jobs who worked themselves into sick-beds trying not to be absent during the winter. Flu caught up with them."

The result of the Portland investigation was a campaign against the various major causes of poor attendance on the job. Propaganda against absenteeism was introduced in the yards; new housing and transportation was made available to the workers; stores and banks were induced to stay open nights for their convenience; and, perhaps most important of all, the committee recommended that the industry improve the quality of its supervision, eliminating favoritism and nepotism in the selection of supervisors and introducing other managerial reforms. The employer representatives on

the committee agreed to this program, and the upshot was that absenteeism dropped by almost half in the next few months. (Improved weather conditions accounted for part of this improvement, but community effort also had an important effect.)

### *Poor Management Leads to Turnover*

A more basic problem in the shipyards is high labor turnover. According to Admiral Emory S. Land, Chairman of the Maritime Commission, at least 650,000 workers were needed during 1943 in addition to the million and a half who were working in the shipyards at the beginning of the year. In April the Maritime Commission announced that the shipbuilding industry was losing men so rapidly as to imperil the whole program. In the first quarter of the year the turnover rate reached 11.2 percent per month. Some 200,000 workers left the yards, and the industry suffered a deficit of 70,000 men in this period.

Labor turnover is especially high in Pacific Coast yards, which are building just over half of our new ships. In the first three months of 1943 the shipyards of this region required 122,378 workers as replacements, or over 60 percent of the national figure. One Seattle yard had to hire 25,000 workers during a six-month period, to achieve a net gain of 3000 workers. Another hired 9000 in the same period to gain 2000 additional workers. A careful analysis of the reasons for this turnover revealed the draft to be only a minor cause. Lack of convenient facilities and general dissatisfaction with conditions in the yards were far more important.

Lack of housing and other community facilities has perhaps been sufficiently stressed as a cause of both absenteeism and labor turnover. Shipyard inefficiency, however, has been largely ignored as a cause of low morale. According to the workers themselves there is no shortage of manpower; most of them complained, rather, that they were unable to put in more than four hours of good, solid work on an eight-hour shift.

Efficiency varies greatly from shipyard to shipyard, of course. The range in cost of building the highly standardized Liberty ships was from \$2,730,000 in the Marinship Yard near San Francisco down to \$579,000 at the North Carolina shipyard at Wilmington.



The Kaiser shipyards have done a good job, on the whole. The Maritime Commission gives Kaiser credit for putting the whole shipbuilding industry six months ahead of schedule. In the opinion of experts, however, the public has a greatly exaggerated idea of Kaiser's efficiency. His mass-production methods consist of welding large sections of the ship together and of assembling them with 200-ton cranes. Other companies, using smaller cranes, have also made good records—notably at Wilmington, Newport News, and Camden, New Jersey. And even in some of the Kaiser yards, the workers complained vociferously of poor planning and supervision.

"Yard politics is the cause of a lot of the trouble," one Kaiser employee told me. "The men who run the Vancouver yard are nearly all dam engineers. They bring their friends and relatives with them from other jobs, and put them in as foremen and supervisors whether they know anything about ships or not. They won't take the advice of a marine engineer. So they can't keep engineers enough on their staff, the accident rate has gone up, and when they have some really expert work to do they have to send it over to the Oregon yard as often as not. They've got the most beautifully laid-out yard in the world here at Vancouver. But they can't lay out the work for it to do. One day they had 1400 men polishing some machines up in order to look busy while a Government inspection was going on."

An investigation by the House of Representatives' Merchant Marine Subcommittee subsequently bore out these reports. Kaiser's Richmond Yard Number Three was shown to have hoarded so much steel that production was affected in other shipyards. This yard spent almost \$105,000,000 without completing its first C-4 transport vessel. By June five ships had been launched, but none had been completed. The Maritime Commission excused this record because plans for the vessels had been changed during construction. But several of Kaiser's foremen said high labor turnover because of "broken promises" by management was responsible; more than 8000 workers had been imported, but when housing promised to them failed to materialize, only 2500 stayed. Other witnesses gave the employment of "dam builders" and "concrete mixers" as yard supervisors as a reason for production breakdowns.

An engineer in one of Seattle's largest yards said, "I'm right in

the middle of the management side and I can see what's going on. It seems to be a question of top management passing out the jobs, the good ones, on the basis of somebody being somebody's friend or relative. It runs all the way through. And look at the results. At the Kearney yard back East, they build exactly the same ship in six and a half months that it takes us almost two years to build. Of course, part of that is inexperience, but not all."

A former logger commented, "WPA was nothing compared to this job. They really got something done on WPA. If you ask me, it's getting worse here all the time." A welder added, "Aw, they don't want efficiency. They try to run up the hours on them jobs. It's cost-plus that does it. They hoard labor, too. They got enough to weed out a fifth or a quarter without feeling it." Another worker complained, "Maybe altogether I worked half an hour today." And a stager said, "Hell, from noon on I didn't even have my hammer out of the box."

When the men don't have work to do they spend hours on end in the locker room, smoking and lying on the lunch tables. As one member of the fastening gang said, "I used to kill time walking everywhere in the yard, up and down ladders, in holes and out of 'em, but I don't do that any more."

The labor-management committee has never functioned well in this yard. The management offers a \$25 prize each week for the best suggestion to improve production; but the men are cynical about it. One worker remarked, "When I came here, I saw lots of things, ideas that would put a little system in the place. But you know how it is; they're just not interested. You just hurt the feelings of the leadman or the foreman. First thing you know you're in dutch."

The results of this atmosphere in terms of labor turnover are what one would expect. An electrician remarked, "I want to get out of this yard. I haven't had a damned thing to do for two weeks. I'm getting a release and going to Portland to see if things are any better down there." Another worker said, "One of our welders quit the other day. They wouldn't give him a release, so he said, 'Well, I'm leaving just the same. If you can guarantee me eight hours of work a day, though, I'll stay.'"

Another Seattle electrician told me, "It was bad enough to work

under a foreman who had never seen a ship until a few months ago. But it was worse to have to waste time on the job day after day because the work hadn't been laid out right. On the day before Thanksgiving the foreman told me, 'Your crew will work tomorrow. There's a war on, you know.' I said, 'I'm not working tomorrow for you or anyone else. You know damned well we've had practically nothing to do for days and there's no rush of work tomorrow.' This man didn't work on Thanksgiving; in fact, he was "absent without excuse" for several days while he contributed to the labor turnover rate by seeking and obtaining a job in another yard.

Symptomatic of the situation in the yards are the "funny" stories told up and down the Pacific Coast by shipyard workers. There is the tale of the man who was told by a foreman to carry a piece of wooden staging back and forth across the yard. After a few days he noticed another man following him. He told the foreman he wanted to quit because he was afraid a Government inspector was shadowing him and had discovered his lack of work. The foreman laughed and said, "Don't mind him—he's only your helper." The story may be apocryphal, but the fact that it is widely repeated is significant.

Then there is the actual case of the man whose son was among those missing on Bataan, and who gave up his own business to come to work in the Kaiser shipyard at Vancouver, Washington. After six weeks he "asked for his time," explaining to his fellow employees with tears in his eyes that he couldn't stand any longer to be told to walk around the yard carrying a wrench, and to be bawled out when he asked for useful work.

"Why worry about loafing on the hulls?" one Seattle worker asked me. "There's a dozen ships lying out there in the bay, waiting to be outfitted and delivered. Some of them were launched as long ago as the Fourth of July. If they're in such an all-fired hurry, why don't they deliver those?" On the type of ships this yard was building, less than half the work is done when the launching takes place. But it is difficult to explain such slowness as was displayed in fitting out ships from certain West Coast yards.

Another source of dissatisfaction was the slowness of the Maritime Commission in changing over from Liberty cargo ships to the



larger and faster C-2 type. "These Liberty ships are submarine bait," one ship engineer told me. "The shipping industry wants to keep on building them because they are cheaper to run, which means more profits after the war. But they are so slow they can't outrun the submarines. So they've been sunk right and left. Makes more ships for the operators to build," he added cynically.

Subsequently most new contracts have been for C-2 or "Victory" ships. But the change came only some time after the British made a similar shift. One wonders: how many thousands of additional lives might have been lost had it not been necessary to build faster ships in order to compete with the British after the war?

### *Men, Management, Government*

Still other factors have interfered with ship production. One is bad over-all community planning in many places. Not only have lack of housing, transportation and recreational facilities interfered with the hiring and retention of a stable labor force, but even food supplies and feeding facilities have been inadequate. San Francisco's American Federation of Labor Council investigated the food facilities in seven Bay area shipyards. It found that only 15,000 workers out of a total of 176,000 were served lunches, and where food was served it was nutritionally poor and prepared under unsanitary conditions. Two of the four Kaiser yards in Richmond had no eating facilities whatsoever for the workers. Grumbling was prevalent—so much so that a Federal nutrition expert remarked that "the West Coast has been a hot-bed of complaints about inadequate food." Not until the summer of 1943 were steps taken to expand food rations for those doing heavy outdoor work in the yards, and to install new restaurant facilities to get food to workers on the job.

There is an almost universal cynicism in most of the yards, based on the feeling that the shipyard operators are getting huge profits, despite all tax limitations on their incomes. I ran across this in Boston in even stronger form than on the West Coast. A CIO union official told me that in one yard the men believe that management is profiteering on the ships. "When they built the first ship of a certain class," he told me, "they put 10,000 men on it. But 5000 could

have done it just as well—or maybe better. They operate under a 'fixed price' system, where they get 7½ percent of the cost of building ships, including the cost of the material they waste. They set the price on the basis of the first ship they build in each class. The Government may trim it down a little, later on, but the more it costs in the beginning, the more room they have for trimming it. So they make it expensive. They even paid bonuses to the men. Most everyone that worked on that first big ship got a 50 percent bonus on his wages. Now they use bonuses to keep workers quiet about waste, and to discourage them from joining the union. When the union men take off their buttons, their bonuses go up. The whole system stinks. They call it an incentive plan, but as it works out it's nothing but an incentive to loaf."

Shipyard inefficiency, where it exists, can be attributed in part to simple growing pains. No industry can mushroom from near-zero to 120,000 workers (in the Portland area) or 176,000 (around San Francisco Bay) without some dislocation. Furthermore, mass-production methods are still in the experimental stage in shipbuilding. Ten-thousand-ton ships are not adaptable to assembly lines, despite the public illusion that Kaiser is using such methods.

In some yards these problems are gradually working themselves out. Kaiser's Oregon shipyard doubled its production—from nine Liberty ships in July 1942 to eighteen in March 1943—while taking a net loss of 400 workers. But this could not continue indefinitely. In April, Kaiser started a campaign to recruit 40,000 new workers in all parts of the country.

The Government has been guilty of poor planning and faulty allocation of materials to the shipyards, holding up production in some instances and in others going to immense expense to shift steel and parts from one yard to another. The yards get their materials directly through the four regional Maritime Commission construction offices, in Philadelphia, Chicago, New Orleans and Oakland. According to one operator this has resulted in a piling up in some yards of parts which are greatly needed in others. Furthermore, the Washington staff of the Maritime Commission, from Rear Admiral Howard L. Vickery on down, is made up of people with little or no experience in actual ship construction. As a result,

shipbuilding has suffered from a lack of central planning, and most of the ships we are turning out are very expensive.

Management, however, must bear a major responsibility for inefficiency in yards where manpower and materials are being wasted. Under the cost-plus system the operators have no particular incentive to keep costs down. Poor supervision is only one result. In many yards labor, skilled and unskilled, has been "hoarded" against possible future needs, with a disastrous effect on employee morale.

Under present conditions yards working on Navy contracts must use this system, because of frequent changes in specifications. But companies engaged in building cargo ships fall in a different category. Though the operators vociferously deny it, their employees are agreed that cost-plus contracts and labor hoarding go together. As proof of this they cite the case of the Marinship Yard near San Francisco, which fired 2500 out of 20,000 workers when it shifted from cost-plus work on cargo ships to building oil tankers on a contract basis.

A final factor contributing to shipyard inefficiency is the failure of some shipyard unions to go all out for war. On the West Coast, the AFL boilermakers' union has become chiefly a dues-collecting agency; its members have no real sense of participation in its affairs, and resent its high fees and high-handed policies. Although the unions have set high wage standards in the industry, which are good for employee morale, and have adopted a no-strike policy for the duration of the war, some of them, such as the AFL boiler-makers, have refused to accept Negroes into full membership and thus damaged the enthusiasm of colored workers.

Some of the craft unions have also been guilty of practices which should be modified in the interest of wartime efficiency. One Wilmington, Delaware, shipfitter told me that his crew was often idle for two hours at a time, waiting for the rigging crew to do a minor job. He could do such jobs himself in five minutes, he said, and would much prefer to; but if he touched anything in the rigging line the riggers would walk out.



## *What To Do*

If these conditions can be remedied the manpower problem will be partly solved, ship construction will be speeded, and countless lives of American and Allied soldiers will be saved. The following steps are clearly indicated:

1. Government agencies should quickly provide more community facilities—not only housing and transportation, but also shopping, rationing, banking, recreation, nursery and day care facilities in and near the yards.

2. Government control over shipbuilding should be centralized, under the supervision of experts in ship construction. Inspections should be more frequent and painstaking, to prevent wastage of all sorts.

3. Cost-plus contracts should be done away with wherever possible. Where this is not possible, a penalty clause should be included in all contracts so that the operators' profits will be lowered as construction costs increase.

4. Labor and the operators should both participate more wholeheartedly in employee-management plans. Labor should adopt more democratic methods within the unions and abandon craft union disputes for the duration.

If these steps were taken, shipyard efficiency and morale would rise sharply, such problems as absenteeism and labor turnover would diminish in importance, and our ships would be turned out faster and far less expensively than they are today.

## *Trouble In the Aircraft Industry*

In Seattle, I found that the Boeing Aircraft Corporation exemplified another type of unrest—one which is prevalent among workers in many aircraft plants, who feel that their wages are far out of line with rising prices. The Boeing management has failed to adopt a personnel and welfare program comprehensive enough to counterbalance this feeling. The results: a state of morale so low and a rate of labor turnover so high that they actually interfered with the production of Flying Fortresses in the Summer of 1943.

Boeing's four Seattle plants, with 40,000 workers, have done an

efficient job of turning out bombers for the Army for several years. They are proud of their Army-Navy "E," acquired despite a low-wage structure which they inherited from pre-war days. When war broke out the starting wage at Boeing's stood at only 62½ cents an hour. Early in 1942 the AFL machinists' union, which has a closed-shop contract at the bomber plants, asked for a starting wage of 95 cents, arguing that this was necessary if Boeing's was to compete with the shipyards for workers. The union pointed to rising prices, and to the minimum of 94 cents which prevailed in Eastern aircraft plants, to bolster its case. The company favored a compromise which would help to hold its workers: a minimum wage for beginners of 85 cents an hour, increasing gradually to 95 cents after twenty-four weeks' experience. The War Labor Board sat on the case for several months—in fact, until a three-hour demonstration by the Boeing workers forced the issue in February 1942.

The WLB majority opinion, handed down in March, called for a raise of 4½ cents an hour in the minimum bracket, moving it up to 67 cents. The "Little Steel Formula" for keeping wages within 15 percent of the January 1941 level was the basis for the decision.

The four labor members of the Board wrote a dissenting opinion, saying that the rigid application of the Little Steel Formula was not justified and that a raise of at least 10 cents per hour should have been granted to West Coast aircraft plants. Wayne Morse, a public member of the Board, also dissented, saying, "The proposal of the majority for a 4½ cent increase in the basic rate of the Boeing workers as a cost of living adjustment . . . is not adequate. It will not provide an adequate wage increase for the Boeing workers in the light of rates paid for comparable work in the Seattle area. Seattle is one of the high pay areas of the country and that fact should not be ignored in fixing the wage for Boeing employees."

Boeing workers were stunned, having expected a real raise. They complained that even with this raise they would still be getting far less in real wages than they had before the war began. Word got around the plants that the decision was based on a fear of setting a precedent for the \$2-a-day increase that John L. Lewis was demanding, rather than on the Boeing case itself. There was talk of a strike, but the union kept things under control. Indignation was instead channeled into a series of mass meetings.

But labor turnover, which had already been running far above 100 percent a year, increased. Over 300 workers quit in the two days after the WLB decision, and the Boeing plants sustained a net loss in personnel of 345 within a two-week period. More quit on April 23, when the WLB retroactive raise was paid. A year earlier, Boeing was receiving 2800 job applications a week; now the number had dropped to 800, and 2000 applicants were needed weekly to keep up with the production schedule.

Part-time workers, boys of sixteen and girls of seventeen were welcomed in order to swell the labor supply. But turnover was so great that 12,000 workers had to be hired in order to achieve a net gain of 1000.

### *Morale Goes Down As Prices Go Up*

Prices continued to rise, and with them dissatisfaction among the workers. One Boeing employee told me, "The *Times* ran a story on the woman who lost five sons in the war, expectin' everybody to forget what's wrong down at Boeing's. That stuff's gettin' ragged around the edges. When I see that flag-wavin' stuff to cover up a bad situation, it makes my blood boil. . . . Then they run another story about some Boeing worker who makes \$75 a week. I'd sure hate to have to work enough hours to make that \$75 a week. They'd carry you out on a stretcher."

Wages were not the only cause of complaint, although they seemed to be the basic one. Once a negative attitude is established, it seems to spread to all phases of life on the job. One Boeing worker told me, "It's impossible to put your finger on the seat of the trouble here, outside of low wages. There are different things in different shops. Some people are unhappy because they hate the union. Some are mad because they hate the management. All are unhappy because they hate the shift they are working on—no matter which one it is."

The most obvious remedy was a wage raise large enough to offset rising prices and to put the industry on a par with the shipyards. But this was said to be impossible under the terms of the Administration's "hold the line" policy of combating inflation. The lowering of food prices by means of Government subsidies was another



way out; but that this could be done on a large enough scale to restore earlier living standards seemed unlikely to all concerned.

The Boeing management proposed to get around the WLB limitations by establishing a ten-hour day and an average 57½-hour week, which would increase "take-home pay" by 27 percent. But, the union argued that the British experience showed that lengthening the work week to this extent is uneconomic. The accident rate increases with the working hours, and absenteeism and turnover also rise sharply. This was a particular danger at Boeing's since almost half the workers were women, many of them with home responsibilities in addition to their jobs in the plant.

The alternative advocated by some of the union leaders was to make up the difference by a system of incentive wages, granting increases as production went up in the various shops. They also suggested that the company furnish free lunches in the plant, as well as medical care, day nurseries for children of women workers, rationing facilities within each plant and similar concessions that would make wartime living easier and less expensive, even if money wages remained the same.

By July 1943 the problem was still unsolved, and Boeing's was suffering an actual deficit of 9000 workers. Production of much needed Flying Fortresses had now fallen off, and the War Department threatened to cancel \$40,000,000 in Army contracts with smaller companies in the area in order to release workers for the four huge Boeing plants. Joseph B. Keenan, labor vice-chairman of WPB, made a hurried trip to Seattle and got AFL union leaders to agree to the ten-hour day. The local unions, however, voted against the plan almost unanimously.

The Seattle Chamber of Commerce, meanwhile, carried on a recruiting drive for Boeing's in an attempt to avert the loss of war contracts in the smaller industries. Since no housing was available for workers from the outside, Negro and white housewives were sought out to fill the gap, but still not enough workers were available. Some war contracts were withdrawn from other industries, and drafting of aircraft workers was discontinued, but still the labor shortage remained.

This is the way the Boeing workers sized up the situation in mid-July:

"A majority of the Boeing workers think that the worst saboteurs of the war effort are those nincompoops who sat on the WLB panel that awarded us that 4½-cent raise.

"Good God, doesn't the Government realize that production could be maintained even with our reduced personnel if at least 25 percent of the workers weren't trying to get fired? The only way to get released is to be fired with prejudice. And our experienced workers wouldn't want to leave if their wages were on a par with shipyard wages."

"The way my shop figures it, under the two-shift plan we would have to work ten hours and with overtime get paid for eleven, in order to get as much as we would on an eight-hour day anywhere else. And all the time having patriotism shoved down our throats. We're working hard and doing a good job. All we ask is a fair deal.

"The 'white jackets' [supervisory workers] are getting another \$35 raise on August 1. That makes \$85 in raises they've had in the last two years, while the WLB gave us about \$7.80 a month. And the white jackets get two weeks' vacation, while very few of us get even one week. The foremen come back nice and brown, and come rushing into the shop with tales of their fishing and swimming. Makes us sore."

Not a pretty picture, but there it is: bad feeling caused by dissatisfaction over inequalities in the wage structure. Subsequently the War Labor Board recognized the relation between this feeling and labor turnover and raised the minimum wage at Boeing's from 67 to 82½ cents an hour. But much damage was already done.

I have not intended to convey the idea that Boeing's or any other West Coast war industry is about to fall to pieces because of low morale. It is a tribute to the patriotism of the workers and to the mechanical efficiency of our war plants that production goes on pretty much as usual at Boeing's and in the shipyards.

But the war program requires constantly increased production. It is not enough to hold our own on the assembly line, with occasional temporary lapses. We must break production records every month. If we can remove the causes of the discontent in such sore spots as the Boeing plants, we will be well on the road toward waging all-out war on the industrial front.

## *Men Who Dig the Coal*

The coal strike of 1943 also resulted from the feeling that wages were being held down while prices were getting out of control. John L. Lewis, whatever his motives, could not have obtained the following he did had the miners not believed they had good grounds for complaint.

To find out how the miners felt, I visited the coal fields of Southern West Virginia and Eastern Kentucky shortly before the strike. The majority of miners realized that a stoppage would interfere seriously with the war effort. "The way I see it, coal is at the bottom of the whole war," one man told me. "It takes coal to melt the iron ore, and it takes iron and steel to make guns and tanks." The miners did not want to interrupt this process. Nearly all of them were buying war bonds on the payroll allotment plan; house after company house displayed one, two or even three blue or silver stars in the window. A Kentucky miner assured me with deep emotion, "I don't want to do a thing that will hurt our Government. I got a boy in the Army, and I'd hate to see the coal stop coming from the mines even for one day, for fear it might hurt him." Yet this man expressed his firm intention of supporting the union's stand even if it meant a strike. His attitude was typical.

The willingness of the miners to follow John L. Lewis, I found, was traceable to three things: first, a profound faith in the rightness of union policy, a faith which had grown partly out of their hard-won victories in past strikes. The union has raised basic wages in the mines to \$7 a day and has proved the miners' only real protection against the operators. The miners' loyalty, by and large, is to the union itself and to the local leaders rather than the national officers. But Lewis also has a strong personal following—especially in the Southern fields which were most recently organized and which benefited by abolition of the North-South wage differential in 1941.

Second, there was the unanimous feeling that rapidly rising prices make the present wage scale unfair. "We've got to live and feed our kids," the miners said. They did not complain about deductions for war bonds and taxes; but they did see the Victory tax and the 20 percent withholding feature of the new income tax law as cuts in



pay that would force them to live on less and less as time goes on. They were anxious to earn enough to offset these increased inroads on their cash income. When Lewis stated that "The coal miners of America are hungry; they are ill-fed and undernourished, below the standards of their neighbors and other citizens," his words struck a responsive chord. According to the operators themselves, the average miner earned only \$1893 in 1942.

A third reason for the united support given to the union was that most of the miners optimistically believed that the need for coal was such that their demands would have to be met, or some reasonable compromise be made, to keep the mines running. Many of them predicted that the negotiations would continue right up to the deadline, when a settlement would be reached.

### *Again: Prices Going Up*

I went into the coal fields with two preconceived ideas: that Lewis' demands for a \$9 basic wage and an \$8 absolute minimum, if fully realized, would destroy the present wage-and-price control system that is our main protection against inflation; and that a basic wage of \$7 a day was pretty fair pay anyhow, even in this period of rising prices.

The first of these points I believe was well founded. But the "spiral of inflation," I learned, was a mere phrase to nine-tenths of the miners. For them, inflation was already here. One miner told me, "Prices are gettin' so high that a person has a time just a-livin' these days. Ten dollars a day wouldn't be too much." Another added, "We got our children to think of. If we don't beat the cost of living, it'll beat us." The miners conceived of the strike as strictly an economic issue between them and the operators, with the danger of hurting war production only an unfortunate complicating factor.

As for the adequacy of the prevailing \$7 wage, I changed my ideas after witnessing the widespread poverty that still exists in the mining camps. "We could buy more with \$5.60 two years ago than we can with \$7 today," miner after miner declared. Reports that the men are squandering their money are simply unfounded. I saw crowds of people in the stores of Logan, West Virginia, on a Saturday night, but most of them were buying the necessities of life;

and the liquor stores were a good deal less crowded than those of Mobile, Seattle, and other centers of new war industry.

One reason for the continued poverty of the miners lay in the numerous and sizeable deductions made from their pay by the operators. After war bond allotments and Social Security and Victory taxes came out, there were deductions for rent, lights, water, coal; for health, hospital and burial benefits; and for several other items that included, to my surprise, even rentals for the lamps worn by the men and for the explosives they must use in their work. I saw several pay slips on which gross figures of \$80 to \$90 for two weeks' work had been trimmed down by a third to a half. "They got back that last pay raise long ago in bigger 'cuts' and higher prices at the commissary," one miner told me. The workers are no longer paid in "scrip" usable only in the company stores, but most of them are forced to buy a large part of their goods from the company because of lack of time and transportation facilities for trading in the towns. Complaints are widespread of overcharging and violations of price ceilings in the company stores.

Another cause for bitterness among the miners was the lack of overtime pay. In far-away Washington, it had been assumed that the miners were working six days a week, and getting \$10.50 extra pay each week for their Saturday work. This was usually not true. "The operators got their raise of 14 cents a ton to cover time-and-a-half for Saturday work, but they haven't passed it on to us," a West Virginia miner complained. "They only started occasional overtime work a few weeks ago to make a showing at the negotiations." A local union official in Kentucky added, "The operators somehow manage to shut down one day during every week to avoid working us over 35 hours, so they can pay us straight time on Saturdays. Usually they plead a lack of cars; but last week they used as an excuse the funeral of a colored man who hadn't even worked in the mine for the last four years. All Saturday work should be at time-and-a-half." If the miners had been allowed to work six straight days per week, it was obvious that there would have been much better feeling toward the companies. This was hardly an unreasonable desire on their part, especially if the danger of a coal shortage was as great as the newspapers and Harold Ickes claimed.

Still another source of discontent was the shortage of heavy foods

—meat and potatoes—which the hard-working miners need to keep them going. This they blame on “Washington.” One miner asked me, “Don’t they know down there that we got to have plenty of meat to keep us going? You can’t dig coal on cabbage and crackers. And now, to make things worse, you can’t get spuds for love nor money. Something’s wrong somewhere. They better do something pretty soon.”

Agnes Meyer found the same conditions and attitudes in the coalfields near Uniontown, Pa. At the entrance to one mine she asked the men about food conditions. “Look at these lunches,” they said, tearing back the covers of their tin boxes. “No meat in any of them.” One man had two ears of birdseye corn and some chunks of white bread without butter. Butter takes points. Every box had starches, but very few proteins and not enough fats. “On my trip through the country,” said Mrs. Meyer, “I have often been indignant that workers in heavy industry have no more meat rations than I. When I looked into these pathetic lunch boxes, I was ashamed.”

A typical remark, she found, was “Tell those folks in Washington to give us enough to eat at the right prices and we’ll go along. But if they can’t make good, we’ve got to have more money. And we’re not going to wait long for the answer.”

A final important source of bad relations is the extreme squalor prevailing in most of the camps. Unpainted shanties, with muddy yards and streets and practically no sanitary facilities, clutter up the bottomland along every river and creek in the mining districts. The comfortable homes of supervisory employees are usually set apart on “Snob’s Knob,” as the miners term it in one camp near Holden, West Virginia, and they provide a glaring contrast with the miners’ shanties.

Miners’ houses barely large enough for one family are divided into duplexes; the coal-streaked faces of unkempt children peer through every window and around every door when a stranger approaches. I visited one house in a company town near Hazard, Kentucky, and saw holes in the rough board floor and around the doors big enough to stuff my hand through. The miner’s wife told me that on windy days it was impossible to keep the house warm, even with coal fires in both the fireplace and the kitchen stove. She



was doing the family wash when I called; there being no laundry facilities, she heated the water in a tub over a coal fire in the muddy yard. This tiny house, sheltering a family of seven, cost its inhabitants about \$30 a month, including light, water and coal. That may not seem high to a city dweller but considering the quality of the house and the lower rent formerly charged for it, it was exorbitant. In some camps the miners are charged a set rate for coal each month, regardless of whether they need or get it. Little grievances such as these are often the ones that rankle the most.

It should be noted that conditions are not uniformly bad in the camps. I saw some, at Seco and in the Jenkins district of Eastern Kentucky, that looked fairly well-kept. One camp at Holden has a swimming pool which is open to those miners and their families who can pass a health test. In Harlan County, long an anti-union stronghold with its captive mines, I am told that showers have been installed at some mine entrances. The miners appreciate these benefits, but they still look to their union for basic guidance and support.

### *Strike Post-Mortem*

After my return I wrote, "If the Federal Government finds it necessary to take over the mines in order that war industries can be kept going, all indications are that the men will gladly go back to work pending a final settlement. They put Uncle Sam above John L. Lewis, and the great majority of them have an unshakable faith in the justness of their Government." This prediction was borne out when President Roosevelt ordered Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes to take over the mines. Lewis had to send his men back to work; he could not defy Government in wartime.

If the Government had really taken over operation of the mines for the duration, and immediately offered the miners an agreement embodying a guaranteed six-day week and an end to the various archaic deductions—a concession later granted by the WLB—the men would probably have reacted so favorably that Lewis would have had to end the strike. The Government's labor policy would have been immensely strengthened, and anti-labor legislation might have been avoided. But instead, delay and bickering carried the day, and everybody lost—the miners, the operators, the Government

and the people. By the time the miners straggled back from their third strike, 2,000,000 tons of coal and close to 100,000 tons of steel had been lost to war production. Because of John L. Lewis' uncompromising stand, it had become an issue of whether one union leader was more powerful than the United States Government. An enraged Congress passed anti-strike legislation, and the miners became more embittered than ever when they were the law's first victims.

The coal workers certainly deserved some concessions. They do some of the hardest, most dangerous work in the nation; in 1942 alone, 75,000 men were killed or injured in the mines. Furthermore, they earn less than workers in many new war industries. Eventually some wage adjustment will have to be made for the miners' benefit, but unless the ceiling on wages is lifted it can only come through a court decision on the issue of paying the men for "travel time," as is the practice in other types of mines. The WLB twice turned down travel time proposals, rightly labeling them hidden wage increases. Though technically correct, this did not make the miners feel any better. They will not work willingly and efficiently until they are convinced that Uncle Sam has their interests at heart. Two things can be done to convince the miners of this without disturbing the anti-inflation policy: more drastic price control; and an investigation of living conditions in the mining camps, followed by corrective legislation within a few months.

### *Strikes On the Increase*

Strikes in wartime, though undeniably a serious problem, are usually given an exaggerated importance by our press and radio. The fact is, the 3000 strikes that occurred in 1942 involved 825,000 workers, while in 1917—the corresponding year of World War I—there were 4,450 strikes involving 1,227,000 workers. Idleness due to strikes in 1942 amounted to 4,225,000 man-days of work; but this was only one-twentieth of one percent of the total time worked. Our experience compared favorably with that of the British, who with a third of our population lost 1,530,000 man-days of work through strikes in 1942. By way of comparison, in the same year

industrial accidents cost us 110,000,000 man-days of work in America, or twenty-five times as many as strikes.

But in 1943 strikes began to increase. During and just after the coal controversy a rash of walkouts suddenly appeared all over the country. The fact that Lewis defied the War Labor Board and got away with it encouraged workers in many places to follow his example, despite the no-strike policy of both the AFL and the CIO. In April, 200,000 workers were involved in new strikes—almost three times as many as in the previous month. In May, with the first coal strike, the figure jumped to 620,000 workers, and in June to 950,000 workers. The number of man-days lost in June was 4,750,000, or more than during the entire year of 1942. Here is one reason for the lag in war production in May and June.

### *Anti-Labor Legislation Boomerangs*

Some walkouts occurred for trivial and inexcusable reasons. Several wildcat strikes over the employment of Negroes or, in one case, over the disciplining of a group of workers found "shooting craps" in a lavatory of the Ford Motor Company's Highland Park plant, were of this type. Most strikes, however, grow out of conditions which must be remedied—or at least bettered—before we can be sure of labor peace and all-out production.

The Connally-Smith Act is a case in point. Inspired by antagonism for John L. Lewis, the Senate passed a bill giving the President power to take over and operate struck war plants, outlawing strikes in Government-operated plants and providing penalties for those who advocate them, and giving the War Labor Board the power to subpoena witnesses for its hearings. Then the bill went to the House of Representatives, where Representative Howard Smith tacked onto it a list of anti-labor proposals he had been advocating unsuccessfully for several years. As finally passed, it includes a provision requiring unions to give thirty-day notice before striking. Under this provision, any union in war industry which tries seriously to negotiate with a tough employer is forced to threaten a strike in advance. Every time a contract comes up for renewal or a minor dispute reaches a stalemate there is apt to be a strike notice, if only to prove that the union is in earnest about



its demands. The law thus actually encourages strikes, rather than discouraging them. Another Smith-sponsored provision is to prevent labor unions from making financial contributions to political campaigns. This has the effect of making it hard for the working man to make sizeable contributions to a political party or candidate, while the wealthy man continues to do so without difficulty.

President William Green of the AFL called this legislation "un-American, fascist and anti-labor." The effect of its passage was to stir up resentment among labor leaders, even though Gallup polls had indicated that the public approved of every provision in the bill.

Anti-labor bills have also been passed in the States of Texas, Kansas, Arkansas, Mississippi, South Dakota, Colorado and Idaho. With the encouragement provided by the Smith-Connally Act, other States are moving in the same direction, using the war as a blind for hamstringing labor.

Instead of clamping down a lid, the practical and scientific approach is to deal with the causes of the trouble. First of all, the Federal Government needs to put real teeth in the over-all planning of the war program, through its Office of War Mobilization. This means a more effective policy of price control, calculated at forcing runaway prices back into line. It means a wage policy which will be consistent with prices, so that the worker will feel he is getting a square deal. It means a firmer, clearer policy with regard to the full use of manpower in war industry.

Federal labor agencies also need to be more adequately staffed and financed, so that they can act more promptly. Six to eight months of waiting for a decision is hard on labor morale. Then too, the WLB should intervene and arrange for arbitration of disputes where management has lost the confidence of labor. With the passage of the Connally-Smith Act, the WLB declared it to be the responsibility of employers and unions to set up adequate grievance machinery providing for arbitration of all unsettled disputes, so that strikes will not occur despite the legal sanction placed on them by the Act. And in August the President armed the WLB with a new set of teeth—the power to withhold union privileges from workers and priority rights to employers who ignore WLB orders.

Last, but far from least, a closer Federal watch should be main-

tained over Government war contracts, in order to eliminate inefficiency and profiteering from war industry as far as possible.

These steps by the Government would help, but would not complete the job. For the basic cause of unrest is the decline in real wages—money wages as compared with prices—and under the inflation-control program such adjustments in flat wage rates as are possible are not enough to solve the problem. The only answer, since the OPA is evidently emasculated for the duration, would seem to be the widespread adoption of incentive wage plans. These would allow workers to earn more as they produce more, and would also provide full motivation for all-out war production.

### *Cleveland: What Can Be Done*

Two industries in Cleveland show the possibilities of the incentive pay plan. A pioneer in this field is the Lincoln Electric Company, which employs 1300 men and women, and which produces half of the arc-welding equipment in the country and a quarter of all that is produced in the world. Lincoln Electric's employees are the highest paid workers in the industry, with bonuses averaging 100 percent paid to them each December. At the end of 1942, a punch-press operator earning \$2600 got a bonus check for \$2800; and an armature winder whose salary totaled \$1800 found a check for another \$1800 in his Christmas pay envelope. These were typical examples. In 1942 the total bonus was \$3,000,000, averaging \$2300 per worker and making the average worker's income well over \$5000 for the year.

According to James F. Lincoln, president of the company, this is just "intelligent selfishness" on his part. For his workers turned out \$30,000 worth of products per capita in 1942, or three times as much as the workers in the plant of his nearest competitor.

Lincoln Electric is strictly a non-union shop; it is, in fact, anathema to the Cleveland local of the electrical workers' union. But Mr. Lincoln says he's had his own collective bargaining system ever since 1914: an advisory board of factory workers, one selected from each department every year, for a one-year term. This committee determines factory policy as far as working conditions are concerned and even sets the annual bonus rate. The amount of

production on which wages are figured for the individual worker is determined by a scientific time-study.

The unions object to this sort of incentive payment as impractical for most mass-production industries, where assembly-line methods are used. Labor leaders refer to individual incentive payments as a "stretch-out" or "speed-up" system. But in the true speed-up the base on which the bonus is computed is continually being raised as the worker becomes more efficient, so that he works harder and harder without being paid in full proportion to his increased production. This is not the case at Lincoln Electric. Lincoln workers seem to be well satisfied, turnover and absenteeism are negligible, and more than half of the employees own stock in the company.

For the ultimate example of how a bonus system can be combined with benevolent paternalism to produce high morale, however, you should visit the Jack and Heintz plants at Bedford, just outside of Cleveland. This company makes plane starters and automatic pilots for the Government. It first became nationally famous when the House Naval Affairs Committee hauled it over the coals for paying extravagant salaries and bonuses to its employees—\$39,000 a year to a secretary, for example. Bill Jack, the president of the firm, defended this particular salary by saying that the person involved was not merely a girl stenographer, but virtually an executive in the company who had been with him for twenty-five years. But the company voluntarily reduced such out-of-line salaries after this unfavorable publicity.

When the whole story came out, it was apparent that Jack and Heintz did more for its workers than any company in the nation—and made it pay dividends to all concerned: the company, the workers and the Government. Morale was tops, and production costs were the lowest in the industry. Not only were Jack and Heintz's wages the highest on record, but also they were augmented by free life insurance policies, free wrist watches and even free Christmas turkeys. Nor was that all. The company furnished free hot lunches to its workers daily—balanced meals, with vitamin tablets on the side. Hot coffee was on tap at all times in the plant, and doughnuts were served once a shift—also free. Once a month Bill Jack put on a banquet for his "associates," as he calls them, in the Cleveland Auditorium—the only building large enough to hold



them all. The company also furnished uniforms for use on the job, first aid and emergency dental treatment, health centers, two-week vacations with pay at company-leased cottages in Florida, and numerous other benefits—all free. Many an employer tore his hair at the publicity all this received.

Bill Jack himself puts in sixteen to eighteen hours of work a day, often sleeping in the plant. He mixes constantly with his 7600 “associates,” knows thousands of them by their first names and often speaks to them informally over a loudspeaker system. He watches over them like a mother. When he noticed that some of his employees were having trouble with their feet, he immediately arranged to sell them the same type of \$15 shoes that he wears, at \$7.50, the wholesale price. Foot trouble has practically disappeared. Jack also gives his “associates” music with their work, advises them on their income taxes and domestic problems, and does everything possible otherwise to make them happy.

The rates of pay throughout the Jack and Heintz plants are fantastically high. Individual production is not checked—production by shops determines the wage. But the workers see to it that no one lags. The ordinary semi-skilled machine operator, working the usual forty hours of overtime per week, gets about \$7,600 per year in cash, to say nothing of extras. A woman production worker ordinarily earns \$125 a week—and more often than not puts \$100 of it into war bonds. But the “associates” work hard for these salaries. Jack himself says, “My associates are working twelve hours a day and seven days a week and keeping healthy at it. Our experience has been the opposite of all authorities on fatigue. And the secret of it is that people don’t get tired if they are happy on the job, if they know they are not slaves, if they feel important where they are. Get rid of fear and you get rid of fatigue. My associates are not afraid of any foreman coming up behind and watching if they stop work to get a cup of coffee. The fellow who sweeps the floor knows that he is just as important in his place as I am in mine.”

Despite these seeming extravagances, Jack and Heintz has driven its competitors almost wild. Some of them call Bill Jack “crazy.” But they admit he sells his products for 10 to 40 percent less than any of them, yet makes more money than anyone in the business. The reason: simply, high morale. There are no time clocks in the

Jack and Heintz plants, but they are not needed, for when a worker is late he is greeted by a "wolf-howl" from his fellow workers that he won't soon forget. Absenteeism runs less than one percent, even in the coldest part of the winter; and unauthorized absences totaled only five one-hundredths of one percent early in 1943. "One for all, and all for one" is the company's motto.

Labor turnover is also negligible at Jack and Heintz. Mr. Jack says, "I haven't fired twenty people since we started nearly three years ago. I hear from Washington that labor turnover runs around 72 percent a year, nationally. But while other people are having manpower trouble, I have a list of over 30,000 people waiting to work for me."

Even the union likes Bill Jack; he is a former union organizer himself and he signed a union contract two weeks after he opened his Cleveland plant. He thinks unions are fine. But he goes them one better—not only on wages but on job security as well. For the company has been pouring 80 percent of its net profits into a post-war reserve fund, by means of which it promises to keep all employees on a forty hour week at full pay while the plants are being retooled for civilian production. This fund totaled nearly \$2,000,000 by the spring of 1943.

Perhaps the best tribute to Jack and Heintz was paid by none other than James F. Lincoln of Lincoln Electric. In a letter to the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* he wrote that it is easy to double production "if cooperation, such as Jack and Heintz have gotten, can be obtained. If such cooperation is gotten every manufacturer will be making profits similar to Jack and Heintz on present contract prices."

Not every war plant can be like Lincoln Electric or Jack and Heintz, of course. These two are far ahead of their times. But they do show how production can be vastly increased, and wages raised, by two devices: incentive wages or bonuses for efficient production, and good employee-management relations.

### *How Incentive Wages Work*

The incentive wage is nothing new. It was formerly called the "piece-work" system, and at one time it prevailed throughout most

of America's manufacturing industries. Abuses were numerous, as noted earlier, and when unions were organized a day-rate payment was usually substituted for piece-work. Today some sort of piece-work or incentive system is used in many—but considerably less than half—of our war industries. The newer incentive systems provide safeguards against the old "stretch-out" abuses, however; most of them are on a shop or plant basis rather than an individual basis, and basic rates of pay are not cut as production increases.

Our total war output could be increased by 20 to 30 percent by the use of incentive wages, according to authorities in Government and industry. In four aluminum extrusion plants which had slowed up production in the aviation industry, an incentive wage plan stepped up the work by 20 percent. In other industries the plan has increased production by 26 to 50 percent. If only 20 percent more goods were produced in our war industries, this would mean a much faster rate of arming ourselves and our allies, a quicker end to the war, and the saving of many lives. Or if the manpower shortage becomes extremely acute, it would mean that at least three million war workers could be released to the armed forces without cutting production.

Furthermore, incentive wages are not inflationary in nature. They mean higher wages without a corresponding increase in production of consumer goods; but as production rises, proportionately fewer workers are needed, thereby releasing manpower for non-war production.

Many unions already swear by the incentive system, since it means higher wages and morale for their workers. One is the United Auto Workers' local in the Toledo Electric Auto Lite plant, where production is up 25 percent under the incentive system. Another is Murray Corporation of America at Detroit, where production of aircraft parts has risen by 50 percent since an incentive plan was installed early in 1943. The CIO United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers' union, covering 90 percent of the electrical industry, reports that most of its 400,000 members are paid on an incentive basis. Officials of this union say they are sold on the incentive idea. They estimate that it has raised production and pay by 25 percent where it has been used. Under the union's contracts,



production standards and pay rates can be changed only by agreement with union representatives, and wage increases are granted on a plant-wide basis. This avoids undue pressure on the individual worker, and gives white-collar employees a chance to share in the incentive wage melon. And it works.

Some industrialists oppose the incentive wage idea. Charles Sorenson, Ford executive, has declared that it constitutes "a bribe to labor," and was not the right approach in getting more efficiency from Ford workers. But most employers favor the incentive scheme as the only way to get full production out of the "marginal workers" who have recently been attracted to war industry.

The War Labor Board has placed its stamp of approval on an incentive wage system in the case of 1600 employees of the National Automotive Fibres plant in Detroit. The plan, submitted jointly by the CIO auto workers' union and the management, provides for increased wages (up to 35 percent, to allow for readjustment when technological changes occur.) The War Production Board also favors wage incentives. But no clear-cut Federal policy on the incentive plan has been adopted, as this is written.

If a ceiling is maintained on wage rates, most unions will soon come around to this plan as the only way of getting wage adjustments. And if the new wage system continues to demonstrate its worth, recalcitrant industrialists will follow suit.

The only alternative to the incentive wage plan, as a means of averting labor unrest over wages while avoiding inflationary consequences, is an arrangement whereby wages are tied to the cost of living. George Soule has suggested that blanket wage increases might be given periodically to all workers to match the rise in living costs since January 1941, with the surplus pay going into war bonds. Employees would not be able to cash these bonds until the war is over. Farmers, corporations and other non-employees would be pledged likewise to put a similar portion of their income into war bonds. This scheme, if it could be made to work, might help to satisfy the wage earner. But it would not increase production to the same degree as the incentive wage system.

## *Other Ways to Increase Production*

The incentive plan ties in closely with another basic reform that is needed to raise industrial morale: better relations between management and labor. The War Production Board has long been campaigning for the establishment of labor-management production committees, and by the spring of 1943 about 2300 of them were functioning. But only about 5,000,000 war workers—a quarter of the total—are represented on such committees.

In an earlier chapter I have described the excellent work done by labor-management committees in the St. Louis electrical industry and in the General Motors Corporation. But many war plants have not approved this reform. The Ford Motor Company has held out against it, which may account for some of the friction which has developed in its plants. Officials of the Ford unions have stated that production could be boosted 20 percent if labor-management committees were established. R. J. Thomas, president of the United Auto Workers' union, says, "There is no better man to tell you how to get more production than the man on the job. Properly operated labor-management committees will increase it greatly."

In one war plant where labor relations were bad and production was lagging, officials said that employees "are putting in eight hours a day and working about six." They claimed that the plant could be producing "25 percent more war goods easily." WPB officials who looked into the matter said that production could be increased by rearranging machines in the plant and making other "management changes." One WPB investigator added, "I think it is probable that an improvement of production of from 20 to 30 percent is possible if there is complete cooperation between labor and management."

Since the war began, labor-management committees have made half a million suggestions on how to increase production, and 50,000 of these have been so good as to win local honors from WPB. The committees also facilitate the ironing out of minor difficulties before they reach the dangerous stage. And they have resulted in cutting down absenteeism and in improving working conditions, with consequent benefits to employee morale.

Employee-management cooperation will speed up certain badly-

needed reforms in our war plants. One improvement in working conditions that seems inevitable, as food shortages and rationing become more drastic, is in-plant feeding. The Department of Labor has found that thousands of workers have no hot food during working hours, and thousands of others eat in the open or in unsanitary rest rooms, many with only fifteen minutes to gulp their lunches. Since some workers live in boarding houses or dormitories and cannot bring their lunches, they must eat short rations or go hungry. Discontent and absenteeism result.

The Labor Department has recommended the establishment of restaurants or the use of hot food trucks to bring lunches to the workers. If prices continue to rise, many war plants may even feed their workers free, as Jack and Heintz and a few other plants are already doing, as a means of keeping living standards up to the minimum necessary for effective work.

For as the food situation grows worse, getting a balanced diet for our war workers will be more than a matter of welfare or morale; it will be a matter of production. Some of our big industries have already come to realize this. Douglas Aircraft has a total of eighteen cafeterias employing a total of 1000 people and serving 100,000 meals per day at cost—35 cents for a complete dinner. To get the food for this service, Douglas has been scouring the country by plane. More Federal attention to this matter of getting food to the worker is essential.

Here is what Donald W. Douglas, head of the industry, told Mrs. Agnes Meyer: "There isn't a doubt in my mind that we shall have to come to communal feeding of the war workers, especially if we want married women to work. As our workers come from every direction, I believe communal feeding should start in the factories. It would be better not to have the Government do it, as the factory management would probably do the better job. We shall gladly undertake the responsibility of feeding our people if the Government will guarantee that we can get the materials. The sooner this is done, the better for all concerned."

Great Britain has long required all plants with 250 or more employees to install cafeteria facilities. We must follow suit. We should also have community eating facilities in all of our large war housing projects. To accomplish this, war plants and projects need



priorities on kitchen and dining room equipment and an adequate supply of food. Only by focusing Federal attention on this question can we expect to keep morale and war production at a high level.

Finally, increased labor participation in the Government end of the war program is needed, in order to give the workers confidence in the way production is being handled. For a time, Sidney Hillman of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers' union was a co-chairman of the Office of Production Management. But during 1942 and the first half of 1943, labor had no such representation—and felt very much out of things. The appointment of Clinton S. Golden of the CIO as coordinator of manpower and production, and of Joseph D. Keenan of the AFL as a vice-chairman of the War Production Board, represented a move in the right direction. For only by full labor participation in the planning of war production, both in government and in industry, can all-out production be attained.

## 10: MANPOWER, LTD.

A SIGN in the window of a Washington, D. C. store said: "Help Wanted—High Salaries, short hours, quick promotion, 6-day week, vacation with pay. No experience necessary. . . . Uniforms furnished and laundered free. Apply at any People's Drug Store." A department store display ad in the help wanted section of the evening paper read, "Excellent opportunities for boys, girls, men and women, 16 to 65, in all departments of the store. High wages, short hours, vacations with pay, good opportunities for advancement. Call or telephone."

In Toledo, a chain of grocery stores stuffed handbills advertising for women workers into every shopping bag. "*An Opportunity for You with Us!*" the slip announced. "We need women for grocery managers, clerks, and many other jobs. Experience not necessary—you *earn* while you *learn!* It's patriotic to work and help relieve the critical manpower shortage. Full time or part time work available."

And up in New Britain, Connecticut, a restaurant owner named

Miro Grubisch was reported to be paying wages ranging from \$54 a week for dishwashers to \$80 a week, board and 10 percent of the profits to the top member of his staff. He had also taken over a house for his family and employees to live in, he said, and supplied his help with three gallons of wine and a case of beer daily to hold them on his payroll. "It's a disgrace when dishwashers make more than I do," he complained.

If an unemployed worker, model 1933, could be picked up out of the past and transported to the middle of an American war boom town of today, he would find what he saw hard to believe. We have come a long way. It took a war to do it; but today our problem is a growing shortage of workers, instead of a surplus.

With close to eleven million young men and women in the services, we have managed to keep our labor force within two million of the pre-war figure. In June 1940 we had 56.2 million workers, but only 47.6 million of them were employed. In June 1943 we had only 54.6 million workers, but 53.4 million of them had jobs. Unemployment had dropped from over eight million to about one million—a rock bottom figure, allowing for job shifts and temporary shut-downs. These are Census Bureau estimates.

What had happened was this:

1. Seven million men had entered the armed forces.
2. Close to three million young boys and old men who were not working or seeking work in 1940 had taken jobs by 1943.
3. The total number of men in the labor force declined by four million in the three-year period.
4. Two million women who had not worked before had taken jobs.

But the pinch was on. War Manpower Commissioner Paul McNutt said in July 1943 that our armed forces and war industries would need 3,600,000 more men and women within a year. He expected most of these—2,300,000—to shift from non-war activities to war work. The remainder would have to be recruited among people not now working, mainly women. The average work week was slated to rise from 46.9 to 48 hours throughout the nation. If all this is not accomplished, both war production and the size of our armed forces may suffer; and this in turn would probably mean a longer war.

## *Gripping and Uncertainty*

In my trip to the four corners of the country, I heard more criticism of the Government's manpower policy—or lack of it—than of any aspect of the war Administration, save possibly the rationing program. Farmers were angry because the draft had taken some of their hired hands and war industries many more of them. Industrialists were dismayed because the draft had taken some really essential technicians from their plants and were worried lest it might take more. Workers were disgruntled at the hoarding of manpower by many war industries and were resentful of the lack of a uniform policy by the draft boards. And everywhere, young men and women were asking, "Why don't they make up their minds? We don't know whether to buy a house or not, or whether to have another baby or not, because we can't find out whether the draft will split us up or not. If we could only know just where we stand, so we could plan, what a relief it would be!"

It was impossible, of course, in the first days of the war to foresee exactly how big an army or how many war workers we would need. But we had no manpower policy for more than a year after Pearl Harbor. True, three million or so workers were trained for war jobs; but of over-all direction and planning, there was none. The War Manpower Commission was expected to make policy, but Chairman Paul McNutt said, "Experience has demonstrated that we have to become an operating agency." In other words, he didn't have the presidential backing to do the job that had to be done.

Not until February of 1943 did the War Manpower Commission take its first real step toward dealing with the larger manpower problem by withdrawing draft deferments from men in sixty-five clearly nonessential occupations. Subsequently the WMC announced that pre-Pearl Harbor fathers were to be drafted unless they were in war industries. But uncertainty as to how many fathers would be required in the Army still remained, for there was still sharp disagreement in Government circles over how fast our armed forces should be built up to the estimated maximum of ten to eleven million.

To top it off, Chairman McNutt of the War Manpower Com-



mission still lacked authority fully to handle manpower questions in war plants, for they remained in the control of the Army.

### *Manpower Goes to Waste*

The industrial manpower question stares you in the face in every city where war goods are being produced in quantity. Yet manpower is still going to waste in every city and town in the nation. In earlier chapters I have described the poor morale and high rate of turnover that result from such conditions. In the mushroom period of expansion there was some excuse for disorganization in certain industries. But that period is over. Economy of operation is increasingly important as manpower becomes increasingly precious.

This means that the shipyards and other industries that have hired workers in huge numbers, or hoarded them in order to guard against future labor shortages, should be called to account, and their records compared, to determine which plants are least efficient. Closer inspection should be maintained to make sure that idleness on the job is cut to a minimum. If such idleness is due to poor management, some penalty should be assessed against the employer; if it is due to individual laziness or indifference, the idlers should be fired. A few such firings would be excellent morale-builders. One of management's commonest complaints is that workers are no longer motivated by the desire to hold a job, because they know that they are likely to be kept on under almost any circumstances. As a result, the pace of production in a whole shop or department may be held back by a few workers who just don't care. A little housecleaning from time to time would be welcomed by a great majority of workers.

Even in war production centers able-bodied young men are still driving taxis, operating elevators, clerking in stores, working in filling stations and waiting on tables in restaurants. In New York there was the amazing spectacle of the milk truck drivers going on strike because they objected to cutting down milk deliveries to every other day—for fear the number of jobs would diminish. Unemployment persisted among Negroes, Mexicans and aliens, even in cities where employers cried to the high heavens about lack of

manpower. Subsistence farmers in backward areas stayed put because Congress had vetoed the Farm Security Administration program for moving them to sections of the country where they were needed.

The U.S. Employment Service and the War Manpower Commission have conscientiously tried to get employers to utilize Negroes, women and part-time workers in most localities. They have not been completely successful. Racial and sex lines have all too often been drawn by employers regardless of the advice of these Federal agencies. The various racial minorities have, however, been gradually absorbed in employment to such an extent that they no longer constitute large pools of reserve labor.

The workers who will be drawn into industry as replacements of drafted men will now have to come mainly from two remaining sources: women not now working, and men who are already employed in white collar jobs but who will be willing to work an extra half-shift in the evening or early morning. Absenteeism and labor turnover will of necessity be higher in these two groups than among experienced full-time workers; but this is something which will simply have to be reckoned with. As one manpower official put it: "We're at the bottom of the manpower barrel, but fortunately it is a big barrel with a big bottom. There's enough there, but we're going to have to scrape around to get it."

### *Womanpower Available*

We have hardly begun to tap our womanpower resources, though the statistics look encouraging at first glance. In December, 1940, we had ten million women in nonagricultural work; in April 1943, fourteen million. In 8000 war plants surveyed by the War Manpower Commission in the spring of 1943, total employment had risen 17 percent in the preceding half year, but women's employment had gone up 69 percent. In ship-building total employment was up 43 percent, and women's employment up 164 percent, over a period of a year. In Detroit and Baltimore, where the manpower situation was tight, the number of women employed doubled in a six-month period; in Buffalo, it more than tripled in an eight-month period.

And yet something was wrong. For the women's labor force as a whole had practically stopped growing in the six months after November 1942. Women were leaving other industries, rather than leaving their kitchens, for war work. This explains the fact that in Detroit and other cities the greatest problem is to get employees for the stores, restaurants and laundries that are needed to serve war workers, rather than to get people for the war plants themselves.

Plenty of additional women can be drawn into war work. On the basis of a poll in March 1943, Dr. George Gallup estimated that 8.8 million additional women would take jobs in war plants immediately if they were personally asked to do so. Many of these women were already working, of course. But there were also 2,300,000 married women with children under ten years of age who were not working and who would be willing to take war jobs, if some provision were made for the care of their children during working hours. In the war production centers alone there were 900,000 single women and 3,500,000 married women not now employed, who said they would take jobs in war plants.

The Department of Labor has pointed out that women are equipped to do almost any war job not requiring heavy lifting or physical strain, with a minimum of training. For example:

If a woman has sewed on buttons or made buttonholes on a machine, she can learn to do tack welding.

If she has ever sliced peaches at home, she can do cannery work.

If she's made garments on an electric sewing machine, she can sew canvas hatch covers.

If she's done fine embroidery or made jewelry, she can learn radio tube or control instrument assembly.

If she's used an electric mixer in her kitchen, she can learn to run a drill press.

If she's driven a car, she can drive a small plant truck.

If she's been a store clerk or had charge of a table at a church fair or charity bazaar, she can learn to work in the tool crib or the storeroom.

If she's packed her husband's suitcase, she can learn to pack equipment in lifeboats.

If she's taken household gadgets apart and put them together again, she can learn to assemble small parts for airplanes.



If she's replaced blown-out fuses in her home or repaired an electric toaster, she can learn to be an electrician's helper.

If she's hung her own curtain rods and repaired her own window screens, she can learn to be a carpenter's helper.

Portland, Oregon, has demonstrated better than almost any other city how women can be used to keep war production humming. The proportion of women employed in Portland's shipyards is probably five times as great as in any other shipbuilding area. By the summer of 1943, according to the *Oregon Journal*, 25,000 women were working in Portland's various war industries. Mrs. Jane Martin, women's coordinator at Kaiser's Oregon shipyard, said,

"We have women in almost every craft and department doing the job that men have previously done and doing it successfully. We have women crane operators that are doing an excellent job of lifting steel plates, angle irons, frames and so on, and putting them in places to be fitted and welded into large units. Some of these units weigh up to 56 tons. We have shipfitters that can fit pieces together with exactness and speed. They have come in as helpers and learned this work in a comparatively short time.

"There are jobs everyone has heard about and others that you may never hear about, yet they are all a part of the finished ship—the hundreds of sweepers, for instance, who keep the yard clean and orderly, the janitresses that clean the offices and yard rest-rooms, the waitresses that work in the cafeterias, keeping the tables clean. That is not a glamorous job, yet it must be done."

Portland was looking ahead, however, to the time when it would need almost twice this number of women workers. Jobs were already available for 5000 more women, according to the U.S. Employment Service. A thousand women were needed for welding jobs, 500 for other shipyard work, 2000 for work in food canneries, 250 for railroad work and smaller numbers for other industries. Employment officials were casting a wistful eye on Portland's 1700 school teachers, who were off for the summer, hoping that most of them would take jobs in canneries.

## *A Million Children On the Loose*

Our war housing program has done yoeman's service in meeting housing needs, with 1,100,000 units completed by the summer of 1943. But by the middle of 1944 another million families were expected to migrate to the war centers, and with the public housing program already far short of needs in many booming cities, the biggest challenge remains to be met. Only if modern housing is provided in close proximity to war plants will the wives of war workers be able to help fill in the gaps in our essential industries.

Charles P. Taft, Director of Community War Services for the Federal Security Agency, has said that before the war is over we will need 18,500,000 women in war industries—four million more than were in nonagricultural work in August 1943. But before this tremendous reserve of womanpower can be used to the fullest extent, facilities will have to be provided for the care of at least a million children. Under the Lanham Act, which requires matching of funds by local communities for child care facilities, this work has gone all too slowly. Only \$9,000,000 had been spent for 2000 nursery schools and over a thousand day care centers for 160,000 children since the war began.

In 1943 Senator Thomas of Utah introduced a bill to appropriate an additional \$20,000,000 for day nurseries and day care of older children. It provided for the use of private as well as public schools and institutions for this purpose. It would make possible for the first time the use of all local resources for child care. This legislation would be a good start, but only that, for three to five times \$20,000,000 would be needed to care for a million children of working mothers. The Senate passed the bill, but it was turned down by the House budget committee.

Child care is essential not only to release mothers for war jobs, but also to maintain the morale of those already at work. The story of war town "door-key children," who are on the loose after school hours and in vacation time, is too well known to need repeating. With juvenile delinquency rising rapidly in war centers (though not in the nation as a whole), the mothers of these children will inevitably worry while they are on the job and will frequently take time off from work. The fact that arrests of girls un-

der twenty-one were 55 percent higher in 1942 than the average for the three preceding years is in itself reason enough to provide for more adequate supervision of teen-age children of working mothers.

We also need to provide transportation and convenient housing, shopping and rationing facilities if women with some home responsibilities are to be attracted to war jobs in sufficient numbers to meet our needs. And for those who cannot spare eight hours a day away from home, the way should be opened for four-hour split shifts, either morning or afternoon, in our war plants.

After the war is over, many women will be willing and even glad to go back to their homes. But millions will prefer staying at work, keeping the new independence they have earned. A Gallup poll of women war workers in May 1943 showed that 56 percent definitely planned to continue working after the war, and another 13 percent were undecided. Of the married women, 35 percent wanted to keep on working. Some firms, like Jack and Heintz of Cleveland, have made it clear in hiring women workers to replace drafted men that such jobs were to be terminated when the service men returned. But many of these women, once having had a taste of financial independence, will seek other jobs. Unless we utilize their energies, we may see an unemployment crisis and a controversy in which returned service men will exert pressure to eliminate all married women from civilian jobs.

### *The Short Shifters*

I have already described how some factories in New England and on the West Coast are conserving manpower by employing part-time workers—housewives and persons with white collar jobs—to overcome labor shortages. This, unfortunately, is not the rule; in many areas it has hardly begun. A Chicago school teacher complained to me that he had in effect been denied a place in the war effort. He pointed out that his services were needed in the school system, but that he would be only too glad to put in an extra four hours in the evening in a war plant. He wanted to contribute more directly to the war effort and he needed the extra money. But he had not been able to find any part-time job in war industry. A few



retail stores were hiring part-time salesmen; but war plants—no. Where, asked the teacher, was the manpower shortage?

In many cities and towns, however, white collar workers—and housewives too—are now doing part-time war work. Everywhere I inquired about this plan I found that an ad for “short shifters” brought a deluge of applicants—more than could be hired, without exception. And the plan has worked well when it has been tried, as it has in wartime Britain. “The results in this plant are most gratifying,” said an official of Woonsocket’s Taft-Peirce Manufacturing Company to a writer for the *Christian Science Monitor*. “If we had the machinery available we could put two hundred more men right to work. We have a waiting list of more than fifty right now.” Armand H. Demers of Woonsocket, clerks all day at one of the largest Franco-American fraternal organizations in the country. At night he operates a surface grinder in the Taft-Peirce plant. “My wife,” he says, “will have to tend our victory Garden this year. I won’t have the time.” He works from five-thirty to eleven each night, and likes it.

In the same plant, William Dion runs a milling machine each night. In fact, he works a full shift, quitting at 3:30 A.M. Then he opens his barber shop at ten o’clock next morning. “Yes,” he says, “I put in a straight 105 hours a week, and I’m feeling great.”

One of the busiest of “short shifters” is Angus J. Kennedy, Rhode Island State Representative, who works a full night shift, finishing at 3:35 A.M. By 4:15, he’s home and abed. Four hours later he opens his variety store, where he sells newspapers, soda, and candy. At 11:30 A.M. he leaves for Providence to attend to his duties in the State House, leaving his wife or a clerk in the store. Late in the afternoon he returns to Woonsocket, changes his clothes, eats and goes back to the war plant.

In another city members of the State Bar Association are continuing to serve their clients the best part of the day, quitting early and putting in a night shift at the local arsenal and the Navy Yard. One judge, recognizing this patriotic wartime effort, has even arranged to call their court cases early so that these two-job lawyers might finish in time to join the “short shift.”

In Cleveland, the Warner and Swasey Company has worked out a practical plan for splitting the 4 to 12 swing shift into two 4-hour

periods, so that part-time workers can be hired without interfering with the routine of round-the-clock production. The company hires workers in pairs—one man for the 4 to 8 period, one to work from 8 to 12. By the time 160 pairs of workers had been placed in this way, the company pronounced the experiment an unqualified success. There were no administrative difficulties, and the output of these workers was better than the average for a full-time worker—perhaps because the white collar workers, business men and professionals who took the part-time jobs were working mainly for patriotic reasons.

On the West Coast, salesmen, printers, bank clerks and garage mechanics are doubling up and working part time in aircraft factories and busy shipyards. But an enormous amount of part-time manpower is still untapped.

### *Coming Down From the Hills*

There remain, too, a few stagnant pools of depression unemployment, though the migration that has brought millions of Americans into war centers from backward areas has drained most of these fairly dry. The flow will probably continue, but at a much smaller and ever decreasing rate from now on.

In and around Scranton, Pennsylvania, there were still some 30,000 unemployed workers and 7000 empty houses as recently as March 1943, even after 20,000 men had gone into the armed forces and a similar number had migrated to war jobs in Bridgeport, Wilmington, Baltimore and other booming cities.

The Appalachian and Ozark Mountain regions form another sizable labor reservoir. I visited the mountain farming districts of Eastern Kentucky, and found them somewhat shocking after the booming centers of war industry. The scarcity of good farm land and the poverty of the people there, taken together with the surprisingly high density of population, make an amazing picture. The problem is not unemployment, but rather one of unproductive employment at subsistence farming.

Here is at least a partial answer to two puzzling questions: where the people come from who are now crowding into war centers of the Midwest, East and South; and where may be found even more

of the workers who are sorely needed to ease our growing shortage of industrial and agricultural manpower. There were in early 1943 some 50,000 sub-subsistence farmers in Kentucky alone, according to the War Manpower Commission.

The Kentucky mountains are full of natural beauties, even when the trees are bare. Along the Trail of the Lonesome Pine, which crosses this region, are such picturesque and melancholy names as Troublesome and Defeated Creeks. They are pretty streams, if somewhat muddy in the springtime with soil from eroded hillsides which should never have been plowed. The people here are friendly and real, too. They are not out of touch with the outside world, as they were a generation or so ago. There are now many good roads in these parts, especially since the advent of WPA. Buses run into every major populated district, although thousands of farms are still accessible only by horseback. Feuding and moonshining are no longer prevalent in Eastern Kentucky. Mrs. M. H. Holliday, editor of the Jackson weekly *Times*, became indignant when I asked her about these pastimes; she pointed out with some justice that lawlessness was much commoner in some of our large cities than in the hill regions. Another Kentuckian told me that the last street shooting he had witnessed in Jackson took place at least three years ago. Such moonshining as there was in the hills virtually ended with the sugar shortage. Only such signs as "Legal Liquor Store" serve as reminders of the old days.

Contrary to popular belief, illiteracy is no longer the rule in the Kentucky hills. In a recent draft call less than 5 percent of the boys from Breathitt County were turned down for this reason. These are able enough people, but they are handicapped by lack of economic opportunities.

Rural poverty is rampant in the Kentucky hills. The birth rate is high, and every bit of bottom land which might conceivably support a family has from two to half-a-dozen shacks on it. Many of these are crude log cabins, some so poorly chinked up that the passerby can look right into them. The farmers plant corn on every inch of bottom, and on hillsides so steep that according to local yarns they have to stand on one hillside and shoot corn into the side of the next hill with a shotgun to make it stick.

In Jackson itself I saw poverty as abject as any in the deep South.



Ragged, unkempt children follow visitors down the street begging for pennies, as they do in Cuba or Mexico—but not, as a rule, in the United States. In all of Breathitt County, with its 24,000 people in 1940, there was only one licensed physician until March of 1943, when a young medical graduate opened a new office. Out of 150 men who were called to the colors from this county in that month, at least 60 were turned down on physical grounds—usually tuberculosis, or past ear infections which, uncared for, had injured their middle ears so that they could not wear gas masks.

Thousands of men from these mountain areas who have not entered the armed forces have gone to Detroit, Baltimore or other cities to work in war plants. The population of Jackson dropped from over 2000 in 1940 to about 1500 in 1943. Those who have migrated have usually been the younger, more footloose men, but even so, many of them returned to their mountain farms when they were unable to find a place for their families in the cities. These and other men who have never been outside their home district or state would welcome a chance to do war work.

Uncle Sam's representatives should tell them, "Here is a job at such and such a wage, on a farm in Ohio (or, perhaps, a war plant in Detroit). We will advance the money with which to move your family and guarantee you a place to live when you get there, if you will take it." The Farm Security Administration has done just this, on a small scale, in certain districts of Kentucky. It has been outstandingly successful; but Congress has done its best to wreck the FSA program, largely because the farm lobby opposes anything which would deplete the supply of cheap farm labor.

These human resources should be used. But it should be recognized that such areas as the Pennsylvania anthracite region and the Appalachian hills can supply only a fraction of the labor that will be needed to keep our war plants going at full speed.

### *The Question Of Drafting Labor*

Before this war is over we may have to draft workers for war jobs. A majority of Americans were ready to accept legislation to accomplish this early in 1942, at least if they were shown that it was

essential to the war effort. But only 37 percent were convinced that there was an actual shortage of manpower early in 1943.

There is considerable opposition to drafting labor, from several quarters. Labor leaders term a labor draft "involuntary servitude," although it would restrict the employer's right to hire and fire as well as the worker's right to move from job to job. They argue that working conditions must be made more attractive to get labor where it is needed. They point out that the plants most in need of labor are those which pay the lowest wages, by and large.

Americans do not take kindly to being told what they can or cannot do, unless they feel that such regimentation is unavoidable—as in the case of Selective Service for the armed forces. The War Manpower Commission's experiment with job freezing in 1943, for example, was not very successful. If a worker felt he had a good reason for changing jobs he simply quit, took either a vacation or a non-war job for two weeks or so, and then went into the war job he wanted. Labor turnover remained practically the same as before.

"You can't whip people into line without production falling off," one Seattle labor leader has said. "The people must have leaders who will persuade and not drive them." And management, on the whole, agrees with this point of view. Its position was summed up in this way by C. E. Wilson, president of General Motors, to James Y. Newton of the *Washington Evening Star*: "I am working in a copper mine in Montana. I don't like the job and I am looking for an opportunity to leave. Then, I am 'frozen' in the job. You are moved from a place in St. Louis where you are happy to work alongside of me in the mine. Do you think we will do very much work?"

Robert Mason of the Muskegon, Michigan, Employers' Association, declared that employers in his town were "afraid" of the effect on the worker of national labor legislation. Individual plant executives in the same city reflected that view. One said a worker "would not be worth a whoop" if forced into a job he did not like. "Slave labor is not worth a darn," added John Lovett of the Michigan Manufacturers' Association. "We just don't think it would work. It would be the worst thing that could happen to the country. We oppose any plan to force effort in industry. You could get better

results through proper leadership in both management and labor and through appeals to patriotism."

In Britain the demand for a draft of workers came largely from the common people, who believed it to be essential if the war were to be won. Organized labor was strongly behind the plan, and it became law. There is no reason to think that American labor would react any differently, once convinced that a labor draft is really necessary. Certain qualifications would have to be made, however, if labor were to cooperate fully in such a plan. First, the representatives of labor must have a voice in its administration. And second, the law must not be used for the advancement of hidden political ends. Some business men have advocated the insertion of a clause in the Austin-Wadsworth national service bill providing that "no person shall be obliged to join any union or organization of employees as a condition of employment under this act." This sounds innocent enough, but it would really set aside all closed-shop and maintenance-of-membership contracts now held by unions, insofar as new employees were concerned. Organized labor would balk hard at this, and with good reason.

In any case, no draft of workers should be attempted until much greater efforts have been made to utilize every remaining source of labor supply. This means workers already on the job but not kept busy, women, people available for part-time work, and the few remaining pools of unemployment among our racial minorities and in depressed areas must first be used. If enough workers are still not forthcoming, the polls show that a draft of labor would be almost universally accepted by Americans.

### *Keep the Basic 40-Hour Week*

Another proposed "solution" to the manpower problem would be even less practical as things now stand: the repeal of the Fair Labor Standards Act. Any attempt to change the forty-hour basic working week would raise a hornet's nest. The argument for repeal of the Wage-Hour Act rests on the fallacious assumption that workers are limited to that number of hours under the law. The fact is, in April 1943 the average industrial worker put in some forty-six hours a week, and in some industries much longer hours were stand-



ard practice. In machine tools, for example, the average was 52.5 hours per week late in 1942; in engine and turbine construction, 49.7; and in shipbuilding, 47.6. These figures do not include time off for sickness, accidents, or other causes. The scheduled hours of work were therefore longer still.

The real purpose of the drive against the wage-hour law is not to increase working hours but to cut wages, providing a nice little windfall for employers who have already negotiated contracts on the assumption of a forty-hour basic week. If the law is repealed or modified to eliminate overtime rates for more than forty hours of work, absenteeism would increase and the manpower shortage would only be intensified. For at present the worker gets overtime rates on the sixth day of work only if he has been at work the other five days. Remove this provision and the average worker would not only be very angry at the resulting cut in wages; he would also be less likely to stay on the job day after day in order to qualify for overtime pay.

If legislation is required, we might as well go whole hog with a national service act. But for the time being, pressure on specific groups of workers through the present selective service system is all that seems justified. The War Manpower Commission got loggers to leave the shipyards of the Northwest for their old jobs in the woods by ordering them to do so through their draft boards. Similar orders sent large numbers of war plant workers back to the farms where they were needed. These actions are drastic enough to suffice until such time as we have used every bit of labor that is still available for war work.

## 11: FARM LABOR AND FOOD

WHENEVER THE FARM BLOC raises its voice in Washington in opposition to the Government's program of price controls and subsidies, I think of what a Nebraska farmer told me. "Hell, those guys aren't dirt farmers," he said. "The only farmers they represent are the big fellows and the packing companies. The little farmers

aren't organized. And the big fellows don't care what happens to us. . . . Most of the farmers in these parts are pretty well off after last year's crop. They're inclined to go along with anything the Department of Agriculture wants, for the duration of the war anyhow. After all, prices are good and we're paying off our debts. That's about all you can expect in wartime."

The facts, as I uncovered them subsequently, bear out my friend's opinion. The majority of farmers belong to no farm organization. A relatively small number—not over 600,000, and mainly in the top income brackets—belong to the American Farm Bureau Federation, which wields great control over the county agricultural agents wherever it is organized.

This is the heart of the "farm bloc" which carries such weight in Congressional circles. It has done more to impede the war program and advance the cause of inflation than any single group on the American scene. Its resistance to any Administration proposal which would coordinate farm production with an all-out war effort, if allowed to carry the day, may disrupt our economy and prevent our adequately feeding our armed forces and our allies.

Gallup and *Fortune* polls have proved that discontent is far less prevalent among farmers than we have been led to believe by the farm bloc and its spokesmen in the press. Early in 1943, *Fortune's* representatives asked a cross-section of farmers "Would you say that the Government farm program has been good or bad for American farming as a whole?" Some 54 percent answered "good," 18 percent said "bad," and the remainder were undecided about it. (A Gallup poll similarly showed 66 percent of farmers thought the Administration had helped them; only 17 percent thought it had hurt them.)

A majority of the farmers polled by *Fortune* were favorable to the soil improvement, farm loan and farm price policies of the Administration; production limitation was the only policy which they opposed—naturally enough, in this period of threatened food shortages. Only 26 percent thought that "Farming can and should take care of itself and the Government should leave it entirely alone."

A poll conducted by a leading farm magazine in the spring of 1943 got much the same results. When Iowa farmers were asked whether they approved or disapproved of the way President Roose-

velt was handling his job, 57 percent approved and only 15 percent disapproved. Furthermore, 67 percent of the farmers favored the AAA—one of the agencies which the “farm bloc” was trying to abolish.

When asked for criticisms of the Government’s farm program by the Gallup poll, 27 percent of the farmers had none. The most frequent criticism, offered by 17 percent, was that prices had been held down too low for the farmers. Only 8 and 7 percent, respectively, complained of too much regimentation or of Government inefficiency.

Furthermore, a Gallup poll showed that of those farmers who knew what price ceilings were, 64 percent favored them in general and only 18 percent opposed them. Price ceilings *on farm products* were favored by 56 percent, opposed by 28 percent—a two-to-one majority in their favor. Seven out of ten were for Government action to prevent inflation.

One reason that the farmers were well satisfied was that 1942 was a good crop year and all in all the most profitable year in the history of American agriculture. According to an OPA study, farm production in 1942 was 13 percent better than in 1941. Farm income, meanwhile, had risen 116 percent above 1939 in terms of dollars and 72 percent in terms of purchasing power. Total farm income was \$8.7 billion in 1939, \$16.1 billion in 1942. Farm prices, according to the Office of War Information, were up 92 percent on the average, while the average prices paid by farmers (including interest and taxes) rose only 25 percent.

The farmer’s cash income in 1942 as compared with 1919, the best year of the last war period, was up 40 percent in terms of purchasing power. The Farm Bureau Federation looks back on World War I as a sort of golden era. Perhaps it was—for the food processors and speculators. From 1914 to 1919 the rise in net income per capita was 128 percent in dollars, but only 13 percent in terms of what those dollars would buy. Memories of that inflationary era have undoubtedly contributed to the willingness of most farmers to support a price control program this time.



## *Exodus of the Hired Hands*

When Dr. Gallup's field workers asked the farmers "What is the biggest problem facing you in this area today?" 77 percent answered that it was shortage of farm help, and 19 percent, shortages of farm equipment or difficulty in getting repairs.

By the end of 1942 the Department of Agriculture reported that family workers on the farms were about as numerous as ever, and hired hands had declined only 8 percent. Total farm employment on June 1, 1943, was only 2 percent less than a year earlier, and 5 percent under the 1937-41 average for that time of year.

Nevertheless in some places, where replacements were lacking, things were getting serious. Nearly three-quarters of all farmers expected a labor shortage in the peak season of 1943. Among those farming 100 acres or more—who produce most of our food—over half expected labor shortages to affect their production.

*Fortune* found that a majority of farmers—60 percent—thought women farm workers would help to solve the problem. High school students were considered still more valuable for farm work. A majority also thought that the Government should freeze farm laborers on the farms (although the farm hands themselves dissented on this). Importation of workers from other areas and the release of soldiers at harvest time were also suggested by a few farmers. And 8 percent thought that farm prices should be increased so the farmers could pay higher wages.

From 1939 to 1942 farm prices went up 71 percent while wage costs per unit of output increased only 28 percent. But the farmers' concern for what would happen in 1943 was understandable; after all, wages in industry looked pretty big to the farmer who had to compete with war plants for labor.

Ex-Food Administrator Chester Davis predicted as early as May 1943 that there would be no serious shortage of farm workers even in the harvest season. All basic needs would be met, he said, by six million farm families; over a million farmers and farm workers who have been deferred by Selective Service; men returned to their farms from the services after passing the 38-year mark; the U.S. Crop Corps, three million and a half strong, consisting of men, women and children from the towns and cities; and the importation of

50,000 Mexicans, 10,000 Jamaicans, and 5000 Bahamans to do seasonal labor.

The real test was to come, however, at the peak of the fall harvest. Normally, at least four million seasonal farm workers have been required in the summer and fall and a million of these were migrants who moved with the crops. Half a million were accustomed to migrating across State lines: these were the skilled harvest workers, and by 1943 a great part of them had steady jobs in war industries at higher pay than they could earn in farm work.

### *Ghost Farms*

I first ran into a real shortage of farm manpower in Panola County, Texas, early in 1943. Farmers there were worried; farm labor was so sparse that crops were likely to be sparse, too. Department of Agriculture officials were telling the farmers that they must produce at least as much in 1943 as in 1942. But they didn't see how they could, with help almost impossible to find.

Close to a third of Panola County's registered males, from eighteen to sixty-five, were in the armed forces. Farmers, their sons and their farm hands had been drafted or had volunteered in droves. Others had gone to work in the shipyards, or in the huge TNT plant near Marshall. Negroes were migrating North and West to jobs at higher wages in places with less racial discrimination.

In 1941, 10 percent of Panola County's farms were vacant, in 1942 it was 20 percent and in 1943, according to the best local estimates, about 40 percent of all farm units would be deserted unless something were done to prevent it. Vacant houses, stores and farms were everywhere.

Panola County's farms are of moderate size, raising cotton and corn and, to an increasing extent in the last few years, cattle and peanuts. Cotton is still the big cash crop, and it takes a lot of labor—not only for the picking, which has usually been done by Negro labor, but for the planting. "I'm not worried about the picking—that's too far off," one farmer told me as he waited in line outside the AAA office in Carthage, the county seat, to get his acreage allotment for 1943. "What I can't figure out is how I'm going to *make* the crop."

One Carthage official advocated the establishment of a War Manpower Commission office in every county where there was a serious farm labor shortage, with power to examine the draft records to find men who were farmers at the time they registered but who had left for jobs in near-by boom towns. These would then be ordered to return to farm work or be drafted into the armed forces. This plan was set forth in the firm belief that "those shipyards, with their cost-plus system of operation, have a hell of a lot more workers than they need."

Panola County and hundreds of other counties like it were obviously going to fall down on the job of producing food unless something was done to help them. They want action. The Administration's appeals for crop diversification and an increase in farm production in 1943 fell here on disillusioned ears. The year before, Uncle Sam had called for extensive peanut plantings, at the expense of cotton, to step up production of peanut oil. Many farmers cooperated, only to find that the Government had not supplied enough harvesting equipment to get the peanuts in. Some of them had to turn their hogs loose to root out the peanut crop. They didn't lose by it; you can fatten three hogs on every acre of peanuts. But the experience was disappointing. In 1943, when the AAA asked for still more peanuts in Panola County—12,000 acres this time—the farmers were skeptical. "Give us the men and the machines and we'll raise the crops, all right," said one farmer. Otherwise, he implied, the Government's plans for farm production will go a-glimmering.

In some other farming towns I visited the story was similar. In Stanley, Wisconsin, I learned that many dairy farms had gone out of production. The price of cheese was up; but many elderly farm couples, with their sons gone to war and hired hands almost impossible to obtain, had sold their stock except for one or two cows and a few chickens and were renting their fields or letting them lie fallow. In most farm areas, however, production was being maintained. In Morrison, Illinois, high school youngsters were taking over vacant farms—and earning more than their teachers, in some cases.

Culpeper County, Virginia, was feeling the farm labor shortage as never before. But the farmers there were getting their crops in



just the same. "We're going to plant and pray that we can save the crop when harvest comes," one of them told me. They are cooperating with the Department of Agriculture's "Food for Freedom" program 100 percent. They were asked to plant 500 acres of soy beans for oil in 1943, but instead they planted 1000 acres. The farmers felt that a guaranteed price of \$1.80 per bushel was enough insurance that they wouldn't go bankrupt while doing their part for the war program.

Culpeper farmers, who supply large quantities of milk to the Washington area, have suffered least from the shortage of farm labor. They hire family men on a year-round basis, paying them \$50 or more a month "and found." The smaller farms are hardest hit. Deferment of farm workers helped them, but it came too late to solve the problem.

Culpeper's workers have migrated to Norfolk, Baltimore and other war centers in large numbers. One group of men commutes to Quantico each day—a hundred-mile round trip—to work on a government war project.

A farm owner with a 375-acre cattle farm north of Culpeper had lost three out of his four farm hands, I found, and had been able to replace only one. Last to leave was a Negro tenant farmer with eleven children. He told his employer with genuine regret, "Boss, I've worked for you for I don't know how long and I hate to leave you. But I can make me \$6.50 a day on that airport up Warrenton way, and they'll pick me up with a truck and cart me there and back. I know you can't pay me that much and I need that money, so I guess I'll have to take it."

Boys of school age are largely responsible for saving the crops so far in Culpeper County, as in the Midwest. They are excused from classes whenever they are needed on the farm, attending school irregularly on rainy days and in slack work periods. School officials estimate that half of the boys—20 percent of the entire high school population in Culpeper—are taking advantage of this arrangement. "Taking advantage" is the correct phrase, for although the boys are supposed to attend school on all exam days many of them forget to do so.

## *California Cotton County*

It is on the West Coast that the farm labor shortage is most extreme. In some parts of Eastern Washington, a third to a half of the 1942 apple crop rotted on the ground for lack of pickers. Oregon did much better, through a system of recruiting that will be described later.

The greatest changes have taken place in the "factory-farming" areas of California, where farming is an industry, not a way of life. One Madera County farmer told me, "Four or five years ago we used to cuss the 'Okies.' Now when we see one we feel like rushing up and kissing him." Attitudes toward the dust bowl migrants who thronged into California farming areas from 1935 to 1939 have been neatly reversed.

Half of Madera County's 100,000 irrigated acres are devoted to cotton, with grapes and tree fruits taking second place. The County's cotton crop was worth nearly \$4,000,000 in 1940, and furnished more than three-fourths of all seasonal farm employment.

Migratory farm workers usually ended up at Madera picking cotton after they had worked in other crops in the summer and early fall. Since there was little more to do after the San Joaquin cotton crop was picked, except for the employment of a relatively small number in the citrus crop farther south, thousands of these people wintered in or around Madera. Relief and WPA reached their peak in 1939 when 5000 families became dependent, most of them "Okies" who had no work from December to April. Their children filled the schools, which were expanded until in one district classes were being held in the school bus garages and even in the janitor's home. Resentment rose among certain of the taxpayers; but Madera, unlike some California communities, did not "take it out" on the children.

In the fall of 1939, the CIO cannery and agricultural workers' union (UCAPAWA) invaded Madera County, organized a large proportion of the cotton pickers into a local union and staged a short-lived strike. The pickers had been getting 75 to 90 cents per hundredweight in those days and hoped to raise the rate to \$1.25 by united action. But they didn't reckon with the stubbornness of

the growers, who were accustomed to dictating the wage rate at their annual meetings.

On October 21, 1939, a mob of 150 angry cotton farmers gathered outside the County Park in Madera, where the strikers were meeting, and ordered the session to adjourn. The strikers refused, and a pitched battle ensued. Sheriff W. O. Justice and his men did not interfere. After state troopers had arrived and ended the riot by the use of teargas bombs, the sheriff said, "The situation appears to be well in hand, with both parties dispersed." This meant, of course, that the growers had achieved their purpose. "We are not exactly proud of that day's happenings," one Madera business man told me.

The strike was broken, and to this day the farm workers of Madera County remain unorganized. Hundreds of the former "Okies" have now settled down to live in Madera, most of them on one- or two-acre plots around the fringes of the town. Shrewd farmers subdivided large stretches of grain land worth \$20 to \$25 an acre and sold it to the migrants, without improvements of any sort, for \$125 to \$150 an acre. In off seasons the settlers dug wells, built small frame shacks to live in, and planted vegetables and flowers. Some even got year-round jobs in the town, prospering moderately and sending their children through high school.

At least half the migrants of five years earlier had left Madera County, however, by early 1943. Some had gone to the San Francisco Bay region to get work in the shipyards. Immediately after Pearl Harbor, a few started back to their old homes to escape possible bombing attacks. The size of this migration has been greatly exaggerated; a much larger exodus came when nation-wide gasoline rationing was first announced, and thousands of refugees who had been unable to get their roots down into California's soil headed back eastward while still able to.

This migration dismayed the farmers and caused some of them to regret their former toughness in dealing with the "Okies." For now they were faced with an acute labor shortage. The growers, at their 1942 meeting, set a price of \$1.50 a hundredweight for pickers, or nearly twice the official rate for 1938. Local growers upped this to \$1.75 and \$2.00, with some paying as high as \$2.25 for the cleanup. Since a good picker can pick 200 to 300 pounds of cotton



a day, this meant a relatively high wage. But still there wasn't enough labor.

In the fall the Madera County Defense Council took a hand in the crisis. Craig Cunningham, secretary both of the Council and of the Madera County Chamber of Commerce, organized a "Food for Victory" drive which went far toward saving the crops. Leading citizens, including the principal and teachers of the high school, the District Attorney and his wife, and other county officials went out to pick cotton, grapes and tomatoes. All except the primary grades of the schools in the cotton districts were closed down for two weeks while the children went out to harvest the fruit and cotton. One group of thirty-five children formed a sort of shock troop, going twenty-six miles to a farm near Firebaugh to pick eighty-five tons of tomatoes. Without their help virtually the entire crop would have rotted in the field.

This work was done under the supervision of the teachers, who called roll and kept an account of the earnings of each child. Within two weeks the supervisors had learned that four hours of work in the fields was the maximum effective working day for children. After that the schools were put on a half-day basis, adjourning at noon so that the children could spend afternoons in the fields. The teachers saw to it that the proceeds went to the children themselves, and not to their parents. The net result: the 3077 children who participated earned a total of \$88,000 (\$74,000 in cotton alone). They also enjoyed themselves and saved nearly all of the cotton crop except the clean-up.

The problem has since become worse, not better. Farm workers are still leaving Madera. Soon the huge Friant Dam—fourth largest in the world and second only to the Shasta Dam in the huge California Central Valley Project—may get into operation. Its prime purpose is to replenish the water supply in existing irrigated areas, rather than to reclaim new desert land. Madera gets only nine inches of rainfall a year, and deep wells dug for irrigation have lowered the water table until existing crop land is in danger. When the dam and irrigation canals are finished, crops will be increased and a new labor crisis may ensue.

Madera County growers want to solve the problem by cutting through Federal restrictions on the immigration of Mexicans. "We

need 50,000, not 3,000 this year," a representative of the growers told me. "The minimum wage of 35 cents an hour is O.K.—we paid more than that last year. But we can't afford to put up a \$100,000 bond, or to take a chance on being held responsible for the Mexicans. Furthermore, we can't furnish them new houses, with hot and cold running water and the like, because we can't even get the materials."

Some modification in the Federal requirements for importation of Mexican labor was indicated to meet these changing conditions. But California beet growers had been able to meet the basic requirements and import the 3000 Mexicans they needed in 1942. The well-organized cotton farmers should be able to do likewise.

It would help a lot if Madera's cotton farmers would change over to some other crop. After all, we have a two-year supply of cotton on hand now, and other crops are much more needed in the war effort. But resistance to change seems to be characteristic of cotton growers.

### *Oregon Points the Way*

Oregon probably had the most efficient system for getting seasonal labor to the farms in 1942. It showed what can be done in every farming area to insure against any loss of crops because of a labor shortage.

Early in the year the Oregon State College Extension Service collaborated with the U.S. Employment Service in setting up farm labor committees in every county when seasonal workers were needed. The Employment Service had made a detailed survey of needs and was in a position to allocate the workers on the basis of minimum requirements. The committees got the workers. Civilian defense organizations, the State Department of Education and every other agency interested in farm problems helped in mobilizing farm help when harvest time came.

Newspapers and radio stations throughout the State publicized the program, appealing to the patriotism of the public in enlisting seasonal labor. Church groups, Chambers of Commerce and other civic bodies held meetings and recruited their own members to save the crops. Women and school children were registered

throughout the State and offered jobs near where they lived. When fall came, the schools postponed their opening dates in order to get the fall fruits and vegetables packed, canned or dried.

Schools throughout the State had offered courses in agricultural economics and harvesting methods in the spring of the year. More than 10,000 pupils, from the fifth grade through high school, took the courses. In Portland's Multnomah County alone 11,000 youths of school age were sent out to work in the harvest. School platoons were organized, as in Madera, California, and teachers went along with them to supervise the children's work. Starting with the strawberry harvest, this system continued through the pea, bean, hop, peach, prune, pear and apple seasons.

Many city women took their families to the fields. This has long been a common practice in Oregon, but it was greatly enlarged to meet war conditions. A check-up at the end of the season showed that out of 97,000 seasonal workers placed on Oregon farms in 1942, nearly 20,000 were women and 42,000 were youth under eighteen. In farm market towns, stores were closed and business men went to the fields. City executives and professional men spent their vacations working on the farms. Office workers put in an extra half-shift after hours in the canneries to save the pear crop. And when fall came, every Oregon crop had been harvested on time and saved for the Nation's food supply.

The Federal Government announced early in 1943 that farm labor throughout the country was to be coordinated under the Agricultural Extension Service. Immediately a great cry went up from Oregon officials and farmers. "We've solved our problem," one leading Portland citizen told me. "We have proved what local initiative can do. We saved our crops last year and we can do it again this year, if they'll only leave us alone. But if they disrupt the organization we have built up, there's no telling what will happen."

The anticipated crisis never developed, however. The Department of Agriculture's U.S. Crop Corps and its Women's Land Army were only too glad to utilize the machinery that had already been set up. Methods of recruiting women varied from town to town. In Silverton, OCD block leaders signed up women workers. In Mt. Angel, Catholic women's organizations took over. In Forest



Grove and Hillsboro, block leaders, women's clubs and the Chambers of Commerce all cooperated. The Women's Land Army set a goal for Oregon of 10,000 year-round workers and 50,000 seasonal hands—three times the previous year's number, and a sixth of the Nation's quota.

In Hillsboro some of the town's most prominent women, including the wives of bankers and business men, volunteered to lead and supervise "platoons" of children in the harvest fields. School courses in agriculture had meanwhile been expanded so that more than 15,000 "city kids" got basic training as harvest hands before the season began. Around forty platoons of Portland children went into the fields of near-by Washington County alone during the summer. Japanese labor from the relocation camps was also used in Eastern Oregon. And once more the farm labor problem was taken care of so efficiently that crop losses were negligible. This was important to the entire country, for Oregon is one of the chief producers of small fruits and berries, truck crops for canning, and potatoes.

### *Farm Bloc Sabotage*

Despite much criticism, the Administration's farm labor policy has been reasonably well adjusted to the nation's needs. The Washington farm bloc and its partisans in Congress will be primarily responsible if this policy fails to fill the bill. For it has sabotaged the Roosevelt farm program at every turn.

Deferment of farm workers began in November 1942, as soon as the farm labor shortage started to become serious. Three million farm deferments were expected to be in effect by the end of 1943. This was essential to head-off a real crisis.

At about the same time, the Farm Security Administration was given a go-ahead signal to transport 50,000 year-round farm workers from submarginal areas, such as the Appalachian region, to places where farm manpower was needed. It started to do the job, but had moved less than 3000 families by April 1943, when its work was stymied by the refusal of Congress to appropriate the necessary funds. There are, in fact, from one to two million farm families in the nation who produce no more than they need for their own use;

much of this huge reserve of labor can be drawn into war food production of food if Congress will allow it.

FSA also had plans for developing a corps of 275,000 seasonal workers, to be transported to any section of the country where they were needed. Congress also lopped this off, turning it over to the Extension Service, which was not equipped to handle it. A provision was added prohibiting the transportation of workers out of surplus labor areas without the approval of the county agricultural agent at the point of departure. This placed virtually the whole program under the thumb of the Farm Bureau Federation. Laborers in the cotton South, for example, are held in what amounts to peonage unless the big farmers see fit to let them go.

Fortunately, the U.S. Crop Corps was able to fill the need for seasonal workers in some measure. But it was late on the scene, and not fully organized in 1943.

Not only was the FSA's attempt to get workers from the most logical source—farm families themselves—completely sabotaged, but the farm bloc got the House of Representatives to cut the appropriation for FSA operating loans to farmers from \$97,500,000 to \$60,000,000, and the \$29,700,000 needed for administering the agency to an inadequate \$20,000,000. This was a serious blow to the whole war food program, for the small farmers served by FSA are particularly able to increase production of small crops for consumer use. The small farmer cannot solve the food problem, but he can help a lot. The 500,000 farmers aided by FSA in 1942 accounted for 30 percent of the increase in milk, 25 percent of the rise in beans and 10 percent of the added pork, beef, eggs, chickens and peanuts.

Most outrageous of all, however, was the farm bloc's sabotage of all efforts to convert American agriculture to a war basis. Two years of pressure were required before the automobile industry was finally converted to war production; but even after two years of actual warfare, farming was still on a peacetime basis for the most part. In 1943 the farm bloc cheered while the House of Representatives voted to prohibit the OPA from using subsidies to farmers to hold prices down. Next, the House, at the farm bloc's behest, knocked out a \$100 million appropriation for incentive payments to farmers changing over from non-war to war crops. Then it cut a similar amount from the funds for soil conservation payments, to

prevent their being used for the same purpose. And finally, it hedged the \$225 million fund for war crop loans with restrictions. The net effect was not only to sabotage conversion of farms to war production, but also to hamstring the Administration's inflation-control program.

The farm bloc has obstructed all attempts to bring about a large-scale shift in acreage to the food- and oil-producing crops that we most need to carry on the war. One-fourth of our farms specialize in two non-essential crops: cotton and tobacco. We have a two-year supply of each of these on hand today. We needed the land devoted to them in 1943 for other purposes. Yet, as a result of farm bloc pressure, acreage allotted to cotton production by the Department of Agriculture was actually increased by 10 percent. And as a crowning insult to those who advocate an all-out war, labor in short-staple cotton was declared essential.

On the basis of our 1943 production goals, more than a billion farm man-hours were estimated to have been spent on cotton production, and over 300 million man-hours on tobacco. Together, they account for close to a third of all farm man-hours of work. Of the total farm man-hours, only 2.7 percent were scheduled for truck and garden crops, 2.4 percent for white potatoes, 1.5 percent for soy beans, and 3.4 percent for peanuts. And these last are essential war crops.

In the summer of 1943 truck farmers of Long Island were destroying their crops for lack of harvest labor, while 80 miles away in Connecticut 10,000 workers, including some imported by the Government from the West Indies, were raising tobacco.

Representatives of the farm bloc argue that we need to continue producing cotton on the present scale in order to get cottonseed oil. Actually, as Senator Harley Kilgore has pointed out, more acreage is required to produce oil from cotton than from any other oil-producing crop. It takes at least  $1\frac{1}{2}$  acres of cotton and 132 man-hours of work to get 100 pounds of cottonseed oil. It takes about half an acre of land and  $6\frac{1}{2}$  man-hours of work to get an equal amount of oil from soy beans. If we have a shortage of farm labor and vegetable oils, this will be the principal reason.

Again, the farm bloc has played along with the meat packers in opposition to all attempts to control meat prices. At a time when the



coal miners were being roundly condemned by almost everyone for going on strike, the large cattle ranchers and meat packers staged a strike of their own, creating a meat shortage that lasted for several months. There was some truth in the packers' argument that price ceilings for meat were too low to enable them to operate at a profit; but the force of their argument was lost when they came out in vehement opposition to a subsidy aimed at making up the very losses they were complaining about. Inflation was riding again—with the blessing of the farm bloc.

Finally, it ought to be recorded that the campaign of the big farmers for more farm labor and for the blanket deferment of all farm workers is mainly a campaign for *cheap* farm labor. This was strikingly shown up in the Arizona cotton "crisis" early in 1943. The Farm Security Administration had been authorized by the War Manpower Commission to bring in farm laborers from Mexico, provided the growers would guarantee a minimum wage of 30 cents per hour. The Arizona ranchers, who produce a rare type of long-staple cotton that is particularly needed in the manufacture of observation balloons and parachutes, refused to guarantee this minimum. When the crop was at its height, they got enough workers at piece rates of pay to get by with very little loss of cotton; a good worker had no difficulty in earning 30 cents or more per hour. But toward the end of the harvest, when the picking became poorer, the workers began to leave.

Immediately the growers cried out that they had no labor, that their valuable crop was rotting in the fields. They asked for the release of Army men on furlough to finish harvesting the crop. To relieve the tension the Army decided to pick the cotton itself. But before marching the soldiers into the fields the officers in charge checked with the Department of Agriculture on the average rate of pay for cotton pickers, for under the law they had to collect this amount and turn it in to the Treasury. They were told that 30 cents per hour was the average wage and the Mexican contract rate. So they offered battalions of pickers to the Arizona growers at that price.

At this point the whole thing blew up. The ranchers wouldn't pay 30 cents an hour. They preferred to let the cotton rot, if the United States Government wouldn't furnish free labor for the harvest. There

was no labor shortage; there was only a shortage of workers who would pick cotton for less than 30 cents an hour.

The large growers complain most about shortages of farm labor. And they are the ones who try hardest to keep wages down, despite present high prices for their products which would enable them to be much more generous with their workers. They also welcome the importation of cheap labor from Mexico, the Bahamas and Jamaica, but oppose the immigration of 100,000 Puerto Ricans who would welcome a chance to come here—perhaps because, being American citizens, they might refuse to return when they are no longer needed.

There are exceptions, of course. Seabrook Farms, covering 15,000 acres in Cumberland and Salem Counties of New Jersey, have demonstrated how an enlightened labor policy may pay dividends. This corporation farm is the best example of large-scale farming in the East, fully equal in scope to the huge "factory-farms" of California. But instead of adopting an anti-labor policy, such as the Associated Farmers represent in California, Seabrook has a closed-shop contract with an AFL union, covering its 300 permanent and 2000 to 3000 seasonal workers. Seasonal workers pay 25 cents a week for a union card while they work on the farm and get free lunches during the harvest season. This contract has been in operation since January 1941, when workers' wages were raised from 25 to 56 cents an hour.

John Seabrook, co-manager of the Farms, says the management opposed the union at first. "But now we're all for it. It's almost done away with labor turnover. But more important than that, for the first time in our lives we know what our workers want. We used to just hear rumors of dissatisfaction. Now we've got a good grievance committee that brings complaints to us."

The farm bloc should take notice of this arrangement. But it probably won't.

### *American Farmers vs. The Farm Bloc*

The average American farmer has no part in the maneuverings of the farm bloc. His point of view on the farm labor situation is much better represented by this statement, made by Governor Griswold of Nebraska: "We plan to solve our own problems in Nebraska.

There is certainly a manpower problem on our farms, but I am just as interested in the shortage of manpower in our shell-loading plants, in the great war industries of Michigan, and in the front lines in Tunisia." The Governor opposed any blanket deferment of farm workers because "that would be unfair to the boys already in the service, to those who would be deferred, and to the whole war effort."

American farmers, the great majority of them, are cooperating fully in our war program for the farms—such as it is. They are raising more soy beans and peanuts than ever before. Early in 1943, nearly two-thirds of them were planning to increase production of some crop that was needed in the war effort. They are working harder than ever. They were already putting in an average of sixty hours of work per week in April 1943, and were ready to work even longer hours when necessary to get their crops in.

Because of their long hours, 74 percent of them thought that they worked harder than factory workers. The average farmer is inclined to resent the forty-hour week for industrial employees. "I wish I could get time-and-a-half for every hour I put in after forty hours a week," one Iowa farmer remarked to me. "I'd be rich. I put in twelve or fourteen hours a day seven days a week while the rush is on." More than 70 percent of all farmers thought that labor had been given most of the breaks by this Administration. Yet early in 1943, 45 percent thought they would be better off under a Democratic Party administration, compared to 32 percent who thought the Republicans would help them most. And when it came to a question of whether they preferred a Congress dominated by labor or one dominated by big business, the vote was 45 percent to 25 percent in favor of labor.

As for labor unions, a majority of farmers thought that they had done some good, but had gone too far and should be watched. Three-quarters of the farmers favored more Government control over unions. Only 17 percent were for doing away with them altogether. As a matter of fact, nearly two-thirds of the farmers thought that some sort of union for farmers would be a good thing. The National Farmers' Union, an organization of small farmers opposed to the farm bloc on all important issues, should take advantage of this feeling.



## *Things We Must Do*

We face a food crisis in America today. The people are acutely conscious of it, and they are alarmed. Two-thirds of them believe there should be an investigation of our food situation, according to a Gallup poll in July 1943.

In part, the food problem maybe attributed to the fumbling of the Administration. In part it may be blamed on Congressional sabotage of such constructive measures as Mr. Roosevelt and his advisers have hesitantly put forth. And finally, it is in part the result of bad crop conditions in 1943. A wet, cold spring, combined with floods that covered some twelve million acres of good farm land in Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Missouri and Arkansas played havoc with the early crops. A good part of the nation's grain, soy beans and truck crops are raised in these States. The speed with which the farmers got late crops into the ground in the wake of the receding flood, however, was both admirable and amazing.

We will not suffer from lack of food here in America. Yield per acre and total output of food crops were down in 1943 as compared to 1942, although total food production was expected to show a slight rise, thanks to an increase in live stock. But we need ever more food to feed ourselves, our armed forces, our allies and the people of reoccupied areas. If we have to cut our home food supply too drastically to accomplish this, we will be inviting bitter criticism from the unsophisticated citizen who doesn't understand the political and military importance of shipping food abroad. We will also be giving a hostage to the isolationists, who will turn dissatisfaction over food to their own ends.

If food will win the war, as our Government tells us, it is about time that we bypass the farm bloc and go directly to the rank and file of farmers and to the consumer with a program to increase food production. First of all, this means cutting cotton and tobacco production drastically, in favor of food crops and crops of military value. There are two ways to go about this: through subsidies or incentive payments to farmers who are willing to cooperate; or by the more drastic method of dumping on the open market all Government holdings of cotton and other commodities that are not essential to the war, in order to force prices down sharply. If the

farm bloc continues to prevent the first method, the second will do the job. The big cotton farmers would be angry, but they are already out of sympathy with the Administration so little harm would be done. The small Southern farmer, if he is supplied with seed, tools and a guaranteed minimum price, will be glad to change from cotton and tobacco to other, more needed crops. He will profit, too, by further emancipation from King Cotton.

Second, we need to make better use of our land and resources. This means an aggressive program to get every acre that can be cultivated economically back into production. In July 1943 the War Food Administrator Marvin Jones asked that farmers cultivate 380,000,000 acres in 1944, or 16,000,000 acres more than in 1943. This was a modest enough request. An estimated 40,000,000 additional acres could be brought into use by taking over unused farms and by completing the reclamation of such huge areas as the Central Valley irrigation project of California and the Columbia Basin project in the State of Washington. This can only be accomplished, with our limited manpower, by giving new impetus to mechanized farming. Machinery would have to be supplied to the farmers who undertake to till the new land on a cooperative rental basis, to get it into use quickly. The statement of Col. Lewis Sanders of Selective Service, that we will have to cut across farm lines and cultivate crops on a county-wide basis, may come true.

We have the means of bringing about such an agricultural revolution. One or two tank factories may have to be reconverted to the production of farm implements; but that should be possible, by stepping up our output in other tank plants. To get the manpower to run the tractors we can use the small farmer, guaranteeing him a decent income, and the present supply of wage workers, guaranteeing them decent wages. If food is a weapon, some such program as this should be brought to completion within the next two years.

Third, the consumer must be willing to make his contribution to the food problem. Cooperation with the rationing program is only one of the ways in which he can help. He must produce more and more of his own food, as he has been doing; twenty million Americans planted victory gardens in 1943—no mean achievement. The consumer must also be willing to change his food habits. He must eliminate all waste. He must eat less and less meat, more and more

grain products. The lowly soy bean, which is one of the most complete foods known, will then come into its own. By learning to depend almost entirely on foods which are economical of acreage, we can produce enough to feed ourselves, our allies and the starving people of occupied lands for the duration of the emergency. We can do this even without greatly increased acreage, and without bumper crops such as we had in 1942.

And finally, we need a Federal policy on food. When people find periodically that beef, or potatoes, or butter, is as unobtainable as bananas, they begin to wonder. Something is obviously wrong. It is simply this: not only is our farm production system inadequate for wartime, but our distribution system is woefully behind the times.

The Office of Price Administration has tried—when its officials weren't too busy answering Congressional attacks or appearing before Senatorial committees—to straighten out the food tangle. But its efforts were weak, and its motto might as well have been "too little and too late." Its orders were issued, countermanded, revised and reissued in such quick succession that the food situation remained in chaos. OPA put a ceiling on meat, but not on live beef. Cattle prices soared, therefore, and the black market flourished. It placed a ceiling on corn, but not on hogs, so that farmers refused to sell their corn, and fed it to their hogs instead. This situation went on for weeks, without OPA having courage enough to cross the farm bloc and finish the job that it had started.

If food prices are once stabilized on an orderly basis, the food situation will become simpler—but there will still be a problem: how to get essential food stuffs to the people. Many a miner or shipyard worker is not getting a well-balanced diet because the food he needs simply isn't there, ration points or no ration points. He expects Uncle Sam to get meat, potatoes and vegetables to him where he lives. That is the final test of our food program: whether food reaches the ultimate consumer in quantities great enough and well-balanced enough to keep war production going.



## 12: THE DEADLY SPIRAL

DESPITE ALL EFFORTS of President Roosevelt and his Administration, prices were getting out of hand in the first half of 1943. Living costs rose 26 percent from September 1939 to June 1943, according to Government estimates. Food prices, especially, were soaring; they were at least 50 percent above the pre-war level. To some this meant inflation. Others called it "the high cost of living." But all Americans were nervously watching the upward trend, hoping that it could be stopped.

Many of us think of inflation in terms of Germany's experience after the last war. German money at that time dropped to one-trillionth of its former value—so low that in terms of our own currency, a 5-cent cup of coffee would have cost \$50,000,000,000. Nobody believes that such conditions will come in America. We would have to be defeated in the war, economically exhausted, and financially bankrupt, before that happens. But it is possible that a cup of coffee might cost 25 cents, if things get out of hand. In the last war living costs doubled, and the American people had a hard enough time getting along. This time it could be much worse, for we are spending money upon the war many times as rapidly as in World War I. If we come out of this one with prices doubled or tripled, it will mean that our savings, our war bonds and our insurance policies would be worth only half or a third as much as formerly. Most people understand this and want to stop inflation.

Inflation occurs when there is a sudden and enormous increase of money, without a corresponding increase of things to buy. That is precisely what is happening in America today.

Profits are rising. On the basis of present corporate tax rates, profits after taxes for the first quarter of 1943 amounted to \$1,821,000,000, approximately 18 percent above the first quarter of 1942. Profits before taxes showed a 19 percent increase over the same period of 1942.

War has made a great difference to the American purse. In April 1943, income per capita was \$85.03—pushed up by war expenditures from the \$47.92 of three years earlier. But if the average American had been called upon to pay this April's war expenses on the spot,

he would have paid \$53.52 of his new \$85.03 income, as compared with the dollar and a half he would have paid in July 1940.

In 1942 our national income was about \$120,000,000,000; we made only about \$82,000,000,000 worth of goods to buy. Some of the difference went into taxes and war bonds, but not all. A lot of it went into the bank. Checking deposits rose \$30,000,000,000 from 1939 to 1943. During 1942 alone, money in the hands of the public rose by \$15,000,000,000; \$11,700,000,000 of this was in the form of bank deposits. And surplus money in the banks is just as dangerous as surplus greenbacks in the corner cupboard.

In 1943, estimated national income was up to \$143,000,000,000—more than half as much again as in the peak year 1929. But the supply of consumers' goods was still dropping. War expenditures were soaring, putting more cash into circulation. There was a gap of around \$50,000,000,000 between money income and goods, before taxes were collected. Net purchasing power after taxes and war bond purchase was up \$24,000,000,000 a year from 1941. We are ripe for inflation. We must hold the line against it at all costs.

### *FDR's 7-Point Program*

President Roosevelt gave us a sound formula for the prevention of inflation in the seven-point program he laid down in April 1942:

1. Tax heavily and hold profits down.
2. Fix ceilings on prices and rents.
3. Stabilize wages.
4. Stabilize farm prices.
5. Save more; buy more war bonds.
6. Ration all essential commodities that are scarce.
7. Discourage installment buying and encourage paying off debts.

The President made it clear that a break-through at any point in this scale would imperil the whole anti-inflation program.

The Administration has made every effort to carry out its well-considered program. But opposition from private interests and delays in Congress have hampered it at every turn. Here is how things stood in August 1943:

1. Congress failed to vote a further increase in taxes, though in his Budget Message of February 1943 the President made it abundantly clear that sixteen billions of revenue must come in if we are to prosecute the war without serious consequences to our economy. Instead Congress lifted the top salary limit of \$25,000 after taxes, and spent months debating the Ruml plan. However desirable pay-as-you-go tax legislation may have been, it was no remedy for inflation.

2. Roosevelt's second point, the fixing of price and rent ceilings, fared a little better. The Office of Price Administration has managed to keep rents down to within  $3\frac{1}{2}$  percent of their pre-war level—except where new quarters were built or rented and there was no pre-war basis for fixing rents. Consumers saved an estimated billion dollars in 1943 because of the rent control system.

Price ceilings have not stood the strain as well. Pressure from chain-store representatives without and within OPA had its effect; ceilings were set as much as 25 percent above going prices, so that prices were revised upward, not downward. Not until the end of April, when the coal strike forced the issue, did Price Administrator Prentiss Brown finally "get tough" and announce that prices would be held all along the line and certain food prices rolled back to the September 1942 level. But he had admitted that the best OPA could expect to do was to hold average price increases down to one-half of one percent a month; and later he had to compromise with Congress on the roll-back program.

A statement by the AFL and CIO charged that Brown: "has failed to roll back or even hold prices of strategic cost of living items; . . . has failed to wage a determined fight on opposition of special interests to subsidies necessary to effect a roll-back; has failed to strengthen his policy-making and administrative staff; . . . has failed to organize and extend effective enforcement machinery." All of which was true, although Congress must share the blame with Brown.

3. The wage stabilization program worked well enough, for a time at least. From October 1942 to June 1943 hourly wage rates in manufacturing increased 6 cents but almost half of this was because of increased production in plants using piecework or incentive pay plans. Overtime, promotions, and shifts to higher-paid war indus-



tries accounted for most of the remainder; wage rates rose by less than a penny an hour, on the average. Less than one percent of the raises granted by the War Labor Board were accompanied by any rise in prices of materials produced, showing that labor costs were not responsible for the inflationary trend.

The WLB's "Little Steel Formula," which limited wage increases to 15 percent over the January 1941 level, came under sharper and sharper criticism from organized labor as prices rose. If John L. Lewis' demand for a flat \$2 daily wage increase had been granted, workers in every industry would have become restive and demanded higher wages. Then one of two things would have happened: wholesale raises in other industries would have been given, releasing the brake from farm and food prices and bringing a real inflationary upsurge; or the raises would have been denied, stimulating a series of strikes and damaging war production.

As it was, both AFL and CIO leaders threatened to scrap the Little Steel Formula unless food prices were rolled back to the level of September 1942. A temporary respite was granted the Administration when living costs dropped one percent in June and July 1943. But the real battle was yet to be fought.

4. Farm prices rose 20 percent during 1942, despite all efforts to control them. In March 1943 the farm bloc forced through both houses of Congress a bill to raise farm price ceilings, but the President vetoed it. The farm price ceiling and the wage ceiling are two of a kind; if one goes, the other goes too, with inflationary results. And in July 1943 the farm price ceiling was beginning to crack, with ceilings increased sharply on vegetables for canning.

5. War bond sales were good; our periodic drives have consistently passed their quotas. But those quotas, in the opinion of most economists, are far too low. And too many Americans were buying bonds only in spurts or not at all. Only 60 percent of American families bought any war bonds or stamps in the first six months of 1943, according to the Gallup poll.

Every dollar spent on war bonds is a soldier in the fight against inflation, for it means one more surplus dollar out of circulation until such time as there are goods to be bought with it. Higher bond sales are the only alternative to higher and still higher taxes, if we

are to place purchasing power and consumer production on an equal footing.

6. Rationing had been extended to all scarce products that are essential; but the OPA lacked the staff adequately to enforce rationing regulations. The people are willing to accept rationing with a minimum of griping, and most of that is good natured. They are willing to help police rationing and price control, if a simple system of uniform prices can be set up. They realize that rationing is the only fair and democratic way of insuring that every individual shall be able to get the necessities of life. But the people are also thoroughly disgusted at some aspects of rationing. After they get their ration books, they expect to be able to get what they have coming. When butter, or beef, or gasoline is not obtainable, they are naturally angry. They want a rationing system that works.

One of the most unsavory aspects of our rationing program has been the growth of the black market. By May 1943, at least 20 per cent of our meat was passing through black market channels. Large black markets also operated in butter, poultry, potatoes and vegetables. And most of the time when the consumer was buying black market foods, she didn't even know it; for many otherwise "respectable" stores got goods for their regular customers on the black market.

Such illegal activities were and are a threat to the ration system and to the whole principle of distributing goods fairly. They deprive the poor man of his food, giving it to the man who is able and willing to pay a premium price, regardless of how fairly ration tickets are distributed. Black markets have severely dislocated the purchase of food supplies for the Army and lend-lease. The black market in meat causes a great waste of such strategic by-products as hides, adrenalin, insulin, fertilizer and bone meal, for only the meat is sold. It is also a menace to health. And black markets are a threat to legitimate business and to morale on the home front.

7. Finally, installment buying has been quite effectively discouraged—as much by the impossibility of buying cars, refrigerators and similar products as by the new regulations raising down payments and shortening the purchase period. And billions of dollars in personal debts have been paid off. This part of the President's program has been a huge success. There has been practically no opposition

to it. In fact, some business organizations want to carry the present limitations on installment buying over into the peace period.

The weakest point in our inflation control program is price control—and specifically, food prices. It is here that the foes of the Administration's program have concentrated their attack. The fact that the OPA had not been too efficient, in addition to its being politically unpopular, made it particularly vulnerable.

### *Black Friday, 1943*

On Saturday, June 19, 1943, I picked up the morning paper and saw this shocking headline: "HOUSE VOTES BAN ON FOOD SUBSIDY, CUTS OPA FUNDS." This was the climax of a campaign which the Washington *Evening Star* described as an attempt "to get the price-fixing agency 'dead or alive'—preferably dead." It was motivated by two forces: pressure from the farm bloc, the meat packers, real estate operators and others who were out to wreck price control for their own benefit; and sheer hatred for President Roosevelt and the New Deal. It was a Republican victory (although a temporary one) against the Administration. The Roosevelt-haters would rather see inflation and monetary chaos, which would react to the discredit of the Administration, than a Roosevelt victory in 1944—even if our war effort were endangered.

C. F. Hughes, business editor of the *New York Times*, characterized the Congressional rampage in these words: "Congress began to look like a case for the FBI to investigate in order to find out if enemy agents have sneaked loco weed into the fodder of the honorable gentlemen. In a hysterical effort to 'regain its powers' it passed a contradictory and confused anti-strike bill over the sound reasons advanced by war production experts and military arms. By turning down the subsidies which have made price control work in Canada and England, it voted for inflation and plenty of labor trouble."

Clarence Francis, president of General Foods, Inc., and Chairman of the industry's "War Food Committee," has frankly said that "controlled inflation" was necessary to save the retailer. Others have argued that inflation is desirable as a means of canceling out part of our projected \$300,000,000,000 national debt. Proponents of inflation, by and large, are the people or representatives of the people who



own real properties—land, factories, railroads and the like—that would retain relative values regardless of inflation. In fact, many a large business man would profit by inflation, for he could pay off his indebtedness in depreciated dollars and come out free of obligations.

It is the little man, on a salary, wage or pension, who would be hit hard—especially the 55 percent of America's families who earned less than \$2000 in 1942. Among those who would suffer most would be the 2,000,000 families of men in the services who are struggling along on fixed allotments of \$50 or \$62 a month, half a million veterans of the last war who are living on their pensions, half a million people who subsist on social security benefits—the aged, blind, mothers of dependent children, and families on relief—and 3,300,000 teachers, firemen, policemen and other public employees who are earning about the same salaries as they did in 1939. In addition there are the people who depend on life insurance annuities, the white collar workers on fixed salaries and about 7,000,000 wage workers who still earn less than 40 cents an hour. Altogether these groups include about half the civilian population. They would be the chief victims of inflation.

The crucial issue was that of subsidies, to be paid to growers and processors to help them make ends meet at present prices. A presidential veto was necessary to kill the Congressional ban on subsidies, and there is every indication that Congress will return to the attack.

Now subsidies are nothing new. They have been paid to wheat, corn and cotton farmers for many years, to keep prices up and to encourage soil conservation. In 1943 the Commodity Credit Corporation was to spend \$25,000,000 to subsidize the packing of tomatoes, peas, beans and sweet corn, buying these vegetables at higher prices but selling them to the processors at the same prices as in 1942, in order to keep retail prices down. Subsidies are being paid to coal, steel and oil firms, to offset the increased cost of shipments. Copper, lead and zinc production has also been expanded at stable prices, despite the higher cost of operating low-grade mines, by the judicious use of subsidies.

The Government has subsidized over 80 percent of the \$18,000,000,000 expansion in our war industries. It has put up 99.6 percent

of the funds for expansion of the explosive industry, 96 percent for shipbuilding expansion, and 93 percent for new ammunition, shell and bomb factories. Even the steel industry has had 71 percent of its wartime expansion paid for by Federal funds. The RFC has subsidized Standard Oil to the extent of \$650,000,000 for building synthetic rubber plants. In every case, Uncle Sam also insures the operation of these plants at a generous profit. Congress did not object to these subsidies which went to private business to insure production at a profit. It did object to subsidies which were meant to protect the consumer.

Walter Lippmann has pointed out that "every responsible authority in this country and abroad knows that retail prices cannot be kept level without resorting to subsidies." The moderate roll-back put into effect by OPA was scheduled to cost only \$450,000,000. Economists estimate that a two-billion-dollar subsidy program would be needed to do the job properly. Every dollar spent on food subsidies would save the consumer five to ten times that amount in losses resulting from run-away prices. But when Congress finally passed the Administration's \$450,000,000 subsidy program, it was with the understanding that it would not be used for further price roll-backs.

The Congressional cutting of the OPA appropriation from \$177,000,000 asked by the agency to \$155,000,000 could not fail to hamstring the enforcement of price controls. It prevented Brown from hiring 1600 badly-needed investigators. With or without subsidies, prices cannot begin to be held in line unless the OPA has funds for adequate enforcement machinery. This must be obvious to every thinking citizen.

A final point of Congressional attack was on the grade-labeling of processed foods and clothing. This was a measure proposed to check evasion of price control resulting from passing off deteriorated or shoddy merchandise at high-quality prices. It meant protection for the consumer, so that he might know what he is getting inside the cans or bottles. A fight had long been going on inside the OPA over this issue; at one point two OPA officials from the canned-food industry who had opposed grade labeling resigned from the agency under fire from labor, after Prentiss Brown had removed their policy-making powers.

Brown finally killed the whole grade-labeling project—apparently

to appease the critics of price control, who had earlier forced the resignation of Leon Henderson and who were now out to get Brown if he didn't play ball. The OPA had stated that it must depend largely on the consumer for the enforcement of price ceilings; but now there was no way he could check on quality deterioration.

The aim of this Congressional attack on the whole price control system was the wrecking of the Administration's anti-inflation program. The consequences were clear—no further subsidies for rolling back of prices, no effective policing of price ceilings and the virtual certainty of further price rises.

### *Profit by Britain's Experience*

If we want to lick inflation, we will have to go about it systematically and efficiently, as the British have done. It will not be an easy job. It will require self-sacrifice on the part of every citizen. But it can be done.

The British technique is based primarily on price control and rationing. And these in turn depend for their effectiveness on subsidies. Britain started its subsidy system in December 1939 and today is spending \$600,000,000 a year on subsidies. The British have found that only by using subsidies to hold prices down can they avoid undue pressure from labor for higher wages. If we used subsidies on a similar scale, we would have to spend at least \$2,000,000,000 a year on them. If this seems high, compare it to our projected expenditure of \$100,000,000,000 for war production in 1943.

Through the use of subsidies British food costs have been rolled back 3 percent, to a level only 20 percent higher than the 1935-39 average. Food prices in the United States were up 40 percent in the same period. The British food index was based on only twenty items, compared to sixty in the American index; but the results of the British subsidy program were still impressive.

Canada spends \$68,000,000 a year on subsidies covering 90 percent of essential items, to encourage production and to control prices. Prices and wages were frozen at November 1941 levels, which were 15 percent higher than September 1939. In the next year and a half, Canadian prices in general rose only 2.1 percent. Our prices rose 11.6 percent in the same period, although we were not at war.



In July 1943 Australia adopted a \$40,000,000 subsidy program, aimed at rolling prices back to the April level and holding them there.

The second main point in the British anti-inflation program is high taxes. We are paying only about a quarter of the cost of the war as we go along whereas Britain, Canada and Australia are paying half of their costs on a current basis. This shows the need for higher taxes in America, especially on the top half of the population with incomes above \$2000 a year.

If this is not enough to eliminate the inflationary gap, we must step up savings—especially savings in the form of war bonds, by the use of compulsory payroll deductions if necessary. British war bond purchases are on a much steadier basis than ours.

Finally, the British have been able to keep their whole price-control program on a stable basis by a much stricter government control over the economy than we have. The British Food Ministry buys and sells all rationed foods, so that prices cannot get out of hand. Perhaps this will be necessary here, too, if private interests continue to hamper the price-control program.

### 13: CONFUSION IN WASHINGTON

IN 1943 the people of America were well satisfied with the progress of the war abroad. But they were confused about the conduct of the war at home. As the year wore on, more and more of us felt that we had been let down by the statesmen and politicians in Washington, D. C.

This feeling was not localized; the average citizen didn't know whether to blame the President, or Congress, or Prentiss Brown, or Harry Hopkins. He only knew that a lot of bungling was going on. He was sure of that. He was especially sure when he was unable to get meat or potatoes or butter even with his ration book; when he saw prices going up more rapidly than wages; when he saw signs of inefficiency in the war production program; and when he

witnessed the wave of strikes and riots which for a time threatened to disrupt the whole war effort. He sensed a lack of decisive action in high places in dealing with these problems.

A great majority of the people still thought that the President was doing a good job; but more and more of them qualified their approval. They wanted Washington to furnish stronger evidence of its ability to lead the country to a clear-cut victory in this greatest of all wars, without permitting a breakdown in our economy here at home.

Dissatisfaction was strongest among business men and Republicans who had always thought of Roosevelt as "That Man in the White House." They were making profits—especially those who had a finger in the war industry pie, as most of them had. But they were horrified at the red tape and divided authority they found in doing business with Washington, and at the thought of a \$300 billion national debt when the war is over. Their fears, rational and otherwise, were reflected in the press, and added to the doubts of the ordinary citizen.

### *Mal-Administration*

There is no doubt that Roosevelt will go down in history as one of the world's really great men. His leadership brought us out of the financial chaos of 1933. On the international scene, he saw what was coming years before most Americans were willing to admit it. His program of preparation for the conflict that was inevitable was a life-saver when war finally came. And the Administration's social aims on the home front are admirable enough.

Our record of war production in 1942, moreover, was little short of miraculous. Donald Nelson has reported that we built nearly 48,000 planes, more warships than in any year of our history, and other things in proportion. By the end of 1943 practically our whole war plant was to be completed, leaving only half a billion dollars' worth of construction to be finished in 1944. While this record of speed was conducive to waste, it was nevertheless a great achievement. The Administration is justified in taking a good share of the credit for it.

But the fact remains that President Roosevelt is not a good admin-

istrator. His well-known reluctance to admit failures and to fire the men who caused those failures is partly responsible. His unwillingness to allocate clear-cut and undivided authority is another factor. This has contributed to the vacillation and confusion surrounding such matters as food, manpower and price control.

A good example of the trouble behind the scenes is the conflict between the so-called military "brass hats" and civilian officials for control of the nation's economy—a fight that has been going on ever since the "defense effort" got under way in 1940. Whenever the situation has become intolerable, the President has appointed a new super-agency: OPM, OEM, WPB, OES and now OWM. But throughout this tortuous evolution, the basic conflict in our war production program remained. The War and Navy Departments, jealous of civilian encroachment despite the remarkable record made by Donald Nelson and Charles E. Wilson of WPB, were unwilling to bow to any over-all coordination of the war program, feared that Congress would force on them an agency to do just this. They therefore welcomed the appointment of James F. Byrnes as head of the Office of War Mobilization and of Bernard Baruch as his right-hand man; for both were inclined to play along with those who favored military rather than civilian control. Byrnes' conception of his job was that of a referee among quarreling agencies. This left things pretty much as they were, except that the Pepper-Kilgore-Tolan bill for a genuine Office of War Mobilization was killed. The manpower, food, price and rationing programs were in the same semi-autonomous state as before, except that Referee Byrnes had his hand strengthened a bit.

The results of our haphazard governmental evolution were even more disruptive in some cases. Paul McNutt, as chief of the War Manpower Commission, long lacked authority over Selective Service, so that no comprehensive plan for utilizing our manpower was possible. When McNutt's authority was strengthened, most of the damage that was possible had been done. Again, when the production of synthetic rubber was in a state of chaos, William R. Jeffers was called in. He was made "responsible to the President" but placed "under the direction" of Donald Nelson, chairman of WPB. In spite of this anomalous situation he straightened the rubber industry out, only to become involved in a feud with Undersecretary



of War Patterson on the question of division of strategic equipment and materials between the rubber and military gasoline programs. This is the sort of exhibition that confuses and angers the public.

The most explosive situation, however, was in foodstuffs. The War Food Administration was created to solve the food problem. But again, it shared authority with at least six other agencies, and did not have over-all authority to plan the production and distribution of food. The administrator had no power over OPA, which controlled the pricing and rationing of food; the Office of Economic Stabilization, which has the last say on food prices; the War Manpower Commission, which controls the farm labor supply; the War Production Board, which controls the supply of farm machinery; the Petroleum Administration, which regulates the farmers' gasoline supply; or the Department of Agriculture, which is charged with responsibility for increasing farm acreage and production of essential crops. The War Food Administration, it turned out, had no real powers; it was just another agency, able to do little except offer advice to the multitude of agencies already in the food field.

Chester Davis had a try at working within these limitations, but gave up in despair. He ought never to have been appointed, nor, when offered the job, to have accepted, for he was completely out of step with the subsidy and price control program of the Administration. The fact that he held office for three months under these conditions was itself a sign of disorganization. The last straw for Davis, according to his associates, was when OPA and the White House formulated the program for subsidizing meat and butter production without even consulting War Food Administrator Davis.

Jesse Jones, Secretary of Commerce and head of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, obstructed many aspects of our war program for three years. He failed dismally to build up stockpiles of crucial war materials which Congress had ordered him to acquire eighteen months before Pearl Harbor, and failed to build up a synthetic rubber industry. He apparently saw his role as that of a banker who must avoid using red ink if possible. Yet he did not hesitate to advance \$68,500,000 in RFC funds to the aluminum cartel without interest, to finance the construction of the Shipsaw hydroelectric project in Canada. While this was being done the building of power projects in the United States was being stopped

by the WPB, as Congressman John M. Coffee has scathingly pointed out.

Strangest of all, though Jesse Jones was relieved of executive responsibility for the Board of Economic Warfare in April 1942, he continued to exercise the power of a censor over its actions by virtue of holding the purse strings of the RFC, whence the BEW got its funds. In the summer of 1943 the story of Jones' interference with our economic war was at last made public by none other than Vice-President Henry Wallace, head of the BEW, who declared that the Texas banker had held up the acquisition or production of needed quinine, fats and oils, castor seeds, cobalt, carborundum, palm oil, flax fiber, jute, sisal and other products. The thing that puzzled the general public about all this was that such obstructionism was allowed to continue for so many years, with control of the BEW divided between Wallace and Jones until the feud between these two simmered and boiled over in a public fight. They also wondered why the President had to deprive both Jones and Wallace of control over the BEW. "Why," asked a Virginia friend of mine, "couldn't Roosevelt have fired Jesse Jones long ago, if he's done so much harm? And if Jones was wrong and needed firing, why did Roosevelt take it out on Wallace too? Why couldn't he have put the BEW under the complete control of Wallace, or Milo Perkins? If he had done that long ago, all this mess might have been avoided." But instead, conservative Leo Crowley became head of the "reorganized" Office of Economic Warfare and soon it became apparent that the Jesse Jones philosophy was still dominant.

The two most overworked words in official Washington's vocabulary are "coordinate" and "liaison." When the President "reorganizes" some part of the Government, instead of merging related agencies he usually groups them and creates a new one to "coordinate" them. All sorts of vestigial remains still clutter up the Washington scene—for example, the Civil Aeronautics Authority and the Office for Emergency Management. Duplication of functions is a chronic weakness; no less than eight different agencies are collecting data on manpower requirements and supply.

These are the sorts of things about the Administration which the press is fond of citing and which dismay the President's staunchest supporters.

## *Congress' Private War*

Lest this seem to be an all-out attack on the President, I hasten to state the further opinion that Congress must bear an even larger share of the blame for the confusion on the domestic front. The President's administrative record may not be the best; but his policies in general have been sound, and the sounder they were the harder they have been attacked in Congress. The difficulties of the executive branch have been greatly increased by constant sniping from "the hill."

Congress came to Washington in 1943 under the impression that it had a mandate from the voters to wage an undeclared war against the President. There is no evidence that the public gave any such mandate. There was a trend away from the Democratic Party, but this was partly because young people and working people did not exercise the franchise as they ordinarily would have. They were in the Army, or had moved to war centers too recently to meet residential requirements, or were too busy working to vote. The laboring class was too well satisfied with conditions as they existed, and the unemployed were now employed; neither group was strongly enough motivated to go to the polls in force, especially in a non-presidential election.

In my travels around the country I heard as much "beefing" about Congress and its obstructionism as I did about the President—except from people in the upper economic brackets. The *Fortune* Survey which I cited earlier also showed that Congress ranked much lower in public esteem than did the President.

One of the most disruptive practices in Congress has been the multiplication of "investigating committees." Many a busy administrator has been forced to spend days on end in these various committees, which overlap as badly as some of the bureaus in the executive branch of the Government. A very few Congressional committees have made a constructive contribution to the war effort. The Tolan Committee on interstate migration and the Truman Committee investigating the various phases of our war effort stand out.

At the other end of the scale is the committee headed by Representative Howard Smith of Virginia, arch-enemy of the National Labor Relations Board and co-author of the Connally-Smith Act,



who now has a free hand in "investigating" all Government departments save War, Navy and the White House. He showed his intentions in advance when he announced jubilantly upon the formation of the committee that he would "stop the deliberate misrepresentation of Acts of Congress" by the Administration. Then there is Senator Harry Byrd's Economy Committee, which came out in favor of slashing the Federal payroll by 300,000 civilian employees, or 10 percent of the national total. It failed to say where the cut could be made. Since the great bulk of new employees have been hired by the War and Navy Departments, a cut of this magnitude would have to be made largely in these agencies. But military authorities insist that this is impossible; and other agencies have already been pared down to a point where further large cuts could only hurt the war effort on the home front.

The constant sniping of the Dies Committee on Un-American Activities is too well known to need reviewing. It is expert at harassing New Deal officials, but has never attempted to go after our native fascist groups on a serious scale. In 1943, Dies was so taken aback by the scrapping of the Communist International that he said the work of his Committee might be discontinued as a result—thus betraying his complete lack of interest in investigating fascists. But the Committee's staff members were not giving up their place in the sun so easily. They arranged to concentrate their fire on the War Relocation Authority, as noted earlier.

The prestige of the Dies Committee is low in Congress—so low that when Dies presented a list of thirty-nine names of Federal officials to the House as "crackpots" or "subversives," a separate committee—the Kerr Committee—was set up to reinvestigate the case. But such is the loyalty of Congressmen to their colleagues that the House renewed the Dies Committee's appropriation in 1943.

The House descended to a new low when it gave Representative Eugene Cox carte blanche to investigate the Federal Communications Commission, one of the few agencies that had taken an aggressive stand against radio monopoly and that had refused to be intimidated by the threat of a Congressional investigation. Cox was the one man in Congress with a personal ax to grind against FCC—this very agency had uncovered and submitted to the Department of Justice information alleging that he had accepted a fee of \$2500

for acting in behalf of a Georgia broadcasting station in its relations with the FCC. A Federal statute calls for a maximum fine of \$10,000 or two years in prison for a Congressman proved to have accepted pay for services rendered in a matter affecting the United States before a Government agency. The Cox investigation was obviously a counter-attack; the Georgia Congressman showed the biased nature of the investigation by labeling the FCC in advance as "the nastiest nest of rats in the entire country." As the hearings proceeded, it became apparent that Cox's strategy was to make the most extravagant charges, aimed at the newspaper front pages, without giving the FCC a fair chance to reply. FCC Chairman James Lawrence Fly made the obvious observation: "FCC is being tried in the newspapers." He had pretty good proof that the Committee planned it that way. A memo from counsel Eugene Garey to Cox Committee members, outlining this procedure, had fallen into his hands:

1) "Decide what you want the newspapers to hit hardest and then shape each hearing so that the main point becomes the vortex of the testimony. Once that vortex is reached, *adjourn*."

2) "Do not permit . . . extraneous fusses with would-be witnesses, which might provide news that would bury the testimony which you want featured."

3) "Do not space hearings more than 24 or 48 hours apart when on a controversial subject. This gives the opposition too much opportunity to make . . . countercharges. . . ."

4) "Don't ever be afraid to recess . . . so that you keep proceedings in control so far as creating news is concerned."

5) "And *this is most important* don't let the hearings or the evidence ever descend to the plane of a personal fight between the Committee chairman and the head of the agency being investigated. The high plane . . . should be maintained at all costs."

The Kerr Committee, appropriately enough, started off its new investigation of supposedly "subversive" Government employees with three FCC employees—Goodwin Watson, William E. Dodd, Jr., and Frederick L. Schuman. All three men were loyal Americans but "premature anti-fascists" who had foreseen and understood the nature of the present conflict long before their inquisitors. All were doing important war jobs, for which they were well qualified; there was no criticism of their work. But the House ordered Watson

and Dodd excluded from the Federal payroll, along with Robert Morss Lovett, an able official of the Virgin Islands administration.

Schuman apparently felt a little hurt at being exonerated by the Committee which had "convicted" Watson and Dodd, for he penned a memorable statement on the case for the benefit of Congress and the press. It read, in part:

"The fact that I have been cleared of unwarranted accusations does not place in any better light the more important fact that two of my fellow-citizens have been condemned on the basis of equally unwarranted accusations and sentenced to prospective dismissal and disgrace. . . . The issues involved are larger than the fate of particular mice or men. The sentences already handed down will, if unchallenged, be a precedent for others. They place in potential jeopardy the activities of all the war agencies of the Government. They threaten the possible subversion of the fundamentals of the American democratic system.

". . . the members of Congress have a grave responsibility in protecting American values and practices against those who are in fact committed to their destruction. No loyal citizen, whether in or out of public office, can question this duty of America's legislators or fail to sympathize with their difficulties in grappling with a problem of great complexity.

"What is questionable is whether the problem can be dealt with constructively by those who approach it in the spirit of witch-chasers, Red-baiters and head-hunters. What is equally questionable is whether any group of law-makers, with the best will in the world, can reasonably be expected to be fair judges of men and agencies they do not know so long as they themselves are preoccupied with the arduous tasks of legislation and appropriation in war time and are subjected to political pressures against which judicial tribunals are protected. What is more questionable is whether truth and justice can ever be arrived at through a secret inquisition, involving no judge, no jury, no counsel for the accused, no witnesses, no logic, and no law save something called public opinion. The condemnation of individuals through star-chamber proceedings on the basis of so-called public opinion is typical of Fascist and Nazi justice. It is repugnant to all that America has always stood for . . . Americanism is safe against the attacks of its enemies, within and without. Whether it can survive the assaults of its self-appointed champions remains to be seen. . . ."



Its dignity hurt by this blast, the House probably would have included Schuman on its black list had he not been about to resign anyhow. It did uphold the dismissals of the others. The Senate, where fair-mindedness is more common, voted overwhelmingly to reject the House findings in the case several times, but finally gave up the fight in order to get the appropriation bill through. Fortunately President Roosevelt refused to accept the House's decision, labeling it a violation of the executive power to appoint personnel, and intimating that he would renew the fight.

But such political side-shows, although full of implications for civil rights and constitutional Government, are merely symbolic of the Congressional state of mind. Much more important were the mortal blows that Congress dealt in 1943 to agencies that were important instruments of the home front war machine.

### *Congress Wields the Ax*

First to feel the wrath of the Congress was the Farm Security Administration, whose record in increasing food production has already been cited. Many of its functions were eliminated, and it was apparent that it was doomed.

The National Resources Planning Board was the next to receive a death sentence, when Congress refused to appropriate money for its modest \$1,400,000 budget. This was the agency that had brought forth plans for a post-war public works program and "cradle to the grave" social security plan. Senator Taft of Ohio maintained that this forward-looking "American Beveridge Plan" was based upon a philosophy that was "partly Socialism and partly the product of a dangerous imagination. . . . a combination of hoey and false promises." So the Senate voted 44 to 31 to kill by slow degrees the only agency equipped to plan for the demobilization of twenty to thirty million Americans from the armed services and war industry. Then it set up its own committee, under Senator George of Georgia, to deal with post-war problems.

The National Youth Administration was likewise killed, although it was devoted entirely to giving vocational training to youth about to take jobs in war industry.

The blow dealt to OPA has already been analyzed. The sad thing

was that it came just as the much maligned price agency was showing signs of holding the line against inflation for the first time.

The Office of Civilian Defense, the Office of War Information and the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, all war agencies, also took sharp cuts. The attacks on OWI have been particularly unfair. It has its faults and has made its mistakes, but all Washington newsmen agree that Elmer Davis has done a good job on the home front. OWI has given out war news as soon as the Army and Navy allowed. It has not propagandized for a fourth term for Roosevelt; nor did the sixty-five tons of material it sent overseas (less than one percent of the capacity of a Liberty ship) crowd out war materials. Far from stirring up active racial antagonism, its lone pamphlet directed to Negroes was urged on readers by the Negro press as an antidote to bitterness and antagonism to the war effort.

Finally, both houses passed the Connally-Smith anti-strike act over the President's veto without even taking time to consider the President's objections seriously. Shortly afterward they shut up shop for the summer, arranging to reconvene without a call from the President, at the request of either majority or minority leaders of both houses. This action was unprecedented.

The most disastrous result of the Congressional revolt was the hamstringing of the Administration's inflation-control and labor policies. Congress seemed about to succeed, where John L. Lewis had failed, in bringing about inflation.

### *Congress vs. the President*

The causes of the friction between Congress and the executive branch of the Government are not hard to find. Anti-Roosevelt business and political leaders, and their allies in the farm bloc, undoubtedly helped to stir it up. But that is not the whole story.

Congress and the President both complain of a lack of cooperation from each other. Ever since the famous Supreme Court battle of 1937 the President has had his difficulties in getting essential legislation approved by Congress. To avoid undue delays, he has taken recourse more and more to the issuance of executive orders. From January 1941 to April 1942 alone, 500 of these were issued. Comment-

ing on them, Senator Joseph O'Mahoney has said, "They were not written in the halls of Congress on the responsibility of men chosen by the public and known to the public. They were written in private by anonymous experts. They were not subject to public hearing nor were they analyzed in public debate. They did not become known to the public until issued—and then they were effective."

Again, a feeling has developed in Congress and among many business men that the White House, but not necessarily the President, is trying to run the country. Harry Hopkins has become a personal devil to some of Roosevelt's critics. "The White House cabal is abusing its authority," one very intelligent business man told me. "You've no idea the pressure that can be wielded by any one of the President's assistants simply by picking up a telephone and saying, 'This is the White House calling.'"

Congress has felt that because of Roosevelt's apparent neglect of home affairs, and because it (Congress) isn't in on all the secret military plans that have been developed, it should be given more leeway in its handling of domestic problems. It felt that its sphere was being invaded when the executive branch embarked on a program of price subsidies without Congressional consultation and approval. It was furious when the President vetoed the Connally-Smith bill, because he had given no indication of doing so and because the only alternative offered was the almost universally unpopular Roosevelt proposal to raise the draft age to sixty-five for strikers.

These are a few of the Congressional attitudes that explain the revolt on the Hill in June 1943. And behind the scenes, lending encouragement to the anti-Roosevelt faction, are the farm bloc and other special interest groups that hope to profit by the confusion.

The common people don't hate Roosevelt. But they do share one Congressional view: the feeling that Roosevelt is spending so much time running the war that he has lost touch with the home front.

When Congress took the bit in its teeth, Roosevelt-haters among the business men, Republicans and Southern Democrats cheered themselves hoarse. They saw it as a great popular revolt against the Administration. But the polls showed nothing of the sort. The people, from all indications, were merely looking on from the side-



lines, puzzled and a little angry at such goings-on in Washington, and wishing that Roosevelt would do something about it.

## 14: THE NEW ISOLATIONISM

ISOLATIONISM in the pre-war sense died on December 7, 1941. The attack on Pearl Harbor and what followed proved that the isolationists were wrong in every detail. They had said that this war was none of our business, and suddenly it was the business of every living American. They had said that the two oceans were sufficient protection for us, and all at once ships along both of our coasts were attacked by submarines. They had said that we were depriving ourselves of military strength in aiding Great Britain, but when the Nazis counted us in too we were mighty glad that we had helped Britain hold the fort through the critical summer of 1940.

So with the declaration of war, the isolationists either crawled into their storm cellars or became super-patriots. "America First" officially dissolved itself. Isolationist newspapers began to sport little American flags on their mastheads. Everybody was for winning the war right away, using every resource at our command. Everybody apparently accepted the support of all our Allies gratefully.

This honeymoon lasted about six weeks. Colonel Robert R. McCormick's *Chicago Tribune*, which had published secret War Department plans on its front page less than a week before Pearl Harbor, was the first to swing back in the general direction of the isolationist line. The *Tribune* began to blame President Roosevelt for the war, and gave currency to talk of impeachment by remarking, "Our president is removable only by the long process of impeachment." It also expressed its approval of Representative Clare Hoffman, who had proposed impeaching the President for leading us into the war "by deception" and who had called the A.E.F. in Ireland a "suicide squad." And it published an editorial saying that "It is time that those who willed the war were driven from their hiding places and sent to the front, where they can share some of the agony they have created."

William Randolph Hearst likewise absolved the Axis from blame for our involvement in the war when he said on February 18, 1942, that "Mr. Churchill, notwithstanding his incompetence, has succeeded in dragging the United States into England's entanglements and in making the United States the buffer, the victim of England."

The New York *Daily News* of the McCormick-Patterson trio of newspapers, meanwhile, was busy complaining over "the non-success of the Roosevelt-Churchill strategy since December 8" and telling of "a spreading belief that this Administration is playing politics with the war" and "a suspicion that this Administration expects to be running some sort of totalitarian government either before or after the end of the war, and is prudently getting ready for same." This sort of talk gave rise to widespread rumors that the 1942 elections would not be held.

### *The New Line Emerges*

As time went on and the unrepentant isolationists grew bolder, the pattern of a "New Isolationism" gradually began to emerge. It represented a sort of protective coloration, an adaptation of pre-war isolationism to the new situation. Its proponents at no time admitted any reservations regarding the necessity of fighting the war. But the effect of their preachments was to spread confusion and weaken our war effort. Their main strategies were these:

*Attacks on our Allies, particularly Britain and Russia.* Anti-British sentiment was strong in many sections of the country before Pearl Harbor, and the British defeats at Hong Kong, Singapore and Tobruk were used to prove that the British were weak or corrupt. Another argument was that Britain was using us as a "cat's paw." One Kentucky Congressman said, "I don't blame Great Britain for trying to protect itself, but I protest against denying our flesh and blood assistance while 3,500,000 men are sitting on their rifles in the British Isles." A companion argument, much more effective, was that Britain was fighting only to preserve her empire, as shown by Prime Minister Churchill's statements or by the British policy in India.

Most of these criticisms, however, fell flat after the British started

chasing Rommel across Africa, and especially when they joined us in the invasion of North Africa. Americans, who always love a winner, began to look on their British allies with new esteem as they proved their military strength. Criticism dropped to a new low.

Anti-Russian propaganda, however, was another matter. It was still a powerful weapon. For two decades most Americans had been hearing about the "Communist Menace." This continued to be played up on the home front by the investigations of the Dies Committee and by a great part of the press, even though Communists had abandoned their silly slogan that this was merely an "imperialist war" on June 22, 1941, and had thereafter devoted their energies to winning the war.

As the Russians showed their strength and high morale in battle, Americans gave evidence of more and more respect for them. The New Isolationists tried to turn this respect into fear by creating a new bogey—the spectre of a victorious Russia going on to spread the Communist revolution throughout the world after the war. Every time the Russians won a spectacular victory, such newspapers as the *Chicago Tribune* would print cartoons of the menacing Russian bear, and ask, "Where will Stalin stop?"

Even after the dissolution of the Communist International and Stalin's statement that Russia favored the creation of a strong and independent Polish state this sort of propaganda continued at full blast. It reached a crescendo when the manifesto of the German National Committee in Moscow, calling for a democratic revolution in Germany, was taken to mean that Russia was seeking to make a separate peace.

A related line is that Russia is not showing her good faith by helping us in the war against Japan. We need, say the New Isolationists, Siberian bases from which to bomb Japan, but Russia will not provide them. To quote the *Washington Times-Herald* (the third McCormick-Patterson paper), "Why aren't the Russians sitting in on the planning? Is it because they want to keep a free hand for their own operations and not be bound to our time schedules on anything?" And Senator Burton K. Wheeler added, "Russia has yet to show a clear-cut demonstration that she is on our side in the Pacific war. Russia has yet to renounce her imperialistic designs after the war. Until we have firm assurance on both these points, it would



appear wise for America to proceed primarily with an offensive against Japan, and only secondarily with the Allied invasion of Europe, pending the defeat of Japan."

That brings us to the second main propaganda point of the New Isolationism: *Japan is our main enemy, and we should therefore devote all our efforts to defeating her first.* This ties in neatly with the anti-British appeal, for sponsors of this strategy usually say, in spite of Churchill's statements to the contrary, that Britain does not plan to help us in the Far East after Hitler is beaten. If we wait too long, the argument runs, we will give Japan time to fortify Burma and the Indies and to develop the resources which she needs to carry on a long war.

This argument was most effective in the first months of the war. It was thrown for a loss by the success of the North African campaign. But the Japan-firsters soon recovered their breath and resumed the attack. The climax came during a visit by Prime Minister Churchill to Washington, when Senator "Happy" Chandler of Kentucky delivered a three-hour speech criticizing Britain and Russia and demanding a "Japan first" strategy. This exhibition was too much for the New York *Herald-Tribune*, which labeled it "one of the kind for which in the less enlightened states a person would be taken out and shot at the following sunrise."

Senator Wheeler and other former isolationists came to Chandler's support. Wheeler is the same man who once said, "Why all this sudden talk about war with Japan? What is America's stake in the Malay Archipelago, in Burma, in Indo-China, in Siam, in Singapore?" He also remarked exactly eighteen days before Pearl Harbor, "There is no reason why the United States and Japan should go to war. Our differences can be worked out amicably, and I believe they will be."

The "Japan first" propaganda is shrewdly calculated to appeal to the emotions aroused by Pearl Harbor, to our race prejudice and especially to anti-Japanese sentiment on the West Coast. The Axis radios have gone out of their way to express their approval, knowing that if our forces are more evenly divided both Germany and Japan will have a better chance of winning. Berlin radio remarked, "Mr. Churchill made no attempt to deny that England is not prepared to take a sufficient share in the war against Japan. . . . The British

are going to leave the Americans in the lurch in the Far East." Tokyo threatened that if the United Nations launched an all-out assault on Europe, it would launch a "great" new offensive in Asia. The Japanese radio also applauded the "Japan first" propaganda of the *Chicago Tribune*, declaring that it represented "true Americanism."

The third point of departure of the New Isolationists is a campaign for *American nationalism and imperialism*. The New York *Daily News* early in 1942 took the lead in the campaign for a new American imperialism. It had more than once suggested that Canada leave the British Empire to join us, producing an integrated North American nation which might "concern itself with its own problems while the mother country concerned itself with such problems as the Danzig Corridor and Czecho-Slovakia." Now it added, "We are grabbing territory and setting up protectorates wherever else we feel like it and can get away with it. So is everybody else. Why must we blow back Dutch Guiana after the war, or any time before we're compelled by superior force to blow it back? We're taking it by force because the Holland government no longer has the force to keep it and no other first-class power at this point in history can beat us to it. . . . Why then be hypocritical about it!"

In April 1943 Colonel McCormick's *Tribune* advocated a form of imperialism that provided the ultimate insult to our British Allies.

"If the British Commonwealth and the nations of Western Europe wish to enjoy closer association with us in foreign policy, defense, trade, currency, patents, and all the other fields of Federal jurisdiction, and if for our part we wish similarly to link ourselves to them, the way to accomplish the result is clear. All they need do is adopt written constitutions and apply for membership and all we need do is accept them as we once accepted Texas.

"The people who are demanding that the United States yield its sovereignty to some kind of international organization seem to be more eager to stir up a row in this country than to achieve closer international co-operation. Certainly it is difficult to see why those who say their goal is integration of the free peoples have consistently neglected the most obvious method of achieving it, and the one that could be most readily acceptable to the American people.

"The method is found in the Constitution of the United States.

The provisions of Article IV are not at all onerous. Section 3 says that 'new states may be admitted by the Congress into this Union.' A joint resolution is all that is required. The qualification that when new states are created existing states shall not be deprived of territory or merged without their consent is obviously no bar to the admission of overseas members of an enlarged Union. Section 4 says 'the United States shall guarantee to every state in this union a republican form of government' and goes on to pledge the central government to protect the new states from invasion and, upon request, from domestic violence.

"That is all there is to it.

"Great Britain could come into the Union, for example, as four states, England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. Canada could constitute another state. Australia, New Zealand, and the contiguous islands, might form still another."

Rome radio immediately seized on this proposal, declaring that while "the White House is rather cautious in making declarations concerning their domination of the world, American papers, which are not directly influenced by the White House, show absolutely no delicacy when speaking of their British Allies." The announcer then proceeded to quote Colonel McCormick. And the Japanese radio added, "Robert McCormick is an extremely charming character. America today needs many more characters like this Chicago veteran. There is the possibility that other influential newspapers such as the New York *Daily News* and the Washington *Times-Herald* also may join the campaign, and they will have tremendous influence over the reading public."

Usually, however, the New Isolationists are a little more modest in their imperialistic ambitions. Some would have us confine our activities to dominating the Western Hemisphere. Others advocate keeping naval and air bases we have leased and adding a few new ones, say in the South Pacific or Southeast Asia. All agree that we should aim to dominate a great part of the world by virtue of an Army and Navy second to none. As Max Lerner has remarked, the isolationist and the old-fashioned imperialist are brothers under the skin.

In evaluating these imperialistic proposals, we might remember that the "Islands for War Debts Committee," which would have



extended our holdings in this hemisphere, turned out to be a creature of George Sylvester Viereck, agent for the Nazis. Viereck and the Committee's secretary, Prescott Dennett, who used Representative Hamilton Fish's postage frank to send around his literature, were later indicted on charges of seditious conspiracy. This sort of imperialistic propaganda, then, is just what Dr. Goebbels ordered, to divide and weaken America and split us from our Allies.

Imperialistic propaganda has a considerable appeal. Nineteen percent of the better-informed group of Americans, and 43 percent of those who are relatively uninformed, think that the United States should come out of this war with more territory under our control than when we went in, according to a *Fortune* Survey. Nearly a third of all our people hold this view.

The counterpart of imperialism is nationalism, which has recently been coming to the fore in the Midwest. Chicago is the center of nationalist agitation, as noted earlier. At a rally of the Republican National Revival Committee held there in July 1943, Representative Shafer of Michigan hit this note: "Let the New Dealers restore the four freedoms to America first. They have endangered, if not destroyed, them here." William Grace, secretary of the Committee and a leading New Isolationist agitator, announced that the meeting had adopted a resolution calling on Colonel McCormick of the *Tribune* to "stand as a Republican candidate for president . . . against Wendell Willkie, who personifies internationalism." The resolution stated that Colonel McCormick "is known throughout the nation as an American nationalist, and as a leader in the Republican Party." The Colonel very wisely declined the invitation.

In the spring and summer of 1943 meetings were held in various Midwestern cities, dedicated to a "revival of nationalism." One of the most prominent speakers, Gerald L. K. Smith of Detroit, publicly announced his intention of launching an "America First" party as a "spare tire" in 1944 in case both of the major parties were committed to a policy of international cooperation after the war. He hailed Senator Gerald Nye and Colonel Charles Lindbergh as likely presidential candidates. Earlier, he had mentioned Captain Eddie Rickenbacker in the same connection.

Apparently the New Isolationists think that the combination of

nationalism, imperialism and general die-hard conservatism, sponsored by a big name, will be their best propaganda line for the war and post-war periods.

A fourth sign of the New Isolationism is *willingness to discuss a negotiated peace*. A great majority of Americans back the President's and Mr. Churchill's policy of fighting through to an unconditional surrender. But when they were asked the question "If the German Army overthrew Hitler and then offered to stop the war and discuss peace terms, would you favor or oppose accepting the offer," 28 percent actually said they were ready to accept such an offer, even after the Casablanca Conference. This is a large group of innocents for the Nazi-line propagandists to work on. Americans who still fear Stalin more than Hitler are the ones who are susceptible.

Periodically the German Propaganda Ministry tries to utilize this minority of appeasement-minded persons by releasing peace feelers through Swedish newspaper or Spanish Government channels. There are always a few in this country who are willing to listen. In this way confusion is sown, and in the event of a long war a groundwork might be laid for a compromise peace by which German militarists might be able to retain control of Germany and hegemony over some occupied areas.

A fifth and final major earmark of the New Isolationism is *unwillingness to consider positive plans for the post-war world*. Attacks on Willkie, Wallace and other exponents of post-war internationalism are symptomatic of this position. "The Government is trying to railroad us into some new League of Nations," a Wisconsin school teacher informed me. "Why should we worry about a quart of milk for every Hottentot? Let's win the war first, and not worry about post-war problems until after the armistice."

Here are five potent arguments. None is supported by majority opinion; the polls have shown that. But one or another has some appeal to many Americans who don't subscribe to the whole pattern of the New Isolationism. Propaganda on these several fronts therefore has some effect in sowing doubts and mental reservations about the war and the peace to follow.

## *They Would Win Over the Army*

The New Isolationists appear to be staking everything on a reaction against internationalism in the post-war period. Only 13 percent of the American people now favor a post-war policy of "staying on our side of the oceans and having as little as possible to do with Europe and Asia." But, says an editorial in the Patterson newspapers, "We hope that the returning soldiers will insist on a return to our former foreign policy of staying out of Europe's eternal wars, minding our own business, and keeping our powder dry. We realize that these sentiments are what are nowadays called isolationism, America Firstism, treachery to the human race, etc. Nevertheless, we expect that a large majority of our boys will be found to entertain precisely these sentiments when at long last they come home from this global war." The returning veterans, the same editorial states, will be "tough men, grim men. . . . When they come home, the United States will be in effect theirs, and rightfully so, because they will have saved it from conquest and slavery and brought it to victory over a horde of barbaric enemies. These men will be entitled to run this country, not we who stayed at home and cheered them on with eloquent words while cussing the wartime deprivations on the home front. There will be some 10 or 12 million of them—which means that if they form a fairly well integrated bloc with intelligent leadership they can hold the balance of political power throughout the nation, and can hold all Government policies that amount to anything."

The New Isolationists are hoping to supply this "intelligent leadership."

## *The Republicans Veer Away*

One wing of the Republican Party may be expected to take an isolationist position in 1944. But the rank and file of Republicans are about as much in favor of international cooperation as the Democrats. Grove Patterson, a columnist in the *Toledo Blade*, has eloquently described their position: "Since I was 21 I have usually voted the Republican ticket because it has seemed to me that it has taken the better position on great issues and has offered the stronger



candidates. I believe in the system of two political parties and a loyal partisanship as best adapted to the making of free and effective government. But there are limits to partisanship beyond which I can never go. I should gladly make speeches and write pieces in favor of the reelection of Franklin Roosevelt rather than do anything to help elect a Republican isolationist. Ten million men were killed in World War I. More than that will have been killed before this war is over. Isolationism brought on this war and isolationism, if persisted in, will bring on the next. I don't propose to have on my conscience the record that I did even my little bit to help elect an isolationist president of the United States and thereby did my miserable part in promoting World War III."

Even those Republican leaders who have been critical of the Administration's foreign policy recognize that there is no political future in isolationism, old or new. Governor Thomas E. Dewey of New York told the 1943 Governors' Conference at Columbus that isolationism for the American people or for the Republican Party is a thing of the past. He added, "I hope the Republican Party will adopt a strong post-war foreign policy. If it does, it will be the first such policy put forward. President Roosevelt has never put one into words or given an outline of such a policy." Governor John W. Bricker of Ohio has come out for a post-war collective security program. Willkie's position as an internationalist has been unequivocal.

Yet, one may ask, what assurance is there that the Republican leaders will be able to follow through to the stage of participating fully in an international organization to prevent future wars? In 1920 many of our intellectuals supported Harding in the sincere belief that if he were elected, we would surely join the League of Nations. But a Republican Congress decided that this country should remain aloof. The sad story of that earlier period can repeat itself after this war, if the same factors are at work. The people today are internationally minded, but this may be in large part a temporary phenomenon born of the common baptism of fire. We know from the polls that people who say "Yes, I'm for an international organization to preserve the peace" will begin to back down when you question them on disarmament or tariff reduction—which might be essential to the success of such organization. After the armistice it will be easy for political demagogues to play upon traditional

attitudes toward trade and fear of foreign competition. Whether popular sentiment for a world federation would hold up under pressure of this sort is an open question. The New Isolationists will do everything in their power to see that it doesn't.

### *Miscellaneous Corrosion*

The isolationist newspapers of this country have not only set forth the basic precepts of the New Isolationism, as noted above. They have also sniped at almost every positive program, Federal or local, aimed at increasing participation in the war. And while they are less extreme than the little "vermin" papers, they manage to cause a good deal of confusion because of their large circulation.

The Hearst newspapers, for example, led the pack in attacking the Office of Civilian Defense early in the war, criticizing (with some justice) certain strange activities of that organization when Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia was its part-time director. But instead of making constructive suggestions all emphasis was placed on ridiculing minor OCD employees, such as a former fan-dancer who was a protégée of Mrs. Roosevelt. The apparent purpose was to discredit LaGuardia, Mrs. Roosevelt and the OCD in general. The effectiveness of the agency was certainly impaired by such attacks.

When LaGuardia went out and James Landis took over, OCD became less vulnerable to criticism, but sniping continued, especially on a local scale. Early in 1943, for example, the Hearst *San Francisco Examiner* featured a series of articles attacking OCD "block clubs" as a "deadly menace to America," terming them "socialism." San Franciscans had formed 500 block clubs within a few days after Pearl Harbor, and 200 or more were still in existence. These had done a remarkable job of cleaning up dried weeds and debris which constituted fire hazards, sponsoring cooperative victory gardens and child care programs, sharing cars and furthering war bond and salvage drives. Their whole purpose was to get the residents of each city block to elect a chairman and organize to participate more fully in home-front activities. Los Angeles and other major cities had already adopted the block plan, under the sponsorship of OCD; but in San Francisco the press long stymied the appropriation of \$16,000 which was needed to extend the block plan throughout the city.

The Hearst press and other newspapers apparently feared the effect of organizing the people along neighborhood lines. They argued that the block plan might be used as a political machine. Representative Fred Bradley of Michigan was quoted as saying that President Roosevelt and his advisers intended to use the block plan to build up support for Roosevelt in 1944 and eventually to establish a socialist dictatorship under the President.

The press has also waged a little private war on the unions, spreading false reports of unpatriotic actions by organized labor. The prime example of this was a story circulated by the *Akron Beacon-Journal*, the Hearst and McCormick papers and the Associated Press to the effect that American seamen had refused to unload their ship at Guadalcanal. A Congressional investigation showed no basis for the story, and the National Maritime Union brought a four-million-dollar libel suit against the papers which had used it.

Certain newspaper columnists also have unenviable records for malicious attacks on labor and the wartime Administration. Westbrook Pegler is the best known of these journalistic guerrilla warriors. For every corrupt union official he has exposed, he has made many emotional and prejudiced attacks on good honest people. Running stiff competition to Pegler nowadays is John O'Donnell of the *Patterson New York Daily News* and *Washington Times-Herald*, whose column goes to other papers as well. He was once presented with a German Iron Cross by President Roosevelt himself. He is the gentleman who gave wide circulation to the false tale that the Army was issuing contraceptives to the WACS. And when President Edwin Barclay of Liberia visited Washington, he made great capital of the fact that a Negro had slept in the White House. "This is political dynamite to be tossing around in the Southern States," he commented, doing his best to toss it around a little further. O'Donnell never misses a chance to get in a cutting attack on the Administration and its war program.

All of which adds up to this: the isolationists, old and new, not only spread confusion about our Allies and the war abroad; they also seize upon any wedge that comes to hand to divide and disrupt the war spirit at home.



## 15: AFTER "THE DURATION"

ON MY TRIP around the country I asked hundreds of people what they thought was "the most important problem facing this country today," aside from winning the war. In spite of all the emphasis I could place on the word "today," the two most frequent replies were these: "winning the peace, to insure against another war," and "preventing a depression after the war is over." The statistical results of various public opinion polls, cited earlier, show the same high degree of interest in post-war problems.

Our soldiers share this concern. Just ahead of me in a crowded railroad coach crossing South Carolina sat two soldiers, looking very hot and tired. They were talking loudly, but not in disagreement.

"I left a \$200 a month job when I got drafted," said the older one. "Driving a truck for a storage company. All I ask is, when this is over, to get my old job back or another one just as good."

"What bothers me," said the other man, "is the way we'll be paying for this war the rest of our lives. First we fight it, then we pay for it. Pay for our own wages while we're in the Army, after we get out."

"That don't worry me," said the first soldier. "This country's got plenty to do with. What I don't like is all the time I'm gone, I got the feeling that the 4F's and the women who are still back home are getting ahead of me. They're moving up to better jobs, learning things all the time. All we're learning is how to shoot and run a tank. That won't help much when it's all over."

The second soldier paused awhile to think this over. "Well," he answered, "there'll be plenty of us coming back. Ten million, maybe. We ought to make out all right. If we don't like the way things are run, we can take over and run them ourselves."

This was an unusual conversation. Most service men on leave prefer to talk about wine, women, and song, and life in the Army. But in the back of their heads are many questions about what will happen when they return.

The Army Special Service Division, or morale branch, suggested to a group of newly inducted selectees that they write down what they would ask the President of the United States if they could

talk to him. Some 38 percent of the questions chosen were on prospects for the post-war period. Here are a few of the questions:

“Are we going to have a voice in the peace?”

“Will there be a repetition of the Versailles Treaty?”

“Are we fighting just to have our sons do it all over again in twenty years?”

“Will we get our jobs back?”

President Roosevelt put it this way: “The men in our armed forces want a lasting peace and, equally, they want permanent employment for themselves, for their families and their neighbors when they are mustered out at the end of the war.”

### *Jobs for Service Men*

The public believes that the problem of jobs for service men will be a tough one after the war. In June 1943 the Gallup poll found that 56 percent thought “the men in the armed forces will have trouble finding jobs when the war is over.” Dr. Gallup also found that a majority favored keeping the men in the services until they have jobs at home. This shows how great is the fear of an unemployment crisis after the war.

Our civilian population is heartily in favor of giving service men every break. A poll made by the Office of Public Opinion Research in the East showed that two-thirds of the people thought that soldiers should be given the first choice of jobs after the war. More than nine-tenths felt that women who are working now should be made to give up their jobs to returning soldiers. And just over half believed that “local draft boards should have some responsibility for finding jobs for returning soldiers from their districts after the war is over.”

If we fail to reemploy our fighting men after this war, they will be justly resentful. They will also be the natural prey of fascist demagogues. There is for example Joseph E. McWilliams, former pro-Nazi politician from the Yorkville section of New York, who has started a movement in the Midwest called the “Servicemen’s Reconstruction Plan.” His proposal is to give a bonus of \$7,800 to each returning service man which would cost the Treasury a total

of more than \$80,000,000,000. He doesn't expect to accomplish this, but it makes a good talking point. Servicemen who don't readily find jobs when they return will be especially susceptible to such an appeal. Once their hopes are aroused by the McWilliams' proposal, and nothing happens, the veterans may be embittered and dangerous.

The American Legion will also be seeking to recruit the veterans of this war. It has already set up the machinery for doing so. I do not mean to class the Legion with Joe McWilliams' potential storm-troop organization. But it has conspicuously failed to fight against the fifth column of native fascists on the home front. In 1943, in fact, its executive committee endorsed the anti-labor program of the Texas Christian American Association. The Legion will have a special appeal to the men overseas who have been understandably embittered by strikes in the coal mines and other war industries. In June 1943, the North African edition of *Stars and Stripes*, a soldiers' paper, used its reporters to make a survey of Army opinion on those strikes. Almost 90 percent of the men urged drastic Government action against the union leaders and the strikers themselves. "Fully 70 percent declared the strikers should be inducted into the Army and returned to work on 'C' Army Rations," a front-page article said. "A substantial minority expressed concern that the people back home still don't realize that the war is going on. None of the soldiers had any use whatever for John L. Lewis. Almost without exception the soldiers offered to change places with the strikers."

The American soldier has had the best educational opportunities in the world. Yet he has less interest in politics than his Russian and British colleagues. His commonest answer to the question "Why are you in the war?" is, according to one Army chaplain, "Because I was drafted." The Army is doing something to remedy this, especially with the series of films entitled "Why We Fight." But the average soldier is still, as one writer put it, "fighting for blueberry pie." To paraphrase Drew Middleton of the *New York Times*, who has mixed with our fighting men in American Army camps, in Iceland, Britain, and North Africa:

"American soldiers want to go back to the same kind of world



they knew in 1939. Few realize it can never be the same kind of world again.

“United States pilots evince little interest in the problems of global aviation after the war. They will tell you, ‘Why, the air’s free, just as the ocean should be’—and then change the subject. Senior air officers encounter difficulty in interesting subordinates in the future of air power.

“America’s real position as a world power is not understood by our soldiers. They overestimate the importance of our industrial strength and underestimate the immense moral strength of the United States in world affairs.

“They are unaware of their own power of shaping American policy in the post-war years. Rarely do they give attention to our relations with Britain, China, Russia, or the other united Nations.

“Russia’s position both now and after the war is little understood. Few soldiers have heard of the Anglo-Russian treaty.

“Most American soldiers agree Germany should be disarmed but they are vague as to how it should be done.

“Very few understand the nature of fascism. To most soldiers it is ‘some sort of politics practised by Germans and Italians.’ Some domestic brand of fascism, properly camouflaged, might easily deceive our soldiers.”

This is no reflection on the men of our armed forces. It is, rather, a reflection on our Army morale branch and on our educational institutions at home. It certainly indicates the paramount importance of providing for these men the peace, jobs and prosperity which they will deserve when they come home. If we fail in this, the problem of maintaining democracy at home after the war may be more serious than any of the wartime problems now facing us on the home front.

### *Our Obligations to the Future*

After this war, in short, we will still have two jobs to do. We must achieve a lasting world peace and a continued prosperity at home. If we don’t accomplish both, our military victory will be an empty one.

We are moving, in accordance with public opinion, toward greater participation in the post-war world. Every United Nations conference is a step in that direction. Unless the New Isolationists get a

lot stronger than they are now, it seems probable that the United Nations will evolve into the World Federation that has long been awaited. The solid foundation of a common struggle against military aggression, plus the memory of our colossal failure after World War I, should make for whole-hearted participation in a new structure less flimsy than the old League of Nations.

On the home front, however, the picture is more obscure. By the end of 1944, about sixty-five million Americans will be gainfully employed, if we count the armed forces. Of these, close to forty millions will be either in war industries or in the services. Not all of these will be demobilized immediately, of course. Perhaps five million men will remain in the services for some time; an equal number of women will leave war industries to go back into the home; and half of the remaining war workers will go back into production of consumer goods within a fairly short period—with a few months' layoff, at most, for the process of conversion. But there will remain up to five million service men, and perhaps ten million workers in such industries as powder, ammunition, aircraft and shipbuilding, who will find themselves out of work soon after the armistice. The Department of Labor estimates conservatively that we will have 12 million unemployed six months after the war is over.

In April 1940 there were only fifty-four million workers in the labor force, and only forty-five million of these were employed. By 1946, according to a Department of Commerce study, our labor force will have increased by two and one-half millions, and with technological improvements the potential capacity of our available manpower will be almost 50 percent higher than in 1940. Conceivably, these factors might even throw twenty-five to thirty million workers out of jobs within a few years of the armistice.

Although employment will almost certainly decline after the war, some economists predict a period of inflation unless wartime taxes and price controls are maintained. We have accumulated great deficits in consumer goods—such things as automobiles, refrigerators, radios and electrical appliances, which are no longer being manufactured. At the same time, savings have piled up in bank accounts and in war bonds. With the patriotic incentive to buy and hold bonds largely gone after the war, we may see a temporary spending

spreed that will temporarily keep our economy going at high speed. The danger of inflation may be greater, in fact, than at any time during the war—at least for a brief period.

If the demobilization throws twelve million men and women out of jobs, however, such a boom would not last long. In the best year of the 'twenties employment increased by only three millions; at this rate it would take at least five years to get our post-war unemployed back at work. Meanwhile most of those who are jobless, temporarily or otherwise, will soon go through their war bond savings for living expenses. Purchasing power will then start to decline, and the greatest deflation (i.e., depression) in history will shortly set in—if we allow it to.

Of course, the American people have no intention of letting unemployment get out of hand after this war. Having had a taste of full employment for the first time in more than a decade, and having seen what it is possible for American industry to produce, they will ask, "If we can do it in wartime, why not in peacetime?" The answer is, we can do it in peacetime. But to accomplish the transition will require continued government control over some phases of our economy. It may mean a huge public works program to bridge the unemployment gap. There is plenty of work to be done. Alvin H. Hansen of the now defunct National Resources Planning Board has summed it up very well:

"We need improved manufacturing equipment to produce more and better goods at lower prices. We need to carry on extensive research in the laboratories of our great private corporations, in our universities, and in Government bureaus to create new products and develop new processes. We need to rehabilitate and modernize our transportation system—by land, water, and air. We need continued advance in the techniques of production, distribution, and transportation; in short, in all those elements that enter into a higher standard of living. We need to bebuild America—urban redevelopment projects, rural rehabilitation, low-cost housing, express highways, terminal facilities, electrification, flood control, reforestation. Many public developmental projects open fresh outlets for private investment. We need a public health program, including expansion of hospital facilities. We need a nutrition program. We need more adequate provision for old age. We need higher educa-



tional standards in large sections of our country. We need a program to improve and extend our cultural and recreational facilities. We need an enrichment of the material and spiritual resources of our American way of life. We have seen how it is possible to mobilize the productive capacities of the country for war. We can also mobilize them for peace. Under a program of full employment new enterprises would grow up; old enterprises would expand. Youth would find opportunities and employment."

All this would be expensive. But it would cost far less to have full employment through this sort of program than it is costing us to fight the war.

State and local governments had plans drawn up for \$3,679,970,000 worth of post-war public works by the middle of 1943. This was a good start. New York City alone has plans for \$700,000,000 in constructive projects, including \$120,000,000 for sixty-nine new elementary and high schools. Some localities have set aside money for their projects. But a Federal works program will have to supply funds where they are lacking. We need to start planning for this now.

There will be opposition to a Government program of full employment. Business organizations are developing their own plans for post-war expansion. This is a constructive activity; if private industry can help to keep employment up, to that extent public works programs will not be needed. But business was not able to convert to a war basis without some coordination from the Government; and the Government must be prepared to step in again if reconversion cannot be accomplished by private business without chaos.

There will certainly be special problem areas when war production tapers off. War boom towns like Norfolk, Mobile, Wichita and San Diego will be especially hard-hit. Some of the war workers who migrated to these places will go back to the farms and towns where they came from; to that extent unemployment will be spread out. But millions will want to stay in their new homes. Whether they go or stay, they will have none of the sympathy accorded to returning soldiers, nor the prior claim to civilian jobs, nor the benefits in the form of pensions and medical aid. These millions, like the returning soldiers, will be a special responsibility of our peacetime Government.

This is why the scrapping of the National Resources Planning Board by Congress was a major tragedy. The plans of the NRPB for post-war public works and social security compare favorably to those developed by the British. If we are to be prepared for anything that comes, we must make planning a continuous function, either through this or through some other agency. And we must carry our plans into action when the need arises.

This is the ultimate challenge to us on the home front. If we win the war only to enter a period of economic chaos at home, we may lose the four freedoms for which we are fighting. If so, we will prove that we are not worthy of those freedoms.













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