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What the People Want

IT shouldn't be difficult for President Roosevelt to find out what the people are thinking about. His long trip through the West will bring him closer to the voices he is trying to catch, but the chief things the people have been trying to tell him were perfectly audible in Washington. The sound-proof walls erected by the economic royalists in their press and radio have muffled but have not been able to silence the people's demands on the administration. If Roosevelt returns to Washington with the air of having solved a great mystery, that may be of some practical value from the standpoint of dramatizing a "new" mandate; but the putting of this mandate into effect will be possible only because it represents the deep and unchanging desire of the people.

The people want of this administration in October 1937 the same things that they demanded, by a landslide vote, in November 1936.

They want more security, a better life. They want better houses to live in, more wages to enable them to live in those houses, shorter hours both to cut unemployment and to give them greater leisure. The farmers want to have the program which was side-tracked in the last session put into operation. The industrial workers want a wages and hours bill. The swelling tide of progressive sentiment in the country will not be satisfied until such fundamentally necessary legislation as the anti-lynching bill is passed. And to ensure that when Congress does act, as act it must in response to the overwhelming pressure of the country, that its enactments will then not be cancelled by the Supreme Court, the people want the court restored to its proper place under the Constitution, as a coördinate branch of the government, and not as the sovereign power.

We know of no evidence that the people themselves are opposed to the Supreme Court reorganization plan. We know of no evidence that the people have abated one point in the legislative mandate which they imposed on Congress and the President last

November. If President Roosevelt undertook this trip to really find out what the people want, and not primarily to hold together the two-party system by reconciling the irreconcilable reactionaries and progressives among the Democrats, he will know by the time he returns to the White House that the people stand today where they have stood for the past year. And then it will be high time to call a special session and begin giving the people what they want.

Boycotting Japan

THE movement for a popular boycott of Japanese goods is spreading at a rapid pace throughout Great Britain and the United States—the two countries where it can do most good. In this country, impetus for the boycott movement has come from the trade unions. At the A. F. of L. convention in Denver, resolutions will be presented for an official embargo as well as an unofficial boycott on Japanese imports. In Atlantic City, the Committee for Industrial Organization will simultaneously consider a resolution calling for a similar embargo. An especially prominent part in the American movement has been taken by the strategically-placed maritime workers. The British boycott movement has reached the point where the press, from the laborite *Daily Herald* to the tory *Daily Express*, warns Japan that continued aggression will bring disaster to Anglo-Japanese trade.

Short of actual collective action on the part of the great powers, this boycott is likely to be the most effective method of restoring peace in the Far East. Japan cannot prolong the war without the benevolent neutrality of Great Britain and the United States. From these two countries, Japan imports most of the sinews of war, especially oil, scrap iron, cotton. The money to buy these semi-military products is primarily obtained through the sale of raw silk and other goods to the United States and Great Britain. In July 1937, for example, the United States purchased over six million dollars worth of raw silk from Japan. Japan in turn bought cotton and scrap iron for the bombs and bullets which are now devastating peaceful Chinese cities.

A popular boycott hits the Japanese militarists in their most vulnerable spot. It will hasten that economic dislocation which Tokyo fears most of all. It will hearten the Chinese to continued resistance. Incidentally, the American League Against War and Fascism is sponsoring a mass meeting at Madison Square Garden, Friday, October 1, in protest against the Japanese aggression. U. S. Ambassador to Germany, William E. Dodd; Rev. D. Willard Lyon, former na-

tional secretary of the Y.M.C.A. in China; Dr. Harry F. Ward, and the Rev. Stephen S. Wise are among the speakers. Meetings such as this and boycotts of Japanese silk, toys, pottery, and cheap rayon and cotton goods are sure to be heard in Tokyo and Nanking.

Misrepresenting the U.S.S.R.

AS we read some of the latest lucubrations on the Soviet Union presented to the American public in the capitalist press, we are reminded that "simple and unpretending ignorance is never revolting. At times, it may even be charming, but there is little that more deserves contempt than the pretense of ignorance to knowledge." Thus Webb Miller of the United Press in one of his "uncensored stories of Soviet Russia" proclaims in a leading paragraph that, "Creeping paralysis has struck Soviet industry, seriously affecting fulfillment of the Second Five Year Plan." A dozen times he emphasizes the Russians' anxiety over the threatened non-fulfillment by Soviet industry of the Second Five Year Plan. This danger was "freely admitted" to him during his three-thousand-mile trip into the interior. He even saw it "caustically criticized and bewailed by the Soviet press."

The achievements in favor of Soviet industry and agriculture will be discussed in a forthcoming series of articles by Joshua Kunitz. Here we merely wish to point to a couple of typical examples of ignorance pretending to knowledge so frequently found in reports on the Soviet Union.

Mr. Miller's story has not only been "uncensored." It has been unchecked and unverified. For the point is that Soviet industry fulfilled the Second Five Year Plan as far back as April, that is, nine months ahead of schedule. Every child in the Soviet Union knows that. Indeed it was in celebration of this fact that the Council of People's Commissars decreed on April 28, 1937, the reduction of retail prices of various manufactured products to the amount of 1300 billion rubles for a year. Actually, what Mr. Miller has heard "freely admitted" and "caustically criticized and bewailed" was the threat to the much increased plan for the year 1937. The figures he cites prove it. Mr. Miller apparently did not know that in addition to a general Five Year Plan, there are annual plans which are quite elastic and are made to accord not merely with the general plan but with the progress of industrial development already achieved. By the time the plan for 1937 was being worked out, it had become clear that the general Five Year Plan would be fulfilled much earlier than was originally expected and t

therefore, the 1937 plan would have to be jacked up so as to ensure considerable over-fulfillment of the Five Year Plan. Such are the facts. However, a little slip of Mr. Miller's interpreter's tongue or his translator's pen—and hundreds of thousands of innocent readers are left with the wrong impression that the Soviet Union is failing to carry out the Second Five Year Plan.

Mr. Harold Denny of the *New York Times* is even worse. "One hears much less of communism in Moscow," declares Mr. Denny, "than in New York, Berlin, London, and Paris. The word itself is seldom heard except in reference to the Communist Party." And again, "That goal (communism) has receded beyond the horizon and is seldom even thought of in Moscow."

When Mr. Denny asserts that communism as a goal is seldom even thought of in Moscow, he, it seems, steps out of his role as reporter and claims to be a mind-reader. He is more within his province as a reporter when he says that communism is seldom heard of. Of course, the implication is that Mr. Denny is not deaf, that he goes about the streets of Moscow, visits Soviet homes, sits in at Communist Party meetings, spends time in workers' clubs, frequents lecture halls and schools, and that as a result of his free and easy contact with Soviet life, he is in a position to report that the word communism, while very popular in the capitalist countries, is seldom heard in the U.S.S.R. Unfortunately, Mr. Denny, like most of his bourgeois colleagues in Moscow, has been a comparatively short time in the Soviet Union, knows nothing or next to nothing of the language, history, or literature of the country, has (for reasons both subjective and objective) but the slightest contact with the Soviet masses, and for the information that goes out to his unsuspecting readers is forced to rely on interpreters and gossip picked up on the backstairs of the various embassies.

Naturally, in Mr. Denny's Moscow the word communism is "seldom heard" and "seldom even thought of." But there is another Moscow, a Moscow of the existence of which Mr. Denny doesn't even seem to be aware—the Moscow of four million workers, the Moscow of the Kremlin and the Communist International, the Moscow where communism both is a word and a goal, is an ever living, ever growing, ever throbbing reality. We have on our desk a fresh batch of Soviet papers, and under the date line of September 3, just a few days before Mr. Denny reported the disappearance of communism from the Soviet vocabulary, we see prominently displayed in all the papers a wonderfully moving appeal sent by the meeting of Stakhanovites of the city and district of Moscow to all workers, engineers, technicians, and employees of that city and

district. The appeal is much too long to be quoted, but here is one paragraph reflecting the communist feeling of the Soviet worker:

Our country is the socialist fatherland of the world proletariat. The workers and oppressed of all countries look toward us with hope and pride. Fulfilling our international obligations to the workers of the world, we will by our Stakhanovite work, raise ever higher the incomparable banner of the socialist state of workers and peasants. . . . Comrades, forward to new victories of Communism!

Let us glance at the slogans for the twenty-third International Youth Day proposed by the Central Committee of the Young Communist League of the U.S.S.R. and published on the front page of every newspaper in the Soviet Union (September 5, 1937).

On internationalism: "The spirit of internationalism must always soar over our Komsomol. Let us bring up the youth of our country in the spirit of the great brotherhood of the toilers of the world."

On communism: "Young Communists, boys and girls, youth of the Soviet Union, let us draw our ranks closer around a great Bolshevik party! Let us hold high the banner of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin! Let us dedicate all our strength, all the flame of our youth, to the great cause of communism!"

The Stakhanovite appeals are read by millions of people. The Young Communist slogans are carried on placards in the Youth Day parades in every city and village in the Soviet land. The word communism is seen and spelled and recited and sung and heard in every nook and corner of the U.S.S.R. The spirit of communism is everywhere.

As to Mr. Denny's report in the *New York Times*, well "there is little that more deserves contempt than the pretense of ignorance to knowledge," especially when it is the vicious pretense of a journalist who undertakes to slander the most inspiring social phenomenon in the modern world.

It Must Be a Real Census

SOME time in the near future a government-sponsored census of unemployment will be taken. Eighty thousand letter carriers are to distribute some thirty-one million blanks throughout the country. All of the unemployed and those working at part-time jobs are expected to fill out the questionnaires, which will then be collected by the post office department. When the results of this voluntary registration are tabulated and analyzed, it is hoped that for the first time a full and true picture of unemployment will be available. John D. Biggers, directing the project, has five million dollars to spend, and his work must be completed by April 1.

Certainly no one can quarrel with the announced objective, even though the means adopted are desperately inadequate, but both the magnitude of the task and its social implications raise serious questions.

Though it is essential to enlist the full cooperation of the jobless and to reach them all, there are other vital considerations. One of them has long troubled government experts, namely, what is the proper definition of an unemployed person and what are the age limits and skills (if any) that qualify one as employable? This country has nearly seventy million people between the ages of twenty and sixty-five. How many of that number would be at work if jobs were available? There has been a strong tendency in the past to regard as unemployed only those people who formerly had jobs of one sort or another. This neglects both those who wanted work but were unable to find it and the yearly increment of young people arrived at working age.

Thorough preparation and a realistic approach can solve these problems. Mr. Biggers and his associates have the opportunity to gather facts and figures of prime social importance. Labor especially should insist that this census be full and accurate and that no loose definitions be permitted to minify the number of men and women who want work and can't get it.

Childs' New Labor Menu

WINNING wage increases, free uniforms, a closed shop, better working conditions, and vacations with pay, the Hotel, Restaurant & Cafeteria Employees' Organization Committee has signed a contract with Childs. More than three thousand workers in fifty-two restaurants throughout Greater New York are affected. Organized in July, the Committee was established to represent eleven American Federation of Labor locals in New York. Childs' employees in other cities and in fact all chain restaurant workers can draw encouragement from the victory of the H. R. & C. E. Organization Committee.

The A. F. of L. Convention

THE American Federation of Labor begins its fifty-seventh annual convention next week. Delegates to this Denver meeting will deal with problems which touch the lives of working men and women from Maine to California. The play of economic and political forces and the tremendous growth of the Committee for Industrial Organization have combined to make genuine trade union unity the supreme convention issue. And just as the impact of social

change is bringing new alignments in the political field, so too, the A. F. of L. finds itself driven toward a choice between progressive and reactionary tendencies. At Denver forward-looking elements representing rank and file sentiment for labor unity will face a strongly entrenched leadership that is determined to perpetuate the narrow, splitting policies of Green and his faction.

If the annual report of the Metal Trades Department, presented to its recent convention by President John P. Frey, may be taken as a sample, the A. F. of L. leadership will put forward a thoroughly reactionary and destructive program. Besides a bitter attack upon the C.I.O. and the forecast of an attempt to expel all C.I.O. unions, Mr. Frey's report sharply criticizes the National Labor Relations Board, recommends that the Wagner Act be amended to conform with craft union policy and urges that the N.L.R.B. be not permitted to determine whether the unit for collective bargaining shall represent craft, plant, company, or industry. A generous portion of the report is given over to Red-baiting; the United Auto Workers' union is taken to task for its conduct during the General Motors and Chrysler strikes. And, of course, Mr. Frey finds that a farmer-labor party would be contrary to the "well established non-partisan policy of the A. F. of L." In fact, this document, which the Liberty League could well endorse, shows all too clearly the hopeless backwardness of William Green and his diehard cohorts.

A number of A. F. of L. unions, however, have already adopted progressive resolutions. The American Federation of Teachers, the International Pocketbook Workers' Union, the Brewery Workers' and the International Typographical Union, to mention only a few, are out of sympathy with Green's tory attitude. These elements at Denver will be helped immeasurably in their fight for unity, and the whole labor movement will gain force if local unions and district councils make known their demands, if they insist upon a sound program and a progressive convention. And it goes without saying that only the principles of industrial unionism for basic industries can be the foundation of real labor unity.

Green Attacks the Guild

MORE than three hundred members of the Brooklyn *Eagle* staff—editorial, circulation, and business department workers—are on strike. They walked out September 13 in protest against mass dismissals and the obvious bad faith of Preston Goodfellow, *Eagle* publisher. The latter had been "negotiating" with the Newspaper

Guild over a long period before the strike was called. Ostensibly, the chief points at issue involve: rates of pay comparable to those prevailing on other New York newspapers, an end of "company unionism," the five-day, forty-hour week in all departments, no wholesale firings, and the Guild—not the closed—shop.

Actually, however, Mr. Goodfellow's shifty tactics indicate quite plainly that his real purpose is war against the American Newspaper Guild. This hostile attitude is given startling confirmation by two former *Eagle* executive editors, both of whom participated in negotiations for the management. One, Lyle Dowling, is now on strike himself; the other, William M. Hines, resigned rather than carry out the orders for dismissal which Mr. Goodfellow issued after having promised in a written notice that there would be no extensive firings during the negotiations.

Mr. Hines told the Guild:

It was impossible for me in honesty and good faith to repudiate that statement [Goodfellow's promise]. I could not agree to the discharge of forty-two editorial employees in the interests of economy or any other reasons within less than thirty days after that statement was posted and sent to staff members. . . . I believe that the dismissal of forty-two editorial employees from a total of about 170 constituted wholesale dismissal and the plan to dismiss them in my opinion would have precipitated a strike and the stockholders and creditors should be made fully aware of the danger.

An aggressive campaign is being carried on to cut the *Eagle's* circulation and reduce its advertising revenues. *Eagle* strikers and the Guild are receiving strong support from other labor groups and from liberals throughout New York City. Needless to say, however, this militant struggle does not commend itself to A. F. of L. leaders. Indeed, William Green picked what must have seemed to him an opportune moment to declare war on the Guild. Hoping to bore from within, Green announced the beginning of "a militant drive against the C.I.O. unit through its own newspaper unions." In a deliberate attempt to check the Guild's growing strength, Green said he would invite all news and editorial employees throughout the country to join federal unions organized by the A. F. of L. His expectation being that "Members of the Guild who voted against affiliation with the Committee for Industrial Organization, or against its political policies, will form the nucleus of this new organization."

After saying that all state and central labor bodies will be instructed to expel Guild locals and "refuse them any further coöperation," the A. F. of L. chief fulminated against the dangers of dictatorship and ranged himself squarely on the side of tory

publishers by alleging that it was necessary to fight the Guild "in the interests of the newspaper workers and to help preserve the freedom of the press."

Nothing in his extended record of labor betrayals better reveals William Green's hapless drift toward company unionism. And it is a certainty that newspaper people the country over will treat his siren song with the contempt that it deserves. In a recent issue, the *Washington Guildsman* points out that Green's proposals are an attempt to use newspapermen as "cannon fodder in his war against the C.I.O." Coming from a Guild unit which had sponsored the national referendum to reconsider the Guild's progressive convention decisions, this judgment is especially significant.

London Pattern

POLITICALLY-MINDED statisticians might make themselves useful by keeping count of the number of times Mussolini has been reported (1) ready to withdraw from Spain, (2) determined to stop sending more "volunteers" to Spain, (3) forced to deny both preceding versions in favor of an "unequivocal" announcement that (4) Italy will help Franco until "communism is destroyed in Europe," by which is meant (5) that another load of Italian victims have been sent to die and kill in Spain. Generally speaking, the first two "reports" have emanated from London just when the British Foreign Office was trying to put across some especially odorous diplomatic double-cross. Last week, London cables reported that Mussolini was ready to be good. It was no coincidence that efforts were proceeding simultaneously to bring Italy into the anti-piracy accord. They know how to time these things better in England.

There was no more truth in the report this time than on past occasions. Mussolini seized the opportunity again to strike the Napoleonic pose in the full glare of the publicity thrown on his meeting with Hitler. This meeting ought to dispose of any lingering doubt that the Berlin-Rome axis will not be weakened at least while world conditions remain what they are. Italy, since the Ethiopian adventure, is on a war footing even though a general European or world war is still in the distance. The strain of actual mobilization puts Italy at a serious disadvantage compared to other powers. That is why Mussolini dare not stand alone. Hitler, on the other hand, has found that Germany extorts concessions from Great Britain and France only when its bark is worse than its bite. The alliance with Mussolini puts Hitler into a better bargaining position, and he is still making the most of it.

Next Time You March, Legionnaires!

*A tin cup and one war is the measure of the difference
between the parading ex-Yanks and certain others of us*

By Hyde Partnow

THIS year they gathered from the Rockies and the lakes and the keys in the village green on Times Square and kicked up their heels like goats in a pasture. They yelled *Whoo-ee-ee* and showed off to us—who had never gone over there, never gone over the top, never gone into action—that they, middle-aged American bucks, had—*Whoo-ee-ee*—and damned glad they were, too, for not being dead and gone but were still standing on the ground. Still talking with their own tongues to those topnotch New York girls. Still touching with their own fingers the city things. Still seeing with their own eyes the first city of the world. Belonging, still, *Whoo-ee-ee*, to the body of life, not six feet under long before their time. They were crazy with wonder how the guns had not gone through them but missed them somehow and left them standing and permitted them to be left alive and become middle-aged and marry their women and make and lift up children. No wonder they did not sleep or let New York sleep.

They drove clanging boxcars, forty men and eight horses, over my toes. They fired their toy cannon through my hat and yelled at the hole in my hat and the echoes on the walls. They shot me with squirt guns and yelled like hell when I got wet. They dropped water bombs from their hotel windows, and yelled like hell when they exploded on my shoulder. They grabbed coconuts and oranges from the open street stands and threw them like hand grenades and yelled like hell when one got me. They used hot boxes and jump sticks on me when my back was turned and yelled like hell when I jumped.

I WAS neither a sour-puss nor a wise guy, I didn't pull them in for assault or for house-breaking. They were making sport, as I saw it, of those objects of war that had insulted and injured them once. They were remembering how glad they were to be alive.

But never forget the dead, Legionnaires. Never forget, you unknown living soldiers who made a big noise to make yourselves *KNOWN*, the legions of unknown dead in Arlington and Flanders and Argonne—in olive groves and wheat fields and forests—in roadway ditches—in Soldiers' Homes, in the Florida Keys (their bellies floating grotesquely in the Gulf, then burnt in a bonfire.) Remember them, Legionnaires.

I was a kid when you were young men. You came back up Fifth Avenue and I stared at you. I followed your parade then and my ears were confused with the marching and my eyes dazed and I remember I got lost follow-

ing you. There was noise and lights. I got fascinated by the round glint on a shining tuba and I followed it and got lost and I felt tired and I walked into Central Park, I remember, and lay down in a meadow and slept. It was dark when I got up. You were gone and I began to cry.

Now I'm a young man. I was on Fifth again and I followed you again. It was dark when you went off and left me, alone on Fifth, in the shambles of smashed boxes and torn-up litter under the weird yellow lamps. I stayed there in the wreckage until dawn, walking about. It's a fine dawn you get in New York; I think you know it. As fine as in any of your cities or on any of your farms. I have seen them all. But this dawn I saw was more than just day coming. I wasn't tight, Legionnaires. I saw more than fifty million ghosts on Fifth Avenue. They had been hiding under eaves and behind doors and in all the side alleys while you marched in the Indian-summer sun. They waited a long time, for the two or three hundred thousands of you to pass. But after you left they got out on the Avenue and walked. Their feet whispered on the littered avenue, throngs of ghosts. One of those ghosts was *myself*, Legionnaires.

Pull in those Sam Browne belts all you want to, you still can't hide those waistlines. Don't hide them. Do something about it. Don't lean on those official American Legion canes. Throw them away. Do something. Do something for me, the generation that springs from your seed.

I listened to your leaders say you are stabilizing America, you Legionnaires. I listened to them say this at the same moment when outside you were tying up law and order in a blizzard of noise and color in a hundred different ways. While you were frolicking in the streets they were passing resolutions lumping communism and fascism in a bogey of "isms." They were forbidding marches on Washington. They were okaying neutrality. They were resolving to "work for world peace, to combat propaganda of international hate and thus aid in averting the tragedy of war and making permanent the blessings of peace," but the headlines still stalked the news—JAPAN THREATENS TO WIPE NANKING OFF MAP—THREE THOUSAND KILLED IN CANTON AIR RAID—CHOLERA RAGES IN SHANGHAI.

While you outside were pulling up fire hydrants and ripping the stuffings from pillows, the others inside were ripping up your right to live and your right to make sure that those who come from your loins do not die. You were letting them divert your violence against war into tearing pillows to pieces.

I talked to you, Legionnaires. Hundreds of you. In spite of the bugles and clanging and hog-calling and banging, I managed to talk to you. I was the quiet young man whom you squirted guns at and used a jump stick on and you made a hole in my hat. In return, I made you talk to me. Your talk was fine. And your talk from the floor of your convention was fine, too. It is the mood behind talk like that which killed resolutions in your Americanism Committee this year against the C.I.O. and the Court Plan and the Soviet Union. So much is good. Good enough, that is, for today. But not for tomorrow. You still have not seen to it that your men may not don tin hats and badges to break strikes.

NEXT TIME you march, enjoy the confetti and the streamers, the crowds, the music. But steal a lesson from the others who call each other comrade. When you march, hold up banners in your hands. Hold up your slogans. Don't let your convictions languish in monopolized newspapers. Bring them to the sidewalks. Don't camouflage your hatred of war behind a circus. Or, rather, don't let them make you camouflage it. Wisconsin, still carry your milk pails and three-legged stools; Iowa, your stalks of corn; Florida, your palm leaves; Minnesota, your Indian head-dresses; Pennsylvania, your mining caps. But, all of you, come holding not canes in your hands but slogans. Let's see what you are for and against. Take sides. Let's judge you. You must take sides. Your middle-aged mission is to save the young from the guns. Remember the beggars in New York, the crippled and the blind who play on saxophones and violins and accordions, shuffling through the crowds, playing "Margie" and "Over There" and "Keep the Home Fires Burning" and "Mademoiselle from Armentières." The only difference between you and them is a tin cup. The only difference between you and us who spring from your loins is one war.

Don't dodge your duty to us.

You have the power. We saw you take over a city like New York and get off scot-free. No one but you could have done it. Anyone else would have been arrested wholesale and jammed into jail. Charges of obstructing traffic, disturbing the peace, resisting an officer, assault with intent to rob, vandalism, arson would have been placed against them. But not you.

Use this power. Don't masquerade in ladies' satins even in travesty. Don't hold aloft reams of toilet paper even in mockery.

Next time, when you march in Los Angeles, hold up slogans.