

MORE AND FASTER

Defense production requires urgent overhauling to give labor equality with management. Time works for those who use it. The critical need for greater military collaboration and material assistance. An editorial.

AN EXTRAORDINARY thing happened in Detroit last week. A congressional committee investigating the problem of labor migration caused by the defense program was holding a hearing. In the chair before the committee members sat a big, earnest-looking man. He spoke critically of the way the auto industry has participated in the defense program. "Why is it," he said, "that the contribution from this major industrial power to our national defense program has been, comparatively speaking, negligible?" He went on to give the answers, to indict the auto companies because of their refusal "to prepare adequately for national defense." The witness was R. J. Thomas, president of the United Automobile Workers, CIO. And so effective was his testimony that the top executive officer of General Motors, C. E. Wilson, rushed over to the hearing that afternoon in an effort to counteract Thomas' charges.

What made this incident extraordinary was that a representative of labor was appearing before a congressional body to discuss not labor problems in the narrow sense, but fundamental problems of production and the national defense. In other words, the auto workers through their elected leader were serving notice that they do not intend to leave the solution of these problems entirely to the big-shot industrialists who have had a monopoly of these matters and have bungled badly.

Thomas' indictment of the auto companies deserves serious study. If the situation in that industry is representative of other major sections of American industry—and there is reason to believe that it is—drastic measures will have to be taken before this country becomes in fact as well as in name the "arsenal of democracy." And for this the labor movement itself, AFL, CIO, and the railroad brotherhoods, requires a boldness, an initiative, a statesmanship that will command attention and win for labor that full partnership in the defense effort which is indispensable for victory.

The fact is that there is a dangerous complacency in high places. It is reflected in the meagerness of aid to the Soviet Union, Britain, and China. It is reflected in such a proposal as that of Walter Lippmann for the demobilization of a large part of our army. It is reflected in a recent column of Anne O'Hare McCormick in the *New York Times* in which she looked forward placidly to Hitler's conquering the whole of European Russia, convinced that even if the worst happens, "Russia remains impregnable in Asia." It is reflected in our own government's dilatory approach to the Moscow conference and in the lingering hesitations and subterfuges in our war policy. We are definitely in the war and have been at least since the passage of

the lend-lease act. The only question is whether we are going to wage war effectively or ineffectively. Up till now our war effort on both the military and production fronts has—to put it mildly—fallen far short of maximum effectiveness. And it must be remembered that being the "arsenal of democracy" is not enough; our full military collaboration with the other anti-axis nations is required to defend America.

This is a war of machines and its ultimate decision lies in the factories. The Soviet Union standing alone cannot outproduce or even equal the war production of Germany, plus Italy, France, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, and the other conquered countries. The marvel is that facing such heavy odds, and despite the loss of important industrial resources, the Red Army has been able to hold back the invader so well. But to make possible continued resistance and to turn the tide against Hitler much more is needed, both in the way of opening new fronts and of material assistance. Together the Soviet Union, the United States, and Britain can definitely outproduce Germany, its allies and the conquered countries. However, it is not potential, future superiority that counts, but immediate superiority. While British production leaves much to be desired, there is no use blinking the fact that the big weakness lies in the country with the mightiest industrial plant in the world, the United States. We have it in our power to deal the knockout blow to Hitlerism, but not if we take precious months and years to wind up. As Dorothy Thompson so well put it in a recent column: "Time is not on our side. Time is neutral. . . . Time is on the side of the people who use it, and use it most efficiently."

ONE WAY to use time most efficiently is to adopt the proposal which has been endorsed by Representative Andrew J. May, chairman of the House Military Affairs Committee, that for the next three months 100 percent of our war production be sent to the USSR and Britain. That is common sense. The mortal foe of America is today striking at us via Leningrad and Kharkov and London. We cannot strike at him by keeping supplies at home; they should be sent to the fronts, not merely for three months, but as long as necessary.

Above all: to use time efficiently means to win the battle of production—not in 1943 and 1944 (it may be too late then), but in 1941 and 1942. That is the most important argument for the active participation of labor in the organization of production, in the planning and direction of the entire defense effort. Instead of the head of the auto workers' union and the president of General Motors flinging

charges and counter-charges at each other, they ought to be sitting down together and working out plans for shifting all possible plant facilities into defense production with a minimum loss of time and jobs. They ought to be coordinating their efforts with similar plans in other industries under the general direction of an overall board in which management and labor would be equally represented. This is in essence what President Philip Murray of the CIO has proposed. The British have just gotten a glimpse of what it means to enlist the enthusiasm and initiative of the workers when Tanks for Russia Week boosted tank production twenty percent. That is a signpost for us.

But the unions themselves cannot wait till the employers and the government invite them in. National defense is not an exclusive club, but must become in every sense of, for and by the people. During the past week three more unions, the Transport Workers Union, the Industrial Union of Marine and Shipbuilding Workers, and the State, County and Municipal Workers of America, at their annual conventions, went on record for aid to Britain, the Soviet Union, and the other nations fighting Hitlerism. That is all to the good. But the time has come when something more is needed. If, for example, the leaders of the shipbuilding workers' union had spent less time Red-baiting and denying elementary trade union rights to anyone who can be labeled a Communist, and devoted some attention to the problem of getting together with the employers on plans for building more and better ships, they would have given real substance to their resolution on aiding the USSR and Britain. In contrast, another CIO union, the United Radio, Electrical and Machine Workers, by arranging conferences with small manufacturers to increase production and lessen priorities unemployment, has shown how labor can make a constructive contribution to the defense program.

The eyes of the world are on America. For too many years we have left it to other countries to bear the brunt of the battle against fascism. Today we can no longer leave it to other countries without betraying our own. Procrastination is the ally of Hitler. We must strike and strike with all our might while the Red Army still stands as our bastion on a 2,000-mile front, while the British people continue to challenge the Nazi fury in the west, while China fights on with unflagging strength, while the conquered nations build an inferno behind the German lines. We must strike with all our might while the peoples of the world still can raise up an unconquerable force of men and arms to destroy the Nazi monster. To delay is to fight alone and to be crushed.

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Moscow Conference

THE best proof of what the Soviet people expect from the conference with the American and British missions now in Moscow, is the kind of men they have selected to represent them. Statesmen like Molotov, the highest military and naval officials like Voroshilov and Kuznetsov, the most responsible directors of Soviet economy like Mikoyan—and Stalin himself—have been meeting all week with Lord Beaverbrook, Averill Harriman, and their associates. There is no question at all that the Russians mean business, and expect to find the British and American delegates in the same mood. There is every reason to expect Britain and the USA will begin to contribute their share—in some measure equal to what the Soviet people have already contributed to the defeat of German fascism.

MEANWHILE in London the other day there was a conference of some nine governments in exile, plus the Soviet Union, to discuss the problem of postwar organization. It was really a followup on the eight-point program which Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill formulated in their Atlantic meeting. The participation of the Soviet ambassador eliminates all the suspicious talk, for example, from the *New York Times* that the Soviet government might find its own aims at variance with those of the Atlantic Charter.

Two things about the inter-allied meeting in London nevertheless deserve criticism. First, it was disappointing to find that the United States, whose President helped formulate the eight points, was not represented. This reflects the fact that America is not as intimately involved in the war as it should be. So, also, the failure to invite China and Ethiopia—both sovereign nations—reflects the fact that these two great representatives of Africa and Asia have still not been admitted into full partnership in the anti-fascist world alliance.

Secondly, it strikes us as inherently unrealistic to be formulating overelaborate plans for the postwar period at a time when not enough is being done to win the war. The Soviet ambassador, Ivan Maisky, put his finger on these abstract concerns with an abstract future when he told the gathering of scientists: "We should not lose sight of distant aims and tasks, but we should not forget that good English expression—first things first."

That should be the slogan for Mr. Harriman in Moscow—"first things first."

How the Front Looks

THE military news last week was a tribute to the tenacity of the Soviet fighting forces, their remarkable capacity to hold on and fight back more strongly than ever in the face of reverses. As a whole, the Soviet position is still as difficult as it was ten days ago when the Germans broke through at Kiev and the middle Dnieper. The drive into the farther Ukraine and the fierce struggle for the Crimea continue to represent a major menace, threatening the Donetz industrial region and the gateways to the Caucasus. That fact must be kept uppermost in mind, even though Marshal Budenny seems to have withdrawn most of his armies intact, fighting back around Poltava, and even though news from other sectors of the front is encouraging.

At Leningrad and Odessa the invader is definitely being held off. The citizens of these besieged cities are giving an unparalleled example of an "active defense." Production continues; supplies come in by sea, rail, and air; in Leningrad there is a distinct possibility that the enemy's hold on the east bank of the Neva, at Schluesselburg, is being weakened. So also, the very important Soviet Navy keeps punching both in the Black Sea and the Baltic.

Yet, in any balanced judgment of the military news, one must return to the Ukraine. The situation is difficult enough to make necessary the most immediate assistance from Britain and the United States. Soviet productive capacity has been definitely lowered; in the decree which inaugurates universal military training, beginning October 1, the Supreme Soviet frankly declares that its losses in men have been "serious." It may make the difference of millions of lives, if, by rushing help we can keep the Nazis out of the Don region and the foothills of the Caucasus.

Europe Versus Hitler

MERELY by adding up the news events, as reported in the press, you get a sense of the trouble Hitler is having in Europe. Entire populations are in direct resistance to Germany, and in some places like Serbia, open warfare against Hitler has already begun.

There was, for example, what the Nazis called a "twenty-four hour outbreak" at Lille, the important industrial town of northern France in the occupied region. Twenty hostages were shot by the Germans.

In Czechoslovakia Hitler has been compelled to remove his governor, von Neurath; one of Himmler's cronies, a certain Reinhard Heydrich, has taken his place. The premier of the so-called Czech government, General Elias, has been arrested for plotting an uprising. Civil siege has been declared in most of Bohemia and Moravia, and reports are that production in the vast Skoda munitions works has been cut to forty percent by the workers' slow-motion tactics.

In Yugoslavia both Serbs and Croats are now admittedly in open revolt. The puppet regime in Croatia was compelled to execute fifty people in reprisal for the recent

bombing of the Zagreb telephone exchange. Some 12,000 Serb guerrillas, known as *Chetniki*, were reported fighting the Croatian puppet troops, repeatedly cutting the rail lines between the Croatian capital and Sarajevo. In Rome it was officially admitted that Italian troops have taken a hand in this fighting. The German command has been compelled to send a division, and the Luftwaffe has been bombing the mountain villages in which the guerrilla fighters are entrenched.

Dispatches from Rome reveal the hard lot of the Italian people in the New Order. Bread and cornmeal are being rationed, so severe has the shortage of foodstuffs become. From Norway comes an item which reveals the plight of both the conquered and the conqueror: all woolen blankets have been requisitioned from the population for the use of the German army.

Judge Sears Reports

THE conspiracy against Harry Bridges has now reached its ugly climax in the report of Judge Charles B. Sears, special examiner in the case, recommending the deportation of the West Coast labor leader. This decision is based on two contentions, neither of which is supported by the evidence: that Bridges has been a member of or "affiliated" with the Communist Party, and that the Communist Party advocates the overthrow of the government by force and violence. The broad grounds on which Judge Sears reached the conclusion that Bridges has been a member or "affiliate" of the Communist Party constitute a direct threat to the entire trade union movement and to basic civil liberties. The very term "affiliate" is of the kind through which a team of horses could be driven.

As further evidence of Bridges' "Communism" Judge Sears declared: "He has consistently favored non-discrimination against union men because of Communist membership and excoriated 'Red-baiters' as he called those who took an opposite view." Now it so happens that many unions bar discrimination because of political belief. By Judge Sears' test every non-citizen who approves of such a provision in his union constitution is, ipso facto, a member or "affiliate" of the Communist Party and liable to deportation.

The fact is that Judge Sears based his decision not on an impartial review of the evidence, but on the perjured statements of stoolpigeons and other enemies of labor. It was precisely this type of witness who was excoriated mercilessly by Dean James M. Landis of Harvard Law School when he dismissed charges against Bridges in 1939.

The Sears report strikes at the foundations of national unity and brings joy to every appeaser and friend of Hitler. The administration has given comfort to the worst enemies of democracy by its persecution of one of America's outstanding labor leaders. We are confident that the trade unions and anti-fascists throughout the country will meet this challenge by redoubling the fight to prevent the deportation of Harry Bridges.