



Washington.

**I**N DISCUSSIONS about the ability of Great Britain and the United States to take the offensive against the Nazis at this fateful moment, much is said about shipping. Naturally the appeasers would stop at nothing to prevent the launching of a European front. And there are also many confused, or hesitant, or timid, who plead lack of vessels for the transport of war materiel and men. Typical are the doubts raised by such journals as the *New York Times*. "The principal reason behind the hesitation was believed to be the shortage of shipping," the *Times* declared. "There were those who claimed that the Western democracies, already hard-pressed, could not afford the losses that an invasion army in Europe would entail." But on examination, this excuse turns out to have no validity. The ships are ready.

Experts in Washington put the questions this way: Granted that the second front must be opened now, the problem boils down to one factor alone—are we prepared to transport the machines and soldiers to Europe? The question cannot be viewed from the standpoint of whether we have at our disposal all the ships we could possibly hope for under the most ideal circumstances. History does not wait for the "ideal" moment. During the Civil War General McClellan procrastinated, delaying offensive action in the hope of getting more manpower, more guns and horses, though his army was overwhelmingly superior to the enemy's. Today procrastination can mean disaster. We cannot, as Ambassador Litvinov remarked, fight this year's battles with next year's weapons.

Since reporting in these columns (*NEW MASSES*, May 5) on ships for a second front, the situation has shifted increasingly in favor of the Allies. Here is the picture:

1. Sinkings in the Atlantic remain tragically high. But the Navy has finally put into practice the methods suggested by the maritime unions. Small craft now patrol the coastal sea lanes. The Navy has begun to requisition fishing boats and to use them as patrols. Already sinkings in coastal waters have dropped. As the patrol becomes more efficient and more widespread, submarine tolls can be reduced still farther, and more ships freed for the Atlantic run.

2. Of great significance in the race to cut down losses at sea is the plan suggested by Henry Kaiser to build a fleet of trans-



Inside a huge transport plane carrying marines, a midget car, and an anti-tank gun. More and more of these planes will ease the shipping burden.

## WE'VE GOT THE SHIPS

*Shipbuilding must be increased, but there are now enough transports to bridge the way to that second front. How the construction of large freight planes can cut down losses at sea.*

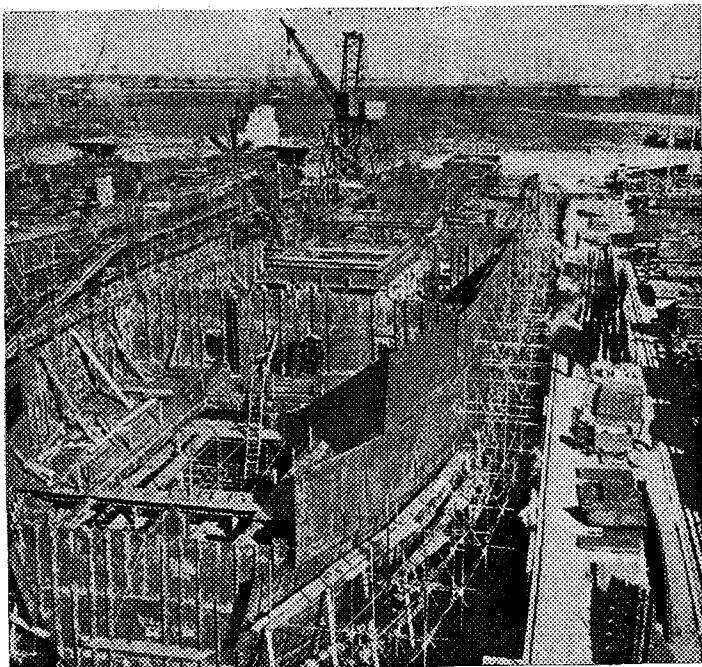
port airplanes. A large section of administration people, particularly the younger men, are enthusiastically approving. Union members with whom I talked have welcomed the proposal eagerly and urge that it be acted upon without delay. Particularly have those unionists with knowledge of shipping supported the plan, pointing out that transport planes will ease the shipping burden within the next six or eight months, which offers further reason for utilizing all available shipping now at hand to launch a second front.

Moreover, up at the CIO Maritime Commission they point out that Kaiser has accomplished wonders in shipbuilding; that he has shown practical ingenuity and imagination in getting out war production (for example, his success in converting cargo ships to airplane carriers, cutting down by one-tenth the time needed to build the usual carrier); that he has a record for achievement in the war effort unequalled by any other industrialist; that he has never promised anything without knowing that he could deliver on his promise.

The unionists point out that planes do not obviate the need for as many vessels as can possibly be built. But planes can transport many cargoes otherwise requiring a large amount of shipping space. Planes would be ideal for the transportation of men. Planes would speed transportation of vital materiel to the front, thereby increasing the striking power of the Allied armies. And planes would take less material to manufacture than ships. The yards already operating can more than meet shipping schedules even though the few yards necessary are turned over to the building of planes. Kaiser points out—and there is no reason to challenge his claim—that no great problem of conversion presents itself since tools already at hand can be used for most of the work in manufacturing the transports. Moreover, a cut in losses at sea through the use of planes means saving cargoes as well as precious materials.

While union men welcome the Kaiser plan, they warn that this important proposal will in all probability meet with brass-hat opposition. The more push given the plan from the start, the greater hope there is that it will be adopted speedily.

3. Shipbuilding rapidly approaches the President's high schedule. On July 1 Rear Admiral Howard L. Vickery, vice-chairman of the US Maritime Commission, reported that sixty-six new cargo ships and tankers had been put into service during the month of June. "The records of June were made possible through the cooperative efforts of shipyard labor and management," declared Admiral Vickery. "I am confident that the remaining ships required to carry out President Roosevelt's directive of 8,000,000 deadweight tons for the entire year will be built if there is a steady flow of steel and other materials in the required amounts."



A prefabricated cargo boat being put together. The parts and sections lie alongside. Extensive use of such methods helps overcome shipping losses.

Sinkings, of course, still outnumber launchings. But this proportion can be rapidly altered through the Kaiser plan, and through increased patrols plus the ever-rising output of new ships. Yet Admiral Vickery's legitimate complaint that "I have no assurance we can get enough steel next year to keep all the yards operating at peak production levels," requires immediate corrective action. Pres. Philip Murray of the CIO has already denounced the failure of giant steel companies to comprehend the need for continued maximum production. The failure to accumulate large enough scrap and steel stockpiles threatens this winter to cut down output to eighty percent of capacity. The responsibility for this inadequacy, Mr. Murray charges, rests with the WPB, the OPA, and the Bureau of Industrial Conservation. For, according to the trade journal, *Steel*, "Everyone who has studied the problem knows that there is enough potential scrap in the country to meet 1942 requirements." Mr. Murray has requested the WPB to call a conference at which representatives of small and large steel firms can discuss with the spokesmen for the United Steel Workers of America ways and means of bringing in the scrap. Moreover, Mr. Murray urges that subcontracting be expanded "to speed up the armor plate production program by at least six months." Such steps can guarantee replacement of shipping losses as well as an increased merchant marine capacity to be used to maintain a Western Front.

4. Vessels are being removed from wasteful runs. The largest United Fruit refrigerator freighters—about forty in all—have been transferred from the South American banana run to military service. More and more, boats which formerly carried cargoes of no value to the war effort have been diverted to essential runs and essential cargoes.

5. The number of ships supplying a second front can be swelled by utilizing vessels now on other runs. Today a great many ships ply back and forth to South America. Without doubt the trade in which these ships are engaged is essential to Latin American economy. Without doubt the withdrawal of these ships would impose a heavy burden on our neighbors to the South. Moreover, the warning is heard that to restrict trade would give encouragement to fifth column and Axis agents in the South American republics. But countering these objections is the even stronger argument that the hardships which the people of South America undoubtedly would undergo should the United States withdraw most of its shipping for a period of three or four months for the purpose of launching a Western Front, would be far less harsh

than the suffering these countries and their people would undergo if the second front is not opened. The fifth column and the Axis agents will receive a mortal blow with the smashing of Hitlerism in Europe—and this can be accomplished only by an Allied offensive from the West. The quicker this blow is delivered, the quicker the economy of Latin America will revive and the speedier the people's suffering everywhere will be relieved.

6. The most convincing proof of the availability of shipping is offered by CIO Maritime Commission in Washington. Today, union spokesmen insist, at least half of our shipping is engaged in supplying the Libyan front and the Near East. The route to the Red Sea is long and dangerous:

New York to Aden, Red Sea (via Cape of			
Good Hope) .....	approx.	10,853	nautical miles
London to Aden (via Cape of Good Hope) ..	"	10,255	" "
San Francisco to Aden (via Australia) ..	"	13,166	" "
New York to London .....	"	3,370	" "

The distances involved in supplying a European front are trivial in comparison with the thousands of miles that must be covered to reach the Near East. A ship can make three trips from the East Coast to England in the time it takes a boat to go from New York or London to the Red Sea. In other words, the available tonnage for a Western Front is triple the tonnage that can be used in supplying the Near East. It is generally acknowledged that the present Libyan front, vital as it is, will become of secondary importance once the Allies establish a bridgehead in Europe. The present traffic to the Red Sea could be cut to a minimum once a European front exists.

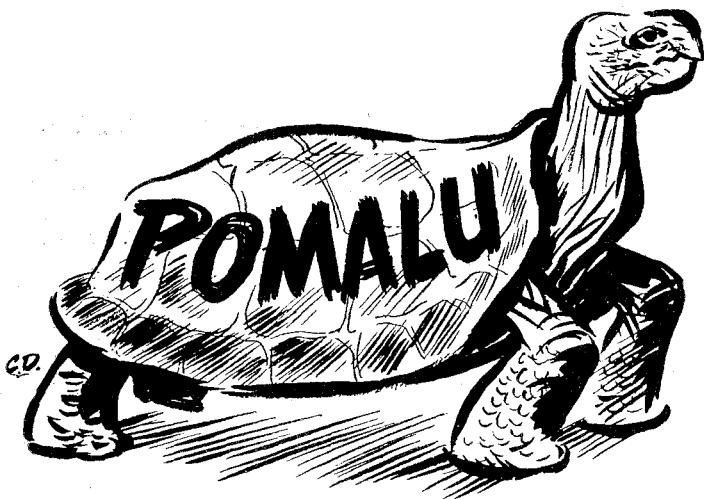
At the present time Great Britain must transfer supplies and men great distances. But a Western Front merely demands transportation from the main British base across a few miles of water. For this, anything that floats can be put into service—barges, tow boats, rafts, ferries, in fact every type of conveyance that will stay above water. The transfer of materiel and men from the main base to the theater of war would require only a few hours, at most a few days. British craft now taking four to six months to make the long run around the Cape of Good Hope could carry three to five times as much cargo if they traveled back and forth to the US East Coast, thirty to forty times as much tonnage in the same time if they were used between England and the mainland.

7. Tying up of ships in harbor because they lacked licensed radio operators has been largely overcome. Discriminatory practices which blacklisted radio operators because of union affiliation and which thereby caused a shortage of licensed men for the merchant marine has diminished and boats are no longer delayed. This bottleneck is rapidly being eliminated.

I do not mean to give the false impression that the shipping situation leaves nothing to be desired. This would be highly inaccurate. Shipbuilding must be increased, and the steel necessary for production must be forthcoming. Speed in loading and unloading on the East Coast has still to be raised to the efficient standard achieved on the West Coast by the International Longshoremen and Warehousemen under the leadership of Harry Bridges. More and more men must be trained for the merchant marine. Increased patrols of small craft would cut down submarine losses along coastal routes. Many ships owned by private companies could be used to greater advantage—certainly huge cargoes of beer shipped last month to Puerto Rico can be dispensed with during the war emergency. But despite laxities and abuses, despite the need ever to improve our shipping effort, sufficient vessels can now be gathered to open and to keep open a western European front. It means concentrating every available ship for the main effort. It means using our shipping capacity to the full effect until the United Nations crush the Axis completely and finally.

BRUCE MINTON.





"Pomalu"—work slowly, slowly—is the word Czech workers use to disrupt production in Nazi-run factories.

FROM the point of view of the occupied nations, the second front in Europe is long overdue. Every day of procrastination means more hostages facing the Nazi firing squads from Norway to the Balkans and from France to the Ukraine. The ultimate success of the second front and of the war itself will depend in a substantial measure upon the existence and active support on the part of the masses who are now bleeding on the home fronts. The longer the day of invasion of Europe is delayed the thinner will be the ranks of the patriots who today are dying as martyrs, but could fight tomorrow as rightful avengers.

Let us have no illusion as to the limits to which the fascists and Nazis will go in physically eliminating their foe and our friend on the inner European front. To this day they have murdered over 500,000 able-bodied men and women. They have reduced to mental and physical wrecks hundreds of thousands of victims in the concentration camps and ghettos. Three million Poles, Frenchmen, Russians, Czechs, Dutch, and other peoples are toiling in Germany under the Nazi whip as forced laborers.

The Nazi leaders have publicly boasted that should they go down, all Europe would go down with them. Goebbels is known to have repeated his threat that should they be forced to slam the door on Europe, they would slam it with a bang the world would never forget. When the Nazis threaten with killing, they mean just that—and more. The tempo of mass extermination such as occurred at Lidice will be speeded up as the chances of victory over the United Nations decrease.

BUT humane concern for the lives of the half-doomed Europeans is not the only factor that makes necessary an energetic preparation for the earliest possible materialization of the second front. Considerations of military strategy supply no less compelling reasons for dealing the Axis powers an organized blow through the occupied nations.

In spite of his tremendous losses in the Soviet Union, Hitler is still the master over a formidable army engaged not only in war, but in production. He still has at his disposal 200,000,000 non-Germans working and sweating for his war machine. Half-hearted, slowing down, and inefficient though this forced collaboration may be, it nevertheless keeps the wheels of the factories rolling. Potential arsenals of the freedom-loving peoples continue to serve as the arsenals of the aggressors.

Nothing else than a second military front can change this situation. The problem created by the bottleneck in the transportation of manpower and war materials from overseas can and will be solved to a considerable extent right in Europe. The hands which today are chained to Nazi tools will fight and work with trebled energy for and with the United Nations once they can rely on friendly support. The armies of invasion

## MY PEOPLE ARE WAITING

Josef Hanc, a member of the Czechoslovak Foreign Service and author of the recently published "Tornado Across Eastern Europe," tells why only a second front can bring Hitler's doom.

will be swelled by the friendly underground movements of the inner front. In fact, this inner front may become one of the principal sources of supplies of manpower for the United Nations provided they act, strike swiftly and effectively, leaving Hitler no chance of weakening his enemies at home before they rise in open revolt.

ONE would like to be assured that all these considerations have been properly weighed within the grand and the detailed strategy of the United Nations. The second front as it is visualized and eagerly awaited by the occupied peoples includes not only the traditional firing line along which the opposing armies try to concentrate superior weapons for advance or defense. It also takes the form of as many as possible lightning offensive actions deep in the rear of the enemy, in the focal strategic places, and particularly within the regions where friendly native populations, well acquainted with local conditions, will carry out the vanguard and scouting operations. Air-borne combat forces descending with unparalleled suddenness upon the most vulnerable points throughout all Europe will be an essential part of the second front.

In other words, the second front must automatically take in most of Europe. It will provide a thousand and one opportunities for the display of acts of daring, quick decision, and sustained precision such as can only be gauged by the examples of Soviet guerrilla warfare.

The second front, if started in a truly offensive spirit and under resolute and united leadership, will put all Europe aflame. It will reveal countless heroes eager to exchange the hitherto practiced passive resistance for open struggle. The avenging nemesis will be the constant invisible comrade-in-arms of the British, American, and other United Nations' armies.

Without the assistance of these enslaved but unconquered millions, the second front hardly becomes what it must be, namely the final stage of the world revolution which the peace and freedom-loving nations are carrying out against fascism and Nazism.

This aspect of the second front should never be lost sight of. Fascism, Hitlerism, Prussianism, the Quislings, the Lavals, the Magyar and other feudalists and puppet rulers can only be wiped out by the people whom they have betrayed and upon whom they have inflicted the horrors of privations and war.

It is in the light of this revolt of offended humanity, ignited and sustained by the establishment of the second front, that the war assumes a people's character, that it becomes the war of the common man. For it is only after Europe has been cleansed of all that is unsavory that the new world order can be erected in which men will secure a chance to live as human beings.

JOSEF HANC.