

# NEW MASSES

ESTABLISHED 1911

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★

## Biddle Passes the Buck

WILLIAM RANDOLPH HEARST's favorite, Attorney-General Biddle, has still not taken action against Adolph Hitler's favorite, Charles E. Coughlin. No doubt he is too busy trying to deport anti-Hitler labor leaders and pronouncing *ex cathedra* judgments that an anti-fascist political party (for instance, the Communist Party) is trying to overthrow the American government by force and violence to bother with such trifles as prosecuting Hitler's American friends. Biddle is one of those tender-hearted lovers of civil liberties who would not hurt a flea—or a fascist—but who summons up unsuspected courage when it comes to a stiletto job on those whose entire lives are devoted to the fight against fascism.

In an interview in Chattanooga last Saturday Biddle pleaded that in his ruling on Bridges and on the Communist Party "I was merely carrying out the mandate of Congress." Congress has enough sins on its head without taking on those of others. Congress did not give Biddle a mandate to accept the opinion of Judge Charles B. Sears in the Bridges case as against the opinion of Dean James M. Landis and the Department of Justice's own Board of Immigration Appeals. That was Biddle's doing. Congress did not give him a mandate to accept Goebbels' version of the program and principles of the Communist Party. That was Biddle's doing. Congress did not give him a mandate to declare that affiliation with or membership in a trade union, the Marine Workers Industrial Union, "was grounds for deportation." That too was Biddle's doing, as was his plagiarizing of Martin Dies' attacks on other progressive organizations.

There are those who say that the question of the Communist Party is a matter for the courts to decide. In an article in *The Worker* of last Sunday, Robert Minor, one of the leaders of the Communist Party, challenges this doctrine as dangerous and un-American. His position appears to us sound. Suppose, for example, that someone charged that the Republican Party sought the overthrow of the government by force and violence. Since

actual fascists like Gerald Winrod, Gerald L. K. Smith, and Coughlin's secretary, Louis B. Ward, have run on the Republican ticket or sought its nomination in the primaries, a better case could be made out against the Republicans (and against the Democratic Party of Senator Reynolds and Representative Cox) than against the Communists. Should we, then, leave it to the courts to decide whether Tom Smith can vote Republican or belong to a Republican club? The voters, not the courts—nor, for that matter, Francis Biddle—are the ones to accept or reject the program of a political party. Any other course stultifies democracy.

## The Great Sea Battle

SIX months after Pearl Harbor, almost to the day, great sea battles have been raging in the middle and north Pacific, from Midway island, west of Hawaii, to Dutch Harbor, off the tip of Alaska. In all probability, these battles will have a decisive significance for the future course of war on the Pacific front. According to the commander-in-chief of our fleet, Adm. Ernest J. King, the enemy has engaged the bulk of his forces with ours. "It is one of their methods," he says, "and a very sound one too, not to send a boy to do a man's job." The man-sized job the Japanese are evidently trying to do is to destroy those bases from Hawaii to Alaska on which the operation of our Pacific fleet depends, and from which our counter-offensive in the Pacific must be mounted.

In the early stage of this battle, Adm. Chester W. Nimitz, chief of our Pacific forces, reports that the enemy has suffered heavy losses. At least two or three Japanese aircraft carriers plus their planes were sunk; as many as three battleships, four cruisers, and three transports are reported damaged. Our losses by comparison with the really sizable losses to the enemy are considered light. Landlubbers may not appreciate these figures, but when it is recalled that the Japanese probably had eight or nine aircraft carriers to start with, the loss of three is a measure of the size of the engagement. So is the figure of three battleships damaged.

Maj. George Fielding Eliot and others have suggested in a preliminary way that the Midway and Dutch Harbor events must be related to a number of others in recent months. What the Japanese tried to do at Pearl Harbor was to knock us out in order to be free to concentrate their land armies in the Philippines, Malaya, the Dutch East Indies, and Burma. That phase of their campaign was relatively successful. But once these areas are occupied, the Japanese have to secure them against our eventual counter-attack and the growing potential of our production lines and shipbuilding ways.

While concentrating their land armies against China, as they are doing with some success, especially in Chekiang province and in the south from the Burma direction, the Japanese had to try and dislodge us from those continental or continent-guarding bases where our forces are being assembled, and from which our fleet needs to operate.

At Madagascar the Japanese tried to deprive us of using the Indian Ocean—and they were beaten to the punch. At Ceylon the Japanese sought to grasp the southern key for invading India. They failed. At the Coral Sea battle, the Japanese tried to open the gates to Australia and at the same time cut us off from that potentially offensive base. Again they failed.

It follows that in last week's northern engagements, they were trying to prevent us from building up our Alaskan base, to knock the troublesome Midway position out, and perhaps even to deprive us of Hawaii. But our fleet engaged them, gave heavier blows than it took, and thus far, it would seem that the Japanese grand strategy has been thwarted.

In other words, what they have tried is to establish a sequel to Pearl Harbor; if successful, it would be worse than Pearl Harbor for us. But they have not been successful, thanks to our ships, our men, and above all, our airplane support. Thus Pearl Harbor is not only being avenged, but the basis is being laid for our offensive. And that is why widely separated peoples such as in India, in Australia, and in China—and no doubt the Russians in Vladivostok—have been watching this week with such deep interest.

## The CIO's Crucial Decisions

JOHN L. LEWIS has missed the bus. Not even with the aid of Attorney-General Biddle's deportation order against Harry Bridges will he succeed in persuading any large number of Americans that the real issue is the "United Mine Workers of America against Communism." That is Hitler's line, that is Coughlin's line, and when Lewis makes it his line too, he only proves to the hilt the charge of CIO President Phil Murray that Lewis is "hell bent on creating national confusion and national disunity." The stupid, Red-baiting attempt to make a Communist out of Murray and other CIO leaders only exposes the hollowness of the belated resolution adopted by Lewis and his obedient Reichstag, the policy committee of the United Mine Workers, pledging support to the war effort. As Murray put it: "You cannot be a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde in this war by saying you are for the war effort and then making qualifications that certain people whom Lewis does not like shall be fired by the CIO."

In contrast to the disruptive activity of

Lewis and his henchmen, the CIO executive board made decisions that help strengthen the entire nation in the fight against fascist barbarism. It pledged full cooperation with President Roosevelt's seven-point economic program; instructed the CIO executive officers to take steps toward cooperation with the trade unions of the United Nations and of Latin America; condemned Attorney General Biddle's order to deport Harry Bridges; pledged to fight for equality of treatment for all workers in industry regardless of race, color, or creed; and sent a telegram to President Roosevelt, Prime Minister Churchill, and Generals Arnold and Somervell expressing agreement with "a speedy, all-embracing offensive to carry the war to Hitler on his own territory and crush the Nazi machine between the pincers of the armies of the United States, Great Britain, and Russia."

Of special significance are the resolutions on labor unity and on a national win-the-war labor conference. On the first the CIO proposed as a basis for organic unity with the AFL the establishment of a United Labor Council at a joint meeting of the executive boards of the two organizations. The proposal for a win-the-war conference came from the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers, one of the key unions in war production. It calls for a national conference of representatives of every affiliate of the CIO,

AFL, and Railroad Brotherhoods. The meeting would have three main objectives: stimulation of war production; "political support to those candidates in support of the President of the United States and the war effort"; and increase of "labor participation in the executive and administrative branches of the government to assure labor's contribution to the war effort."

### Jim Crow Gets Socked

**P**HI Delta Kappa, the professional educational fraternity, voted overwhelmingly last week to eliminate from its constitution a clause that admitted to membership only "white males." The clause had caused trouble since 1911, and in 1940 when Sigma chapter of Ohio State University initiated a Negro and a Chinese student, the chapter was suspended by the National Council.

The Teachers College (NY) chapter took up the gage, and campaigned nationally among the membership, arranging a straw vote last March that resulted in a 3-to-2 majority for amendment of the constitution. Since then the membership has voted again, overwhelmingly in favor of admitting students of all nationalities and color to the ranks of its elect.

Another action taken last week is indicative of the growing awareness of our people. In Washington the National Negro Congress carried its solid understanding of the Negro's

relation to the war to the people of our country in full-page advertisements printed in ten Negro weeklies and one Washington daily.

"This is the war of every American—regardless of race, creed, or color—because the national independence of our country is at stake," the advertisement said. The Congress elected Ferdinand Smith, vice-president of the NMU, to be its treasurer; demanded an end of discrimination against Negroes in the armed forces and in civilian life; urged a Western Front now; assailed John L. Lewis.

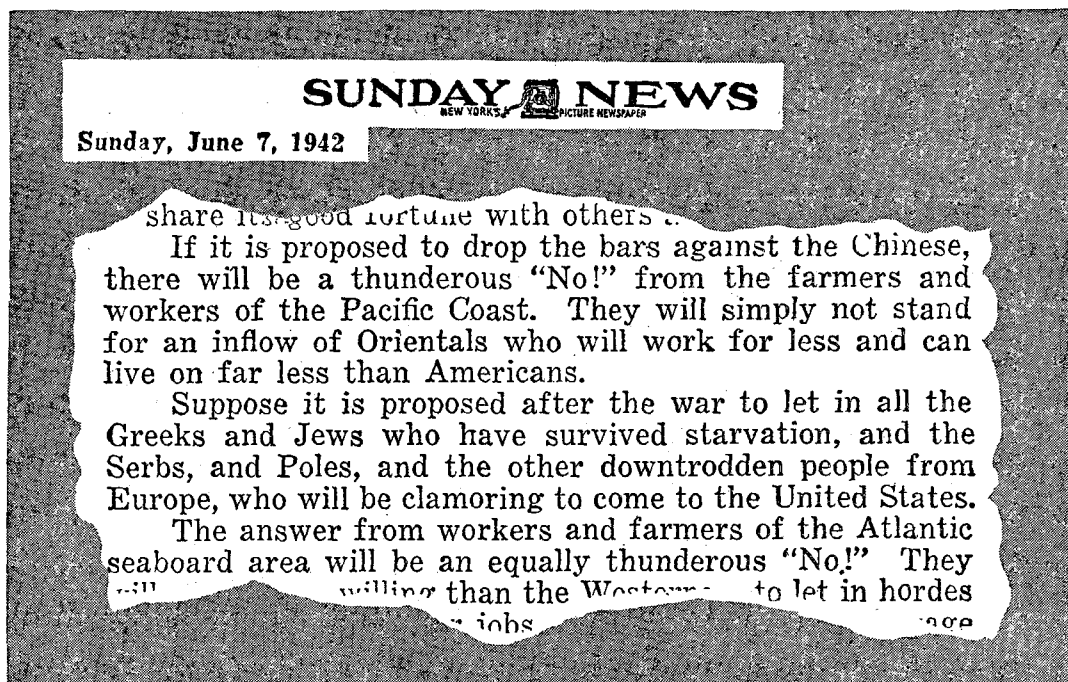
These actions are the direct consequence of the march of events since Pearl Harbor; the heroism of individual Negro soldiers and sailors; the spreading consciousness of the issues of this people's war.

### The Battle of Rationing

**L**AST week we talked about the fact that we were losing the battle of rubber because of conflicts in authority, incompetence in high places, and tardy and shortsighted planning. Closely related is the problem of gas rationing, and here too bungling is rife. There is no shortage of gas and oil; rationing has had to be introduced on the eastern seaboard solely because of a shortage of transportation facilities. Now belatedly, however, the War Production Board has begun to realize that the consumption of gas in motor vehicles is closely related to the consumption of rubber in the form of tires. This means that if the 1,000,000 tons of rubber now on the motor vehicles of the nation are to last as long as possible, the supplies of gas to run the cars must be cut as low as possible. Which in turn means that regardless of whether the transportation bottleneck is broken, gas must be rationed not only in the East, but throughout the country.

It is as simple as two plus two. Yet a special meeting last week of about 100 House members representing both major parties adopted a resolution opposing nationwide gas rationing unless facts are officially presented showing that it is "necessary to conserve the supply of gasoline." The implication is that under no circumstances would these members of the House accept rationing for the purpose of conserving rubber. Now it would be easy to denounce these congressmen and accuse them of lack of patriotism. There is no doubt that the moving spirits in this agitation in Congress are appeasers and those who are more concerned about the profits of the oil companies than the welfare of the country. Yet it is true that neither Congress nor the country has been educated as to the basic facts about gas and rubber. Instead there have been conflicting announcements, rumors, and heated debates, confusing both public and Congress.

A glimmer of light broke through last Friday when it was announced after a meeting of high officials with President Roosevelt



*Dispensing defeatist poison to the millions, an editorial in the New York Daily News ridiculed the idea of a better postwar world as expressed in the recent speeches of Vice-President Wallace and Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles. Part of the ridicule consisted of falsification. For instance: "The US Army, says Mr. Welles, must do most of the work of policing the world until the world settles down to this state of milk-drinking bliss." What Welles actually said was that the people "will insist that the United Nations undertake the maintenance of an international police power in the years after the war to insure freedom from fear to peace-loving peoples. . . ." The News also threatened that any attempt to bring about a better world after the war "will fan up a fight in this country. . . ." The Daily News' own conception of the postwar world, based on Hitlerite anti-Semitism and race and national hatred, is indicated in the above extracts from its editorial.*



that an inventory of the amount of reclaimable rubber in the country would first be undertaken, after which decisions about nationwide gas rationing would be made.

Of course, conserving and reclaiming rubber is only one aspect of the problem. Our rubber stocks will not be ample until the production of synthetic rubber gets fully under way. The whole situation requires, as we pointed out last week, a shakeup of the top command which only the President and Donald Nelson can effect. It is gratifying that in the case of food hit-or-miss methods are not being tolerated. No general shortages of food exist or are expected, but taking time by the forelock, the War Production Board has set up a nine-man committee, headed by Secretary of Agriculture Claude R. Wickard, to control the production and allocation of all military and civilian food supplies.

### Teachers Needed Now

IT is quite possible that by the time you read this there will be 125 less teachers in the New York City educational system. The Board of Education had announced it would drop them for "budgetary" reasons. Five thousand have already been dropped in the last five years, whereas in Britain under the bombs appropriations for education were augmented, this year and last.

The progressive Teachers' Union of New York City feels that its fight to save these jobs involves more than the saving of the jobs themselves. It is true that there are fewer children in school today than there were five years ago, but in spite of this reduction in student population, classes become increasingly larger as teacher personnel is reduced.

It looks from here as though the Board of Education is missing a staggering opportunity to fully integrate the school system into the war effort. The Teachers' Union, wholeheartedly committed to victory, feels that every school in the city should have a child-care center and should become a community center holding nightly forums for civilians. It feels that the million school children should be involved in the war effort; that vocational schools, instead of closing (the vocational evening high schools were closed by the Board of Education as of April 1) should train young boys of fourteen to eighteen, but see to it that their training has practical application. There is no reason why these schools could not manufacture thousands upon thousands of small parts.

Unless the parents of children in New York get on their toes, hundreds of teachers will follow the 125 who were to have been dismissed last week. The school child is a member of our democracy; his stake in this war is vital. With his patriotic teachers and within the enormous apparatus of the schools, he can render an indispensable service to our country.



## THE WEEK in LONDON by CLAUDE COCKBURN

*London (by cable).*

WITH the publication of the White Paper on Coal, the general impression is one of quiet cooling in a political atmosphere which a few days ago could have been described as really tropical. It did seem only last week that the coal crisis might upset the government. That seems less likely today. The most serious effects of the coal compromise will be those resulting from the postponement of fuel rationing and failure to exact such vigorous control of the mines as the Miners Federation has demanded.

The effects of the rationing postponement will be felt next winter. The effects of inadequate control won't be felt for a rather longer time though they will be nonetheless dangerous for that. After all, the government, through Hugh Dalton and Sir Stafford Cripps, did declare only a few weeks ago that fuel rationing by June was urgent and indispensable. The public agreed. Then came the protests of the big distributive interests and the 1922 Committee, and now we have the White Paper jauntily announcing that the government does not consider the introduction of compulsory rationing necessary at all at this time. It is an unpleasant picture and it is one which certainly does not contribute to public confidence. It opens the door wide to all those disruptionists who seek to exploit the existing balance of power within the government to spread cynicism and general disgruntlement.

Equally it is clear that the Coal White Paper represents very serious concessions to the mine owners. This is particularly damaging in the separation of the wage issue from the general scheme and in attempts to prevent any form of national negotiation between miners and mine owners. This, of course, is a point which the mine owners have been fighting on for more than twenty years and so far have always won. It is obvious that whatever other results may come from this compromise, the position of Stafford Cripps and Hugh Dalton in the eyes of the masses has been seriously shaken. It is no secret that Cripps did at one time contemplate resignation on this issue, and it is inevitable that the defense which he will now be compelled to make of the new coal proposals will lower his prestige in the eyes of many who were possibly over-impressed by what has been called the "Cripps myth."

THE dangers implicit in any disruption of existing national unity are most completely evidenced in the agitation of an anti-Soviet character currently being developed by certain extreme reactionary elements who seem ambitious to constitute a new British Cliveden set. They are led by Maj. Victor Cazalet. Cazalet returned recently from the Soviet Union and, as is now generally known, caused to be printed and circulated among his friends—300 persons selected as potentially influential—a bitterly vixenish little volume of comment, largely directed against the Soviet Union. Cazalet's anti-Soviet agitation may have some connection with the heavy losses sustained in the Russian Revolution by the Cazalet family, which up till then had treated Russia as virtually a colonial country created for the benefit of the Cazalets and their like.

With Cazalet in the present agitation are associated Harold Nicolson and Erskine Hill, chairman of the 1922 Committee. Those associated with this group claim—perhaps with some exaggeration—that they have at least 62 MP's associated with them and they boast (again it is to be hoped exaggeratedly) of the pressure which they assert they are able to bring upon the government. Their agitation is directed both against a reasonable settlement of postwar relationships between Britain and the Soviet Union and against full cooperation now in all senses of the word.

A curious feature of the situation is the fact that there exists some kind of general understanding between the Cazalet group and the "Vansittartists." The latter oppose any distinction between the Nazis and the German people and urge that the war be waged in a spirit of vengeance against all Germans. In a recent issue of the *Nineteenth Century* Frederick Voigt, who is closely associated with Sir Robert Vansittart, suggested that unless one adopted a Vansittartite policy toward Germany, it would be impossible to oppose Soviet policy in Eastern Europe. He maintained that the Vansittartites could argue that if Britain totally destroyed Germany, the Soviet Union would have no further "excuse" for acting in the interests of its own security.

The Kemsley press—now by far the most sinister big press influence in Britain—is already following with some necessary caution a similarly anti-Soviet line. And Harold Nicolson has devoted one of his weekly columns in the *Spectator* to an article containing grossly slanderous and defeatist suggestions about Soviet policy. All this, though dangerous and disgusting, must not be taken to suggest that these disruptive elements can seriously affect Anglo-Soviet friendship. Nevertheless, they are typical of the internal menaces to which a strengthened national unity and a strengthened Anglo-Soviet cooperation are the urgent answer.

CLAUDE COCKBURN.