

mean something. I think anti-Semitism is a crime; and so is Negro-baiting; and labor-baiting; and everything else that makes a farce of that grand idea that our country started off with: "All men are created equal." If we put men in jail for stealing sums of money, how about those who try to push the Jew or the Negro off into some corner to starve, or drag along at the lowest-paid and most menial jobs? If we make it a crime to kill or injure, how about those whose slanders and sneers make growing-up a hell on earth for every Negro and Jewish—and Italian, and in some sections, Catholic—kid? If a man can be brought up for sending explosives through the mails, or even obscenity, because they would do terrible damage, what about those who make it a business to poison the minds of innocent readers with all sorts of filthy and vicious lies about different groups in our population?

Once you think pretty soberly about it, you can easily see that we need laws and penalties for the professional anti-democrats. Sure, we need education, too, and plenty of it; and the more we have of it, the fewer innocent ears into which these monsters can pour their poison. But side by side with this education, we need something that will do for the monsters of hate and discrimination what we would do with every other kind—get them out of the way, and keep them there, until they stop being dangerous.

Mary E. Woolley

President emeritus, Mt. Holyoke College

I BELIEVE that individuals or organizations that disseminate fascist propaganda and incite hatred of Negroes, Jews, and other minority groups should not be accorded freedom of press or assemblage.

Lewis Merrill

President, United Office and Professional Workers of America, CIO

I WOULD not think of giving criminals a free run of the vaults of a bank. Everyone would agree that it would be extremely foolish. I do not feel, therefore, that we should give social criminals a free run of our society to disseminate fascist propaganda looking toward the destruction of our democracy. That too is foolish.

For such [individuals and organizations] I think there is only one answer—put them in jail.

Mrs. David de Sola Pool

Former president, Hadassah

NO [in answer to question one]. The same procedure of education and punishment that is meted out to criminals should be applied to these violators of moral law.

READERS' FORUM

Letter from Algiers

FOR many reasons I cannot name the writer of the letter below. Were I to do so it would endanger his life. But I can vouch without reservation for his integrity and patriotism. He was a distinguished political figure during the Popular Front in France. He worked hard to unite all genuine anti-fascists against the debacle which befell his homeland in 1940. And he continues now in the heroic work of freeing his country from the darkness that has descended upon it. For the past few years he has lived in England and in this country. He has been in Algiers and the following letter was sent from there to a mutual friend. Naturally I have edited it in the interests of his safety but without in any way changing its meaning.

JOHN STUART.

"ARRIVING in Algiers from where I have been heretofore everything seems small—the country, the men, the houses, and the villages. Life here is not uncomfortable, but it is more squalid than anything I had ever imagined. I yearn for big, open spaces and for large horizons. Food is plentiful but very bad. Conditions of work are hard. There is little ink and paper. My room is dark and I have no electricity during the day. All this is bearable, but what makes me suffer is the complete absence of news. I have the impression of living in a house without windows or at the bottom of a well. This, of course, does not help in judging foreign affairs in a clear light. Luckily I have some books with me and some notes which I hope will help me keep a certain intellectual equilibrium.

"Although Algiers is a beautifully located city I do not like Mediterranean sloppiness. But we must work, win the war, and subordinate everything else to this. I am accustomed to the lack of comfort. I cannot, however, abide the inaction and idle talk I have found here. I have lost this bad habit and find it very shocking in others. There is plenty of good will here but also a great deal of inexperience and puerility. I often think of England and America—particularly the latter, which will suffer serious crises, but which will bring infinite resources to the new world being formed.

"As a whole the Committee of National Liberation is not of great stature, although it is a great advance over what it has been. I say as a whole, because there are men in it who stand out and are good. One in particular who now holds an important post is much better than I had thought before. He has a sense of international affairs and does his best to counteract the nationalist vanity of certain others. The moral and political climate in Algiers is not good. As I have said there is too much idle talk, too much gossip, too much maneuvering, many small ambitions and many big appetites. And what is even more serious is the lack of competent personnel for the administration and direction of politics.

"The Consultative Assembly does not have great powers, although it plays a very useful role and its action is decidedly felt. The delegates from the resistance movement form an excellent factor and are a wise and democratic element. They offer ideas which are different from much of the preconceived nonsense one hears. The Assembly has already paved the way for certain reforms, has made certain changes, has prevented certain mistakes and has limited the making of others. It will continue along this path. It has no intention of leaving the way open for personal power; it will demand that immediately after the liberation of France elections take place. The Assembly is leading toward the democratic solution of many difficult problems; and if by chance these solutions are not adopted, we can be sure that there will be hell to pay within France. France will not be patient with dilly-dallying. Above all it wants liberty and power to the people.

"De Gaulle is very popular, not as a personality, but for what he represents. His prestige is very great. This is an indisputable fact which everyone must recognize. But it must be remembered that the desire for liberty is greater than any single individual. Unfortunately there are some people who try to exploit his great prestige and give him very bad advice, which might create conflict between himself and the Assembly. But De Gaulle knows better—as he has shown thus far—and will not submit to such bad advice.

"All this does not prevent certain individuals and organizations from playing an extremely dangerous game. Among them are certain big businessmen who are trying to monopolize the situation in the same way that they built their monopolies in France. And it is on their insistence that the Committee has been kept from broadening out to represent the genuine interests of France. As usual they demand that they be permitted to dominate everything.

"It follows from all this that there is work to be done. The Communists have their eyes wide open and naturally have no illusions. They fight for unity of all liberation forces. They have, of course, every reason to be disappointed with the way they have been treated in respect to the inclusion of Communists in the Liberation Committee. It is not they who have refused to participate. They have informed De Gaulle, who invited them to join the Committee, that they were prepared to undertake responsibilities on the basis of a war program whose major planks, among others, are the punishment of traitors and the purging of fascist elements, as well as the creation of a national army and the arming of the patriots in France. As I write, the Communists have not yet heard from the Committee.

"The news from France itself is good. She has suffered but still has immense reserves of energy. Vichy propaganda has left its mark and unfortunately not enough is being done from here to counteract it. Those recently arrived from France are much more democratically minded than many of the French at Algiers.

"X. Y. Z."

LITTLE BUSINESS, WHAT NOW?

Small manufacturers and retailers, already hit by wartime conditions, face critical months ahead. Remedies—bogus and sound. Frank J. Wallace outlines the only solution: planning.

THIS New Year's was the last celebration for a lot of small businessmen. By the thousands they have been shrinking in size or closing up altogether during the last two years, but in 1944 we may see "discontinuances" reach half a million. Aside from the personal tragedies involved, the nation must face the harsh fact that small business has a long indictment to thrust under the nose of those who legislate for and direct our war effort.

The counts in this indictment must receive the immediate attention of the administration, Congress, the labor and progressive movement, as well as small business itself. First is the fact, already well known, that big business has taken the bulk of all war contracts and that seventy percent of all the war business has been placed in the hands of one hundred giant concerns. Second, small business has been forced to restrict itself to consumer goods, civilian goods, and to fight for its life from a "business-as-usual" position, regardless of its patriotism. Third, the facts now come out that big business is not producing all that the war effort requires, and that small business remains a tremendous reservoir of industrial and technical capacity still largely untapped. Fourth is the realization that small business is headed for greater disasters unless postwar planning "of, by, and for" small business becomes an integral part of national policy.

Politically speaking, the mounting bitterness of small businessmen is already being directed against the administration by the same forces who have been the opponents and saboteurs of the war effort—in preparation for the 1944 elections. Since small business is the backbone of the middle class and the dynamic group within it, clearly how small business votes in November 1944 becomes a matter of immediate concern for the labor movement and the progressive forces.

TO UNDERSTAND the situation in which small business finds itself today it is necessary to consider separately the manufacturers and the retailers who comprise the greatest part of all business. Practically all of small business is involved in the production and distribution of consumer goods. This division of labor in American industry is not new. Big business has for long dominated the heavy or durable goods industries and smaller manufacturers have had to concentrate on non-durable consumer goods. Since all retailers operate in the field of consumer supply, we have small business,

in peace or in war, primarily devoted to the manufacture and sale of civilian goods.

Take the smaller manufacturers. Most of them have had no choice but to continue making, as long as possible, the same things they made before the war. Only fifteen percent of the smaller manufacturers have been making products different from those they made in 1941. Thus from the beginning of the war economy it has been for these smaller producers a matter of either surviving on consumer goods manufacture or dying. "Business as usual" has been forced upon them as the only formula for survival. Recall, as contrast, the earlier stages of our armaments program, when big business resisted conversion to war production. The manufacturers of steel, automobiles, refrigerators and other big industries fought against conversion because they wanted to enjoy the fleshpots stewing with the rising national income, and because they demanded that the government build them new plants in which to make munitions without interfering with their own civilian goods production. For a while these giant producers had a choice between civilian and war production until at last they were cajoled, bribed, and forced into turning their facilities to the war effort.

The smaller plants had no such choice. At least one-third of all the smaller manufacturers have shrunk in size and output. Those who did get war contracts had to take them, in most instances, as sub-contracts, which made them completely dependent upon some larger firm. Remember that while the government built or paid for most of the new plants and equipment operated by the big firms, thus making it possible for the large manufacturer to produce articles he had never made before, the small man was able to secure contracts based only upon his actual equipment. Thus, in the long run, the flexibility of big business has been enhanced by the war production it is handling.

It has been estimated that from one-third to one-half of America's productive capacity is in smaller plants. To what extent has the smaller manufacturer been utilized? We know that production for war needs is short of schedule. In the first six months of this year the war plants dropped eleven percent behind. Yet, according to a recent issue of *Business Week*, the general thinking in Washington among those responsible for the placing of war contracts is that the "saturation point" is being reached in the "absorption by the war effort of all businesses, large and small."

Now we have a report which proves that this smaller plant capacity is waiting largely unused. A survey was made by the OWI and the Department of Commerce. It shows that smaller firms have had to reduce their output. Out of 62,000 single-plant manufacturing firms covered, one out of every three reported that they could at least *double* their present production without any new machinery or construction. Altogether almost three-quarters of these firms insisted that they could increase their output by some amount. This survey shows that the smaller the plant the greater the relative amount of idle capacity. Almost half the plants were operating at forty hours or less and most of them had a backlog of orders to keep them going for less than two months. (Compare this with Bendix, which got so much business that when additional contracts were awarded to them the company wrote to find out whether the materials ordered were wanted for this war or the *next*!) More than half the smaller manufacturers either had no war production or their war contracts accounted for a small part of their output and a smaller part of their capacity. Certainly shortages of materials and manpower have forced the curtailment of production in many plants, but in this report we are dealing with manufacturers who could have contributed directly to the war effort. The smaller manufacturers have been unable to raise the funds for war production expansion and it was not until October 17, 1943, that a system was announced for making loans up to \$25,000 "more readily" available.

IN MANY cases the armed services or other procurement agencies, lean so lovingly on the big operators that smaller ones have found their path beset with trials and handicaps. Only a short time ago the Senate Small Business Committee published its hearings in a typical case, that of the Springfield Boiler Company, which had been trying to get contracts to make boilers for the Victory ships built under the supervision of the Maritime Commission. This concern is over fifty years old and has installed the power plants at a large number of important institutions. Whole families of skilled craftsmen make their living from this firm. The Springfield Company had been making the type of boiler required for our Victory ship program for over thirty-one years, long before these boilers were made by the biggest firm in this industry, Babcock and Wilcox. Yet the Springfield was first given no time to submit bids,