

Cost of Living At Record Peak; Will Go Higher

By Cy Thomas

Bounding prices and rent increases have sent the cost of living soaring to a new record peak. According to the latest figures released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the consumers price index rose from 186.6 on Sept. 15 to 187.4 on Oct. 15. The latter figure is the highest in history, but will go higher under the government's

soak-the-poor price control and wage stabilization program. Michael V. DiSalle, Director of the Office of Price Stabilization, said his agency would soon issue a regulation, "to allow all manufacturers and processors to pass along to consumers cost increases since the start of the Korean war." Testifying before the House-Senate Committee on controls, DiSalle said such an order is made mandatory under the Capehart Amendment to the Defense Production Act.

ists Union sounded the alarm in a front page story in its weekly newspaper which said the whole stabilization program is "tottering." The Office of Price Stabilization, it asserted, is "virtually powerless to prevent another round of price inflation that is now beginning."

REAL WAGES DROP

Although its price control program is a shambles the Truman administration is bent on "holding-the-line" on wages. The widening gap between rising prices and frozen wages, has already resulted in a sharp decline in the workers' standard of living. A survey made by the United Nations Department of Economic Affairs reports that in the U.S., "real hourly wages after taxes will fall by about 8 percent in 1951." This conservative estimate is based on official government figures which are notoriously rigged against the workers.

FARCE AND FRAUD

"The stabilization program," says the CIO News, Nov. 19, "is a farce and a fraud." Placing sole responsibility on the "Dixieop Congress," as is the custom among the labor leaders, the News asserts, "there isn't any real price control system in this country today. There are plenty of rules and regulations over wages, and swatting increases in taxes on the average guy — but on price controls, or real rent controls, nothing."

All roads lead to Washington. It is there that the vital questions of prices and wages are decided. With the Democrats and Republicans in control the decision inevitably is against the workers. What to do about it? — that's the big question.

CIO LECTURES WORKERS

"It's easy enough to gripe," lectures the CIO News, "about the high cost of living that's going way up yonder. But the question is: When are we going to turn our gripes into effective political action? When are we going to organize to elect a Congress responsive to the people's will? To be sure, griping is no solution — but why lecture the workers? They can only echo the question: When, pray when, will you provide the leadership, program and organization for an effective political struggle?"

GOOD FOR NOTHING

The answer given by CIO News is "organize for PAC." And the policy of PAC, of course, is to elect Democratic and Republican "friends" to Congress. That policy is good for nothing. It has led to an unbroken series of "worst Congresses" in history. If the labor leaders are serious about organizing "effective political action" they will promote the organization of labor's own political party to elect labor's own candidates to public office on labor's own program. No phony "friends" are going to do the job for them!

HAVING FIELD DAY

The price gougers are having a field day at the expense of the consumers. They are not only raking in fabulous profits but, said DiSalle, they are evading the payment of taxes by "passing a big slice of the tax on to consumers in the form of higher prices for their goods."

The 700,000-man AFL Machin-

No Precedent for "Contempt" Case Against Gus Hall

By Albert Hermann

The "contempt" trial of Gus Hall, Communist Party national secretary who was forcibly seized in Mexico City after failing to report for imprisonment in his Smith Act conviction, has shown the unprecedented lengths to which the Truman administration is going in its drive against civil liberties. Hall is being tried for bail-jumping despite the well-established practice in American and English law that the forfeiture of bail is the only penalty for such an act. Hall's bail has already been forfeited.

Hall's attorney, Harry Sachser, has pointed out that an exhaustive search of legal records has failed to uncover a single instance of punishment for "contempt" in such cases "in the 900 years" history of Anglo-American law. The government prosecutor has admitted that he has not been able to find any precedent, and the judge sitting on the case has also been unable to "recall any proceedings such as the one now before me."

Hall fled to Mexico City as a political refugee. U.S. government agents followed him to Mexico, kidnapped him and without resorting to extradition proceedings, took him by force to Laredo, Tex., where he was placed under arrest.

Thus the U.S., former political asylum, now has itself begun political persecution of opponents, and refuses to permit other nations to offer a haven to refugees. The invasion of Mexico by FBI agents in the Hall case has aroused widespread indignation throughout Latin America.

Massachusetts Adopts Police State Measure

By Manny London

BOSTON, Nov. 20 — In the last hours of its record-long session the Massachusetts Legislature passed one of the most vicious thought control bills ever seen in this country. This legislature passed only three bills of importance in a session lasting four weeks longer than that of the 82nd Congress. These were bills increasing the salaries of legislators, an increase in taxes and the "subversive" law which outlaws the Communist Party. Among the lawmakers' unfinished business were a graft scandal involving the Attorney General and a pay fraud on a Legislature-created Board on Mental Health.

Living up to Dr. Johnson's definition of patriotism as "the last refuge of scoundrels," the legislators tried to cover up the graft scandals, their self-voted salary raise and general inaction on pressing problems by an orgy of flag-waving culminating in the adoption of the repressive gag law.

SAVAGE PENALTIES

Under the provisions of this new law — which has already been signed by Governor Dever — not only is the Communist Party banned but machinery has been set up to declare other organizations "subversive." Many of the provisions are patterned on the

lines of the McCarran Act. The machinery of the law is to be set in motion when the Attorney General of Massachusetts asks the Superior Court for hearings to declare an accused organization "subversive." Upon the court's finding that the accused organization falls within the political ban established in the new law, that organization is dissolved and its funds taken over by the State.

Membership in a "subversive" organization is punishable by fines up to \$1,000 and imprisonment for two years. Concealing records, membership lists, etc., of groups deemed subversive would be punished by fines up to \$5,000 and imprisonment for three years. It is also forbidden under this law to rent halls, etc., to "subversive" organizations or to make donations to them.

When this legislation was proposed the Boston branch of the Socialist Workers Party vigorously opposed it. On two separate occasions representatives of the SWP appeared before legislative committees, denounced the proposals as police state measures and pointed out their dangers to the entire labor movement. Ostensibly passed to outlaw the Communist Party the law is so worded that any organization that is unpopular could be declared illegal in Mas-

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Where to Tighten the Belt



Steel Negotiations Start; Wage Freeze Big Issue

By Fred Hart

Contract negotiations between the United Steelworkers of America (CIO) and the United States Steel Co., which opened in Pittsburgh on Nov. 27, has been made the spearhead for the drive of the labor movement to break through the wage-freeze formula of the Wage Stabilization Board. However, the fact that the union side of the negotiations is in the hands of CIO negotiators who have become ensnared in the government "stabilization" machinery makes the outcome very doubtful.

FOR VIGOROUS FIGHT

Worker sentiment for smashing the formula which is now used to freeze wages has become stronger than ever throughout the country in recent months, and has manifested itself in local strikes and stoppages and pressure on the union leaders for a vigorous fight.

The constantly rising cost of living together with the big tax increases, which are in effect pay cuts, is the basic cause of the dissatisfaction of the workers in steel and other industries, and this resentment is rising as the cost of living soars to record heights.

The Steelworkers Union has opened negotiations with demands for a "substantial" wage increase, which, together with other fringe demands would amount to somewhere between 20 and 25 cents an

hour. The Wage Stabilization Board formula would restrict the steelworkers to a far smaller figure. Steelworkers officials have been strong in their denunciation of the formula in recent months, as preparations for the negotiations were under way. Joseph P. Molony, District Director of the steel union for the Buffalo area, in a speech to a western New York regional Steelworkers conference just before negotiations opened, had this to say:

"I always thought that a formula was something you fed to babies, and evidently the Wage Stabilization Board thinks they

are doing business with babies. But, by the end of next month, they will find that they are doing business with the hairiest bunch of babies they ever tried to bottle feed."

This kind of talk was very popular with the representatives of the steel locals that gathered to hear Mr. Molony speak. Whether the negotiating committee of the union will carry that attitude into the conferences with the arrogant steel barons, and even more important, whether they will stick to that stand when the power of Wall Street's government is thrown against them, as it will be, remains to be seen.

Opposition to Treaty Grows, Tokyo Correspondent Says

By A Special Correspondent

TOKYO — The ratification by the Japanese Diet of the Peace Treaty and the Security Pact has provoked an angry opposition that threatens to spread from Japan's big industrial centers throughout the whole country.

The Peace Treaty came as a sharp disappointment to the masses, who had been encouraged by the ruling classes to hope it would provide some way out of the present unbearable hardships provoked in part by the American occupation.

The people were also profoundly shocked by the Security Pact with its clause that permits the use of American troops to put down revolts in this country. The word Nairan (civil war), which has been almost a taboo, was openly used in reference to Japan itself in the discussion in the Diet. The public discussion of such matters has done a great deal to shock the people into realizing the real nature of the treaties.

Anti-war sentiment had been crystallizing among Japanese workers as early as last summer, especially around the movement for the "Four Principles of Peace." These four principles are: Against a separate treaty, for a treaty with all the powers; against joining either bloc, for neutrality; against rearmament; against any foreign military base in the country.

The Tenth Congress of the State Railway Workers Union, one of the strongest in Japan, adopted these principles by a vote of 292 to 113 last June. The vote was especially significant because this union was the stronghold of the so-called Democratic League movement which was created to fight the radicalization of the labor movement led by the Stalinists.

Other unions that have adopted the same policy include the Teachers Union, Private Railway Workers, Transport Workers, Electric Industrial Workers, Coal Miners, etc. They thus declared their determination to fight any attempt by the Yoshida government to enslave the Japanese people for the benefit of American imperialism.

These tendencies have had their immediate reflection among the intellectuals. Many leading university professors have been emboldened and are openly criticizing the Peace Treaty and Security Pact; some are now advocating a world peace movement. Dr. Nambu, president of Tokyo University, quite recently denounced the separate peace treaty at his farewell lecture to his students.

The treaties resulted in a serious crisis within the Socialist (Continued on page 3)

GI Discontent Forced Order To Hold Fire

Generals Alarmed by Cease-Fire Action Of Troops, Say Fighting Must Be Resumed

By George Lavan

Interpreting an order from the top command in accordance with their own desires, U.S. troops in Korea brought about a cease-fire virtually along the entire battle-front for as long as 48-hours in some sectors.

The enthusiasm with which the GIs put into effect the cease-fire and the prospect of possible fraternization between the opposing armies so alarmed the top command and leading U.S. diplomatic and political circles that new orders were issued to the troops emphasizing that there was no cease-fire and that the war should go on with U.S. troops "shooting to kill."

LIGHT BONFIRES

Soon after the firing stopped, front-line GIs in some sectors watched Chinese troops playing volley ball in no-man's land. The Chinese and North Korean attitude towards the cessation of hostilities was further shown by their lighting bonfires instead of maintaining the usual blackout at night.

Such developments in the first hours following the "misunderstanding" by the troops that an informal cease-fire existed, undoubtedly led the top brass to fear that discontent among the GIs would increase and that raternization might soon develop.

HATE CAMPAIGN FLOPS

U.S. newspapers led by the authoritative N. Y. Times recently discussed with dismay the fact that the GIs were being "taken in" by Chinese demands for an immediate cease-fire. This was attributed to the failure of the U.S. Army to "educate" the GIs on the issues and the nature of the enemy. Attempts to indoctrinate the troops against the idea of an immediate cease-fire included atrocity propaganda to incite hatred against the Chinese and Korean troops such as the now discredited story that many thousand American prisoners were murdered.

It is significant that Col. James H. Hanley, who led off with the first set of alleged atrocity figures, said that he had

issued his report "to let soldiers at the front know the nature of their enemy." Atrocity stories emanating from the Big Brass were, however, unable to stop the mounting dissatisfaction of the combat troops with the U.S. truce negotiators and the feeling that this "useless" war without perspective should end.

When the truce negotiators agreed on the line of opposing armies the Chinese proposed that a cease-fire go into effect then and there. U.S. negotiators rejected the proposition. Troop indignation as well as public opinion in the U.S. and the distrust on the part of U.S. allies led to a compromise agreement at Panmunjom. This provided that the agreed on line would be valid for thirty days. During these thirty days war was to continue, and if the remaining points in dispute had not been agreed upon by the end of the thirty day period a new line corresponding to the new positions of the two armies would be drawn.

VETO BY TROOPS

The troops vetoed this strategy of the top command. Twenty-four

hours before news of the end of firing in Korea reached the U.S., newspapers were carrying stories by United Press war correspondent Robert Vermillion, headed: "Stop Firing NOW, GIs At Front Demand" (N. Y. Post, Nov. 27). Vermillion summarized GI feeling thus: "American front-line troops feel that the shooting in Korea should halt immediately or subside by unspoken agreement while the truce talks continue."

TYPICAL STATEMENTS

Among the typical statements of the GIs quoted by Vermillion was the following from a sergeant: "We want to get the hell out of Korea but we don't expect any armistice to do it. But if they're going to stop the shooting they should do it right now, while I'm still alive." A private asked the reporter: "Thirty more days? What for? If they don't want to sign anything over there in Panmunjom why not just let the shooting fade away until we decide what we're going to do — we'd go for that. You know, let the shooting fade away and us old soldiers will never die."

This is exactly how the front-line troops interpreted the still secret order from General James A. Van Fleet, Commander of the 8th Army. They "just let the shooting fade away."

Despite the new orders to resume fighting it is apparent that, given the overwhelming feeling of the troops for an end to hostilities, United States commanders would have to think twice before ordering the reluctant GIs into major offensive operations. The GIs are thinking things out for themselves and object to being used as just "so much cannon fodder" by the Big Brass. Every GI, every member of an airplane crew wants to live and wants to return home. They hope that the bloody war in Korea will soon end and they believe that every further death in battle is a needless, tragic sacrifice. They are right. All Americans with the interests of the GIs at heart should demand the immediate end of the war in Korea and the withdrawal of all U.S. troops.

707 More

U.S. battle casualties in Korea are up to 100,883. This is an increase of 707 over the preceding week.

The more than 100,000 reported casualties include 17,153 dead in Truman's "police action." 71,307 Americans have been wounded in the Korea fighting, and another 10,866 are reported "missing in action."

The Defense Department casualty figures do not include so-called "non-battle" casualties, such as accidental injuries, and a very large number of serious frostbite cases, some of them amputation cases.

Gen. Ridgway proposes to continue the senseless slaughter until a "full" armistice. The GIs want an end to the war! Bring them home now!

'Liberation Battalion' Movement Spreads Through Egypt's Cities

By John G. Wright

Egypt is in a revolutionary crisis. It was precipitated when the British, with the full backing of the American imperialists, forcibly seized the Suez Canal area. The first phase of this revolutionary crisis has been marked by a series of anti-imperialist demonstrations which saw millions pouring out into the streets of Alexandria and Cairo while other millions demonstrated from one end of the country to the other.

Almost simultaneously with these extraordinary mass outpourings came the organization of "Liberation Battalions." The rise of these revolutionary bodies appears to have been spontaneous. The Cairo correspondent of the N. Y. Times cabled on Nov. 17 that this Liberation Battalion movement "just sprang up." Apparently it has no central leadership as yet.

LIBERATION BATTALIONS

"It is not a highly organized movement with a definite leadership," states the same correspondent who then adds: "Some

had arm bands; some, notably in Sharkia Province, obtained some arms."

These Battalions, armed and unarmed alike, immediately began to assume and exercise authority in their own name. In their localities these Battalions "undertook to do a certain amount of policing on their own." Other groups "representing no one knows exactly whom began to assume authority."

The profoundly revolutionary implications of such a development are self-evident. A new power, resting on popular masses and independent of the existing government is beginning to exercise authority on its own initiative. The Egyptian government is naturally anxious to head off this movement. It has attempted to achieve this by an official announcement that it would "take over leadership and training of the Liberation Battalions."

It still remains to be seen to what extent the Egyptian authorities will be able to exercise more that a nominal control over these revolutionary formations.

Highly symptomatic is the public role being played by Egyptian women who participated both in the mass demonstrations and in the Liberation Battalions. On Nov. 23, the Associated Press carried on its wires a photograph showing three Egyptian women, armed with rifles, engaging in guerrilla training at Cairo. The position of women in Egypt, as throughout the Mohammedan world, is a degraded one. That women appear publicly, without veils, let alone guns in hand, is a tall-tale sign of how deeply the revolutionary ferment has already penetrated.

At present the Liberation Battalion movement appears to be concentrated in cities and towns. Egypt is the most industrialized country in the Near East and the Egyptian workers are destined to play the major role in the events. The Times correspondent reports that the outlawed Communist organization is split up "into four or five quarreling sects. Trotskyism is one thing that seems to have considerable hold on Egyptian Communists." (There is as yet no confirmation of this report

of the prominent role of Egyptian Trotskyists among the class-conscious workers.)

The events in Egypt are unfolding against the background of perhaps the worst poverty and exploitation in the world. According to official figures the average income of Egyptian peasants is \$40 a year, or less than 80 cents a week. A daily wage of 20 cents for workers is considered high. Child laborers, of whom there are many, receive 20 cents a week.

The Egyptian masses correctly hold the Western imperialists primarily responsible for these inhuman conditions. "The idea is almost universal," admits the Times dispatch, "that imperialism, colonialism and foreign predominance must somehow be responsible for the frustrating poverty and helplessness that are found in the world of the Arab and Persian." This universal recognition in Egypt, as throughout the Middle East, of the unpostponable need to get rid of the imperialists has invested the unfolding struggle with the very outset with tremendous scope and power.

