

LABOR ACTION

JUNE 28, 1943

A PAPER IN THE INTERESTS OF LABOR

ONE CENT

After the Third Miners' Strike

Nationalize the Mines Under Workers' Control!

The Policy Committee of the United Mine Workers of America has voted to call off the third general strike of the miners.

A statement issued by President John L. Lewis declares that the miners will return to work pending another truce, this one to expire at midnight of October 31.

The decision of the Policy Committee has not been greeted with enthusiasm by the miners throughout the country. From numerous mining centers come reports that miners, sick and tired and angry over the sabotaging of their legitimate and modest demands for a living wage by the profit-swollen coal operators and the government, are reluctant to return to work.

"Unless Lewis has something up his sleeve, the men will refuse to work," said Russell Foltz, secretary of the Central Pennsylvania Scalp Level Local of the UMW, with 1,600 members.

"It will be kind of hard to get men back," said John Castel, president of the Portage Local of the union. "It looks like production will be cut forty per cent as the men are disgusted."

Negotiations for a new contract have been going on since the beginning of the year. The miners have a perfect case for their wage-increase demands. The coal operators, drunk and arrogant with their economic and political power, feeling the whole capitalist class backing them up, has simply stood pat in the defense of their profits. Not once during the negotiations did the operators make a single specific proposal to meet the miners' demands—except to say: "Go back to work under the old contract."

The government, and the government agencies, particularly the graveyard of American labor grievances, the War Labor Board, have done everything in their power to back up the operators and to rebuff the miners.

Operators, government, press and radio have worked with might and main to break the ranks of the miners. For months, they have carried on the dirtiest campaign of slander and mud-slinging against the miners and their union.

So the miners showed them! They went out once—to a man. They went out a second time—again to a man. And then they went out a third time—and you couldn't find a scab to dig coal. The fight of the miners, their solidarity, their militancy, their courage in the face of mendacious attack and threats, has few equals in the history of the labor movement of this country.

Now they are back at work again—without a single concession, unless you call the miserable twenty cents a day that the War Labor Board has adopted a concession. We call it an insult and a provocation to the men who take their lives in their hands every day they go down into the mines, to men who are compelled to live with their families in conditions of poverty and suffering, to men whose labor and physical sacrifices have built up some of the biggest fortunes in the country.

A statement of the Appalachian operators says: "If the President permits the mines to be operated under the terms laid down by John L. Lewis, the main issue goes unresolved. Nothing is settled. The present strike is merely postponed." The operators are right. They know what they are talking about. They know where their interests lie.

A statement by President Lewis says: "This arrangement is predicated upon operation of the mines and their collateral production units by the United States government and will automatically terminate if governmental control is vacated. . . . The mine workers are going to work for their government, and not for the coal operators." John L. Lewis is wrong, on at least two counts. In the first place, it is not "their government" that the miners are working for, but the government of the coal operators, and the other big industrial monopolists and bankers. In the second place, the miners are not working for the government at all. They still work for the operators, and at least for the time being they work under the old, outlived, utterly inadequate contract. The government has NOT taken over the mines. Solid Fuels Administrator Ickes has made that plain ten times over. He insists that he, that the government, is merely the "custodian" of the mines. That means, the government is merely holding the mines for the operators. It means only that the government hoisted its flag over the mine tipples. It means only that the government is making the miners go back to work for the operators on the terms of the operators.

The operators say that they can't "afford" a wage increase. Poor operators! Who are they? The "operators" are the big railroads and the big banks. The operators are the House of Morgan, the House of Mellon, the House of Rockefeller and more of the same. Every miner's baby knows that.

Well, if their ownership and management of this basic industry has driven it so far into the ground that it cannot afford to pay the miners a living wage—and if the government says that the mining of coal is indispensable to the interests of the nation and the nation's industries—

—AND IF THE GOVERNMENT HAS FOUND IT POSSIBLE TO SUBSIDIZE THE BIG CORPORATIONS AND ENTERPRISES OF THE COUNTRY TO THE TUNE OF BILLIONS OF DOLLARS—

—THEN LET THE GOVERNMENT NATIONALIZE THE MINES UNDER WORKERS' CONTROL!

LET THE GOVERNMENT REALLY TAKE OVER THE MINES FROM THE OPERATORS, WHO ARE SELF-CONFESSED BANKRUPTS AND INCOMPETENTS, WHO ADMIT THAT THEY CANNOT PAY THE MINERS A WAGE THAT MAKES IT POSSIBLE FOR THE MINERS TO LIVE LIKE HUMAN BEINGS!

LET THE NATIONALIZED MINES OPERATE UNDER WORKERS' CONTROL!

The miners can GUARANTEE the operation of the mines at top capacity if they control production, and they can guarantee production with their wage demands met in full!

The miners are one hundred per cent right. Their demands are one hundred per cent justified. All they need to do to win is to stick together, take the next step together, fight together—AND LET NOBODY AND NOTHING STAND IN THEIR WAY!

ALL WORKERS MUST UNITE AGAINST JIM-CROW TERROR

Unite to Defend the Negro People and Labor Movement!

Statement of National Committee of the Workers Party

The pogrom against the Negro people of Detroit is a shameful abomination.

A bloodthirsty minority of the population, its mind poisoned with the doctrine of Jim Crowism and inflamed by the blatant propaganda of organized reactionary forces, has imposed its criminal will by mob violence.

The streets of Detroit are covered with the blood of the victims of the pogrom. Twenty-five Negroes are dead, picked off singly by cowardly mobs who outnumbered them a hundred to one, and three whites are dead, too. Hundreds of Negroes are injured, along with many whites. An atmosphere of terror and intimidation hangs over the city.

This is not the first pogrom against Negroes, which the capitalist press refers to as "race riots." The conditions making for such pogroms have been developing all over the country, and these conditions continue to exist. Yesterday it was Mobile, Chester, Beaumont, Los Angeles, Newark, El Paso and other centers of American "civilization." Today it is Detroit. Tomorrow it will be other cities.

It will be other cities tomorrow—unless speedy, resolute, united action is taken by the people to wipe out the bloody blot of Jim Crow! Nothing less than this will do.

Before action can be taken, the people must know where the responsibility for the dastardly crime lies.

The basic responsibility lies with the rotten system of American capitalism, which feeds upon Jim Crow, upon economic, political and social discrimination against its colored slaves, and which feeds the vicious doctrine of Jim Crow to every child who grows up under its tutelage.

Responsibility falls upon the shoulders of the Roosevelt Administration, which sets the tone for Jim Crowism by segregating and discriminating against the Negro in the armed forces of the country, which makes it clear to the world that it regards the Negro as an inferior animal in the war which is presumably being fought against the Nazi doctrine of "Aryan" or "white" supremacy, the war which is presumably being fought for the "equality of peoples."

Responsibility falls upon the shoulders of the governing party of the Administration, the Democratic Party, which could not stay in power in Washington for one minute without the support of the bigoted, corrupt, Bourbon political machine of the Southern Democrats, the heroes of the poll-tax states, from whom Roosevelt does not dare cut himself loose, because his whole presidential past and his whole presidential future are tied up with them in an iron knot.

Responsibility falls upon the shoulders of the Republican political hypocrites, the traditional "friends of the Negro people," who act in Congress as the accomplices of the poll-tax Democrats, who are silent before the Jim Crow and lynch speeches that poison the halls of the federal legislature, who go along enthusiastically with the Jim Crow system in the armed forces, and who are often directly linked with the reactionary fascist and semi-fascist gangs who spew the venom of Jim Crow propaganda throughout the country.

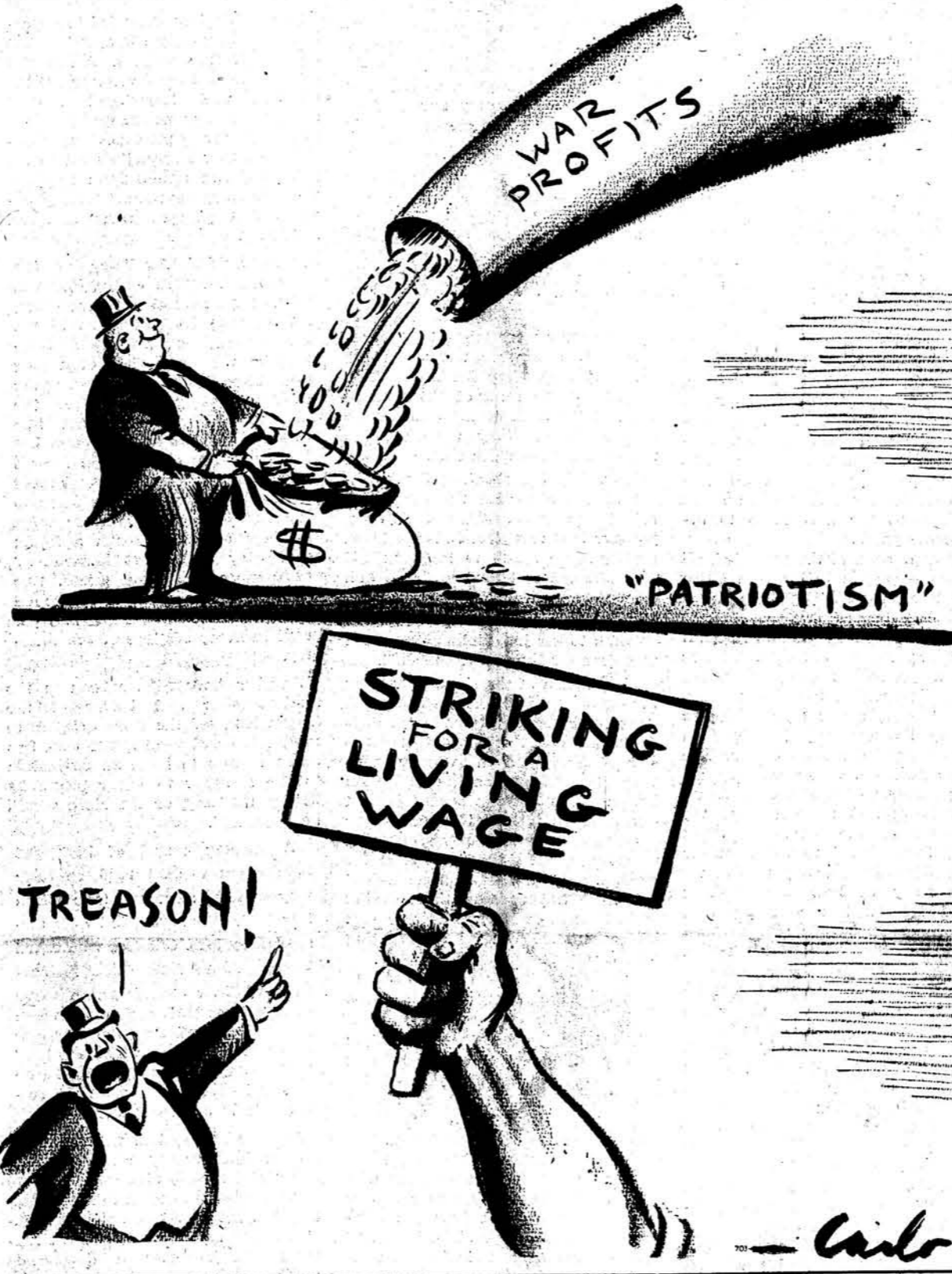
Responsibility falls upon the capitalist class of America, the big corporations and monopolists, who resist every effort to have the Negro taken into industry and treated on an equal basis with all other workers; who stimulate and provoke racial antagonisms among the workers in order to divide their ranks, in order to weaken their unions, in order to maintain their dirty war profits and social power by turning the discontentment of the workers into dissension and fratricidal war among themselves; who encourage and even finance the fascist and semi-fascist organizations, demagogues and rabble-rousers who make their living by spreading the poison of Jim Crowism and anti-Semitism.

Responsibility falls upon these organizations and demagogues too, upon the Christian Mobilizers, upon the Ku Klux Klan, upon the National Workers League, upon the Christian American Association, upon the Black Shirt movement, upon the America First "Party," and others of their foul kind. And there is no doubt that responsibility is shared by Nazi and fascist agents from abroad, that sinister scum which joins with all "native" reactionaries in this country and whose task it is to divide the working class against itself.

We must tell the truth and the whole truth:

Responsibility must be shared by those short-sighted, stupid and reactionary labor leaders who sow antagonisms among the

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An Eye-Witness Account

The Massacre in Detroit

By T. R. COBB

The sun rose high and strong on the first day of summer, 1943. I left my furnished room for the downtown district early that morning, heading for Woodward Avenue, Detroit's Broadway.

Had I been born with a black skin I would have been innocently walking to my death—just as I was later to see dozens of Negroes stroll unsuspectingly into the areas where blood-hungry mobs were waiting to massacre them.

The previous night I had heard whispered rumors about "trouble" on

Belle Isle Bridge. I turned into Woodward expectantly.

Clusters of shirt-sleeved white youths, many wearing identification badges of war plants, milled in the streets, suddenly breaking into a chase.

"There's one!" "Get that n--r!" "Kill that black bastard!" "Lynch him up! Kill him!"

Fists flailed, lead pipes and beer bottles descended on the head of a Negro youth, feet kicked his prostrate form. I caught a glimpse of his face—it was ripped into patches of hanging, bloody flesh.

I caught the arm of one of the hoodlums. He wasn't more than seventeen years old.

"What's the matter, Buddy? You guys like the sight of blood?"

He turned on me ferociously. "Keep yo' face shut, Bo, or yo'll ketch it too. These n--rs are goin' aroun' slashin' and killin' white people."

Wild and confident, the mob was now stopping cars driven by Negro drivers. I saw them stop one car, yank out its Negro driver, drag him behind a billboard and club him into insensibility. Two policemen on

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Drive Over the Top—1214 Subs!

	Quota for Drive	Complete Returns	Pct. of Quota Achieved
Detroit	50	217	434
Buffalo	75	132	176
Los Angeles	100	167	167
Chicago	75	102	136
Cleveland	50	58	116
Sierraville	15	17	113
New York	300	317	106
Akron	50	46	92
Streator	10	8	80
Reading	10	4	40
Philadelphia	75	30	40
St. Louis and Mo.	50	14	30
Louisville	20	2	10
San Francisco	25	1	4
GRAND TOTAL FOR DRIVE	1214		1214

The LABOR ACTION Sub Drive began March 7 and ended June 19. During the fifteen weeks of the

drive, one thousand two hundred and fourteen subs were sent in, exceeding by two hundred and fourteen our National Quota of one thousand subs for the entire drive. Of the total number, over eleven hundred are brand new subs!

The Sub Drive has truly surpassed all our expectations. Its success is an indication of what we can do in the future. It has given LABOR ACTION a broad basis for extending the paper's influence in the labor movement. Already, in the biggest industrial centers, LABOR ACTION is read by thousands of workers each week. It is discussed in lunch hour conversations, its ideas are argued on the floor of union meetings, the policies it advocates are emerging more and more clearly as the ONLY answer to the pressing problems that the American working class is confronted with. Auto workers, shipyard workers, rubber workers, coal miners—all are reading LABOR ACTION and finding in it what they need.

The end of the drive must NOT mean an end to sub-getting activities, however. Our friends and readers

have learned in the drive what can be done and how to do it. Now the job of getting new subs and getting renewals on old ones must be organized on a month-in-month-out basis that will permit no lag, no slack periods, no relaxation in our efforts. The time is rapidly approaching when LABOR ACTION will be needed by American workers in a more urgent sense than ever before. If we have a drive psychology, that means we can't and won't organize ourselves to get subs unless there's some kind of a DRIVE on.

It was a damn good drive—because of the magnificent work of a comparatively small group of devoted supporters of our paper. Now we would like to see the subs begin to come in from our many new subscribers—who by this time have realized that their friends should be reading the paper too. Order one or two, or better still, a buck's worth, of the twenty-five-cent Prepaid Sub Cards. Send us twenty-five cents each for them, and sell them to your friends at twenty-five cents. Each one is good for a six months' trial sub. When we receive the card, the sub goes into effect.

