

Shall the Government Feed Strikers?

MORE and more the power of government to give or to withhold relief will become the crucial factor in the struggle of labor under the New Deal. Harry Hopkins, FERA director, has said repeatedly, "Yes, the FERA has fed strikers and will feed strikers." All strikers, any time and anywhere? Not quite. Mr. Hopkins, under fire from belligerent employers, was obliged to qualify his statement. Relief might be withheld, he admitted, in the case of strikes disapproved by the Department of Labor, although thus far there have been no such strikes. Later Mr. Hopkins said that he did not intend that indefinite support should be given to strikers, and that "if they think we are going to underwrite their strike they are mistaken."

But is it the function of the Department of Labor to approve or disapprove strikes? No, the Department of Labor, the National Labor Relations Board, and other related government agencies are in theory neutral, their functions being limited to interpreting and protecting the rights of employees and employers as these are prescribed by law. Public Resolution Number 44, the President's substitute for the Wagner bill, declares in its last section, inserted on the insistence of Senator La Follette, that "the right to strike remains intact." The resolution also provides that the National Labor Relations Board may investigate the facts and issues of a given industrial conflict with respect to both employers and employees. This is not new. The former National Labor Board, General Johnson, and the various NRA boards have repeatedly investigated industrial disputes and have repeatedly supported labor's right to organize and bargain collectively. But Mr. Hopkins's statement provides the first intimation that the government might go beyond this function and decide whether a given strike was or was not "justifiable," employing the weapon of relief to enforce its decision.

It is a crucial point. For the first time, out of the fog of the New Deal, there emerges the faint outline of something very like the "corporative state." If the government, after permitting employers to write codes limiting production and fixing wages, were to use the power of giving or withholding relief to back or break strikes, the resulting situation would be fascist in effect, by whatever name it was called.

The textile strike will supply the first major test. It involves, potentially at least, about 800,000 workers, practically all of whom now live at or below the subsistence level. Thousands of them are now getting relief to supplement even the meager minimum wages written into the codes. In the South chiseling employers have forced wages considerably below the code minimum of \$12 a week. The cry of reactionary employers, "The government is subsidizing strikes," utterly misrepresents the true situation. In the first place, the relief administration, in feeding strikers, is acting in its only legitimate role—that of an impartial agency distributing relief to destitute persons who are acting within their rights under the law. In the second place, there is the additional and ironical fact that the striking textile workers are strug-

gling to help the government put the burden of supporting workers where it belongs, on industry. If the Administration betrayed its worker-allies by withdrawing relief, it would simply be betraying and abandoning its own recovery program.

Understandably enough, Mr. Hopkins has tried to minimize the issue. On the eve of the textile strike he declared that although the FERA has followed the policy of granting relief to needy strikers for fifteen months, only about \$100,000 has been paid to strikers in that period; strikers do not apply, or do not qualify, for relief on any large scale. This is itself a significant and a dubious statement. Can anyone believe that \$100,000 actually represents either the demand or the "qualified" need of the many thousands of workers who have been on strike during the past fifteen months? As a matter of fact, what has happened is that local relief administrators, either sympathetic with or coerced by local employers, have repeatedly used as a strike-breaking weapon their power to withhold relief or discriminate in giving it. In northern Alabama 23,000 textile workers have been on strike for nearly two months. They appeared at the recent convention of the United Textile Workers in New York laden with affidavits showing that in many localities the relief power was used against them. Similar complaints have arisen in almost every major strike that has occurred in recent months.

In the textile strike, as in many other recent conflicts, the workers will be striking chiefly to obtain the code wage which employers have directly or indirectly withheld, and to establish the collective-bargaining agreements which the Recovery Act explicitly provides for. Notoriously, Section 7-a has been enforced only where and when labor has been sufficiently powerful to compel its enforcement. Under these circumstances we do not believe that the federal government will dare or wish to use the relief power against striking workers.

Upton Sinclair's Victory

UPTON SINCLAIR'S victory is astounding. It bears him out in his early assurance of success and his insistence from the beginning that he sensed a groundswell of revolt against the present order. It is the more remarkable because of the widespread belief that the red scare following the general strike had so aroused California that there was a reaction against the radicalism of Mr. Sinclair. The vote shows, on the contrary, that the lawless officials of San Francisco, the big business men and their loyal servants the police of that city, distinctly over-reached themselves. Again, the supposed resentment of large numbers of Democrats against a Socialist coming over to their party and trying to walk off with its nomination was evidently not as widespread as had been supposed. Union labor certainly supported Sinclair overwhelmingly in his extraordinary run. No one but Sinclair himself and a few devotees believed last February that he had even a chance. He had no money and no means of raising large sums; he had no organization of his own; he had been overwhelmingly licked when he ran for Governor on the Socialist ticket. But for once a candidate interpreted the popular current correctly.

If ever a revolution was due, it was due in California.

Nowhere else has the battle between labor and capital been so widespread and bitter, and the casualties so large; nowhere else has there been such a flagrant denial of the personal liberties guaranteed by the Bill of Rights; nowhere else has authority been so lawless and brazen; nowhere else has the brute force of capitalism been so openly used and displayed; nowhere else has labor been so oppressed; nowhere has there been a falseness or more poisoned and poisoning press. It was time for some sign of rebellion. But the final victory is not yet won. We look to see the San Francisco and Los Angeles press strike hard in the effort to portray Sinclair as a dangerous bolshevik and anarchist; we look to see a union of all the conservative forces against him, plentifully supplied with money and controlling an overwhelming majority of the press. Yet somehow or other we feel that Upton Sinclair may win. Perhaps we underrate the forces against him. But his remarkable record shows that the political currents are running deep and strong in favor of a new deal in California. We look to see the seal of party regularity set on Mr. Sinclair even though it helps Republican efforts to portray the Roosevelt Administration as socialistic; Mark Sullivan and Henry P. Fletcher and Dr. Wirt and some of our other political jokes will not lose this opportunity to make the welkin ring with appeals to high heaven to save the Republic now. Already the Democrats are bolting in several quarters in California.

The drift of conservative Democrats to Governor Merriam, who has won the Republican nomination, is now open and—in the prints—impressive. It is to be welcomed. It is well to have a clear-cut line-up between conservatives and progressives, liberals and radicals. Perhaps this cleavage, like the formation of the American Liberty League, is another sign that the break-up of the old political parties is near at hand—it has already come in Wisconsin and Minnesota. It will make for political clarification and simplification and therefore for progress, since there can be no real progress as long as the conservatives dominate and own both of the historic parties.

Upton Sinclair's E. P. I. C. platform will, of course, bear the brunt of the attack, and good worshippers of the status quo, like the editors of the *New York Times*, are already consoling themselves with the thought that if this wild man is elected, he will be able to do nothing radical because he will have no control over the legislature. Not quite so fast, gentlemen! If Upton Sinclair sweeps the State, he will speak for the people with such force that even a California legislature will have to take some heed. We do not say that all of Mr. Sinclair's program is either wise or enforceable; we do not venture to prophesy how successful he who has never held an executive position would be as Chief Executive of California. That is for the future to show if and when he is elected. But we do give profound thanks that one man has had the courage to stand up and announce his candidacy without consulting any boss, or any newspaper proprietor, or any financier or capitalist, and has gained the first round. He has made multitudes think and will make still more. He has won them and will win others to his belief that the economic and political jungle we live in today is no more necessary and inevitable than were the foul horrors of that human cesspool of the stockyards which he—to his everlasting honor—revealed in his most famous book "The Jungle."

Nazi Women Speak Out

THE Nazis are supposed to be adept in the art of manipulating mass psychology. They have, however, made one serious mistake; they have apparently believed that the psychology of women didn't count. The Nazi appeal to men has been subtle and various. They have been offered the opportunity to sacrifice themselves for their country and for an ideal—always a coveted form of masochism. They have been offered at the same time a sense of power, of achievement, and of superiority—both sexually and racially; the "masculine protest" is written into their creed. They have been offered the satisfactions of comradeship in a common enterprise. Women on the other hand have been offered far less and they have received less than they were offered. Like the men they were invited to sacrifice themselves for their country, but they discovered very soon that their sacrifice was to be vicarious to a degree. Theirs not to march or to sing or to feel superior; theirs merely to minister to the heroes of the Great Awakening and to bear the heroes of the Third Reich's future triumphs. At first they acquiesced, expecting, in return for submission, at least a fair measure of honor and security.

That they have received instead humiliation both at home and in public life is the testimony of a number of prominent Nazi women. A recent *Bulletin* published by the American Committee of the International Relief Association contained excerpts from German women's magazines in which these views are expressed with astonishing courage and candor. For example, Frau Rogge-Börner, editor of *Die Deutsche Kämpferin*, writes in that publication:

The younger generation of women . . . is beginning to feel uneasy. They are troubled by the fact that, carried away as they were by a deep-felt patriotism, they had encouraged a strange form of masculine delusion in making the National Socialists the absolute rulers of their destiny as well as masters over the fate of the entire German people . . . A really unbiased evaluation of women today shows that not only have they not taken one step forward, but many backward.

One quotation after another describes the subjection of women in all branches of public activity and the professions, even in those professions which have traditionally been under their control. And the same policy apparently applies even in domestic relations. Various articles quoted in the *Bulletin* express resentment at the degree to which Nazi activities have broken the unity of home life and drawn men away from their ordinary domestic responsibilities. Others, even more bitter, discuss the emotional results growing out of the Nazi ideal of masculine superiority. Dr. Leonore Kühn, writing in *Die Denkschrift*, says:

. . . A young son, even the youngest, already laughs at his mother with "manly" superiority if she, rather than his father, attempts to exercise authority over him. Instinctively he recognizes his advantage from observing the subservience to which his mother has been reduced.

The opposition of Germany's leading women to the repressions of the Nazi regime may turn out to be quite as important as the other evidences of internal disillusion and rebellion that have recently been revealed.