THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

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No Accounting For Tastes

So There Ought To Be A Law . . . .

EXCEPT for those citizens who hold union cards, and those uncritical politicians and publicists who speak consistently in their behalf, there are very, few Americans, we suspect, who have not now concluded that there ought to be a law to end industrial strife. It's a conclusion we share, and during the confusion and excitement of the past few days (in the city room the atmosphere was reminiscent of Pearl Harbor and D-Day) we have even ventured to suggest a few measures that might be included in the labor legislation now under consideration.

We are, as we have been since he announced it, in general agreement with the President's demand for drastic temporary labor curbs. The rail and coal strikes provided final evidence that we have entered a period of national crisis calling for prompt and decisive action. The President, empowered to suspend civil liberties while a state of war existed, is, we are convinced, justified in suspending them temporarily in an emergency that is, essentially, a part of that war. But these (temporary restrictive measures, important though they may be, are really a side issue, hardly worthy of the violent debate now raging in the Senate, where the Republicans, making the most of a Heaven-sent opportunity to embarrass a Democratic Administration, have suddenly emerged as ardent champions of organized labor.

The law most people think there ought to be is something separate and distinct from the temporary measures recommended by the President. It should be an enduring code, designed to define the permissible relationship between management and labor, to proscribe certain practices, and to guarantee (in the phrase so dear to editorial writers) the protection of the public interest.

Yet, simple as that theorem may appear, its translation into law is as difficult a task as any legislative body ever faced. Basically, it embodies a Constitutional conflict. Few Americans, we suspect, would question, as such, the Constitutional prohibition against forcing a citizen to work against his will (The Bill of Rights). Yet many Americans question that principle, when, by logical extension, it empowers individual citizens to join together and refuse to work. And still others, outraged by a violation of their personal standards, refuse to recognize that this freedom of decision cannot depend upon the justice of the striker's cause; he can walk out because he doesn't like his pay, his hours, his working conditions, or the shape of his superintendent's head. The Constitution will become meaningless when it fails to protect the individual's right to be wrong.

Conflict arises when this principle of individual freedom runs head-on into another Constitutional tenet—the obligation of the Government to protect the rights of the majority. (The General Welfare Clause.) There has come a time, as we have seen in the past few weeks, when individuals, joined together to exercise their right to refuse to work, impair the orderly functioning of society, which the Government is charged with maintaining.

It is obvious that the conflict must end in compromise, a process which is certainly not foreign to a democracy. But how, and where, to compromise? To endure, an equitable labor code must be universal, flexible enough to cover all the cases that might arise under it. It must distinguish between strikes which do not imperil the public interest, and are therefore of no concern to the Government, and strikes which work a hardship upon the majority. In some cases this is easy enough. The rail strike, from the moment of its inception, was obviously intolerable. The dispute between rival labor unions in Hollywood over the construction of false bosoms for movie actresses could continue into the next century without harming that mythical character, the average citizen. But in between these two there are a thousand situations that cannot be pre-judged. Even in the relations between specific unions and specific industries there is not always a constant factor; at this moment the soft coal strike is as intolerable as the rail strike, but there have been times, and pray God there will be again, when the miners could stay out of the pits for months on end without dimming a light or cooling a furnace. Can the coal miners be permanently denied the right to strike because at certain times coal is vital to the public good?

The usual approach to this phase of the problem is to confer upon some Federal agency, of the executive or the judicial branch, authority to determine when a strike conflicts with the public interest, and empower it to impose broad penalties. But is this a workable solution? The courts might insure abstract justice, but could they also provide the speed and flexibility necessary to meet an emergency? If a special agency were established, say under the executive branch, could it be freed of the political pressures that might cause it to use its powers unwisely? And how, exactly, would you go about punishing the individual members of a labor union? Can you jail 400,000 miners? Would a heavy fine against a union treasury work any real hardship upon the individual members? What if the union treasury happened to be empty?

We do not raise these questions in an effort to be contentious, or to disguise our own lack of answers. They are but a few of many that seem to us central to the problem. And they furnish a basis for our conviction that a workable labor code, when it finally emerges, will come only after considerable soul-searching and knuckle-gnawing, and very probably after years of the trial and error necessary to provide a basis for Constitutional interpretation.

This is not to say that we believe the Congress is wrong in approaching the matter now, in this moment of heat and passion. We think the Congress has no choice but to come to grips with the problem, for better or worse, and wrestle with it constantly until, somehow, a solution begins to take shape. But it is also to say that we do not believe that an enduring labor code will ever be based upon the sort of legislation that passed the House amidst (laughter) and (applause) in one hour on Saturday afternoon.

He Was Also A Statesman

CARTER GLASS, the able and cantankerous old man Franklin Roosevelt referred to fondly as an unreconstructed rebel, suffered the final tragedy of outliving the era in which he earned his enduring fame. In his last years, so feeble he could no longer appear in Congress, he repelled all efforts to take away the Senate seat to which the people of Virginia had elected him for five consecutive terms. And as long as he had a voice, he raised it in sturdy opposition to the new tendencies in Government that seemed to him dangerous, or plain wrong-headed.

He, who had been called a militant liberal in his own younger days, led a crusade against the mildly leftist legislation of the New Deal. Through nine consecutive terms in the House, and in his two years as President Wilson's Secretary of the Treasury, he conceived and helped create the Federal Reserve Banking system, as radical a departure in its day as anything his old friend Franklin Roosevelt ever attempted. And it was only natural that his pride in his accomplishment made him, as the passage of years fixed his convictions, an uncompromising "sound money" man. It was his opposition to the New Deal's tampering with the nation's currency that led him to refuse appointment as Secretary of the Treasury in 1933; perhaps it also led him into his determined and consistent campaign against NRA, crop reduction, Federal spending, the Supreme Court reorganization plan, and most of the rest of the New Deal program.

None of the personal and public acts of Carter Glass' last years, no matter how ill-considered they may have been, will be long remembered now that he is dead. The historians will accord him his place on the basis of the first two-thirds of his long life; we have an idea it will be a high and an honored place, for the unreconstructed rebel was, among other things, a great public servant.

Ambassador, Come Home With Me Now

PROHIBITIONISTS, we have found, are among the most accomplished conclusion jumpers in the business, and the gazelle-like leap made this week by Dr. Daniel L. Marsh, president of Boston University, intrigued us even though he finally fell flat on his face. The Doctor, you will remember, noted (1) that all UNO meetings are held adjacent to bars, and (2) that all such sessions have ended in confusion and the worsening of international relations. Ergo, the diplomats have all been stiff as boots and naturally couldn't attend to business.

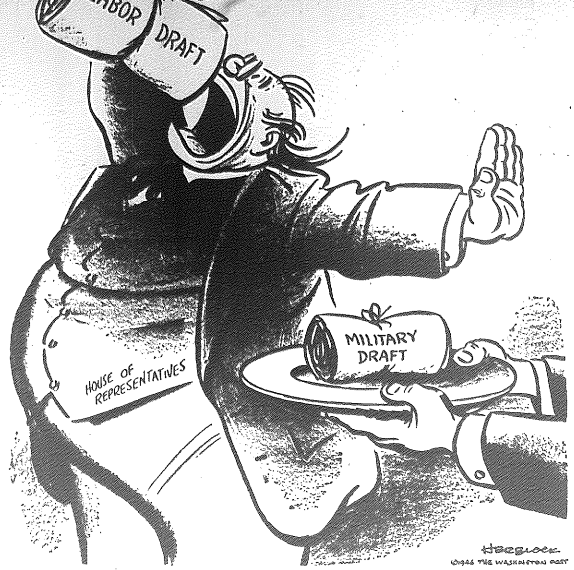
To the good Doctor, the presence of a bar on the premises at Hunter College established beyond question the fact that there has been excessive "guzzling of liquor" at the snarled Security Council sessions. But to refute his charge there has arisen an expert who holds no degrees and wears no academic colors but who undoubtedly knows whereof he speaks. He is Mort Green, the UNO's bartender, who laughed hollowly and reported that business at the UNO Bar and Grill is so bad they're thinking of closing the joint. Said Mort:

"I was working there one day when we took in 70 cents. Once the other bartender said his total was 10 cents. The highest take for a single day was about $30, and you can quote me as saying that more than half of it was for orange juice.

"Those diplomats drive me crazy drinking all that orange stuff. We have to keep pitchers full ahead.

In a way we envy the Doctor. Like all prohibitionists he manages to track the world's ills to a single source, old Demon Rum. The ideological conflict between capitalism and communism is a straw in the breeze, the revolutionary currents running in the world are of no account, the ruins left by a global war are only a dim backdrop for the pyramid of bottles behind the bar next door. It's all so simple, so neat, so fully-packed. There's liquor in the house (but not on it) and so the good Doctor exclaims: "No wonder so many of the international conferences turn out to be last week-ends."

If we may be pardoned for a little conclusion-jumping of our own, we'd like to suggest that Mort Green's report provides prima facie evidence that the striped-pants boys might as well be drunk as the way they are.



Harold Ickes

Salute To A Hero In Civvies

WASHINGTON.

AMERICANS, with few exceptions, concede a monopoly in the hero business to men in uniform. But there is a feeling in some quarters of an indisposition to recognize outstanding civilian services in the late war, without which there could have been no military heroes.

What I am thinking about is gasoline at war. Gasoline alone did not win the war but I believe that no military expert would gainsay that without gasoline we would have won it. Our ability to supply unlimited quantities of petroleum products, in the quantities, qualities and at the places desired by the military, was indispensable to V-E and V-J Days.

This was one of the greatest achievements of the war. However, it was primarily and preponderantly—in fact almost entirely—a civilian accomplishment. So I want to raise my voice in behalf of Ralph K. Davies, Deputy Petroleum Administrator for War.

Every man in the oil industry knows how easily and smoothly and effectively the Petroleum Administration for War operated. The responsibility to see to this was laid upon Mr. Ralph K. Davies, the Deputy Administrator. Together, we insisted upon the building of the Big Inch pipeline, with the Army and Navy, particularly the former, in stubborn opposition. The Little Inch pipeline followed. These two operations alone undoubtedly cut the length of the war by many months and saved the lives of thousands of American, British and Russian soldiers. PAW put through an unprecedented program of high octane gasoline production which necessitated the building, under pressure, of many new refineries and the conversion of others. There is not space to recount the many PAW triumphs in the petroleum field during the war, but our Government knows what was accomplished and the British have not been sparing in their praise of efforts that literally saved that country and made it possible for it to keep on fighting.

CONTROLS CAME OFF

AFTER V-J Day all civilian gasoline controls were promptly lifted and, almost overnight, the American motorist found it possible to buy gasoline to his heart's content. Following this, the liquidation of the Petroleum Administration for War was undertaken quickly and has been smoothly and effectively accomplished.

With one single but notable exception every petroleum-industry man drafted by his country for the war job has gone back to a position with his own company at least equal to the one that he had held. Many of them returned to better jobs because it was realized that the additional experience gained by Government employement had been so valuable as to merit a higher rank and more substantial pay.

By a sardonic turn of fate, the only principal executive who has not been welcomed back to his company in a position at least equal to the one that he had held when eh was drafted is Ralph K. Davies, who did an amazing job that was recognized not only by the Government and the petroleum industry here but in England. Mr. Davies' release for Government service had been requested by President Roosevelt from the Standard Oil Company of California, of which at the time he was the ranking vice president.

The overwhelming opinion is that Ralph K. Davies is perhaps the outstanding oil man in the United States. When the war ended, the Standard Oil Company of California graciously offered him a chance to return to a lesser position which would have represented a demotion, while keeping in service men who, according to the rules of the company, should have been retired several years ago. If I were asked to explain why Mr. Davies, company did not insist that he return to it on terms that would have done it credit because of the notable services that he had been able to perform for his country during the war, I would say that the source of the difficulty was envy, jealousy, and under-cover intrigue that may not be unrelated to the fact that during the war Mr. Davies scrupulously refrained from giving any advantage to the company with which he had been connected.

President Truman, to his credit, expressed to some degree the appreciation and gratitude of his country by conferring upon Mr. Davies a Medal of Merit. The Standard Oil Company of California, Mr. Davies' company, in which he had gained distinction during a service of more than thirty years, gave him the Double-Cross.

Quote, Unquote

I DON'T subscribe to the idea that the rights of labor are superior to those of the public. In my judgment, both capital and labor should be required to subject themselves to the rigors of law and order and to the preservation of the public welfare.—Federal Judge John C. Knox of New York.

The only hope of salvaging peace and the freedom of hundreds of millions now caught in the crossfire of bitter conflict of power politics is for America to compete with Russia for the allegiance of mankind on the basis of a respect for the liberty, dignity and the rights of others.—Sen. Kenneth S. Wherry (R) of Nebraska.

Nobody in Washington seems to know what our foreign policy is, if any, and where we are going, if we are going anywhere.—Rev. Alvin E. O'Konski (R) of Wisconsin.

The excessive intermarriage of U. S. nationality groups indicates that they will in time lose their identity.—Dr. Milton L. Barron, Syracuse U. sociologist.

In a fundamental way mathematics is responsible for the atom bomb.—Dr. Marshall Stone of Harvard University.

Marquis Childs

Labor & The Public

WASHINGTON

JUST twenty years ago, Great Britain had a general strike. It proved to be an almost unrelieved disaster for organized labor.

The railroad strike in this country was not intended to be a general strike. But if it had lasted only a short time longer, it would have shut down the nation's life as England was closed down in May of 1926.

The parallel between the two situations cannot be pushed too far. There are marked differences at every point. Both here and in Britain, however, the public reaction seems to have been strikingly similar.

The great middle class had not realized, until the shutdown came, what its stake was in this industrial warfare. The strife between labor and management had seemed rather remote — interesting and maybe important, but not directly related to the well-being of the average citizen. What industrial paralysis could mean came as a profound shock.

SCARE TACTICS

Kingsley Martin, editor of the New Statesman and Nation, published an extremely interesting study of attitudes during and after the great strike in England. He shows how the Tories, led by Winston Churchill, tried to scare the public into believing that the strike was led by revolutionists who wanted to overthrow the constitution and the government. They were not, of course, revolutionaries any more than A. F. Whitney and Alvanley Johnston mean revolution.

But the bulk of the news that got printed, in spite of the strike of press men, frightened Britain's middle class. In itself, the shutdown was an alarming phenomenon. Martin, a Labor Party Socialist, comes out with an interesting conclusion:

"One important fact emerges from this story. It is clear that a general strike which aims at a limited objective and is not revolutionary can only succeed if it finds active sympathy among a considerable section of the middle classes."

That is a fact which Johnston and Whitney, to say nothing of John L. Lewis, completely ignored. In America, middle-class opinion is even more important than it is in England, where middle-class support was necessary to put a Labor Government in power.

Railroad engineers may have a just cause of grievance. Their wages may have been far too low. But so far as I have been able to discover, Johnston and Whitney never tried to present that case to the public at large. To the public they looked like two autocratic, paunchy old men who were saying no. And their no meant a shutdown of all essential services throughout the country.

LEFTIST ANSWER

The traditional leftist labor answer is that the "capitalist press" would not print labor's side. That is not good enough. Important avenues of communication are open in these days to reasonable men on any side of a dispute. If it came down to that, the engineers have a fat treasury and they could have adopted the current practice of buying advertising space to tell their story. No newspaper would have dared to refuse them such space if that expedient had been necessary, which it was not.

The public was completely ignored. That is old-line unionism of the Gompers era. It simply is not good enough for these times. On top of this, as President Truman was careful to point out in his address to Congress, Johnston and Whitney were only two railway brotherhood officials as against eighteen who were willing to accept the arbitration award.

In Britain, after middle-class opinion was frightened or alienated, organized labor suffered bitter revenge. Workers who returned after the general strike found themselves subject to reprisals in spite of Prime Minister Baldwin's promise that there would be no vindictiveness.

A year later, in 1927, Parliament passed the Trade Union Disputes Act. That act applied penalties which set organized labor back many years, both politically and economically. Severest blow was the provision forbidding the Trades Union Congress, central organization which would add up to a combined AFL and CIO, from blanketing in members of local unions. Local members were required to apply specifically for membership in the central organization.

OMINOUS PRECEDENT

In President Truman's temporary measure there are dangers. It is an ominous precedent. The real danger, however, is in the long-term program. If that is merely revenge, the cause of industrial peace will have been retarded.

Samuel Grafton

Ilya Marches On

VICKSBURG, MISS.

WE try to explain State's rights, in Russian, French, English and German, to Ilya Ehrenburg, as we drive along the road. The Soviet writer listens to our account of how conservative American opinion supports States' rights, as a local check on Federal action. He thinks it over for a minute and says, in "In Spain, during the Civil War, there was a small Anarchist town which greatly enjoyed the thought of the complete self-rule to which it considered itself entitled under Anarchist conceptions. It decided that it did not like railroads. So it cut the rail line, and then supplies could not reach the front. There is something irresistible in this comparison between Spanish Anarchism and American decentralization, but I gave the little quotation more to show the manner in which Ilya Gregorovich Ehrenburg's mind shies away from abstractions, and will always try to concretize them by illustrations and examples which are curiously remote and yet curiously near.

MENACE AMID RUINS

The same habit of mind shows up in Ilya Gregorovich's press conferences. In one town a reporter asked him what he thought of Winston Churchill's famous speech declaring Russia to be a menace. Ilya Gregorovich, again, would not be led into polemical abstractions. He said simply: "In Russia, as you know, we are short of newsprint, and our largest newspapers are limited to circulations of 2,000,000. To get proper distribution of the news, we have to paste the newspaper on walls, so that many people can read them. I was in Smolensk when Churchill made his speech. Smolensk, where only four houses were left standing, in a city of a quarter of a million people. We did not even have sound walls on which to paste the newspaper but had to post them on the ruins. It was before these ruins that the Soviet people stood and read Churchill's words about themselves."

He will deal in facts and in human emotional values, but he will not let general statements of any kind go by. Invariably he will shift the ground to the specific. He will do this in small discussions as we ride. He will do it, I am told, in a Negro shack, on a nearby Louisiana plantation, by a round, smiling woman who has actually had twenty-five children, that all her offspring regularly attended school. A half dozen of the scholars, of assorted sizes, were gathered for Ilya Gregorovich's inspection.

QUESTION IN GEOGRAPHY

"Please name one city in Russia," he said, "any city." None could meet the modest demand, and we saw up the street a beautiful schoolhouse.

Ilya Gregorovich's mind moves always on these factual pivots, and in his struggles with reporters, during local press conferences, he tries earnestly to get them to adopt something like his own criteria. A local reporter will try to impress him with the fact that the American press is free. Ilya Gregorovich will counter with the assertion that much of the American press is tendentiously anti-Soviet. The reporter will charge to the battle, seeking to draw from Ilya Gregorovich an admission as to whether he admires the fact that the American press is free. Ilya Gregorovich will counter by wondering whether the reporter admires the fact that much of the American press is anti-Soviet.

The battle rages moodily in the parlors of the little hotel-suites, across the Southland, as clash between the American taste for the ideal and the abstract, and the Soviet taste for the material and the specific. Isn't it good for the American press to be free? But is it good for it to be tendentiously anti-Soviet? The two questions come out of different worlds; and the differences in the room are more than those of language.

Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

Senate Committee Votes For Inflation

WASHINGTON

THOUGH dwarfed by the labor news over the week-end, last Saturday's closed-door session of the Senate Banking & Currency Committee, which virtually buried price control, was just as significant. It opened the way to vastly increased food costs, the very thing labor has been striking against.

Senator Ernest McFarland, Arizona Democrat, sprang a surprise when he offered his amendments to the stabilization act providing for the dropping of all price controls on meat, poultry, and dairy products. A day earlier, the committee had accepted Senator Taft's proposal for a special "decontrol board" for gradually removing price regulations on various products, and it was thought that this would be satisfactory to the cattle pleaders.

Iowa's Senator Burke Hickenlooper, though a Republican, was one of McFarland's chief supporters.

"It is best to vote this amendment in committee," he said in the secret session, "because if we go to the floor without it, it's certain to be put in, and then it will open the gates for exempting a dozen other products."

Barkley was not impressed by Hickenlooper's solicitude for price control, and disagreed sharply.

"You know that's foolishness," he shot back. "If we go to the floor with these amendments exempting some products, we are simply inviting amendments from the floor exempting all sorts of other products."

However, the meat amendment carried by ten to eight, with McFarland joining with a solid Republican vote and also voting the proxy of Senator Edward Carville, Nevada Democrat. He and Carville were the only Democrats supporting the amendment.

The vote on McFarland's second amendment, decontrolling poultry and dairy products, was 9-8, the only difference being that McFarland did not have Carville's proxy for this amendment.

Utah Senator Votes 'No'

AS the vote was announced, Senator Abe Murdock of Utah, himself a cattleman, remarked:

"Well, that makes me at least $2,500—but I'm glad I voted against it and I wish it hadn't passed."

Murdock had spoken earlier against the amendment which he estimated would cost the American housewife at the very least $1,300,000,000 in the next year.

After the decontrol amendments passed, there was some argument about the date on which they were to become effective. Although the language of the amendments themselves indicated decontrol as of June 30, McFarland himself seemed worried and suggested that the price controls he wanted eliminated should be maintained until October.

Senator Taylor of Idaho immediately declared: "That will mean we won't see a steak between now and October. If we're going to do this thing at all, let's do it right away, because we all know how much meat we'll see under present controls when the industry knows that by waiting a month it can name its own price."

Barkley supported Taylor, and the June 30 date was maintained.

Note: So completely did the committee majority understand that it was voting for inflation that there was not even any serious protest when Senator Mitchell promised, before the meeting closed, that he will introduce an amendment striking the word "wages" from the stabilization act. This, of course, would decontrol wages.

Bumbling John Snyder

THOSE who have sat in on the secret sessions of the current strike crisis say that if any one man is responsible for all the labor fumbling, it is the gentleman sitting at Truman's right hand—hard-drinking, inoffensive-moving John Wesley Snyder.

It was Snyder who appeared before the Reconversion Advisory Committee several weeks ago and, with a great air of confidence, proclaimed that the threatened coal strike was nothing to worry about. The miners will take a little rest for about ten days, he advised, and then go back to work.

"Let 'em strike," was Snyder's brazen advice.

Not only had he completely failed to gauge the temper of the miners, but he preached the fatal doctrine of procrastination—the doctrine which has become the root cause of most Truman strike troubles.

Every time other White House advisers have urged the President to meet a situation before it gets difficult, they encounter the constant, depressing, so-nothing influence of John Snyder. Secretary of the Treasury Fred Vinson, Bob Hannegan, Secretary of State Byrnes who has even moved, temporarily, from the foreign to the domestic field, all have tried to alert Truman to impending trouble.

But the procrastinating Mr. Snyder shakes his head. Mere warnings of catastrophe fail to wake him away from his nighball. Catastrophe has to hit him square in the face before he will even begin to move. Everything will work out all right, is his philosophy. Let people suffer a little, then they will be happy. Let 'em battle things out. Don't get your own fingers burned.

Secret Of Snyder's Hold

SNYDER'S philosophy is exactly the opposite of Roosevelt's and the men trained under Roosevelt who now serve in the Truman cabinet have been at odds almost with that of Herbert Hoover who waited until the bonus army had piled up in Washington, who would not move regarding the depression until farmers were threatening to lynch judges in Iowa. Snyder seems to want the wound to fester before applying the poultice.

Many people have wondered what hold Snyder has over Harry Truman. Bob Hannegan, who has done his best to get Snyder out of the White House, says it is because both men went through hard times together. Others say it is because they both trained with the same Missouri National Guard unit in the Summers.

Whatever the hold, it is tight. For Hannegan, Chester Bowles, Fred Vinson, all have gone their hours to break the Snyder spell—without success. Like his old friendship with Boss Pendergast of Kansas City, Harry Truman puts personal allegiance above national welfare.

Snyder has been widely touted as a St. Louis banker actually his days anywhere near the top of the banking profession are almost nil. Up until 1930, he was only a small-town bank teller and cashier in Arkansas and, like a fool, he couldn't resist the chance to make a go of it in private business, got a job with the Government under Herbert Hoover. For the next thirteen years, 1930-1943, he worked in the Comptroller General's office, later under Jesse Jones's wing in the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. Finally Jones helped him get a vice-presidency in the First National Bank of St. Louis, but he was there only two years, and that bank has now turned thumbs down on Snyder's return.