

A VOICE FROM THE COUNTRY

"The sum total of the common sense of the common people is the greatest and soundest force on earth."

THOMAS JEFFERSON

By Louis Bromfield

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TRUMAN REGIME UNABLE

TO SOLVE U. S. PROBLEMS

There are three issues involved in the maritime strikes which are not generally understood by the average citizen, although all of the issues are of the utmost importance in relation to his future economic status, his liberties and the perpetuation of the ideals of the nation.

The issues are these: (1) That the strike is not a strike against the employers but against the United States Government. (2) That it was caused by the interference of the Government in our economic life and its increasing tendency to interrupt and disrupt both the natural functions of our industrial economy and of free enterprise. (3) That in the threat of Paul Hall, port agent of the striking Seafarer's Union, to call a general strike, including "street car conductors, machinists and everybody else," there is displayed the first bid by an official of organized labor to establish a dictatorship by minority over the American people.

(1) The strike was called not against the employer but against the decision of the Wage Stabilization Board to curtail the raise in wages demanded by the strikers and acceptable to the employers. The Wage Stabilization Board decided that if the wage demanded by the striking seamen were granted, the effect would be to upset the whole of the Government's effort to establish a wage-price balance to bridge over the reconversion and fight inflation.

Of course, the issue raised is whether one group of our society -- a group representing a very tiny minority -- has a right to defy the edicts of government. If it has, then the whole

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structure and functioning of our Government is threatened and its efficiency as government nullified. If a labor union can take such action and get away with it, then the actions of black marketeers, of racketeers, of tax dodgers all become legitimate and government, as such, ceases to exist

Under the weak Truman Administration, badgered and handicapped by the obligations and concessions of the New Deal and its political machine, the Wage Stabilization Board has agreed to re-open the case. In a political year under the leadership of two men, Mr. Truman and Chairman Hannegan, both trained by the corrupt Pendergast machine, the temptations of the Administration to back down is very strong.

(2) It should not be overlooked from the point of view of the striking seamen, that the decision of the Government, as represented by the Wage Stabilization Board, has upset and nullified the whole principle of collective bargaining by which the New Deal set such great store and which has already been accepted both by organized labor and the great majority of employees. In other words, what good is it for employees and employers to reach an agreement when the Government interferes and nullifies that agreement?

(3) The threat of a minor union official to call a general strike of all organized labor if the Government intervenes to operate ships needed to transport food to our great cities, as well as other parts of a suffering world, is plain arrogance and defiance of established government. Whether a general strike could be called or could prove effective is extremely doubtful. The significance of the threat lies in the fact that the idea is alive in the mind of one union official, as well as in the minds of many other radical representatives of organized labor. A general strike is no more than an extension of the "sympathy" strikes which have long harrassed and disrupted production, the life and living standards of average citizen and, in general, a prosperous economy. If it could be carried out, it would mean simply that the minority of organized labor has set out, by wrecking the nation, to impose its will upon the majority of the nation's population in defiance of all orderly government.

All of these things ought seriously to be considered by every citizen, and they appear to add up to the fact that, going or coming, the American people, organized labor and industry included,

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have become snarled up in the long record of improvisation, compromise and fuzzy thinking which represented the activities of so many New Dealers in the past. The complete muddle to which OPA has finally been reduced, creating shortages, black markets and failing to hold down prices, together with the imposition of another agency, is costing taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars and is another recent case in point against subsidies-muddled bureaucracy.

The weak, compromising and vacillating leadership of ward politicians like Truman and Hannegan has done nothing to clean up the unholy muddle. The New Deal, good or bad, is petered out into dissension and futility. What we need is not a New Deal, but a fresh pack.

All of these things add up to the conviction that we shall never get straightened out without cleaning house politically. It seems necessary to find new leadership, to audit books, clear up the mess and make a fresh and progressive start. There is only one way to do it -- forget Middle European and Russian ideologies, get back to American common sense and efficiency, both for organized labor and for industry and agriculture. The present Administration has become so reckless, so muddled that there appears to be only one way to reestablish justice, order, prosperity and respect for government. The only way is to "turn the rascals out!"

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