

LABOR ACTION

Independent Socialist Weekly

DECEMBER 29, 1952

FIVE CENTS

The ACTU Looks Askance at Reuther

... page 2

YS Gets a New Theory on Stalinism

... page 4

Civil Liberties and the Rosenbergs

... page 3

INDEX TO LABOR ACTION—1952

... page 6-7-8

Cities Sneak Loyalty Oath Over on Housing Projects

By L. G. SMITH

The New York City and Newark, N. J., Housing Authorities have just announced that they are taking action to comply with the federal law which prohibits any member of an organization listed as "subversive" by the attorney general of the United States from living in federally-aided housing projects.

The Newark Housing Authority announced on December 18 that on the following day it would circulate certificates to all 3,008 families in its low-income projects. These must be made out by the principal tenant of each dwelling unit, signed by a witness, and returned within a week. The certificates state that no inhabitant of the dwelling unit belongs to any of the 203 organizations listed by the attorney general on November 10 as "subversive."

The Detroit housing commission also announced, the same week, that it was going to require oaths from the tenants of the city's 5,200 public-housing units, on pain of eviction. "McCarthy Will Love This," headlined the Michigan CIO News in publishing the item.

This campaign to force "loyalty" affidavits on all tenants of federally-supported housing was first given publicity in LABOR ACTION for October 13 in a dispatch from San Francisco. Although the law on the basis of which this is being done has been passed in Congress last July 5 (as a rider to the Independent Offices Appropriations Bill) it received almost no attention in the public press at the time. As each local housing authority has a choice of timing and method in applying the law, local publicity about it tends to be totally absent until some action is taken at the local level. This has so far prevented the mobilization of the forces which usually can be expected to combat the extension of anti-democratic measures.

Protests

The experience of the housing authorities in the San Francisco Bay Area has evidently been taken into account by other housing agencies in their handling of the "problem." In San Francisco, the issue was made public in the San Francisco Chronicle for September 13, which not only gave details of how the "loyalty" campaign was going to be carried on in the housing projects, but also carried a major editorial denouncing the whole procedure as an unwarranted extension of the whole concept of "loyalty" tests, which the Chronicle approves when applied to federal employment.

The reaction of the tenants to this announcement was anything but placid. Large protest meetings were held, and a good deal of quiet organizational work has gone on in preparation for resistance to signing this new type of "loyalty oath." Ernest Besig, director of the Northern California

(Continued on page 6)

The Lucky B—!

The current *Conscription News* rescues from oblivion the words of Brigadier General Lewis B. Puller:

"We are," he said, "the most fortunate of men. There was a time when a professional soldier had to wait 25 years or so before he ever got into a war. We only had to wait 5 years for this one. For all that time we have been sitting on our fat behinds drawing our pay. Now we are going to earn it. We are going to work at our trade. We have chosen to live by the sword. If necessary, we will die by the sword."

The source is an article on the fortunate Puller in the March 22, 1952 *Saturday Evening Post*, quoting a speech of his in Korea on the eve of the assault on Seoul.

Judging by the Vincent Case—

Does 'Loyalty' Mean 'Reaction'?

By GORDON HASKELL

The suspension of John Carter Vincent from his job at the State Department once more spotlights the way in which the government's "loyalty" program is set up and the way in which it operates.

After repeated hearings, Vincent, who at one time was intimately connected with the making and application of American foreign policy in China, has been suspended by the Loyalty Review Board. This is the highest board of appeals in the whole government "loyalty" setup. The LRB has stated that, although it does not charge Vincent with being disloyal, it finds that there is "reasonable doubt" as to his loyalty. Under a rule laid down by President Truman this year, such a finding is sufficient to cause removal of any federal employee from his job.

The Evidence

We do not know whether Vincent is a Stalinist agent, sympathizer, or fellow traveler, or none of these. From their own public statement, it is clear that the Loyalty Review Board, despite all the information gathered for it by the FBI and other government agencies, has

not been able to establish any organizational connection between Vincent and the American or international agencies of Stalinism.

In their public statement on the Vincent case the LRB states that he had "associated" with persons "he had reason to believe" were Communists. Chief emphasis, however, is given to the fact that in the past Vincent had given "studied praise" to the Chinese Stalinists and equally "studied criticism" of Chiang Kai-shek, and that he had been "indifferent" to any evidence that Russia controlled the Chinese Stalinists.

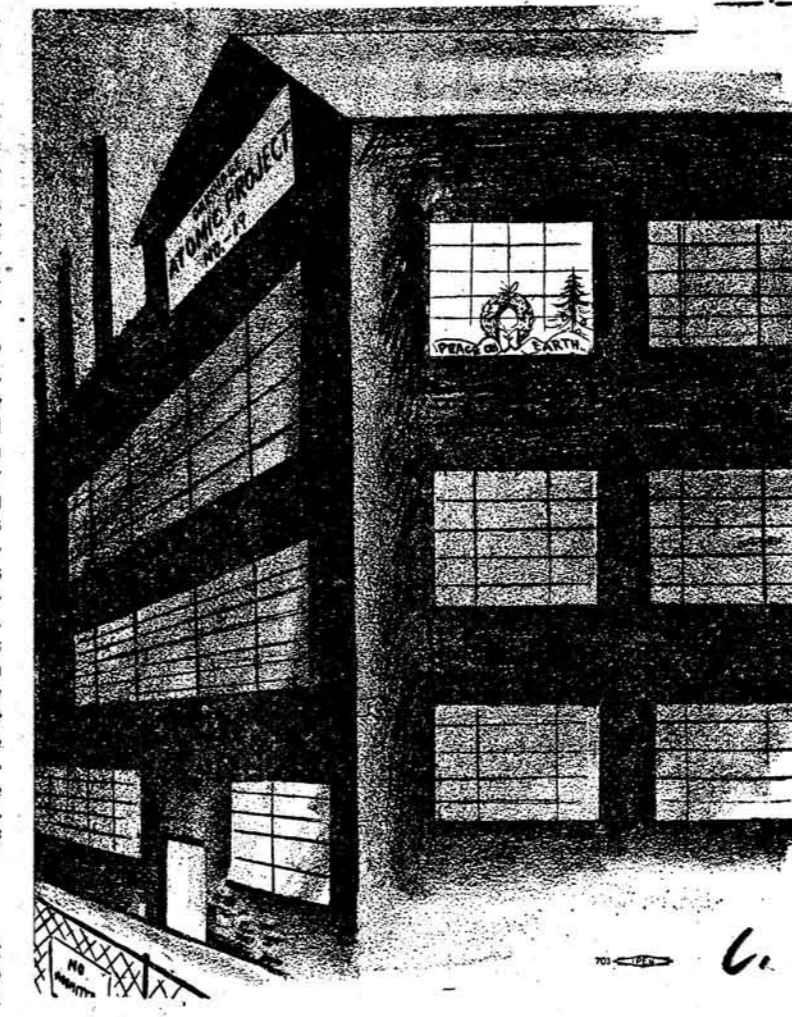
If this is the sole "evidence" the LRB has been able to gather against Vincent, despite all the efforts put in by various government agencies on the case, it presents a pretty clear picture of what is considered to be "loyalty" in these times of the cold war. It is so clear, in fact, that even "respectable" institutions, like the New York Times, who are primarily concerned with the effects of this ruling on the efficiency of the State Department itself, are moved to editorial protest against it.

"Studied criticisms" of Chiang Kai-shek have been made by every informed observer on Chinese affairs who was not simply concerned with keeping reactionary governments in control of as much of the world's surface as possible.

Only Yesterday

Further, blindness to the true nature of Stalinism, and particularly of Chinese Stalinism, has been and continues to be so widespread that if this be "disloyalty" the government is in bad shape indeed.

(Continued on page 6)



GALA New Year's Eve Party

for Dancing, Prancing, Romancing
for Ringing out the old, Ringing in the new
for Fun, Food, Frolic



ANNOUNCING

free!



DATE: Wednesday, Dec. 31, of course.

TIME: from 8:30 p.m. on into next year. CONTRIBUTION: \$1.50.

PLACE: Women's Trade Union League, 247 Lexington Ave., near 34th St.

Sponsored by the New York ISL

Labor Action Wishes You All a Happy New Year

