

LABOR VIEWS

NO. 8

JULY 6, 1946

PRICES SOAR

White Liberals and Conservatives Battle Over Carcass of OPA

The CPA has been "dead" five days.

Yesterday a little Negro lady wheeled a baby carriage along Lake Street. She was happy. She stopped to talk to a friend.

"I've got two steaks," she announced, "first time in months! But," (thoughtfully now) "they ~~cost~~ a dollar apiece."

She had not yet seen the notice of a rent increase in her mailbox.

"Rentals rise as high as 300%" shrieks a daily paper headline.

"Butter will be at least 80¢ a pound by Monday" announces another.

Wholesale food prices had already reached the highest peak since the inflation of 1920. The index of 28 basic commodities was up 8% on July 3 - only three days after the OPA expired.

At first glance this sudden price rise makes CPA look good now. The so-called liberals - from Truman on down to the Communist Party - want just this, so that they can say, "We're fighting for the OPA to protect you."

PEOPLE WHOM

RISING PRICES
WILL NOT
EFFECT

Illinois business magnates who earned more than \$75,000 in 1945 (from U.S. Treasury Dept.):-

JOHN BALABAN, \$104,000
(BALABAN AND KATZ)

S.L. AVERY, \$100,850
(MONTGOMERY WARD)

JOHN HOLMES, \$85,000
(SWIFT & CO.)

B. HENDERSON, \$125,000
(HOUSEHOLD FINANCE)

L. ANDERSON, \$140,822
(REID MURDOCH)

GRAY AND GRAY, \$94,437
(TREBUNE-N.Y. NEWS SYND.)

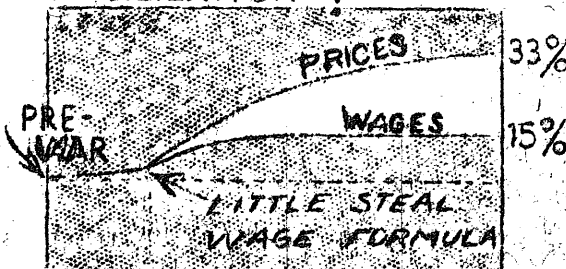
F. McCORMICK, \$141,279
(INT'L HARVESTER)

(For a complete list write LABOR VIEWS).

But look at the record of OPA. It is part of the wage-price "stabilization" program which deliberately allowed prices to rise 31% during the war while wages were held down to the "Little Steal" formula of 15% (from U.S. Dept. of Labor). Since V-J Day these great champions of price control have soon to it that every wage increase (the old 18½¢) has been more than matched by price increases. For example, last February they arranged a price increase which netted the steel companies an extra \$420,000,000 a year to make up for the

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"STABILIZATION"



PEOPLE WHOM

RISING PRICES
WILL
EFFECT

WORKERS WHO HAVE JUST
GOTTEN "18½ CENTS".

30 MILLION UNORGANIZED
WORKERS.

WHITE COLLAR WORKERS.

VETS GOING TO SCHOOL
UNDER THE "G.I. BILL".

VETS. ON PENSION.

OLD AGE PENSIONERS.

WORKERS WHO HAVE SOME
SAVINGS LIKE WAR BONDS.

WORKERS ON "RELIEF".

STUDENTS "WORKING THEIR
WAY" THROUGH SCHOOL.

1939 '41

'45

PRICES RISE

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wage increase costing only \$180,000,000 a year - a neat extra 240 million dollar take from the working class.

Then, the function of the OPA had been to regulate this robbing of the working class - make it more subtle, less sudden and painful. By gradually "relaxing" on hundreds of items it has successfully kept prices one jump ahead of wages. One shopping trip tells any worker that the total cost of living has gone much higher than the official 33% increase. According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics the typical market basket now costs 50% more than in 1941.

Added to this fraud of OPA's "hold-the-line" is the black market. The black market has been selling 80% of the butter at

LABOR VIEWS is issued by the Chicago Committee of the R.W.L. to further the struggle of the working class against the constant attack of the industrialists and bankers.

We propose independent working-class action beginning at the shops, mines and mills against this ruling-class and its government - its police forces, its courts and laws - operating as its "big stick".

LABOR VIEWS recognizes that although today the working class fights to defend its living standards, tomorrow it will face the task of abolishing this rotting system of capitalist slavery, and creating a government which will organize society for the welfare of all who labor. The chief instrument needed for achieving this goal is a Revolutionary Workers Party.

signed to gouge the workers. When prices are "low" workers have little or no money to buy. When they accumulate any small amount of savings (as now) prices reach for the sky. OPA is merely an agency to make this gouging systematic.

Workers can smash this price system only when they dethrone the entire hierarchy of industrialists and bankers and smash their market system. They can smash the capitalist government. Then workers through their own government will be able to regulate production according to their own needs and uses.

You Are Invited to a
"HOUSE WARMING"
PARTY AT THE
NEW LABOR VIEWS OFFICE
333 W. NORTH AVE.
Sat. Eve., July 13

90¢ to \$1.00 a pound and it took even greater control of meat. The death of OPA merely legalized all price gouging of the workers.

The "conservatives" - representing the NAM and the like - want to make a quick killing of every nickle of profit to be squeezed out of the present market scarcity.

The "liberals" say, "Do it gradually with the OPA." That is the fight going on in Congress.

OPA is part of a government which workers don't control. It can never serve their interests.

Under capitalism prices are always de-

Open Meetings
EVERY FRIDAY EVE., 8 P.M.
NEWBERRY SQUARE
DURING SUMMER MONTHS
R.W.L. Speakers

"Our" Schools...

About one out of every four school children in this country has a teacher whose salary is less than \$1,000 a year...

Half the youths of high intelligence prematurely drop from school before reaching college...

A VET LOOKS AT THE HONOR ROLL



Have you noticed recently the condition of many of the neighborhood honor roll monuments? The placards with "our boys" names on them lean at crazy angles and the paint is mostly chipped off. These once neat little garden shrines are now over-run with weeds which almost cover a broken down fence or an unkempt hedge-row. The glamour of newness is gone like the glamour of war and patriotism, and they are forgotten and left to rot. Is there a connection between their shabby appearance and the shabby treatment our veterans are getting?

After years of being away a vet can't help but notice... even though he never did pay much attention to such examples of sentimental patriotism. Actually before leaving for camp he had seen some of these corner monuments put up with varied degrees of decorations and fervor, and it rather disgusted him. Something about it looked meaningless, yes, even hypocritical. But he was then too much concerned with what was in store for him in the near future to concern himself with this foolishness.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

39% MORE JOBLESS VETERANS

Jobless pay for veterans in Chicago rose 39 per cent in just the last week in March according to R. L. Gordon, state director of labor.

For all of Illinois jobless payments for the week ending March 30 totaled \$1,994,694 for 79,608 veterans. The preceding week the sum was \$1,408,940

10,770 MORE UNEMPLOYED IN MAY

The number of persons receiving unemployment compensation in Illinois increa-

Those who have come back and have stopped to look at these honor placards see names of their neighbors, some familiar, some only vaguely so. They may spot one name that should have a gold star, but doesn't. Oh well, if the living vets are neglected, why not the dead?

Look at the mottoes on these honor rolls. They really "get" you. "Fighting for the World's Freedom", "Our Boys for Liberty", "Our Soldiers Insuring Democracy." The veteran asks himself: Whom have I freed? The East Indians, are they free now? The Jews, have they now escaped persecution, or the Italians who are rioting for food? All the starving Europeans, did our bringing them "Democracy" also mean bringing them starvation? Have we freed the Negroes in our own country? What of the treatment of our own boys at Lichtfield, England and the farcical trial which reveals that the atrocities committed there were common to other camps? Is that an example of an army for democracy and liberty in action? Then this veteran thinks of the hard time he is having finding a job, and when offered one he bites his lip at the wages offered. He can't marry his "Lili Marlene" because there is no house for them to rent or buy. He passes another corner monument. It reads "Our Boys Who Served." "Yes", he mutters, "We served, but whom did we serve?"

sed 10,770 to a total of 116,110 in May, while the amount paid in claims increased nearly 33 per cent above April to a total of \$7,703,862 (State Labor Director Gordon). In Chicago 57,000 persons drew \$3,605,747 in jobless benefits in May, compared with 52,580 who received \$2,887,331 in April.

20,000 ON RELIEF GET THEIR "15%"

20,000 people in Chicago, representing 12,400 families are "on relief."

On July 10, for the first time since 1943, they will get an increase (15%) on their food allowance. An average family of four will get \$50.48 a month for food - an increase of \$6.50 per month! This figures down to \$11.76 per week or \$2.94 per person!!!

KING PROFIT CONTROLS MEAT

For months fifty per cent of the retail meat shops had been closed because they could not get meat. Thousands of packing house workers had been laid off. The working class was obliged to buy its meat mainly on the black market. Yet this crisis in consumption came at a time when the largest herds of cattle roamed the ranges, when pigs were stuffed with grain and dairy products. King Profit ruled the show, whether the people ate meat was obviously a secondary matter.

Because the large packinghouses could not bid beyond the OPA ceilings, and because the large ranchers got more money from the black marketeers, the stock yards had been operating at $\frac{1}{2}$ and less of capacity. We would have expected them to have lost money, but no. The Chicago Sun reported that profits were "satisfactory". Armour's net earnings for the 6 months ending April 27 were \$9,700,000 or more than the \$9,172,538 of the preceding year. At least "satisfactory" we would say.

Blocked from making their customary profits thru meat packing, these companies engaged more heavily in the production of fertilizer, soap, chemicals, pharmaceutical products, dairy products, canned meat, sausage and poultry. The cash register had to sing, meat or no meat.

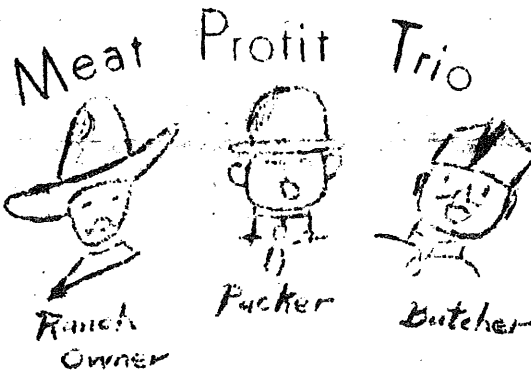
But these operations raise a series of interesting questions. True, there has always been a large reserve of hide, bone, guts, hair, etc. for the by-product industries, yet does not the intensity at which these industries were worked indicate that the usual amount of material, if not a greater, was used? If that be the case,

where also could the packers obtain this material - since their slaughtering had dwindled - if not from the black marketeers who were the only other people in the business? And if we answer yes to the above questions, can't we conclude that the packers had pretty good connections with the black market, actually were in on the racket? PAY-triote American are we!

During these last few weeks the supply of meat, including the black market, has fallen on its face. In the last week of June Armour slaughtered 53 head, Wilson 20. The cattle-raisers - some more PAY-triote Americans - had stopped shipping altogether. There was the possibility that OPA would die on July 1; meat controls would be buried with it. They therefore went out on "strike" and kept the cattle out grazing. Their pocketbooks had to come before the workers' stomach. (Isn't it strange how ranchers, textile manufacturers, radio makers, everyone but the working class has a right to go on "strike" and make it successful?)

The ranchers made a good guess. Truman vetoed the OPA and legalized the black market; cattle began rolling in. Prices have already reached the highest point since 1920 and are out for a new record. The large packers will now be in there buying. The butcher shops will be nice and filled. Everybody will be happy but the poor worker who will have to get down on his back to watch the prices climb.

That is the story of profit and its glory. The rancher had to get his, the packer his, also the butcher, and as for the worker, well, he will get his too - BUT YOU ARE HERE.



Workers, pay the price,
And perhaps you'll get a steak.
Eating would be nice,
But we've got dough to make.

Workers, pay your cash in,
And perhaps you'll get a roast.
Keep our profits rolling in,
And we'll drink to you a toast.

Workers, pay the price-hike,
And at least you'll get a weiner.
Workers soon will look alike -
Some look lean and others leaner.