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# Labor Views

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REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS LEAGUE - CHICAGO

"PRIVATE ENTERPRISE" SOLVES HOUSING SHORTAGE:

## 161,000 HOUSES NEEDED--

## 250 HOUSES BUILT in Chicago

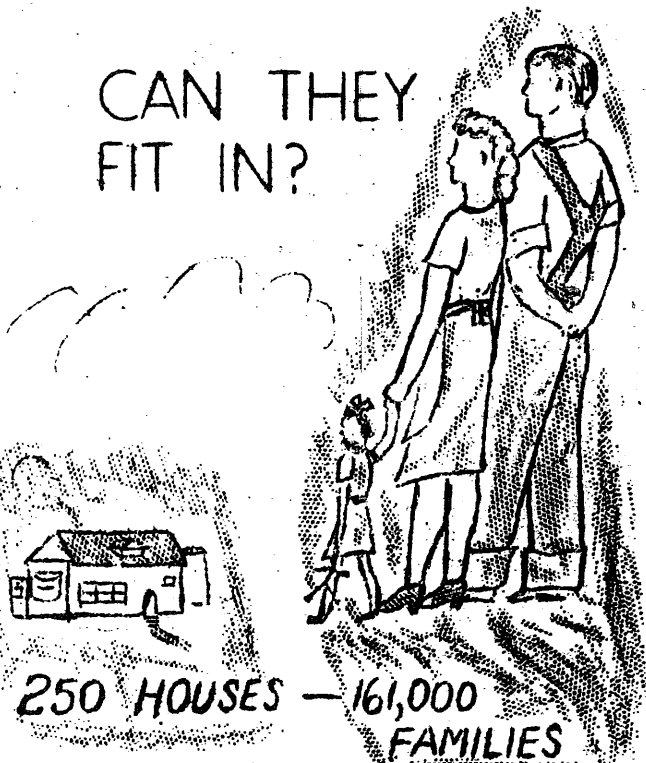
"We did not say these houses would be built," said James C. Downs Jr., chairman of the Mayor's Emergency Housing Committee, in announcing the Committee's estimate of 161,000 homes to be built by 1948. How true! How true!

The Chicago Metropolitan Home Builders Association just finished a survey on the progress of the Mayor's committee. It revealed that 11,627 homes were started this year and only 250 completed. This is a far cry from 161,000 homes. Since 1941 Chicago's population has increased about 200,000 to 3,600,000. In the same period practically no new homes have been built, many have fallen completely into disuse and many more are unfit to live in. Robert E. Morriam, director of the Metropolitan Housing Council has pointed out that Chicago has 15,000 acres of blighted and semi-blighted houses to be reclaimed. "During the last 15 years there has been no redevelopment of blighted areas in Chicago by private enterprise"

Nationally, the housing program, if we may call it that, drags its foot the same way. The National Association of Real Estate Boards reported that only 40,000 of the 331,000 homes planned or 15.9% were completed so far this year.

Some housing units are being constructed but the average cost of these is \$7,400 or the equivalent of \$57 a month rent. In Chicago there are about 950,000 dwelling units with an average rent of \$30. Can workers afford to pay \$57? Can the veteran who is supposed to have first crack at new houses? In March the Army ended

CAN THEY  
FIT IN?



up with an investigation showing that 60% could not afford more than \$40.

Early this year \$4,300,000 was appropriated by the city for slum clearance. To date \$25,000 has been spent. Not having used this fund Kelly claims that more money is needed from the federal government before anything can be done. Obviously this city machine will neither solve nor ease the pressing need for homes.

Perhaps the Honourable Governor Green will be of assistance. His Plan: "They - houses - must be produced with private enterprise, which is eager for the tools (to page 2)"



"There was an old lady  
who lived  
in a  
shoe..."

## THOUSANDS LOOKING FOR HOUSES -- ANY HOUSE

In Mother Goose there is an old lady who lived in a shoe and if shoes were made that large, no doubt millions of families would be sliding down heels to work right now. But people cannot live in shoes and neither can they live in plans and committee reports. That is about all this richest country which outproduced the rest of the world during the war, seems to offer.

But in their own individual way workers are compelled to meet the situation, and are bled thru the nose. A common practice these days when renting a flat is to have to buy the furniture there. The price is upped 3 or more times its value and in cases where the family moving in has its own furniture the other stuff goes for a song.

Thruout Chicago delapidated wrecks are taken over and made into co-operatives. In Rogers Park and Evanston veterans have undertaken to build their own houses. The one in Rogers Park is still in the blueprint stage and will provide 80 families with the latest accommodations. The cost \$800,000. One bedroom \$7,550, two \$9,175, and three \$10,786. This project cannot be undertaken by the ordinary worker and even a worker with a higher income can do so only by mortgaging himself for the next 20 years.

# # # # #

In England thousands of families have just moved into abandoned army barracks, mansions and club-houses. This movement is so widespread that the British Government was forced to sit back and let the workers have their way. Thruout the ruins of Europe and Asia workers dig into the debris to make electricless, gasless, windowless quarters. Everywhere the answer is the same: find someplace to live today; future plans cannot keep out the rain and cold.

### 161,000 HOUSES NEEDED

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and opportunity to tackle the job, and they must be paid for with the people's savings just as American homes have always been built and paid for."

Green is green to the facts.

The Mayor's Emergency Housing Committee may not have helped houses along but it did end up with some interesting facts. Houses are not being built to rent at the workers' income level because the costs and risks involved were too high and not sufficient PROFIT was guaranteed the constructors' investment, since in the years necessary to make it up profitably wars, depressions, depreciation, can all set in. "For these reasons the experienced apartment house owner insists on a very liberal return on his capital at the beginning of the venture as a safeguard against the lean periods."

That is how eager private enterprise is to "tackle the job". Thruout Chicago we see the greatest industrial expansion in the country. New factories are being constructed, additions are being made to old ones. The materials are on hand and so is the manpower, but they go where the profit is greatest.

Green is not even familiar with the government's figures on the people's savings. 69.5% of the people have savings less than \$190. This will not even rent a few feet to put up a tent not alone pay for the building of a home. Mayor Kelly, Governor Green, President Truman each appoint committees, but none of them has an answer to the dire need of the people for homes.

# ...the house is divided—

## Palaces — and — Slave quarters

### DU PONT'S, ROCKEFELLERS AND FIELDS HOLD COURT IN 40-BEDROOM HOUSES

Near Wilmington there are two dozen Du Pont country estates. There is, for example, Witherspur, the ducal 150 room residence of the Henry F. du Ponts, boasting forty bedrooms, each with a radio installation, each replete with costly antiques; the cost of the building alone was \$2,000,000 and including the grounds, trappings, furniture, and fixtures, the cost of the whole establishment easily touches \$10,000,000.

To enumerate the wonders of the royal palaces of all the Du Ponts would, perhaps, be repetitious. Most of them have swimming pools, tennis courts, private telephone switchboards with from fifty to more than one hundred outlets, elaborate music rooms, libraries, salons, and guest

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### Housing Problem in a 140-room palace



"It's beastly, you know!  
I haven't been able to  
find my wife in two days."

### NEGRO HOUSING—WORST OF WORKER HOUSING; 1,400 PEOPLE PER CITY BLOCK

Chicago's nearly 400,000 Negro workers find themselves crammed 90,000 to the square mile. In a housing-starved city this is four and a half times more crowded than the rest of the city. From this figure there are an average of 1400 people living in a square city block.

A survey released in August by the Illinois State Housing board and the National Housing agency revealed these as common housing conditions in this neighborhood:

- 1) Family with four children sharing 7 room apartment with four other families.
- 2) Family of four living in a one room kitchenette sharing bathroom with eleven other families.
- 3) Man, pregnant wife, 2-year-old baby, and sister-in-law sleeping in one bed.

### CHICAGO LANDLORD SQUEEZES WORKERS

New owners have taken over the Lord Manor Apartments on 228 E. Huron St. and changed their name to Huron buildings. The new, dull name is more fitting. These sad-sack old buildings were sliced up years ago into over a hundred one-room "furnished" apartments. A dozen of these are down in the basement - some without windows - sandwiched between the furnaces. In a check up last week it was observed that only one out of all the rooms on the fourth floor did not leak when it rains.

The new management began an immediate campaign to squeeze more profit out of these ancient apartments. Here is what they have done.

1. Attempted to force all people with children to move. Court action against those who refused to move.
2. Evicted other tenants until a group of about 30 rooms were vacant. Reclassified these apartments as "transient". Rents for these were boosted from an av-

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## AMERICAN PALACES

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chambers furnished with antiques, tapestries, paintings. Many of the rooms have been taken bodily out of famed European Chateaux and palaces.

All in all, the residential establishments of the Du Ponts, taking into consideration land, buildings, furnishings, and equipment, may be conservatively estimated as costing at least \$150,000,000 or more than ten per cent of the total university and college endowment of the nation.

The central house on one of the Rockefeller estates has fifty rooms, most of them very large, beginning with two anterooms, an enormous central hall, a living room and a dining room on the first floor.

## HOW NOT TO GET HOUSING:

### AN EXCURSION TO GOV. GREEN

225 representatives of 20 union and civic organizations led by William Coffee, International Representative of the UAW (CIO) hooped it up a little on Kedzie and Ogden Aves, climbed into their two busses and 15 autos, and then headed for the state capitol in Springfield to protest to Governor Green personally about the housing shortage. This protest "march" was organized at the end of last month by the State Committee For Veterans' Housing which wants a special session of the state legislature called to enact emergency measures to alleviate the crisis.

These representatives were joined in their picket line around Green's MANSION - no housing shortage there - by representatives from other cities in Illinois. After stamping about a bit they left a token force which had pitched pup tents on Green's lawn and returned to Chicago. Green was not in; this was the second delegation, the first was in May, which had failed to see him.

Not satisfied with Mayor Kelly's committee which was gathering the "facts and figures", Green was in Chicago setting up a housing committee which would get the "figures and facts". But no one was turning up with "fences and faucets".

## LANDLORD PUTS ON SQUEEZE

(from page 3)

7 dollars a week to 4 dollars a day.

3. Curtailed linen service - one sheet a week for instance. Discontinued toilet paper in the bathrooms.

4. Closed the mail desk at 6 in the evening. Workers coming home from work can't get their mail. Nor can they receive phone calls.

During the O.P.A. "holiday" the rent was raised 20 per cent on all apartments. Some tenants who paid the higher rent in advance have been refused a refund after the OPA ceiling was clamped down again.

Workers in this building have organized.

All are furnished with furniture of the Georgian Period. Two floors of expansive bedroom suites above are topped by quarters for the fifteen servants required to run the house.

The biggest estate on Long Island, however, belongs to Marshall Field, whose former wife owns a two-thousand-acre place at Huntington, Long Island, with six acres of landscaped garden valued alone at \$400,000. The main Marshall Field estate at Lloyd's Neck, Long Island, is said to be worth \$15,000,000. It comprises landscaped gardens, special airplane and boat landings, the best pheasant-shooting grounds in the country with specially bred birds, indoor and outdoor tennis courts, private guest apartments in the house, a large garage, and all other embellishments a modern Croesus can command.

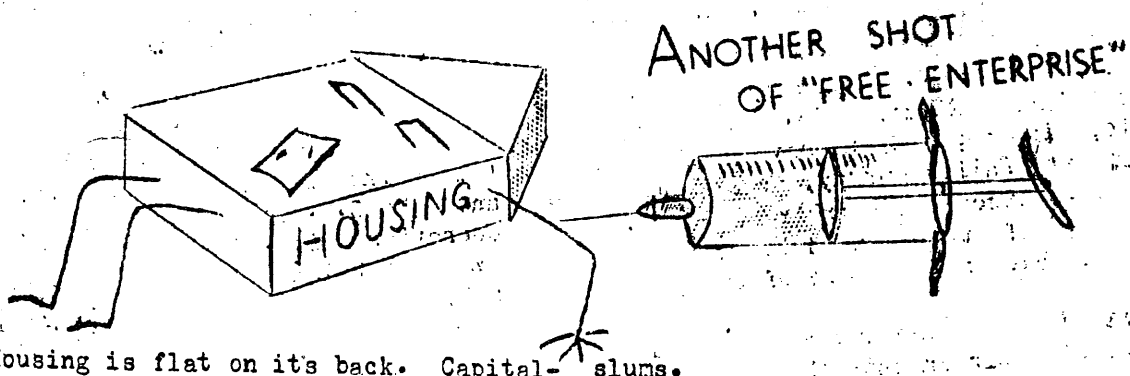
## LABOR VIEWS

is issued by the Chicago Committee of the ILL 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 create 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.

# USE THE DISEASE AS THE MEDICINE?



Housing is flat on its back. Capitalism - "free enterprise" is the disease that put it there. The materials and labor power to make it well are available, but it gets sicker and sicker. Why?

The answer is found in the character of American Society: Capitalism - private enterprise - production for profit. Houses outside of a few government projects, are built for profit. If no customers are available or if more money can be made producing other things, then no houses are built. That is made clear by the diversion of over 50% of the building materials for factories, commercial establishments, honky-tonks, race tracks, swimming pools, etc. The constructors not only make more money but the investor - banks and insurance companies principally - do not have to be concerned about a long time gamble to get their investment back at a fat profit.

Even when homes are built the policy is to build them close to the \$10,000 unit and cash in immediately. In NY recently it came to light that the large insurance companies which are going heavily into the building of large apartment units have entered into an agreement to build only high-rental units.

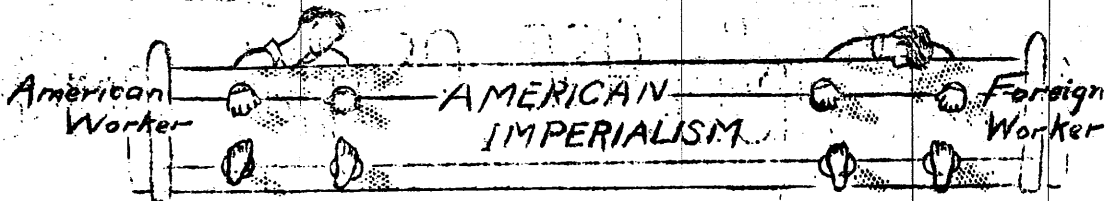
In Chicago the real estate men on LaSalle St., the Marshall Field interests, the Rockefeller interests of the University of Chicago and the other large real estate spiders have hundreds of millions of dollars invested in the slum areas. They receive proportionally greater profits from these worn down wrecks since they need to invest little money in improvements and upkeep, than they would in new units. Their policy is to keep the

Wilson Wyatt, administrator for the National Housing Administration recently stated that at the end of the government's program to start 2,700,000 houses and apartments by the end of '47 "the need for housing will be just as great as it was when the program began." This is an open confession of bankruptcy. Yet this same government continues to feed the war machine \$40,000,000,000 a year and divert material and men to the manufacture of armaments to destroy more homes. Obviously the needs of the people do not even come second to the imperialist ambitions of the bankers and industrialists.

The problem of houses can only be met by a society which considers the interest of the people first. The ruling class is animated solely by the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. If out-houses would make the most money, then out-houses would it be. This is helter-skelter. The material and technical requirements to shelter everyone satisfactorily are so great that they involve nothing less than planning cities decades in advance. The capitalist class can only plan to ruin cities. At destroying millions of homes with atom-bombs, blockbusters and fire it is a master. Capitalism starts with slums and ends with bombed out cities.

Before decent homes can come, capitalism must go. The individual actions of one or two families, of a few thousand families are no answer. We would pose the solution to the housing problem in the following equation: (Capitalism + rotten houses + discontented workers) (revolutionary action + a socialist America) = fine homes for all.

# LOCKED in the SAME PILLORY



## AGE OF SPEED (-UP)

A Mr. James F. Lincoln, president of the Lincoln Electric Co. of Cleveland, Ohio, is reported to have paid a social call to Philip Murray, president of the CIO, to discuss his incentive plan. The results of this discussion were not revealed but the nature of the plan was.

Anticipating that his workers will smell a rat Lincoln insists that his incentive plan is not a speedup system. Taylor, Grant, Bodaux and all the other speedup engineers also insisted that their special form of speedup was not speedup. Mr. Lincoln in a recently published article refers to his plan as being "payment of greater rewards for greater production on an agreed basis." What the agreed basis is he neglects to say. A few of the available figures will give us a clue as to what is in store for the workers of the Lincoln Electric Co. if their union goes along with this speedup plan "on an agreed basis"

In 1921 it took 112 hours to manufacture a welding machine. In 1944 it took 15 hours to produce the same machine, a reduction of more than 80% in production hours. The cost of the machine went down from \$1500 in 1921 to \$200 in 1944. The productivity of Mr. Lincoln's workers (in number of dollars) went up from \$5,000 to about \$57,000. A chart showing per share dividends indicates \$60.00. Lincoln says it's only \$6.00. No word does he give about the relative wage increases, but it is revealed that productivity due to rationalization - the installation of more up-to-date machinery - and the Lincoln brand of speedup has gone up so high that his company has found it profitable to even absorb freight rates.

This then is the prospect which labor is being offered by business. Grind away your life day after day at the machines and produce more profit for the Lincoln! you will eventually be thrown on the scrap heap of burned out workers and in the soup lines.

## BLOOD AND OIL IN MIDDLE-EAST

Part of the blood, sweat and tears of the world's working class has been distilled into oceans of oil. U.S., Britain and the S.U. are in a strategic battle - operation oil - in the near East. U.S. owns about 42% of the estimated reserves; this includes most of Saudi Arabia's oil, part interest in Iraq, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  interest in the sheikdom of Kuwait on the Persian Gulf.

Britain controls about 50% of the estimated reserves of the near East. The Anglo-Iranian Co. has a clear field in southern Iran. Britain also has a chunk of the fields in Iraq and Kuwait. The remainder is owned by Dutch and French capital.

The S.U. has obtained concessions in North Iran, but although they are in a struggle with one another, they all strive to keep the Arab workers in check. Britain recently employed Arabian mercenaries to break a strike in the Iranian oil fields. The leaders of the strike were killed and the rest imprisoned by the provincial government.

An oil strike broke out in Iraq. The workers asked for better housing, transportation, and working conditions. Concessions were granted but the Iraq Government is proceeding to arrest "trouble-makers".

In Saudi Arabia decrees are being issued against communist activity, which is really a fight for better conditions among the Arabian oil workers and the peasantry. Ibn Saud's expenses are paid by the US Export Import Bank to the tune of \$10,000,000 and by royalties paid by the Arabian-American Oil Co. to the tune of \$20,000,000.

To really understand the kind of world U.S., Britain, and the Stalinist bureaucracy want, keep an eye on the oil gauge not on the wind jamming sessions in Paris.