

Radio Talk - August 31, 1941

Delivered in person, W.S.M.

Good Morning Friends:

President Roosevelt, seeking the rest with which he has so frequently and necessarily revitalized himself, during the trying years of his presidency, is in his farm home at Hyde Park today, where he will remain over the Labor Day holiday. While the President rests in the comparative solitude of his ancestral home on Labor Day he will surely think of America's labor problems. No American, past or present, has done as much for organized labor as has President Roosevelt. Yet no American President has been so beset by labor trouble in National Defense as has he.

Nazi Germany, for all its vaunted efficiency, never saw the day when it could compete with industrial America in turning out guns, planes, and tanks - once America really gets going. But America has not yet got going. Something is radically wrong. The Army is waiting for guns, the Air Corps for planes. Men are being drafted to shoulder these guns while other men working at a high wage making the guns strike for still higher wages.

President Roosevelt asks for authority to control the profits which a merchant jobber or a manufacturer may make: asks for authority to control the price of a farmer's product or any other product and yet he disclaims any need for authority to regulate or control labor or labor organizations.

Truly it seems that organized labor is the pet child of President Roosevelt and the pet child, as is usual with pet children, is acting up. Many union bosses are smacking their lips over the rich rake-off in the form of so-called initiation fees which they charged the poor helpless American workmen for the privilege of working for his country on a National Defense project. Many a union till is swelled

because the National Labor Relations Board, created under the leadership of President Roosevelt, decrees that all men, whether in conformity with or contrary to their individual wishes, must join a certain union before they can work at certain plants.

Yes, as President Roosevelt speaks to the Nation tomorrow on Labor Day, he will remember that much of labor's organization is of his making and he will undoubtedly hope and pray for its cooperation which is so vital and so necessary for the defense of this Nation. And doubtless the laboring people of the United States, organized and unorganized, factory worker, farmer, housewife, truckdriver, merchant, clerk, stenographers, merchant clerk, stenographers, mechanics, and butchers will on Labor Day think of the privileges and rights which they enjoy. Perhaps they will reflect upon and compare the Roosevelt-Churchill eight-point program for the world with the points which Hitler and Mussolini jointly declared to be their aim for world organization and domination. Hitler and Mussolini said that the world must be freed from control by Bolshevism, which to them means control by the worker.

They said that the world must be freed from control of plutocrats, which to them means anybody who owns property. Surely American laboring people will see that if neither the workers nor the property owners are to have a voice in government under Hitler and Mussolini, it means that a dictatorship will rule the world if Germany and Italy should succeed in crushing the remaining free nations. Surely, surely many an American worker while listening to patriotic addresses on tomorrow will be thoroughly ashamed of certain union leaders who have willingly and meanly used the Nation's National defense program for personal gain. The heart of our working people is pure.

The great mass of horny-handed American laborers whether on the farm or in the factory are genuinely patriotic American citizens who put their country first, and certainly in this time of emergency first things must come first.

During the week Secretary Hull let the Japanese know that first things come first with us in our dealings with them. Japan lodged a protest with the U. S. over the transportation of American petroleum and other supplies to Vladivostok. The Japanese were particularly incensed over the shipment of aid through waters so near them because the United States has curtailed shipments of oil to Japan. The United States rejected these informal Japanese complaints against shipment of American war materials to Russia through Vladivostok by way of the Sea of Japan. Secretary of State Cordell Hull said that until this country revokes its historic policy of freedom of the seas, it will be enforced everywhere including the Pacific. As a result, Tokyo must watch American oil tankers slide through near by waters with aviation gasoline which the United States has refused to sell to Japan. Four American tankers are already enroute to Vladivostok and other war supplies for Russia are soon to follow.

A few hours later British and Russian troops were moving into Iran, which controls one of the few available routes over which supplies from Britain add this country can reach Russia. And circumstances of weather and war/^{may}make it, before very long, the only feasible route. Vladivostok is ice-bound a good part of the year. Even in good season it is more than 3000 miles removed from the present Eastern Front. Murmansk is closer both to British and American industrial centers. But it is problematical whether and for how long that Arctic port can be held by the Russians in the face of the present German and Finnish drive in

the north. In other words, the Iranian route, far from satisfactory though it is as a lifeline connecting Russia with the nations that are pledged to aid her, may sooner or later be as vital to the Red armies as is the Burma Road to the forces commanded by Chiang Kai-shek.

As the war broadens, its scope, American aid to those fighting against its scope, American aid to those fighting against its spread is needed more and more. In order to accelerate our production, President Roosevelt created another board during the week and made his trusted Lieutenant, Vice President Wallace, head of it. It seems that this new sort of over-all board will have as its principle purpose the settling of rows between other boards and agencies created by presidential order. The O.P.M. headed by Sidney Hilman and William S. Knudsen and the office of Price Control and Civilian Supply, headed by Leon Henderson, has for months quarreled about which has authority to do what. The President, great man that he is, can get some of the strangest people around him.

We can not know what this new board under Vice President Wallace will do. We can only hope for the best. We have boards on top of boards, but unless we get going with national defense, the American people will want to use a board on every body in national defense, and justly so.