Capitalistic Power And Post-War Labour Rehabilitation

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The United States of America is today experiencing another civil war—an almost bloodless clash between the exploited working class and the exploiting capitalist class. The end of the war has seen more than two million workers on strike. They have struck and are striking because there is looming a very grave threat to the high standard of living to which the American worker has become accustomed.

Reconversion of industry from wartime to peace-time economy has caused a severe drop in the congestion of the weekly pay envelope. This has brought about a decline by loss of overtime pay and unemployment. The worker was no longer receiving an average wage of about $46.00 per week, as he did in 1944. Even this figure did not measure up to the $34.00 weekly wage which the Holker Committee found necessary for a man, his wife and two children to live a decent life.

The tremendous capital resources of the N. A. M. (National Association of Manufacturers) are arrayed against the working class. Working capital of U. S. corporations increased from 341 billion dollars in 1939 to 99 billion in 1945. Profits were more than doubled during the war years. After paying taxes, including excess profits tax, Big Business made profits of 9.3 billion dollars in the one year, 1945, as

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For the first time small businessmen and merchants have allied themselves on the side of the workers. They have come to realise that the well-being of their business depends on the wages the workers receive. The Church also now realises that they cannot save souls of men, women and children with empty stomachs. The working classes should greatly applaud the Catholic priests who took part in the packing house (meat) workers strike in Chicago.

Allied to the side of the workers are various liberal organisations. Some have been instrumental in giving not only publicity to the real business at stake, but also material help in the form of food, warmth and clothing to the strikers and their families.

In this battle the capitalist class is fully armed and the balance of power is definitely in its favour. By the very nature of its system, however, it increases year by year the strength of its opposition, the working class. One can only look forward to the time when this strength will permit the working class to become the only true masters in the production and distribution of all wealth.