Bruckart's Washington Digest

Blame Absurd Relief Policies For Widespread WPA Strikes

Misguided Effort to Force Government Into Greater Gifts To Them; Yell Radical Accusations When Soft Snap Is Ended; Honest Distribution Congress' Aim.

By WILLIAM BRUCKART

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WASHINGTON.—It is sometimes possible, I believe, to find an excuse for violent action on the part of a man who is hungry. Likewise, that individual's desperation may be explained when his children are near starvation. It is a social condition that perhaps merits sympathetic understanding rather than harsh treatment. When those individuals have had the specter of starvation removed by the generous hand of government, however, it strikes me that there can be no justification for revolt against the government or the people which have been responsible for the charity. That is to say, neither the government nor the citizens can be held responsible for the hard luck of any of us, nor does any one individual have a divine right to such generosity.

Yet, there exists in this country today an extraordinarily large number of persons who seem to feel the government must bend its knees to them. They have lately taken the position—largely misguided by the lowest grade of leaders—that they can dictate to their government and their neighbors the terms upon which they will receive government relief. They have gone so far as to use the strike as a weapon to force, to coerce, their government into greater gifts to them, and it is one of the most dangerous trends to be noted on the horizon of our country. It is traceable, of course, to the utterly absurd relief policies that have been practiced, heretofore.

To go back a bit for a review, the relief program enacted recently by congress for the year that is now starting specified that all WPA workers must put in 130 hours per month in order to get the maximum government relief. It was included by congress as a part of the law upon recommendation by WPA Commissioner F. C. Harrington, and no right thinking persons can find reason to disagree. The purpose is most commendatory. The increase in the hours of labor was designed to weed out those who were receiving WPA checks who were satisfied to go on without any thought of ever obtaining a private job again. There is that type, you know.

Congress Sought to Set Up An Honest Distribution

The rules that expired June 30 had made it possible for some workers to receive the maximum pay in as little as two weeks of work. Skilled workers were being paid wages that were equivalent to the rates in private employment in the area where they were. So, some workers stayed on the job two weeks and had their month's pay; others worked longer and were paid much less. Congress, therefore, tried to set up something like an honest distribution and it directed that everybody receiving the WPA checks had to work 130 hours in order to receive the full amount.

There were some other provisions, too, that irked the WPA workers. One of them, for instance, makes it necessary for those who have been on WPA relief jobs for 18 months, to take a layoff of one month. That was designed to give some other unemployed person a chance to get WPA relief.

The third big change from last year and the earlier years of federal relief was a specification as to wages. The legal language is too complex for me to understand, thoroughly, but the intention is to make the rates of WPA wages have some relationship to the cost of living where the unemployed are given WPA jobs.

These things are in the law, this time. In previous years, congress had been unable to break the grip of the professional relievers, like Harry Hopkins and Aubrey Williams, and the rates of pay and conditions of work were determined largely by such men. Mr. Williams will be recalled as the man who said in a speech to WPA workers they should use their numerical strength politically and support only those officials who turned loose the most money. Under the previous system, the WPA workers could attack rules and regulations laid down by individuals. But now Mr. Hopkins and Mr. Williams are not in the picture, and a hard-boiled army officer heads up the WPA organization.

Strike Against Government Is What Confronts Country

The condition that confronts the country, therefore, is a strike against the national government, because the elected representatives of the people as a whole laid down the rules, this time. Of course, the Constitution guarantees to all citizens the right to petition congress. It does not grant the right, however, to use force or violence to change the action of congress. The WPA workers who went out on strike, therefore, in my opinion, were right close to the border line of a serious offense against the government. It is one thing to strike, as a union does, against an employer; it is quite another thing for a union to be organized to perpetuate government charity and to use that union in a violent fashion as has been done in this instance.

And, speaking of unions, there are two of them—rival organizations—among WPA workers. There is the Workers Alliance of America and the Workers League of the United States. The first named is headed by David Lasscer and the second by Lloyd Leith. I do not know the background of either man, where they came from or what their mission in life may be. Of this, however, I am sure: very few men and women in this world of ours ever work for absolutely no pay.

I wish that congress would dig into those two organizations and see how much these "leaders" are paid and find out where the money comes from. It is difficult for me to believe that either one of them or the several dozen "field men" and secretaries and others with titles are such lovers of humanity that they are not being well paid for their work. To believe that these men are emulating Our Lord to that extent is stretching my credulity too far.

Why Is a Union Necessary Among These Workers?

One might also inquire quite properly, I think, why it is necessary to have a union among these workers. I fail to see why they should spare any of the meager funds that the government gives them for living purposes to be used by union leaders. Those fellows cannot do anything to make congress change its mind. Oh! They can come to Washington — and they do — and issue statements and shout threats before congressional committees and see their names in the newspapers, and accomplish nothing. That is, they get nowhere except that they are able to show the poor, wretched souls on relief that their "leaders" are great "fighters" in the cause.

While there never was a chance of congress amending the law and anyone with a grain of sense must recognize it, these self-appointed, self-annointed saviors of the WPA workers did succeed in calling something like 40,000 workers off of their jobs in various parts of the country. The result was that those workers lost just that much money. They also ran afoul of the Harrington determination, which many of them did not realize was not a Hopkins or Williams chin. Colonel Harrington promptly issued orders that those who stayed away five days would be replaced, because there were thousands willing to work and had no jobs. Obviously, that brought a good many back to their jobs. Some others, however, let their passion and unwise leadership of their unions put them in a position of cutting off their nose to spite their face.

It is to be noted, in passing, that conditions now are somewhat different than when the policies of the professional relievers were operative throughout the country. There were numerous instances, it will be recalled, when Hopkins and Miss Perkins, secretary of labor, advised that sit-down strikers should be fed off of relief funds. State relief directors and state charity leaders seem generally to have taken a different view of the current situation.

Seems There Are Some Very Stupid Local Labor Leaders

The national labor unions, like the American Federation of Labor and the Lewis organization, the C. I. O., came close to getting involved in this picture. I do not know whether the heads of those great unions were responsible for the general aloofness, but they were quick to explain that strikes by any of their member-organizations in behalf of the WPA workers were "entirely local." If this be true, the explanation lies in the fact that there must be some very stupid local labor leaders. Surely, with union labor's prestige at its lowest ebb in many years, respectable labor unions could hardly expect to gain in public esteem by participating in such ludicrous proceedings as a strike against the government of the United States.

Notwithstanding the gloomy phases of the story told above, attention should be drawn the meanwhile to the healthy aspect that can be found upon examination of the circumstance. Consider the courage that congress showed in taking a position which admits the existence of certain parasitic elements. That is to say, congress has taken a positive step toward placing relief on a basis that will reduce waste, to some extent. It has made some gains in the direction of sweeping out a small part—very small, it is true—of the political influences that hitherto operated. And, more important than the rest, the congress over President Roosevelt's opposition, has acted to compel greater local responsibility for use of public money.

(Released by Western Newspaper Union.)

Pastels Vie With Prints in Midsummer Fashion Picture

By CHERIE NICHOLAS

WHEN it comes to the voguishness of prints versus pastels in the present mode the matter resolves itself into pretty much of a fifty-fifty proposition. Which is to say that the midsummer collections are made up of a goodly showing of each.

There is no doubt as to the importance of pastels especially for cleverly tailored daytime dresses that observe a nicety of detail which gives them "class" in the eyes of discriminating women who know their fashions. Favor for pastels is expressed not only in silk crepes and sheer woolens but a hue and cry is resounding for smart linens in delectable muted pinks and blues, rose shades, cool-looking greens and grays, light yellows, lavenders and novelty shades as cyclamen, tulip shades and such. White linens and linens au natural are also chic.

One reason for the big splurge that linens are making this season is that through the wonders of modern scientific processing newer linens carry a promise of non-wrinkling and non-shrinking.

At the top of the picture to the left see the attractive spectator sports dress of pastel blue crease-resistant imported linen. It has one of the very smart umbrella-tucked skirts. A belt braided in matching blue, fuchsia and yellow silk floss says color in unmistakable terms. The boutonniere is of self-linen and the cunning poke bonnet is of white straw.

The dress to the right in the background of this group is of a nubby sheer, pure linen in a delectable shell pink. Fitted waistline and sleeves cleverly appliqued with contrasting bands of periwinkle blue and strawberry linen are highspots in its styling. Sunburst tucks at the neckline, and unpressed pleats in the skirt, are also significant details. Every dress with a jacket is fashion's decree this season which accounts for a matching shell pink bolero which you carry or which you wear according to pomp and circumstances.

Before leaving the linen theme, just a word in regard to the smart looking redingotes tailored of white or natural linen which ladies of fashion are wearing over their lingerie frocks this summer. They are a modern version of the one-time honored "linen duster."

In regard to the silk prints that are everywhere present, and which are in friendly rivalry to smart linens, there is a decided flair among women who dress in the height of fashion for patternings that run to neat checks, and to plaids and stripes with nothing less than a stampede for dotted effects of every description. As the mid-season approaches suits of the new check silks will come into play in perfect fashion.

To the left in the foreground of the illustration a fashionable miss is wearing a smart frock for a day under the sun in the country. The dress is of blue silk with white pin dots. The collar piece is white, likewise belt and buttons.

A gay and colorful evening gown is shown to the right. It is of Scotch plaid trimmed with lace. The white organza blouse is also trimmed with lace. The full floor length skirt of gay print with dainty lingerie shirtwaist is a favorite evening fashion formula.

(Released by Western Newspaper Union.)

Play Suits Adopt 'Little Girl' Air

Some of the new play suits have a little-girl air. A 1939 variation of the popular shirt, shorts, skirt combination is made of gay floral striped cotton, and links a one-piece, puff-sleeved play suit and a detachable skirt hemmed with a frill.

Another, of ticking, is made up of a square-necked puff sleeved frock and shorts of the same material.

Tennis fans are choosing more dresses than shorts for play this year, one of New York's smartest shops reports. The smartest are white pique rayon or linen, designed with brief gored or plaited skirts ending above the knee.

Enthusiasm Grows For White Jersey

The practicality of white jersey, the smart appearance, the adaptability to sculptural draping and exquisite tailoring has so impressed designers they are expressing an enthusiasm for it that knows no bounds. Try out a costume of jersey and see what it does for you. It will slenderize you, it will be to the touch the sort you "love to wear." The white rayon jersies especially come out after a tubbing "white as snow" which is exactly what every woman hopes for, even longs for in her white costumes.

Diamond Earrings

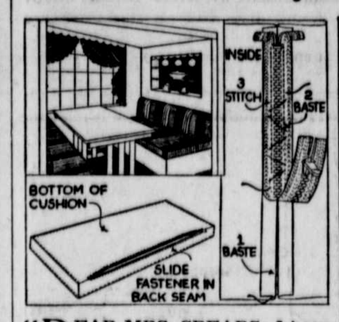
Earrings, particularly diamond and pearl ones, are becoming increasingly important as accents for every costume.

New Hobby

Looms a new hobby on the horizon. It's handkerchief collecting. Not just ordinary handkerchiefs, but handkerchiefs that depict memorable events in American history. There is an interesting group of four, just out, created by Burmel, designer of note. They include Mark Twain's Mississippi, Covered Wagon, Mount Vernon and the Landing of the Pilgrims, printed in vivid tableaux against fetching floral borders. Landing of the Pilgrims is the theme of the handkerchief design carried by the charming collector pictured.

HOW TO SEW

by Ruth Wyeth Spears



"DEAR MRS. SPEARS: I have both of your books and they certainly have been a help to me. I followed your directions in Book 1 for making all of my slipcovers. Recently I started a wall hanging of crewel work embroidery that required many stitches that were new to me. I found them all clearly diagramed in Book 2, and was certainly glad I had it to turn to.

"I am now interested in covering seat cushions for our dinette. The children have both breakfast and their mid-day meal here. Can you suggest a material that will stand hard wear and that comes in bright colors? G. B."

Striped awning material would give good service and both you and the youngsters would enjoy the gay coloring in this much used corner. Green and orange stripes would be attractive, and this color scheme could be repeated in green curtains and orange paint for the inside of a cupboard. I have suggested slide fasteners for the cushions so that they may be removed easily for laundering.

Notice about book prices: Book 1—SEWING for the Home Decorator; and No. 2, Gifts, Novelties and Embroideries, are now 15 cents each, or both books for 25 cents. Readers who have not secured their copies of these two books should send in their orders immediately, as no more copies will be available, when the present supply is exhausted. Your choice of the QUILT LEAFLET illustrating 36 authentic patchwork stitches or the RAG RUG LEAFLET, will be included with orders for both books for the present, but the offer may be withdrawn at any time. Leaflets are 6 cents each when ordered separately.

Everyone should have copies of these two books containing a total of 96 How to Sew articles by Mrs. Spears, that have not appeared in the paper. Send your order at once to Mrs. Spears, 210 S. Desplaines St., Chicago, Ill.

A Man's Home

A comfortable house is a great source of happiness. It ranks immediately after health and a good conscience.—Sydney Smith.

Kool-Aid
Makes 10 Big GLASSES 5¢ AT GROCERS

There for the Feast

Wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

A GREAT BARGAIN
VESPER TEA
PURE ORANGE PEKOE
50 Cups for 10 Cents
Ask Your Grocer

Future Reward

Think of ease but work on.—Herbert.

As You Design

Every man is the architect of his own fortune.

Heavy With Fruit

The boughs that bear most hang lowest.

Oil Purity
MEANS CAREFREE DRIVING!

When your car is mechanically in order and Quaker State is in the crankcase...then you are a carefree motorist. For Quaker State Motor Oil is *pure...acid-free.* Each drop is scrupulously refined to provide you with rich, heat-resistant lubricant. Make *Acid-Free Quaker State your* choice. Your car will run better, last longer. Quaker State Oil Refining Corp., Oil City, Penna.