

# This Small World

By WILLIAM E. DODD JR.



## U.S. and Japan

Again the Japanese are pressing for concessions in the South Pacific to coincide with a new American appeasement campaign toward Japan.

Last winter Japanese Foreign Minister Matsuoka openly called for the creation of a "New Order" in Asia under Tokyo leadership. At the same time Japan 'settled' the Indo-China-Thailand dispute through her 'friendly' mediation. Britain strengthened her defenses in Singapore and the Straits Settlements.

The Japanese backed down from their arrogant position and decided it was not the opportune time to begin a drive into the South Pacific.

By biding their time they hoped to see Britain so busy defending the remaining outposts of Empire in Africa and Asia Minor that she could not effectively defend the Malay Peninsula. They also hoped the United States would soon be involved in war with Germany.

## Selling Out?

The greatest optimists in Japan could not have foreseen an American move to appease her by forcing a disastrous peace upon China. Even the suave denials by our Ambassador Grew in Tokyo have not allayed the feeling that the United States is secretly 'selling-out' China.

Washington can officially wink at the sale of oil and other war materials to Japan but cannot afford to permit Japanese control of the Dutch East Indies or the British Malay States.

Assistant Secretary of State Dean Acheson testified before the House Rules Committee in opposition to an investigation of shipment of oil to Japan. Acheson vigorously opposed the resolution. According to the *New York Post*, he said its passage, obviously aimed at oil shipments to Japan, would be disastrous to the nation's Far Eastern policy. Shipment of oil to Japan must continue, he

stressed . . . Acheson emphasized that the government intended to continue this policy, and regarded even the investigation of the entire subject as 'unwise'.

Acheson apparently feels that Japan would plunge into an attack upon the Philippines and the Dutch and British islands nearby if we do not continue to supply her with oil. That she might even use that oil and other war materials against us later is conveniently overlooked.

## Key to Empire

What importance do the Dutch East Indies and the Malay States have in the present war?

For Britain these two colonial regions are the strategic and economic bases of her whole Empire in the Far East. Control of Malaya enables the English to hold a world monopoly in two most important raw materials: rubber and tin. Malaya is the largest exporter of these commodities in the world. The United States, Britain's chief economic competitor, is the world's largest consumer of these materials.

The Dutch East Indies, now protected by the British fleet, is one of the great oil depositories, producing one fifth of the total world output. It is over the percentage of oil production to be allotted Japan that the present crisis between this colony and Tokyo arises.

At the same time that American and British economic interests are threatened by Japan these two countries have conflicting interests with each other. As long as the United States continues to take more than

half of Malay rubber and three-fourths of her tin, Britain stands to be the gainer. We pay Britain for the products in cash since the United States does not ship a proportionate quantity of manufactured goods to these British possessions.

In the fight to control the rich resources of the South Pacific three nations are engaged: Britain, Japan and the United States. A fourth factor might be added: the internal challenge to all foreign rule offered by the natives and settlers of the Malay States and the Indies.

Before the present war broke out labor struggles were becoming more frequent in Malaya and the Dutch colonies. They were coming to be linked up with the emancipation aspirations of the Indian and Chinese workers who had been imported into these colonial regions by British and Dutch exploiters.

## Two Paths for U.S.

For the United States there are two alternatives in the Far East. Our navy may move into Singapore and fight it out with the Japanese. The effect of this, if United States won, would be to replace British domination with American in the Orient. Or we may throw our support to China in sufficient quantity to defeat Japan's aggressive ambitions all over the Far East.

The latter action would usher in a new era of free development throughout the colonial world of the South Pacific. And it would give sincerity to Secretary Hull's promise to the Chinese a few weeks ago that we would no longer demand special privileges in China after the war.

Japan's hopes lie in the unwillingness of Britain and America to follow this latter course. And at present American oil companies are fueling the Japanese war machine in its attempted conquest of China.





# If This Be Reason

By RICHARD O. BOYER

## The Press and Labor

The public seldom if ever knows the truth about a strike. The public virtually never hears the point of view of 11,000,000 fellow Americans who are organized into trade unions. Too often these 11,000,000 average Americans are presented as bomb throwing conspirators intent on wrecking the peace and the government. This is of course vicious nonsense. Trade unions fight in the stand-up American way for better lives, for better health, for better wages, for better hours, for all the things that make America a better country. This is as much the truth as the fact that if you toss a rock into the air it will fall to the ground.

Why don't more people know this? Because the American press, by and large, has made a consistent profession of strike breaking. Because the American press has a fixed policy of libeling labor. Because it has the same reason for opposing labor as Mr. Girdler. Because both Mr. Girdler and the American press are Big Business and one might as well expect fairness from the former as from the latter.

The late Heywood Broun, founder and first president of the American Newspaper Guild and generally conceded to be the greatest newspaperman who ever lived, once explained why the press will always and inevitably be against labor. He said:

"The making of a modern newspaper is Big Business. Big Business does not want to see the growth of trade unionism. . .

"The American newspaper is the first line of defense of Big Business.

"Newspapers break more strikes than the National Guard or company police. . ."

## The Great Bus Strike

All of this is by way of prelude to Leo Huberman's *The Great Bus Strike*.\* It was a great strike and this is a great book. It is the first one of its kind, an actual day-to-day diary of a strike, containing all of the humor, all of the heartbreak, all of the bravery, all of the ingenuity that is always present when a large group of Americans fight gallantly to improve the conditions of their lives and the lives of their wives and children.

If you have ever thrilled to the old fights of American patriots for a better America then you will thrill to this fight unless you have a heart of stone, unless you are so steeped in newspaper prejudice that you believe that any struggle for a better life is un-American.

If you ever thrilled to the brave words of Captain John Parker to the Minute Men at Lexington ("Stand

your ground. Don't fire unless fired upon. But if they mean to have a war let it begin here!") then you will respond to the words of Matt Kearns. As the strike began he said to the Irish Catholic bus drivers:

"The enemy is attempting, and will attempt, to create diversion and disunity in our ranks . . . Our union will now be attacked from all sides . . . Come what may, we will never let anything or anyone, whatever they may do, weaken our determination to win better contracts—better working conditions—and a decent American standard of living . . . We are fighting for our homes—for the security of our wives and families. Keeping that in mind, no thugs or scabs will break our ranks. Our unity and solidarity are our strength. Stand firm and we will win."

## Three Simple Facts

The union was "attacked from all sides" as all unions are when they strike for better wages. But the New York bus drivers did win because they kept ever before them a few simple facts, facts as immutable as the law of gravity. These were:

1. A union leader will be attacked in the press in direct ratio to his success. If he has done little for his union the attack will be minor or indeed non-existent.

2. The stronger and the more militant a union is in getting better wages and hours, the greater will be the attempt to discredit it. Every attacking editorial is a testimonial to the strength of a union.

3. If a union is aggressive and successful an attempt will be made, usually in the name of patriotism and 100% Americanism, to split that union, to force that union to weaken itself by purging its most aggressive members.

The striking bus drivers and their wives and children knew these things and because they did they won a glorious victory. Since Mike Quill, their president and the head of the Transport Workers Union, has been instrumental in winning raises of \$100,000,000 for the members of his union, he has, of course, been attacked as a red. Here, in the words of a wife of a striker, is what the members of the union think of the charge:

"Mike Quill was a good fighter in Ireland and he's a good fighter here. He can be red, white, black or yellow. I'm for him just the same. He saved my husband's job."



\**The Great Bus Strike*, Modern Age, N. Y., \$1. Transport Workers Bookshop (paper cover) 50c. An excerpt will be published in the next issue of U.S. WEEK.