

"WAR & TAXES"

George Washington University
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FILE COPY -- FIRST DRAFT

To the accompaniment of the Stars and Stripes Forever the curtain goes up showing 9 (or more) minstrels standing in front of their chairs. They wear the conventional minstrel costume and the chairs are arranged in the conventional semi-circle. All are in black face save the central man, the interlocutor. With their colored top hats the minstrels go through the manual of arms in time to the music. Wherever the words can be fitted in, they shout, "Munitions!" "Profits!" "War Fevers!" "National defense!" "Forever!" The music should end as loudly as possible when the manual of arms is completed. The interlocutor speaks.

Interlocutor

Gentlemen! Be seated!

(To the accompaniment of the snare drums, the whole company sits. The Interlocutor addresses the first end man.)

Mr. Bones, I have a question to ask you. I want you to answer truthfully.

First End Man

Yes sir.

Interlocutor

Spoken like a Morgan! Now: Who was that lady I seen you with last night.

First End Man

You want the truth?

Interlocutor

The whole truth.

First End Man

Well, sir. That wasn't no lady. That was a battleship.
(Roll snare drums.)

Second End Man

(To Interlocutor)

You hear about my brother, sir?

Interlocutor

No, what about him?

Second End Man

He was up before the Nye Investigating Committee. And they asked him did he make any money out of the war.

Interlocutor

What did he say?

Second End Man

He said, Sure!

Interlocutor

And was everybody shocked?

Second End Man

Oh, my, yes. A senator asked him, Then you admit you are guilty of profiting out of death and destruction.

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 Interlocutor
 What did your brother say then?

Second End Man
 He said, 'I'm guilty. I made profit. But, Mr. Senator, he said, there ain't no sin where the motive's good. I made them profits, so we could have more money to win the war with.
 (Roll of snare drums)

First End Man
 Sounds like a friend of mine. Named Woodrow Wilson.

Interlocutor
 Not the Woodrow Wilson?

First End Man
 No, sir. Boy named after him.

Interlocutor
 Well, what did he do?

First End Man
 Woodrow Wilson, he was gate tender but at a grade crossing. One night a car got hit by the express. Everybody in the car got killed.

Interlocutor
 How terrible.

First End Man
 Yes sir! I asked him, Woodrow Wilson, what your railroad think it is? A munitions factory?

Interlocutor
 Of course the railroad company was sued, Mr. Bones.

First End Man
 Indeed it was. Woodrow Wilson was chief witness. And the court wanted to know if he displayed his warning signal.

Interlocutor
 Had he?

First End Man
 Woodrow Wilson said, the night was dark and he waved his lantern hard as he could. But the fool driver of the car didn't pay no attention to him. And Woodrow Wilson stuck to his story. Well, the President of that railroad was mighty proud of Woodrow Wilson. He came by to shake his hand. He said, Woodrow, you're wonderful. I was afraid they might be able to shake your story.

Interlocutor
 And what did Woodrow Wilson say?

First End Man
 He said, no sir. Nobody could shake my story. But I was awful afraid somebody was going to ask was that lantern lit.
 (Roll of snare drums)

Interlocutor

That should be a lesson to us all. Light your lantern first.
 Intime of peace prepare for war. Don't be a foolish virgin.
 Ladies and gentlemen, with great pleasure, I introduce that
 sweet-voiced adviser of presidents Mr. Bernard Baruch. He will sing a
 song first delivered before the War Industrial College of Washington
 D. C. in 19 . Mr. Baruch.

(A minstrel carrying a mask of Baruch
 steps to the footlight Vamp.)

Baruch

(Singing)

The profit motive is one
 Which in my judgment
 Society
 Is not yet ready to
 Eliminate.

(Chorus; solo)

Even under the fiery spell
 Of patriotism
 Even under the great surge
 Of emotions called
 Into life by war.
 The factor of gain is still present.

I do not preach the mil-
 Ennium. To me the phrase
 Taking the profit out of war
 Does not mean
 The entire extirpation
 Of individual profits.
 Does not mean
 We can get along without
 The spur to action that the hope
 Of profit provides

(Chorus: Other minstrels swaying
 from side to side.)

Even under the fiery spell
 Of patriotism
 Even under the great surge
 Of emotions called

Into life by war,
 The factor of gain is still present.

(Applause from minstrels. Baruch
 sits down.)

Interlocutor

(To second end man)

Don't you think that's a beautiful song, Mr. Bones?

Second End Man

It makes me feel like Charlie Schwab.

Interlocutor

Why?

Second End Man

Because I feel so good.

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First End Man

Reminds me of my papa.

Interlocutor

Why does it remind you of your papa?

Second End Man

Because my papa was a good man and a banker.

Interlocutor

A good man and a banker.

Second End Man

He was always a banker. He used to investigate chicken coops.

Interlocutor

What did he find?

Second End Man

People had too many chickens. And he tried to relieve them of their burden. People objected though. Always somebody to stir people up. And one night my papa nearly got caught.

Interlocutor

Oh no.

Second End Man

Oh yes. Man who owned chicken coup heard a noise in it and called out, Who's in my chicken coup?

Interlocutor

And your papa kept still?

Second End Man

He did better than that. He answered, There's nobody in here, Mister. And the man went back to sleep.

(Roll of drums.)

Interlocutor

Ladies and gentlemen, we will now hear from-

(But a group of men and women enter from either side. They are noisy, determined. They carry placards, saying: "War will push up the stocks while you push up the daisies;" drawing of fallen soldiers, "They fell in battle while you fell for war propaganda," "Down with War," etc. They move around the stage pushing the Interlocutor aside and facing the audience, hide from view the minstrels. They repeat the slogans they carry on their placards. The orchestra begins to play "The Stars and Stripes Forever" in an effort to drown them out. The men and women of the group lean down and try to shout their slogans at the members of the orchestra. Hubbub.. A policeman rushes on and roughly pushes the group back, one at a time. There are cries of

The Interlocutor pushes his way through the moloch but he can hardly wave for

(silence to the orchestra because he is laughing so hard. The orchestra slowly ceases. The policeman looks at the Interlocutor who through his laughter nods at him; the policeman shrugs and goes out. It is the laughter of the Interlocutor that gives the pickets pause. The Interlocutor takes out a handkerchief and dries his eyes. To the silent pickets he speaks. The two end men go to either far sides of the stage.

First End Man

How high is up?

Second End Man

Where does your lap go when the war is over.

Interlocutor

(Drying his eyes)

I laughed so loud I cried.

First Picket

What are you laughing at? Your moth-eaten jokes?

Interlocutor

At you.

Second Picket

Why at you?

Interlocutor

You don't even know that, do you? You see how impractical you are. My good friends, don't you know that everybody out there

(Indicating the audience)

knows that war is terrible? You're not telling them anything new.

Second Picket

How did the cop grab us?

Second End Man

Was that Gerald Smith I seen you with last night?

First End Man

No, he's a been a couple of other Fascists.

Second Picket

(Insistently)

What you say is right, why did the cop grab us?

Interlocutor

you were disturbing the peace, of course. You create a nuisance. Even the orchestra resents you. Haven't you anything to say to the public but

(Reading from a placard)

"Down with War"?

(To the orchestra)

Agree. Down with war?

Orchestra

Interlocutor

(Reading another placard)

Interlocutor
(Reading)

War will push up profits while you push up the daisies. Indeed.
(He shrugs)

Third Picket

Do you know that in 1933 the war budget for the U. S, was \$628,000,900? And now it's \$1,161,000,000?

Interlocutor

And my good man. Do you know that there were 2,016 homicides in the United States for 1917. And last year there were only 1455. As something goes up another goes down. It's the law of compensation. (During this last, another man has come on. He is a truck driver. He looks with idle curiosity at the signs and then about to go on about his business through the group. But one of the pickets notices his casual interest and immediately catches hold of him.)

First Picket

(Immediately after last remark)

Want to carry a sign, buddy?

Truck Driver

Huh?

First Picket

(Insistently)

Want to carry a sign? Help us fight war?

(The group including the Interlocutor has turned its interest to the truck driver.)

Truck Driver

Listen, if you'd driven a truck 15 hours straight without even a nap you wouldn't want to fight anything. But a pillow.

Second Picket

Listen, you. Don't you know if you're ever a soldier you will have to go 72 hours or maybe more without sleep?

Truck Driver

So what? I couldn't be any sleepier than I am now.

Interlocutor

(Airily)

Don't you know, my good fellow, that if all the war dead were laid end to end - there wouldn't be enough to fight another war.

Truck Driver

(Belligerently)

Look here, all of you! I don't know what you're ribbing me for but I don't want none of it.

Second Picket

Do you want war?

Truck Driver

Sure, I don't want war. What the hell do you think I am? But if one comes maybe we can stay out of it.

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First Picket

And if we don't?

Truck Driver

Well, I suppose I go. Nobody can call me yellow. It can't be much worse than driving a truck.

Second Picket

And that's all you got to say?

Truck Driver

(Petulantly)

I ain't got no time to think about what to say. I got to get up and drive a truck in another six hours. I ain't got the time to think about something that ain't happened yet --

(He pushes his way angrily out)

Interlocutor

(Mimicking)

I ain't got no time to think about what to say. Did you hear that, my friends? There isn't time. People haven't the time to think about war. It isn't their business. They have to worry about the things of the moment. And besides they get bored with being reminded of the same thing. War, War, War. Now if you wish I can immediately call upon some very entertaining gentlemen, --

(Itemizing them on his fingers)

Secretary of War Woodring, who recently declared for peace, Charles M. Schwab, who would like to see all battleships sunk, Mr. Bernard Baruch, --

First End Man

When it's night time in Italy, it's Wednesday over here.

Second End Man

The higher the fewer.

Interlocutor

(Directly to the audience; very sincerely)

In fact, any of these men, and several others, any public man, would agree with them

(Indicating the pickets)

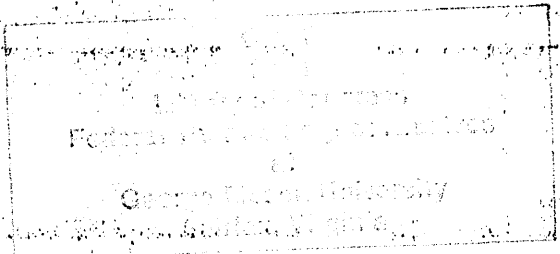
with you and me, that war is a dreadful, heartbreaking affair. Yet, you see, war is like the common cold. The only thing you can do for it is curse it. Which I do most heartily. Look at pacifism. It has never had any effect. It has never stopped a war. A very futile philosophy. Indeed pacifism is negative. Do nothing. War, at least is positive. It has nothing to recommend it, but war does give a man the satisfaction of doing this --

(He drives out with a double fist. The pickets have been listening, held by the man's sincere reasonableness. But the last words spoken, suddenly, pull the third picket alive.)

Third Picket

I ought to take a poke out of you for that one.

(And he lunges at the man, with the others protesting grab him)



Interlocutor

(Laughing a little to the audience)

What did I tell you? Until the natural sadism in man is eradicated, you can have no hope of stopping war. War satisfies something -

First Picket

(Loudly to the audience)

Don't listen to him! Don't listen! That's what he fooled us into doing.

(He crouches down near the footlights the better to talk to the audience.)

Maybe it is old stuff to you. Maybe you all believe war is inevitable. I'll admit it looks that way but every step you take to prevent war, that moment longer we hold it off. We've got just that much more time to breathe -

Announcer

Hurry! Your time is short!

(He speaks like a train announcer, always keeping his voice up at the end of a sentence. Then, he pronounces whatever at the moment are the latest war scare headlines.)

Hurry! Your time is short! You have much to do! Hurry!

First Picket

(To the audience)

Maybe you've forgotten what war was like. Maybe you never know. We want to show you that first -

Interlocutor

Going to take them back? A mistake. A mistake, I assure you. They know they were duped in the last war. It won't help for the new one

First Picket

Do they? Well, they'll know it better for having it repeated.

Interlocutor

The people who know will know already and those who don't won't pay any attention. If you'd let me suggest -

Third Picket

We'll let you suggest nothing. Get out! Or I will poke you one sure
(Interlocutor shrugs. He motions to the other minstrels.)

First Picket

No, we want them. For once, there's going to be no confusion. About one thing, anyway.

(Pointing)

Every member of that audience is going to know that when one of these guys
(Indicating the minstrels)
speaks a line, it's doing harm to us, to them. We'll give 'em masks to look like who they're supposed to be.

Interlocutor

May I at least ask Mr. Bones and Mr. Bones to accompany me?

Second Picket

Sure, take your funny bones if you want them.

First End Man

(As he joins him)

Mr. Interlocutor

First End Man (Continued)

I want to ask you a riddle

(They are walking out arm in arm)

Interlocutor

What is the riddle, Mr. Bones?

First End Man

The riddle is, when is a door not a door?

Interlocutor

Well? When is a door not a door?

First End Man

When it's a jar of T.N.T.

(Roll of drum)

(Second End Man joins the two of them.)

Second End Man

Can you answer me a question, Mr. Interlocutor?

Interlocutor

Certainly, Mr. Bones.

Second End Man

Why don't pigs have wings?

Interlocutor

Why don't pigs have wings? Supposing you tell me.

Second End Man

Because they can't drop bombs.

(Roll of drums. The three are out.)

Announcer

Hurry! There isn't much time.

(More immediate war headlines. The pickets have stood quietly, the minstrels mournfully, watching the exit of the three. At once, the pickets start energetically to work. They push five minstrels off. The first picket grabs hold of the remaining minstrel)

First Picket

(Calling out to the others.)

Bring me a typewriter. And a bowl of crackers and milk.

(As soon as the pickets and the minstrels are off, one of them returns carrying an uncovered portable. Another follows with a bowl of crackers and milk. The first picket pulls up one of the minstrels' chairs, faces it toward another of the chairs. He plants the minstrel in one and tells a picket)

Put the typewriter on the other. Put the bowl of crackers beside

(As he dashes off to the wings and returns at once with a mask of Woodrow Wilson. He thrusts the mask into the hands of the minstrel who looks at it and at once perks up. The other pickets carry off as quickly as possible the remaining chairs so that the stage is bare save for the two chairs in use.)

First Picket (Continued)

Yes,
 you're going to be Woodrow Wilson for the moment.
 (Returns to the audience)

Woodrow Wilson -

Announcer

(Taking it up)

- writes his war message on the South Porch of the White House
 at 2 a.m., April 2, 1917.

(The first Picket goes down the steps
 and up the aisle. The other pickets,
 if on stage, or if off, returning lie
 down in the near center of the stage.
 The minstrels should be at far left.)

First Picket

(As he goes down the steps)

Woodrow Wilson couldn't sleep.

(He walks quickly up the aisle. Minstrel
 peeks at the typewriter and munches a
 cracker.)

Wilson

(As he picks out the words)

The - world - must - be - made - safe - for - democracy -

(The pickets are asleep. There should
 be a stillness of the early morning.
 The only sound that of Wilson's words
 and typewriter. If needed a xylophone
 can emphasize the striking of the type-
 writer.)

We - have - no - selfish - ends - to serve -

(The third picket raises himself up on
 his elbow, and speaks very quietly.
 His remarks are punctuated by Wilson's
 words and the typewriter keys.)

Third Picket

(To audience)

If there's one time in the day when you think a guy'd be scared of
 his own thoughts, it's this time in the morning.

Wilson

(As before)

We - are - glad - now - that - we - see - the - facts - with - no -
 veil - of - false - pretense - about - them -

Third Picket

(Continuing)

When all the awful things you've done keep coming up before your eyes-

Wilson

(As before)

I - am - not - now - thinking - of - the - loss - of - property -
 involved -

Third Picket

(Continuing)

When you'd think a guy, I don't care who he is, would be scared to
 make up his mind for good and all about anything, for 120,000,000
 people.

Wilson
(as before)

Property - can - be - paid - for - the - lives - of - peaceful - and
important - people - cannot - be -

(during this the second minstrel comes on, very quietly,
goes and crouches beside the third picket. His re-
marks are punctuated by the typewriter and Wilson's
war speech).

Second Minstrel
(direction to third picket)

Ah, my friend. The sound of that typewriter means a beautiful time in America
is passing. We should mourn it together. An innocent time when industry is
booming. Everybody is at work.

Wilson
(as before)

We - entered - this - war - only - when - we - are - clearly - forced - into -
it -

Second Minstrel
You see, that's the great fly in our previous ointment. The war, the cursed
war has made industry boom. If the war stops, if the allies are defeated, our
own boom dies. Unfortunately we all of us have a stake in this war. Every em-
ployed man in America. And woman too.

Wilson
(as before)

But - the - right - is - more - precious - than - peace -

Second Minstrel
(rapturously)
It is more precious than rubies.

Second Picket
(Sitting up and rubbing his Eyes)
You say, I got a stake in this war in Europe?

Third Picket
Yeah! By 1919 you'll be paying 42 percent more for steak than you did in 1913.
That's the kind of stake you've got.

Second Minstrel
Puns at a time like this.

(to the second picket, earnestly)
You see, if the United States declared war against Germany, we can keep our
trade and increase it 'til the war ends. At the moment it is not contemplated
that we should have to aid our allies with man power. And after the war Europe
will purchase food and enormous supplies of material with which to re-equip -

Fourth Picket
(Interrupting)
Says: If everybody's prosperous. Maybe you can tell me why more guys like me
had to go on strike in the year 1916 than the year before. If everything's
booming for everybody, why did we have to strike?

War creates a certain unrest. It is the echo of the guns. These are troubled times, of course.

Fourth Picket

But people don't go out on strike just for fun. Maybe we're not getting our share. What do you think?

Second Ministrel

Oh come, come.

Third Picket

Sure, we're getting our share. The dirty end of the stick. Our dollars won't get us as much as they would in 1914 and now we can march off to war. That's our share.

Second Ministrel

(getting up indignantly)

You can't possibly know such things. The facts aren't available yet.

Third Picket

You forget, Buddy, we aren't in this for our health. We know such things. We know what's going on. Now. What we don't know right now is how to stop it.

Second Ministrel

I won't listen to you. This is 1917. Not 1936 and you're guilty of sedition. You're trying to undermine -

(he is interrupted by the entrance of a man from the opposite side of the stage.)

Have you come to bring us words of comfort?

Man

My name is Robert M. Page.

Second Ministrel

(eagerly)

Brother of Walter Hines Page, U.S. Ambassador to the Court of St. James?

Page

(nodding)

And I ~~was~~ was Democratic representative from North Carolina.

Second Picket.

He talks like a ghost.

Second Ministrel

Be quiet.

(To Page)

Yes? Yes?

Page

I announced in 1916 that I would retire from public life because I couldn't follow the foreign policy.

(Pointing to Wilson)

of this Administration.

Second Ministrel

Oh speak quietly.

(the pickets get up to come over and listen)

The President is writing his war speech - Hark -

(he holds up finger)

Wilson
(as before)

We - shall - fight - for - the - things - which - we - have - always - carried -
nearest - our - hearts -

Page
(raising his voice)

Jesus Christ never uttered a more profound truth than when he declared.
"Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Second Ministrel

Ah yes. He also said, "I come not to bring peace; I bring a sword."

Page

The loan of \$500,000,000 by the United States capitalists to England, to say nothing
of the profit, -

Second Ministrel
(beside himself, wringing his hands)

Oh, later, later, Not now, say later.

Page
(continuing)

- of the Munition makers has destroyed the slightest semblance of neutrality -
(the Second Ministrel suddenly begins to push Page to
getting off).

Third Picket

There's our stake in this war -

Page

(being pushed off - insistently)

And will probably lead to war.

(he is off) But the Second Ministrel is not satisfied. He is
disturbed - he dashes over to Wilson, nudging each other. The
pickets watch him. In his frantic haste to get to Wilson,
he collides with a dirty and grimy French soldier.

Second Ministrel

Oh, I beg your pardon. Vive la franco! Lafayette, we are here!

French Soldier

Long Live Peace!

Second Ministrel
(coldly)

Are you sure you're speaking correctly.

French Soldier

Listen. French soldiers are getting tired of losing maybe 2 milas and losing a
hundred thousand lives doing it.

Third Picket
(coming over)

You better tell that to us.

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No! No!

(he tries to prevent Soldier from getting to the pickets) Soldier pushes him aside. The pickets and the soldier shake hands. The pickets form a semi-circle around the Soldier into which the Second Minstrel tries to break without success).

French soldier
(to the pickets)

There have been mutinies in the French Army. We've stood about as much as we can. At Soissons, two whole regiments deserted. They invaded railroad stations, seized a train. -

Second Minstrel

Don't tell them that! Tell them about the food riots in Germany. Tell them about little German children being forced to carry arms.

French Soldier
(continuing)

They were going to march on the Chamber of Deputies.

Second Minstrel
(frantically)

Tell them about the revolution in Russia. Tell them how the czar has been overthrown -

Third Picket
(grinning)

Yes, tell us about Russia.

French Soldier

Why, yes, I'll tell them about Russia. We heard about it and we heard how the Russian soldiers were forming their own Soldier's Councils. And selecting their own officers. We wanted to do the same. -

Second Minstrel

Oh, my God. Don't tell them that -

(And he breaks off and dashes over to the Minstrel playing Wilson).

Mr. President! Mr. President!

(Hurry music, softly, from orchestra ensemble. During this the French Soldier continues to talk with the pickets. His gestures are voluble. Phrases emerges: "Won't attack any more!" "Refuse even to go into the trenches;" "Down with the war;" "Assassinating us.")

Mr. President: The slow and irritating period of education Mr. Robert Lansing spoke is necessary to arouse the people of this country to a state of indignation, is proving very slow and very irritating. You've got to say something to these men. To that soldier. To those people out there.

(indicating audience. Hurry music faster, no louder. Wilson gets abruptly to his feet. Violin solo: "At Dawning". As Wilson steps determinedly to the footlights, the French Soldier's words has visible effects on the pickets. Now they are silent, waiting for Wilson. Music over).

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Why, my fellow citizens: Is there any man here? or any woman? Lot me say is there any child -

(pause, as if looking for a child) extending his hands to indicate height - man, woman, child).

who does not know that the seed of war in the modern world is industrial and commercial rivalry -

(immediate applause from the pickets. Consternation on the Second Ministrel's part. Wilson, flattered, proceeds very rapidly).

This war in its inception, was a commercial and industrial war. It was not -

(But the Second Ministrel has reached Wilson and snatches the mask of Wilson away from him.

Second Ministrel

If you can't remember your lines, you can't be Wilson. That's Wilson's 1919 speech, in St. Louis. Get out! Get out! You're hopeless.

(The First Ministrel is saddened).

Third Picket

Buck up, my good man. There'll be something else for you to do. Maybe you can collect peach stones for gas masks.

(The First Ministrel goes and gets the typewriter and bowl of crackers. The Second Ministrel is bustling him off).

Second Ministrel

(to third picket)

There's no need for you to interfere. It isn't he that that needs bucking up. It's him.

(pointing to French Soldier)

French Soldier

Mo? I don't need to be bucked up. I'm satisfied to sit down here and rest, After three years of fighting, it'll be good.

(the pickets sit down besides him. They grin at the Soldier and he grins back). First Ministrel is off).

Second Ministrel

You can't do that. You can't! You're fighting the battle of civilization. (trying to lift the French Soldier up).

Remember Verdun!

French Soldier
(Making himself heavy)

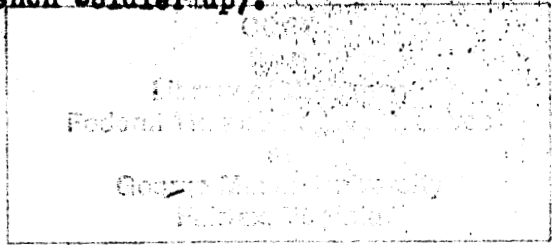
I do!

Announcer
(rapidly)

Cablegram from General Pershing! Cablegram from General Pershing). To Henry P. Davidson, Chairman of the Red Cross War Council! Cablegram from General Pershing!

Second Ministrel

Read it, read it.



Announcer

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Cablegram reads: If you want to do something for me, for God's sake buck up the French.

Second Picket

(indicating the Second Ministrel)

That's what he's trying to do.

Second Ministrel

(letting the French Soldier go)

The Red Cross! The Red Cross! Oh, what a brilliant idea.

(He runs over to the far side of the stage, calling Red Cross! Red Cross! then he turns to the audience and very stiffly, accompanied by orchestra, sings:

Mid the war's great nurse, stands the Red Cross nurse, she's the Rose of No Man's land.

(From the same side - Enter Third Ministrel and a woman in black face in the uniform of a Red Cross Nurse, carrying a nursing bag. The Second Ministrel shakes hands with the third ministrel.

Oh thank you, thank you so much, Mr. Murphy.

(turning to Nurse)

And this, I suppose, is the greatest Mother in the World.

(He is about to shake hands with her, but starts back. He whispers agitatedly to the Third Ministrel:

Second Picket

What's wrong! The French are still waiting.

Third Ministrel.

(indignantly to Second Ministrel)

Don't be ridiculous. Her color's no different from yours or mine.

Second Ministrel

But it looks so natural. As if it were her own.

Third Ministrel.

She's not a bit different from you or me.

(To the Nurse)

Show him that's only make-up.

(The Nurse obligingly pulls down her black gloves showing white skin).

Second Ministrel

Oh, then, if you're only in make-up, then forgive me -

(He shakes hands with the nurse)

You see, General Gorgas, head of the Medical Army Corps has stated that, owing to the lack of housing facilities, we are unable to send Negro nurses to France, and I thought -

Nurse

Oh, I understand. It's quite all right. A nurse has to have a thick skin.

Second Ministrel

Not a black one. I am embarrassed to death.

(guiding her and the Third Ministrel over to the seated French Soldier. The three stand over him).

Second Ministrel (continuing)

You see his morale is very low. The French have been through a lot.

(To French Soldier)

This is the Red Cross's first rescue mission.

Nurse

The poor dear.

(She bends down over him. The pickets crowd around him).

I'll restore your morale, poor soldier boy. What's your name? Dear, do have this.

(She takes a sandwich from her bag).

French Soldier

(taking it)

Jean.

Nurse

And you've been away from your family a long time.

(French Soldier nods)

Second Picket

A lot of German guys have been away from their families a long time, too.

Nurse

(ignoring him)

That's probably why you're so upset. You're worried about your family. We'll see that they get help. A lump sum of money. Won't that be nice? And they'll know the American Red Cross did it. That will help their spirits. And yours too.

Fourth Picket

What about the spirits of the German soldiers and their families? We have no quarrel with the German people.

(he, too, is ignored).

Nurse

(to second and third ministrel)

Help him up, please. He's all right.

(The French Soldier allows himself to be put on his feet. The two Ministrels and he proceed towards the exit. The Nurse stands with her hands outstretched in the manner of a Red Cross poster. She keeps repeating "The Greatest Mother in the World," lowering her hands and raising them in appeal).

Third Picket

(going alongside the French Soldier)

You're a fool to go back to it now.

(the French Soldier shrugs and munches the sandwich)

They're buying you off for a few dollars and a meagly sandwich.

Second Ministrel

Be quiet! The sandwich is excellent. We'll attend to you later.

Third Picket

(to third ministrel)

Say, who's mask have you got.

Third Minstrel
(heartily)

5
For the present, my name is Grayson Murphy.

(he and the second minstrel and the French Soldier
go on out.)

Third Picket

(slapping his leg)

By God! I might have known it.

(going back to the other pickets)

Do you know who that other guy is? Grayson M. F. Murphy. He's got a brokerage firm on Broadway. And it is a representative of that firm, that Smddley Butler said tried to pay him to lead an army of 500,000 veterans in a March on Washington to form a dictatorship. Do you hear me? It's the same damn guy that bucked up the morale of the French Army with Red Cross funds. The Army fighting for civilization! For Democracy!

Announcer

Newton D. Baker, Secretary of War under Wilson, has an announcement to make.

Voice of Newton D. Baker

Democracy is the most perfect form of government ever devised by man, and the most difficult. We can have it only as long as we are worthy of it. Democracy is possible only to highly educated people.

Third Picket

(to audience)

Now it comes. Now we're getting it.

Second Picket

All right, you dope. They get the point. Come here, we want to tell you something.

Third Picket

(being drawn away. To Audience)

Do you get it? We're in a war this minute to make the world safe for Democracy. Now we hear from one of the big guys, a few years later, only a certain kind of people can have democracy.

Fourth Picket

Will you listen to us for a minute?

the three go into a huddle, emerging to nod their heads toward the Nurse, who, while continuing to go through the same motions, becomes bothered by their glances and obvious references to her. The pickets nod and agree. The Nurse becomes more nervous. Her movements become confused. Suddenly without warning, the Second Picket drops to the floor. The startled Nurse screams and without thinking dashes over to him.)

Nurse

(frantically to others)

What's wrong with him?

(in complete bewilderment the other pickets scratch their heads. They stoop over the fallen man.)

5
Food! Food! I'm starving.

Second Picket

Nurse
(to the others)

Go get my bag, quick!

(one of the pickets runs over to pick up the bag - brings it to the nurse. She takes out a sandwich and gives it to the Second Picket.)

Second Picket

I think I am dying, Nurse. Hold me in your arms?

Nurse

Of course.

(and she tries to hold him in her arms, but loses her balance and topples over. She scrambles up.)

Fourth Picket

Hurt yourself, Miss?

Nurse
(impatiently)

No!. But get me a chair.

(one of the pickets pulls up one of the chairs. The Nurse sits in it.)

Now I'll hold him in my lap. Pick him up. Put him here.

Third Picket

You sure you want him in your lap?

Nurse

Of course, I do. It's easy to see you don't know what work the Red Cross has done. The Greatest Mother in the World.

Fourth Picket

(to second Picket as he and Third Picket lift Second.)

Do you want that sandwich or don't you?

Nurse

Brute! Don't you dare take that one to him.

(They put the man on her lap there.)

Second Picket

Oh, I'm dying, Nurse.

Nurse

Oh no you're not. I've seen men with their legs all blown to bits, their faces shot away, their lungs full of gas. And they didn't die. You'll get all well, you'll rejoin the army and fight for your rights and for the rights of the rest of the world. Now eat your sandwich.

Second Picket

You're sure it's all right.

Second Picket

Well, you see, Nurse, it's like this. I'm a Kentucky coal miner. From Harlan County. And I'm on strike in 1934. Now is it all right to eat the sandwich.

(with a scream the Nurse dumps the Picket from her lap, stands up. The Picket immediately scrambles to his feet.)

Nurse

Give me back that sandwich.

(she makes a grab for it.)

Second Picket

(tosses it to the third picket and the third to the fourth and back, the Nurse trying to intercept it.)

Nurse

Give it to me. You can't have food. A strike isn't an act of God. Like a flood or war. Give it to me please.

Announcer

President Wilson proclaims the Selective Draft Act, May, 18, 1917.

(The Second Minstrel enters. He wears an army officer's cap. At the sound of the Announcer's voice, the pickets have stiffened. The second Minstrel goes up to whichever one of the pickets happens to have the sandwich and takes it.)

Second Minstrel

I'll relieve you of this. You're in the Army now.

(He offers to return the sandwich to the Nurse.)

Nurse

Oh no, you keep it.

Second Minstrel

I hope it's chicken.

(the Nurse nods)

Fine! I'll eat it later.

(the Nurse nods)

Announcer

President Wilson states in his proclamation that the Selective Draft is in no sense a conscription of the unwilling. It is rather selection from a nation that has volunteered en masse.

Third Picket

Then why is only one-sixth of the quota set enlisted?

Second Minstrel

Silence!

Announcer

The President's proclamation states a nation needs all men; but it needs each man not in the field that will most please him but in the endeavor that will most serve the common good.

5

FIRST END MAN
(Foking his head out)

When is common good not common good?

SECOND END MAN
(Poking his head out the other side)

When it is preferred stock.
(They disappear)

ANNOUNCER
(Irritably)
Will you have silence please? While I finish the President's proclamation.

SECOND MINSTREL
Silence!

SECOND PICKET
This is a hell of a time for wise cracks. Anyhow.

SECOND MINSTREL
Silence!

ANNOUNCER
Though a sharp shooter pleases to operate a triphammer for the forging of great guns and an expert machinist desires to mark the flag, the nation is being served only when the sharpshooter marches -

FOURTH PICKET
(Stage whisper)
I thought sharpshooters shoot -
(The second minstrel makes a threatening movement)

ANNOUNCER
(Continuing)
- and the machinist remains at his levers. The whole nation must be a team in which each man must play the part for which he is best fitted.

THIRD PICKET
(Continuing)
So it's work or fight. Politely put. Is it?

SECOND MINSTREL
We've had enough of your lip. Get going all of you.

SECOND PICKET
Aren't we going to have a chance to say goodbye to our women folks tomorrow.

SECOND MINSTREL
(Hesitating)
Well - you don't deserve it but I guess -
(Immediately a group of women equal to a number of pickets come on. Two of them wear overalls and carry lunch boxes.)

(The men and women embrace each other.)

FOURTH PICKET

(To the women opposite him.)

So you got my job, now, eh.

FIRST WOMEN

(Opposite fourth man)

We'll be in all the industries. Even the heaviest. In factories they have never had women before.

Second Picket

(To woman opposite him)

I could chop off one of my fingers. They won't take anything but an all sound man.

(The second minstrel who has been impatiently but importantly pacing up and down hears him)

SECOND MINSTREL

What's that you're saying?

(Immediately the woman seizes the second picket's hand and puts it behind her.)

SECOND WOMAN

(Opposite second picket)

There's nothing wrong, General.

SECOND MINSTREL

(Ominously)

Let's see his hand.

(Reluctantly the woman lets the picket hold his hand out. The second minstrel jerks hold of it, pulling the man slightly off balance, turns the hand around, examining it. His actions obviously hurt the picket.)

Well - I guess it's OK. Let me warn you men have been sent to Levenworth for trying to escape the draft that way.-

THIRD WOMAN

(To third picket)

Listen; I'll have to make uniforms. I gues. At home. Piece-work. I can't get another kind of job and I'll need it.

THIRD PICKET

(Angrily)

Yah. You can turn our miserable little flat into a sweat shop. And when winter comes along we can shiver in summer clothes and get pneumonia. Just because some clothing manufactures can't get contacts with the government. Because, as the New York Times elegantly puts it, they decline to conform to the sociological views of persons representing the government.

(Looking up)

The common good.

5
23
(The fourth minstrel comes hurrying on. He wears a derby hat and carries a small American flag. He wipes his brow, as he comes, flustered, hurried, cheerful.)

FOURTH MINSTREL

(Going up to the pickets and the women)

Gee! I didn't think I'd get here in time.

(He claps the men and women, indiscriminately, on the back.)

I wanted to get here before you left. You boys, I mean. I got good news for you.

SECOND PICKET

The war over?

FOURTH MINSTREL

(Laughing heartedly)

What! Before the fun even starts! Before you've even had a chance to get a German helmet for this pretty gal here. NO. It's much better than that.

(To the second minstrel)

We're right up there with you, buddy. Fighting too.

FOURTH PICKET

I bet you are.

THIRD PICKET

What the hell have you done now?

FOURTH MINSTREL

(Carrying the good news to each couple of the group)

We've persuaded the state legislature, oh, in lots of states—big ones like New York for instance—to let the laws about women working hours go by the board for the duration. Isn't that swell? You girls can work just as hard and as long as you want to. Make just as much money as you want to. Golly! You won't even need these boys here to support you after this. You can send them off to war. Anytime. And feel perfectly safe.

(There is no response from the group, except an appalled silence.)

SAY!

(Looking in amazement at the members of the group)

I didn't expect to make a speech. I didn't think I'd be able to get more than a few words out. And you'd be overwhelmingly with cheers. And kisses even -

FIRST WOMAN

We can work from dawn to midnight. If we like.

5
FIRST WOMEN (Cont'd)
(The fourth minstrel nod
enthusiastically)

Or if the boss won't pay us enough if we don't work that long.
And we're supposed to cheer.

FOURTH MINSTREL

Sure. And kids can work too. Some of the states have let their
child labor laws go too. It's a real world we're living in today.
People are facing facts -

ANNOUNCER

I have an interesting communication on that score. A communication
from the superintendent of public instruction of Indiana to the
county superintendent. It reads; the department of public instruc-
tion wishes to recommend for your favorable consideration the sug-
gestion made to the department by representatives of the Indiana
Canning Factories that the school authorities postponed for two or
three weeks the opening of the schools' next autumn in order that
the school boys and girls of suitable age may assist in caring for
the great vegetable and fruit crops which our farmers shall this
year grow.

(During this the fourth minstrel
hops about with great glee
patting the group on the back,
although they shrink away from
him, shaking hands with the
second minstrel.)

It is as important for the canning factories to run full time as
for our canning factories to operate extra shifts.

FOURTH MINSTREL

Hear that? Cannons and Canning.

ANNOUNCER

Our people must either be fighters of feeders.

FOURTH MINSTREL

(Excitedly)

Fighters or feeders! Feeders of fighters.

ANNOUNCER (Continuing)

If you can where feasible postpone the autumn opening of your
schools. You will thus enable tens of thousands of our boys
and girls to become, in a practical sense feeders.

FOURTH MINSTREL

See? What did I tel you.

(Poking first man on the chest)

Fighters!

(Men and Women).

FEEDERS!

(Then a man)

Fighters!

(Then indicating an imaginary child
with his extended hand. "MA * MA!"
The fourth minstrel pokes the
child's imaginary chest.)

Fooder!

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(Second and fourth minstrel
shaking hands)

5

THIRD PICKET

(Viciously slapping his cap
down on the floor)

Every damn thing we've ever worked for. For years, to get. To
keep our kids in school. To keep our women from being worked to
death. Everything gone up in smoke. Everything handed to the guys
who fought us. On a silver platter. And our heads along with them.
By God -

SECOND MINSTREL

Silence! Do you know where you are? You're in the army.
(Ominously)

Pick up your cap!

(Third Picket hesitates)

THIRD PICKET

(Suddenly)

Listen! I'm not going in your damn army. That's what. I'm
not going! You understand.

FOURTH MINSTREL

A yellowback, eh?

SECOND MINSTREL

So you're not going? Conscientious scruples against war, I suppose.

THIRD PICKET

You can call it what you like. I'm not going.

SECOND MINSTREL

(Going up to third picket and lifting
his chin in the manner of a school
teacher.)

Do you know what we do to little boys like you? In Leavenworth
and such nice lonely places.

(Savagely)

We strip 'em naked. We put 'em in icy cold showers. Then we
scrub 'em with brushes that have been used to clean toilets with.
Till their skins are raw.

FOURTH MINSTREL

They usually collapse then. Until another time.

ANNOUNCER

Believe him! That's what they do to conscientious objectors.
Hang you up by chains to the bars of your cells! Put you in
dungeons without food! Believe him I can give you names and
date if you want them.

(Women scream and throw their
arms around the man)

SECOND PICKET

Is this America 1917 or Germany 1936?

(The woman opposite him claps
her hand over his mouth
The Third woman stoops and
snatches up the third picket's

picket's hands.)

SECOND MINSTREL

(To third Picket)

Put that cap down.

(Third picket lets it drop.)

Now pick it up.

(Reluctantly the third picket stoops and picks the cap up)

Put it on your head. In the army you learn to obey without question. That's why the army makes men. Now get going. All of you.

(The men and women too, begin to march off. The orchestra plays a quick military march to which the pickets and their women do not keep time. The fourth minstrel waves his flag.)

SECOND PICKET

Are our women going too?

FOURTH MINSTREL

Oh we couldn't get along without the women.

FOURTH WOMEN

You're sure of that.

FOURTH MINSTREL

Oh I could quote you authorities on that.

SECOND MINSTREL

With four million men under arms? We're sure we can't get along with out the women.

FOURTH WOMAN

You won't mind talking to my sister then?

FOURTH MINSTREL

Mind? We'll be dee-lighted. Where is she?

(The fifth woman comes on)

FIFTH WOMAN

Here I am.

(Brightly)

How do you do?

FOURTH WOMAN

(To fifth woman)

Now don't be bold will you?

FOURTH MINSTREL

(Taking fifth woman's arm)

So this is the little lady?

FIFTH WOMAN

(To fourth woman)

No bolder than I have to be.

(Fourth woman goes out)

5

FOURTH MINSTREL
(To fifth woman)

Look! Here's an army officer. Doesn't it thrill you

FIFTH WOMAN

No. If you don't mind. I have seen soldiers before. And I came here to get some information.

FOURTH MINSTREL
(A little chilled)

What kind of information? You know we can't give out any valuable information now.

FIFTH WOMAN

But this is very valuable information I want. It's about myself.

SECOND MINSTREL

You surely aren't thinking of yourself in a time like this?

FIFTH WOMAN

Oh, please, won't you sit down? Both of you.

(The two minstrels look at each other in astonishment)

Please do. You see I'm so used to standing up in front of the class that I really can't talk if you're both standing. I'm a school teacher. Please sit down.

(Reluctantly the two minstrels got chairs and sit down.)

SECOND MINSTREL

I asked you, my good woman, if you were thinking of yourself at a time like this.

FIFTH WOMAN

Well, to be perfectly frank, I am. Aren't you?

SECOND MINSTREL
(Indignantly)

Of course not.

FIFTH WOMAN

(To fourth minstrel)

And you?

FOURTH MINSTREL

I am not. What do you take me for?

FIFTH WOMAN

Well that seems very strange. Really. In a society where every man ought to stand on his own feet. You're not even thinking about where your feet are placed?

SECOND MINSTREL

I resent this line of questioning.

FIFTH WOMAN

Oh come now surely you think about your business. About national defense?

FOURTH MINSTREL

That's for your sake.

FIFTH WOMAN

That's precisely what I came to ask about. Just where do I come in on this.

FOURTH MINSTREL

Where does she come in?

(To fifth woman)

Are you daft, little lady.

SECOND MINSTREL

(Pompously)

We're protecting you against the invasion of a foreign country. Against the hun in this instance.

FIFTH WOMAN

Oh, pooh. I tell that sort of thing to my school children. Do let's the three of us talk sense. About my wages. Now I teach school for a living. In your opinion is teaching the youth of a country an essential element in a country life. Or isn't it?

FOURTH MINSTREL

(Looking to second minstrel for help)

Well & I suppose that depends on what you teach.

FIFTH WOMAN

Oh that's simple. Reading. Writing. Arithmetic, what a great country the U. S. is, what a fine thing private utilities are -

SECOND MINSTREL

Oh, Of course such things are essential. What would we do without you.

FIFTH WOMAN

To tell you the truth that's what I expected you to say. I believe it myself.

FOURTH MINSTREL

Naturally you do.

FIFTH WOMAN

Then if I'm so essential to the life of the country will you please tell me why I am making less in 1917 than I did in 1914?

FOURTH MINSTREL

(Laughing heartedly)

So that's all it is? Eh? Well, well, Well.

(Strating to get up)

If that's all -

FIFTH WOMAN

(Interrupting)

No, please sit down. I don't want to hear a speech.

FOURTH MINSTREL

(Sits down; complainingly)

It isn't easy for me to talk sitting down.

second Minstrel

Perhaps I can explain in a sitting position. I'm used to staff meetings.

(Sternly)

You know perfectly good and well, young woman, that wages are going up.

Fifth Woman

But my living expenses are going up faster.

Second Minstrel

It is necessary that prices rise if capital is to be invested. If you're profession isn't paying you enough you should get a job in a munition's factory.

Fifth Woman

And let teaching hang?

Fourth Minstrel

That's not very nice language for a school teacher.

Fifth Woman

You're evading me. What about this language?

(Emphatically)

In 1914 my real annual earnings were equivalent to say 100. That represent what my dollar would buy. In 1916 it was equivalent to 100 still. In 1917 with the mounting cost of living--

Fourth Minstrel

(interrupting)

Listen little lady do you know that in the steel industry some workers are getting 25 and thirty dollars a day?

Second Minstrel

And buying silk shirts with it.

Fifth Woman

I am not in the steel business. It would be interesting to meet such workers though. They're rather inaccessible. But to get back with the rising cost of living my real annual earnings dropped to 89. And in 1918 they'll drop to 78. Do you understand what that is doing to my standard of living.

Second Minstrel

You see you're talking ship now. One expects a school teacher to be good at figures.

Fifth woman

(angrily)

And one expects a person who supposed to be essential to the life of the country to get something out of a war that is supposedly being fought for that country and I tell you I'm not getting my share. The professional class of this country is actually losing by this war.

Second Minstrel

On, but if you were in Chicago in the early years of the depression you'd think you were well off now.

Fifth Woman

You still don't answer me.

5

Fourth Minstrel

Well maybe you'll answer one little question for us first. You want mind just one teeny question?

(he gets to his feet)

T

Fifth Woman

That's fair enough. Ask it.

Fourth Minstrel

Did you, little lady, come here all by yourself?

Fifth Woman

Of course I did, I'm not afraid

Fourth Minstrel

Why sure, you're not. What's there to be afraid of?
But you're not with a delegation? Or any thing like that?

Fifth Woman

No. Unfortunately, the professional classes are poorly organized.
We're not supposed to strike for-

Fourth Minstrel

That's all I wanted to know.

(And he suddenly seizes the woman, hoists her unceremoniously over her shoulder and starts to walk off with her)

Fifth Woman

(Screaming. Pounding at his back)

Put me down! Put me down! I'll scream my head off.

(And she screams again. Second Minstrel claps his hands over her mouth. She tries to strike at him. She seizes her hands.)

Fourth Minstrel

(To second Minstrel)

O.K.?

Second Minstrel

O.K.

Fourth Minstrel

We'll take care of you my little lady.

(They're proceeding towards the exit with the struggling silenced woman. But a negro comes on and confronts them eagerly stopping their progress.)

Negro

Here I am, Here I am. Ready and waiting to do my part.

(The second minstrel peers around the fourth minstrel not letting go of the woman)

Second Minstrel

(Angrily)

What do you want?

Get out of our way!
Fourth Minstrel

I want to fight the Hun, sir.
Negro
What have you got there sir?
(Innocently to second minstrel)

Uppity? Heh? Asking questions you've no business to ask.
Fourth Minstrel
(Indignantly)

Oh, indeed not sir. I'm an educated Negro. I'm only asking to do something for my country. I feel my race is on trial. It's an un-paralleled opportunity -
Negro

Where the hell are you from?
Second Minstrel

South Carolina, Sir. And an eager fighter, sir.
Negro

South Carolina, And you think we're going to put arms and ammunition into the hands of the Negroes of the South? Think we're damn fools? Smooth tongue and oily, aren't you? Ready to get a gun and run amok! Destroy white civilization, ravish white womanhood -
Fourth Minstrel

But sir, The very first American to receive the Croix de Guerre was a Negro named Henry Johnson. Killed four Germans, wounded twenty-two others with a bollo knife.
Negro
(Protestingly)

Sure it wasn't a razor?
Second Minstrel
(Interrupting)

After this war sir that superstition and all other superstitions about the Negro -
Negro

Will you get this guy out of my way? Give him something to do for God's sake.
Fourth Minstrel
(Widly to second minstrel)

But if I let go of her, she'll yell.
Second Minstrel

I'll handle her.
Fourth Minstrel

Fourth Minstrel (cont'd.)

(Loudly)

Give him something to do! But don't give him a gun.

Negro

Please do sir. This is an opportunity for my race. -

(The second minstrel lets go of the woman and immediately she yells)

Fifth Woman

You're being taken in the same way I was -

(Second minstrel tries to cover her mouth again. She wiggles free.)

They'll treat you as they always have -

(A struggle again between her and the second minstrel. This time second minstrel succeeds.)

Second Minstrel

(Helplessly)

What are we going to do?

Fourth Minstrel

Go this Negro out of the way.

Negro

Perhaps gentlemen if I talked to the lady -

Fourth Minstrel

(Snatching himself and his burden away)

Don't you dare touch her. You want to start a race riot?

(To the second minstrel)

Do something, will you?

(The second minstrel lets go and runs as fast as he can for the opposite exit. The fifth woman begins to scream. The fourth woman starts resolutely past the Negro, who jumps out of the way, but they get tangled up. Fourth minstrel then wheels and starts for the opposite exit with the screaming woman)

Negro

Can't I help, sir.

(Running alongside fourth minstrel)

Fifth Woman

(To Negro)

Grab my hands!

(She waves her hands at him and almost without thinking the Negro grabs them. This stops the fourth minstrel's hasty exit.)

Fourth Minstrel

What the hell are you doing? Let go that woman.

Fifth Woman

Make him put me down. You'll

get them bamboozle

Fifth Woman (Cont'd.)

(Screaming)

Lynchings! Discriminations! Race violence. Do you hear me!
(The second minstrel comes running
back on carrying a push broom)

Second Minstrel

Here you! Get to work! Let go that woman!

Fourth Minstrel

Let go of her. If you think old Judge Lynch won't hold court
because there's a war on, you've got another think coming.

(The second minstrel is shaking
the broom at him to take it.
In astonishment the Negro lets
go the woman's hand and takes
the push broom)

Negro

Is this for me?

Second Minstrel

Who else? Of course it's for you. Get to work, I said.

Fifth Woman

What did I tell you? Look at what they're doing to both of us!

(But the second minstrel steps up
and claps his hand over her mouth
again. This time the two go off
at a jog trot.)

Fourth Minstrel

A nice little loyalty oath ought to keep this school man quiet
for a long time to come.

(They are off with the struggling
woman. The Negro left alone
pays no further attention to
the two minstrels or their burden.
He is puzzled by the broom in
his hand. He shakes his head
slowly.)

Negro

I don't understand. I don't understand.

(Then he begins to sweep.)

But my race is still on trial. College graduates and students
should come forward.

(As he sweeps)

And demonstrate by their presence the principle of virtue and
courage learned in the academic hall. Say, to my fellow Negroes,
up!

(He flourishes his broom)

The race is on trial.

(Then he goes back to sweeping.)

Announcer

How do you like defending your country with a broom?

Negro

I don't understand, I don't see why they wouldn't give me
a gun. But perhaps, I'll be given a chance later.

(He is sweeping all this time)

If I do this job well after the war is over this great country is certain to grant my race as a reward for faithful service our elementary rights.

Announcer

Such as?

Negro

(Sweeping)

Oh - Court Justice -

Announcer

Nine young Negroes will come pretty close to the electric chair before you ever hear such a thing.

Negro

Well, better education

(The announcer silent)

Well? Didn't you hear what I said? Better education -

Announcer

Yes I heard you. I was just thinking of all the schools closed during the depression. I was thinking of the state of literacy in the South in 1936

Negro

Well by God man at least there will be an end to our economic peonage as a race -

Announcer

Yes. You'll be whipped and shot for joining with white tenant farmers in a union of your own against the landlords.

Negro

But maybe you know and maybe you don't. But you just wait until some of us Negroes get to France. We're brave men. The French have said so.

Announcer

Listen, Jim Crow, Listen to this: It is important that French Officers in command of U. S. Negro troops have an idea as to the position possessed by that race in the U. S. It is important not to treat the Negroes with that familiarity of indulgence which are matters of grievance and concern to American and an affront to their national policy. The Blacks might thereby be inspired with undesirable aspirations. How does that sound?

Negro

(Repeating)

Undesirable aspirations.

(Sweeping)

Undesirable aspirations.

(A man comes on from the left)

Man

But the New York Sun says editorial under capable white officers Negroes are splendid soldiers. They may not be able to live amicably with their southern communities but they know how to die in defense for their flag.

Negro

(Excitedly, flourishing his broom)

.. You bet we do.

Man

You don't mean to say that impresses you.

Negro

It picks me up considerably.

Man

Well then you're a fool. That's syrupy flattery. This is a bosses war. Like any and all wars. A cruel and open betrayal of you and every man, no matter what his color who works with his brain or his hands -

(Second Minstrel comes from right)

Second Minstrel

Come away from that man you.

Negro

Why? Maybe I ought to listen to what he says. Things don't seem to be going the way I expected -

Second Minstrel

(coming over to the Negro, yanking him away.)

I said come along you're in the army. We'll let you hear what's best for you. Besides my shoes need shining.

(The second minstrel hurries the Negro towards the exit. The man walks alongside of the Negro talking to him)

Man

Perhaps I should have told you I'm under indictment for sedition against the Government.

Second Minstrel

(to man)

You keep your mouth shut. You hear?

Man

(to Negro)

Don't be frightened of him. He can do no more to you than he can to me -

Second Minstrel

We can do plenty to Negroes. We can do plenty to you.

Man

(to Negro)

Not if you and all the rest like you support me.

(But the second minstrel and the Negro are at the exit. The second minstrel roughly pushes the man away)

Second Minstrel

Keep your distance, jailbird.

(to Negro, shaking him)

Don't you know he's an agitator.

(To Man)

If things were done properly you'd be shot. Like a dog.

(Second Minstrel and the Negro are out)

MAN

5
Yes I suppose I would.

(He turns to the audience)

I, Eugene V. Debs, have been accused of having obstructed war. I admit it. Gentlemen, I abhor war. I would oppose war, if I stood alone. When I think of a cold glittering steel bayonet plunged into the white quivering flesh of a human being I recoil with horror. I have often wondered -

First Picket

(coming down the aisle)

Stop! Right where you are, Gene Debs.

(Debs pauses. The first picket speaks somewhat apologetically)

I want to show something to you. Oh not so much to you, Gene, as to some of these other people here. I bet what you said didn't make any more impression on them

(indicating audience)

than on the judges of the supreme court. I want to show them anyway -

(Turning back to the stage - Loudly as he can he yells)

Come on!

(Bell toll from either side of the stage rush a German soldier and an American soldier at each other. Both are armed, bayonettes fixed. Without pause, they rush at each other. Past the guard of the German soldier the American soldier plunges his bayonette into the belly of the other up to the hilt. The first picket encourages them with loud cry of)

Rip up his guts! Twist it! Push it out the other side!

(The German soldier falls. The American soldier withdraws the bayonette. The first picket turns and speaks with sweet reasonableness to the audience, immediately)

Perhaps you notice something wrong?

Man

I did. There wasn't any blood. And the bayonette wasn't cold looking. Or glittering.

First Picket

Right, Gene. It was rubber.

(to the audience)

The man lying there on the floor isn't dead.

(To German soldier)

You can get up now. They know damn well you aren't dead.

(The German soldier gets up.)

The American soldier grins at him.

First picket speaks to the audience again.)

He's an actor and gets so much a week

(To German soldier)

How much do you get?

George Washington University
Library

(House lights are up)
German Soldier

\$23.86 a week.

First Picket
(To American soldier)

And you get the same?

American Soldier

(Three on stage come down to the footlights. They should seem completely out of character.)

First Picket

And if he

(indicating the American)

were in the army he'd get \$30 a month and keep. The German, if he were German, would get 10¢ a day about. But if he had

(Jerking his thumb towards the American soldier)

run a real bayonette into this other guys guts right here on the stage, he'd get life or the chair. It's O.K. though, isn't it? You can walk out of here any time and nobody's getting killed.

Man

Why don't you tell them how much it cost to kill a soldier in the last war?

(to the audience)

\$25,000. \$25,000 would provide -

(first picket interrupting)

First Picket

What's \$25,000 to these people? Or even 25 hundred thousand. Most of them are good if they see \$3,000 over a whole year. But maybe they would like to know what a real honest to God bayonette looks like.

(to the American soldier)

Let me see yours, will you?

(Off his belt, the American soldier takes a real bayonette. He hands it to the first Picket who gives it to a member of the actual audience.)

American Soldier

(To the man or woman handling the bayonette)

Don't cut your self on it.

First Picket

No, don't. It costs the Bethlehem Steel Corporation \$

_____ in 1918 the
income tax on making

to manufacture it. They sold it for \$ _____
things like that

(Business, if necessary, of telling someone else in the audience to look at the bayonette.)

5 And out of every one of these dollars, out of every dollar the Government takes in, that 72¢ goes for debts on all wars past, present and future. Part of those debts are accumulated buying from the Bethlehem Steel Corporation things like that -
(Indicating bayonets)

So they can pay more income tax. Ring around the rosy, eh?

(Brief music: trombones: Ring around the Rosy)

I'll take it now.

(He takes the bayonette and holds it up)

That's a bayonette. Gene Debs here said: "This being plunged

(He launches forward with the bayonette)

into the white quivering flesh of a human being made him recoil with horror

(He pauses, looks around at the audience)

Maybe you don't know what horror is?

German Soldier

Maybe they've seen too many horror movies.

American Soldier

Or maybe they've seen the safety signs about peace being more horrible than war, to get them to drive their autos more carefully.

First picket

Maybe so. But

(Darkly at the audience)

You know what flesh is, don't you? If you don't, perhaps there are some ladies here in evening dress. Or the man or woman next to you has got a face. Not like some of the guys on a battle field. Look at that face! That's flesh. And if that isn't enough, maybe you'd like to see what two men's naked bellies look like. You know: What the guts spill out when the bayonet runs through-

(He barks at the audience, like a stump speaker; and to the two soldiers).

Strip off your shirts:

(The two throw off their shirt. They stand at rigid military attention)

See! There are two men's naked bellies but they don't quiver, do they? Well, here's the bayonette.

(And he holds the bayonette up into the light. The house lights are dimming. He walks slowly up on the stage, the bayonet held like a knife and goes up to the nearest soldier. He suddenly plunges the bayonet towards the nearest soldier's belly. The soldier covers himself and ducks and the other one runs off. The first immediately follows him).

That's the recoil *Gene men.*

(He tosses the bayonette into the wings and walks off the stage.)

5

First Picket (Cont'd).

(and quickly up the aisle; as he goes he lifts his hand and says)

O.K. Gene Debs

MAN

(As Debs again)

I am the smallest part of this trial. I have lived a long enough to appreciate my own personal insignificance in relation to a great issue. One that involves the welfare of the whole people. What is done to me will be of small consequence.

Announcer

(Interrupting)

Ten years in the state penitentiary of West Virginia.

MAN

(Looking in direction of announcer)

After all. I am not on trial here. There is an infinitely greater issue being tried in this court. American institutions are on trial here. Before a court of American citizens.

(And he turns and goes out. Immediately a Club-woman in black face runs on from the opposite side. The man is off).

Club Woman

Oh, Mr. Debs! Oh, Mr. Debs! You're wrong. And you're right. The future will tell. Whether we'll be ground down by the deal of prussianism or whether we're to be a free people living in a free democracy! Democracy! Mr. Debs. Oh, if I could only find you now I'd show you -

Announcer

Look in the West Virginia _____! Then look in the Penitentiary of Atlanta! Then look for an old man! Sick! 'Dying' Useless! Pardoned in 1921 when he was a ghost of the man he was. Good only to die.

Club Woman

Well, it serves him right. I don't like to be brutal but he should have kept quiet. Nobody would have touched him, if he just thought those things. He tried to get others to think them. And that's bad.

(Fifth minstrel enters. He wears a judge's robe and carries a cup of tea.

Fifth Minstrel

That dear lady is precisely what I said in the Kate Richard's O'Hare case.

Club Woman

Oh Judge how sweet of you to come. Do sit down.

Fifth Minstrel

(Sitting)

Yes, I will. And you have some tea.

(Club woman takes the cup and drinks from it. Gives it back),

Club Woman

These war time economies are sometimes so difficult to manage but

5

I think they're so chummy

(As she gives the cup back)

Fifth Minstrel

In the manner of gossip)

Do you know what that O'Hare woman said?

Any person who enlisted in the army of the U.S. for service in France would be used for fertilizer.

Club Woman

But that's ridiculous. We don't need fertilizer. There's too much food growing in this world already.

Fifth Minstrel

And what more she said the women of the U.S. were nothing more than a brood of sows to raise children to get in the army and be made into a fertilizer.

(They hand the cup of tea back and forth.)

Club Woman

How vulgar. Why if they were brood-sows, their production would be curtailed.

Fifth Minstrel

You can bet I told her a thing or two.

Club Woman

What did you say, Judge?

Fifth Minstrel

I said to her I said the worse poison you can instill in the hearts of men is a conscientious feeling that they are being deprived of their just earnings or their just deserts by some invisible power. And further I said I it's the theory of a socialist like this O'Hare woman that capitalism is the sole instrument that has brought this war.

Club Woman

Oh, touche! Oh touche! A hit, a hit

(She patters her hands together. Takes the tea cup and drinks from it in her excitement)

Fifth Minstrel

Oh but that isn't all I said. I said this is a grave matter. We need reformers in this country. We need men to go out and preach the gospel of the glory and the power of these United States.

Club Woman

Oh dear I wish you'd be able to speak such words in 1930. It would have meant so much to the men in the broad line.

Fifth Minstrel.

(Getting to his feet. Carried away with his own emotion with his own words).

We need reformers to go out and point out where people can benefit themselves.

FIFTH MINSTREL (cont'd)

by having a law enacted. Here and there. But we have not room for reformers who must first drive out of the hearts of men and women every sentiment of pride and exaltation and make them feel like abject slaves.

ANNOUNCER

(In military fashion)

Forward march! Suck in your guts! Fall flat on your face! Your face I said! It'll do good! Forward march. Double quick time. Do you want to live forever!

(As if in response to this a black fact national guard comes on driving a man in dungarees before him across the stage.)

CLUB WOMAN

Oh look judge, another case for you. One of those people whose trying to make people feel like an abject slave.

FIFTH MINSTREL

(Handing her the cup)

Hold the cup please?

(He steps out and stops the two)

What has miscreant done?

NATIONAL GUARDSMAN

He's on strike. But we don't need you sir. Not in 1934. We're settin' up concentration camps for his like down here in Georgis. (To man in dungarees)

Get on with you, you scum.

(The two go on out)

FIFTH MINSTREL

(A little bewilderdly beginning to repeat himself)

The worst poison you can instill in the hearts of men - What was I saying Being deprived of their just earnings -

CLUB WOMAN

(Coming to his rescue)

Judge you were saying just the right thing. And please do have some more tea.

(He takes the cup)

Obviously somebody told that poor man he wasn't getting his just deserts. And now look at him.

(She takes the cup again)

It's been so nice seeing you, judge. But I won't keep you I am sure there are lots of people crying out for peace and I.W.W.s that you should attent to.

(She guides the fifth minstrel to the exit)

FIFTH MINSTREL

(Haughtily)

If you don't mind I'll have my cup, please.

CLUB WOMAN

(Giging it to him)

CLUB WOMAN (Continued)

Why yes how odd of me. I guess I just want anything I could lay my hands on. Don't I.

(Fifth minstrel exits)

You know I didn't know how easy it would be to get rid of him. Not that judges aren't fine. I don't know how we'd get along without them. They're so apt to be dry. And we like something a little juicy, wouldn't we? I was going to show this to Mr. Debs. It would have made his hair stand on end.

ANNOUNCER

Eugene Debs was bold.

CLUB WOMAN

Oh be still.

(To audience)

But I can show it to you.

(And she runs hurriedly off and returns with a reproduction of a movie still on an easel which she places on the stage. Still shows a German soldier about to attack a kneeling helpless woman in a shell shattered house. The German soldier has his back to the door and does not see an American standing there about to enter and save the woman.)

There. Isn't that juicy.

Just look at it. Doesn't that (Pointing to the German in the Still)

just make your blood boil. Of course, Germans aren't like this under Hitler, you know. I was there last summer and they have the very cleanest hotels and streets. Oh, brutes like these are in concentration camps. But from 1914 to 1918 they were on the loose. Lok, just think if this

(Pointing to the woman in the picture)

were I! That's the way to bring it home to you. I will be the woman and -

(RUNNING ABOUT)

Oh where are those two boys who were here with Mr. Debs a while ago. I can use them.

(Calling)

Oh, boys! Boys! Come here I want you.

(The American and German soldier appear at the opposite exit of the entrance to which she is calling)

AMERICAN SOLDIER

Did you want us lady?

CLUB WOMAN

(Dashing back)

Oh there you are.

(So far as costumes are concerned the two soldiers are indistinguishable. They are still naked to the waste and without caps. The club woman speaks to the American)

Now you, you horrid creature, you're to be preparing to attack me.

AMERICAN SOLDIER

Say lady! I'm an American, I am. You can't talk that way -

CLUB WOMAN

Oh dear, Oh dear. I do beg your pardon. I do. It's you
(Pointing an accusing finger at the German soldier)

Isn't it? Trying to pass yourself off as an American? Get your helmet.

(Sullonly the German Soldier goes off to get his helmet. The Club Woman speaks immediately to the American Soldier.)

Oh, but we'll make it up to you. We'll show you how America treats soldiers.

(Calling)

Oh Girls! Girls! Come America.

(A very elegant young girl in black face come on. She is feverish, & scarcely able to stand still*)

This is Miss Debutante.

(To the girl)

Will you dance with the dear boy while I'm getting ready?

MISS DEBUTANTE

Will I? Will he?

(The American Soldier seized the girl and they dance to the softly played tune of a 1917 fox trot. The clubwoman begins to disarrange her hair. The German Soldier comes back on looking forlorn. The Club Woman indicates the girl for the benefit of the Soldier and the Debutante.)

CLUB WOMAN

Look out he doesn't try to knife you in the back. Or crucify you the way they did Canadian soldiers. Or cut off Miss Debutante's dress.

(Sixth Woman comes on; father nervously she goes up to the Club Woman.)

SIXTH WOMAN

I got to talk to some one.

(Club Woman pays no attention to her; only moves out of her range and is obviously delayed by her getting ready.)

MISS DEBUTANTE

(To American Soldier)

Oh, God, isn't war wonderful)

AMERICAN SOLDIER

Huh? Oh, yeah, sure.

SIXTH WOMAN

My man is working steady and we ought to be getting along fine, but my money won't reach even if I look at every penny twice before I spend it.

(She waits with patience each time as she makes a remark as if she expected the Club Woman who ranges all over the stage to avoid her, humming the dance tune, to answer.)

MISS DEBUTANTE

I feel so exhilarated all the time. I want to give, give, give.

AMERICAN SOLDIER

Give to who?

SIXTH WOMAN

It's terrible times. Prices go up and up all the time. Pay stays the same. If it get's much worse, it'll seem like the end of the world.

MISS DEBUTANTE

Father's not going to have a coming-out party forme. I haven't time. He's going to put the money into liberty bonds. Of course he's only getting 3½ percent this time, but he'll get four percent next.

SIXTH WOMAN

I used to go to work when my man was sick. Or couldn't get a job. But this is the first time I ever had to go to work to get enough mooney to feed the kids when he was working regular.

(across the stage comes a Minstrel beating a man in shirt sleeves before him. The Sixth Woman had made no impression on the Club Woman, but was morely avoiding her. She shakes her head wearily and is going out in the same direction that the two men are proceeding in. She pauses to let them by.)

FIRST MINSTREL

(As he beats)

In the name of the woman and children of Belgium,
(He repeats this over and over)

SIXTH WOMAN

(To the man dodging the blows)

What are they beating you for?

MAN

Because I fought the Public Utilities Company in my town for lower rates.

FIRST MINSTREL

He's pro-German, that's what he is. In the name of the women and children of Belgium -

(as he beats him and drags him out)

(Sixth Woman follows them shaking her head)

AMERICAN SOLDIER

(To Miss Debutante)

I been thinking. Maybe your Pa could give you a party with the money he won't have to pay taxes on those Liberty Bonds.

MISS DEBUTANTE

Oh, I don't want a party. Now is the time to give till it hurts! I never danced with a half naked man before. Are all officers going to dances now without their shirts?

(The Club Woman is powdering her nose, rouging her lips, endlessly dishevelling her hair. She motions to the German Soldier to come and give her skirt a twist and a yank. At first he does not understand, then he complies.)

5

American Soldier
(Meanwhile) - (To Miss Debutante)

No, lady, I'm no shave-tail. I'm a sweatin', mamre-shoveling,
buck private.

(In disgust and amazement Miss Debutante snatches
herself free. Music ends with a squawk.)

Miss Debutante
My God! I've been insulted! A private!

(As she dashes off. Immediately a woman
in black face wearing the Salvation Army
Bonnet comes on. She hands the bewildered
American Soldier six doughnuts.)

Lassie
A man may be down, but he's never out.

Clubwoman
(Trying to make herself still more disheveled.)
Isn't the Salvation Army just wonderful? They're right in there
with the boys, aren't they?

German Soldier
(To Lassie)
Anything, for me?

Clubwoman
(Rushing across the stage)
How dare you accost the Salvation Army lassie. Low as the bums
on the street are, you could take lessons from them. Even de-
praved American bums are better than the most cultured Germans!

Lassie
There dear, you go right on with your good work.
(The German Soldier shrinks back and immediately
the First Minstrel comes back across the stage
beating another man. Clubwoman and the Salva-
tion Army Lassie hide their heads in each other's
arm.)

First Minstrel
(As he beats the man)
Try to organize the oil fields, will you, you damned agitator!
You lous-ridden IWW! In the name of the women and children of
Belgium! Take that!
(Driving and beating the man on out)

American Soldier
That's just what he deserves.

Announcer
Wait till you're in the same fix, Buddy, sometime and you will
be, don't worry.

Clubwoman
(To Lassie)
There, are you all right.

Lassie
Yes, I'm all right.
(She goes out singing, accompanied by orchestra)

Salvation Army Lassie (continuing)

There's a fountain filled with blood.

(And immediately the Third Minstrel as a Y.M.C.A. officer, comes out and slaps the American soldier on the back.)

Third Minstrel

Hi, Buddy. Have a new testament. Many of the fellows write home how the book has stopped bullets.

(The American soldier takes the book)

Have a pack of cigs.

(The American Soldier takes the cigarettes.)

Fifty cents, Buddy.

(The American Soldier gives him 50 cents.)

Try to lead a clean life, Buddy. Fight better that way.

(And the Third Minstrel goes out singing
"Though the skies be gray, you can always find
a little sunshine in the Y.M.C.A.")

Clubwoman

Well, I guess I'm nearly as ready as I will be.

(Her dress is off one shoulder like the woman in the still.)

American Soldier

Say, do you know that guy charged me fifty cents for a pack of cigarettes? What about it? I thought they were given away. Or sold at cost.

Clubwoman

Oh, I am sure you are mistaken. You're letting your mind be warped by propaganda. You must think of the roll you play in history.

(She takes him by the arm and leads him to the nearest exit.)

American Soldier

Lady, that's just what I'm beginning to think about.

Clubwoman

Well, that's fine. Now you stand there; like the American in the picture. And you

(To German Soldier)

You come here and stand like the awful German.

(She assumes the posture of the woman; the three of them are grouped to look like the group in the still. The two soldiers are apathetic.)

Oh put some vim into it.

(To German Soldier)

You! Look lustful

German Soldier

Me? Think I am crazy?

American Soldier

(To German Soldier)

I'm getting sick of this foolishness. What do you say we give this dame the bum's rush.

(The Clubwoman jumps to her feet.)

5 Clubwoman
Such language! Don't you dare touch me -

German Soldier
It's a good idea.

(And he and the American Soldier makes a sudden rush for the Clubwoman who runs screaming "Help" from the stage. The two chase her off. The American Soldier sticks his head out of the wing.)

American Soldier
What do you think of that, huh? That's pretty good, isn't it

First Picket
(Coming down the aisle)
Yeah, that's fine.

American Soldier
We thought we'd think so.

First Picket
Yeah, you chased her off the stage and she can go right out the stage door and begin all over again. Where it really counts. In her home, among her friends, in her club -

American Soldier
Say, you're pretty difficult to please.
(First Picket gets up on the stage.)

First Picket
Sure, I'm difficult to please. The point these people
(Indicating the audience)
ought to be thinking is, that's just what you didn't do in 1917.

American Soldier
But I did it today and that's important.

First Picket
Anybody can go back and pick out his mistakes years ago. The point is will he make them over again.
(The Clubwoman in same costume, wearing a false beard, comes in on tiptoe.)

Clubwoman
(Disguising her voice)
What we need is a big navy.
(Going over to the American Soldier)
You can never tell about Japan, you know.

American Soldier
Say, you know I'd forgotten about Japan. Pretty aggressive, isn't sh

Clubwoman
We must protect our shores. We must have a big navy. We must increase the army. We only want to protect ourselves.

First Picket
And who's going to pay for all this protection?

Clubwoman
I'm sure this dear boy here would like to help. Wouldn't you?

American Soldier
Not me. I'm busted. Things didn't break so well for me after the war.

Clubwoman
Oh, the cigarettes you have in your pocket. Just give me the little blue government stamp.

(The American Soldier takes the cigarettes out of his pocket.)

See? There. The little stamp that holds the package together.

American Soldier
Sure, you can have that.
(He tears it off and gives it to the woman)

Clubwoman
That will help. It's worth at least 5 cents. You couldn't use it to send a letter even, but when you think of all the cigarette smokers there are in the land, it will be quite a help.

(Going up to the First Picket)

Wouldn't you like to help build a battleship?

First Picket
I'd like to see what's behind this bush.
(He yanks the whiskers off the Clubwoman who fails to retain them.)

American Soldier
Hey, that's the same dame -
(He pursues her screaming off.)

First Picket
(Holding up the whiskers)
I wish it were as simple as all that. I wish we could pull the whiskers off of some of these people and I wish we could show you as easily that the very people that were taken in once are being taken in all over -
(He is interrupted by a blast from a trumpet. It drowns out everything he is trying to say. The trumpet continues blowing in assembly call. First Picket finally makes himself heard.)
Hey, what's the big idea? Trying to drown me out?

Announcer
They can't help it. The farmers of Oklahoma are going to march on Washington to stop the war. It's revolt.
(Immediately Assembly call again from trumpet and a group of men in dungarees, including the Second and Third Pickets run on ahead of the group of six minstrels, three of whom wear U.S. hats and carry guns. During this there should be cacophonous sounds from the orchestra. As soon as the noise begins, the First Picket ducks.)

First Man
(Not a Picket)

We don't want war. We're sick of slaving and starving. And then being marched off to war.

5
 Second Man (Not a picket)
 And we're going to try to stop it we're organized -

First Picket
 (Trying to get the Minstrel's attention)

Hey! Listen!

Fourth Minstrel
 (Not in uniform, paying no attention to the picket)
 We'll war you. We'll lynch you! Shoot you! We'll teach you to
 terrorize the countryside.

(The Minstrel group runs at the other group.
 The Minstrels in uniform dropping to their
 knees to fire.)

Second Picket

Hey listen, will you?

(He runs up to a Minstrel with a gun and tries
 to wrest it from him, but gets knocked out of
 the way so that he lands near the footlights
 in a sitting position. The same thing simul-
 taneously happens to the Second Picket. Shout-
 ing and yelling, the minstrels pursue the re-
 mainder of the group off to the accompaniment
 of the orchestra's continuous noise. The Second
 and Third Pickets pick themselves up, rubbing
 their injured bodies.)

First Picket

(Standing up)

Well, well, well!

(To the picket nearest him)

And what were you doing in the revolt of the Oklahoma farmers?

Second Picket

And what were you doing hiding over there?

First Picket

(Laughing)

I was hiding behind the skirts of women and children, so I
 wouldn't be fired at. Isn't that what trouble-makers do?

Third Picket

But what the hell did they do that to us for, I want to know.

First Picket

Because you were in revolt against the government. You've got
 to expect the Revolution is going to be put down, even if it's
 American dirt farmers who are fomenting it.

Third Picket

Well, so I understand. But I wasn't in on the revolt. I was
 in the Bonus Army of 1933. We were only trying to get what the
 Government had promised us for war service. And I needed it,
 Gee, my kids are starving. The railroads got compensated for
 giving themselves over to the government right away.

Second Picket

And I wasn't even in the Bonus Army. I was on strike in Minneapolis
 in 1935. I was trying to get decent hours and decent pay.

First Picket

And you both got landed on your ear, didn't you? The years don't seem to make much difference do they? 1917, 1933, 1935.

Third Picket

We were only camping there in Washington until we got what we wanted.

First Picket

The Oklahoma farmers were only camping till they got what they wanted, too.

Third Picket

But it's different with me. I wasn't in a Revolution.

Announcer

General MacArthur takes a different view. He said that mob down there was a bad looking mob. It was animated by the essence of Revolution. The gentleness, the consideration -

First Picket

(Interrupting)

Consideration for who?

Announcer (Continuing)

With which they were treated, had been mistaken for weakness. They had come to the conclusion beyond the shadow of a doubt that they were about to take over in some arbitrary way either the direct control of the government or to control it by some indirect method.

Second Picket

But that doesn't tell me why I got knocked on my head. I was on strike. It's the only weapon I've got.

Announcer

A riot may easily turn into an insurrection.

Second Picket

They were trying to run scabs in on us.

Announcer

A man's right to work must be protected.

First Picket

Even at the point of a gun?

Announcer

If it means destruction of property, property must be protected.
(First and Fourth Minstrels come on, engaged in conversation.)

First Minstrel

(To Fourth Minstrel)

Did you hear what was just said?

Fourth Minstrel

(Anxiously)

I heard it. I know it by hear. But please sell the government your steel. We need it to fight the war with.

FIRST PICKET

What's wrong here.

FOURTH MINSTREL

Nothing, nothing. We don't want any unfavorably publicity.
Go along about your own business.

(The three trail along)

FOURTH MINSTREL

(Pleads with the First Minstrel)

Think what this will do to the country. (With emphasis,) I
demand you give us steel at the price the government offers.
If you don't we'll have to commandeer the steel industry.

FIRST PICKET

Hurray!

FIRST MINSTREL

(Beginning to laugh to Fourth Minstrel)

Did you say commandeer?

FOURTH MINSTREL

(Hesitating)

Well, I think I did.

FIRST MINSTREL

Aren't you forgetting the Constitution? And you're such an
excellent business man too.

SECOND PICKET

Is there anything in the Constitution about me?

FIRST MINSTREL

The Fifth Amendment, prohibits the taking of private property
for public use without just compensation.

FOURTH MINSTREL

(Getting down on his knees)

Please, please, give us your steel. We'll meet you half way.

THIRD PICKET

But isn't this the essence of revolution? Isn't this an arbitrary
way of taking control of the government? Pretty directly too.

FOURTH MINSTREL

(At the First Minstrel's knees)

Don't pay any attention to him. Just meet us half way.

FIRST MINSTREL

(scratching his chin)

Well, now, maybe. Of course in an emergency like this you
really ought to repeal the Sherman Anti-trust laws. But I
guess it doesn't matter. I'll meet you half way.

FOURTH MINSTREL

(Getting up from his knees, eagerly)

Oh thank you, thank you. How kind you are. How patriotic you are.
(he is about to go out with the First Minstrel,
but the First Picket grabs him and holds him
back. First Minstrel goes on out.)

FIRST PICKET

WE just want to ask you a question.

FOURTH MINSTREL

Well ask it quickly. I am very pressed for time.

FIRST PICKET

So are we. But anyway, will that guy make any profit on the steel he sold to the U.S. government?

FOURTH MINSTREL

Profit? Don't be ridiculous. If he didn't make a reasonable profit, how could he be expected to do his duty.

THIRD PICKET

And if he didn't make the profit he thought he should, he could actually hold you up?

FIRST PICKET

Could? He did! And in war time.

SECOND PICKET

I'd like to see what would happen to us if we did something like that.

THIRD PICKET

You saw what happened to us. The Army was called out against us.

FOURTH MINSTREL

Aren't you forgetting the industry of a nation is essential to life? We are dependant upon the energy, resourcefulness, inventiveness, of men like the gentleman, who just left.

FIRST PICKET

And we aren't essential.

FOURTH MINSTREL

Why, of course you are essential, but not in the same way. Now if you don't mind I have an appointment with the copper industry. (he hurries out)

FIRST PICKET

Well, did you understand? Was that clear to you? Capital can go on strike.

SECOND PICKET

Then, by God, we can too.

ANNOUNCER

In war time? Why, boys. Let me read you a notice posted in the American Can Company of Bridgeport, Connecticut, in 1918. Those boys thought they were in a fine position to strike. They thought they had their boss where the hairs are short. The notice reads: This plant employs a number of men who have received exemption for deferred classification on account of the value of their services in the production of munitions or guns. Any of these men who walk out in this crisis, will automatical forfeit such classification and their local board will recieve immediate advice to that effect. Every assurance has been given that these men will at once be placed in class ;-A and that further exemption at this or any other plant will be refused.

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FIRST PICKET

Neat, eh? A striker will be sent to the front. But what are you going to do with a corporation?

SECOND PICKET

Say, maybe if the government would guarantee us collective bargaining, maybe we could have something to the same effect. Maybe we could force the issue.

FIRST PICKET

You actually believe that, don't you.

SECOND PICKET

Until I learn different.

FIRST PICKET

O. K. I'll show what to believe
(he goes to an exit and calls.)
Hey, you. Send out one of the Minstrels.
(The Fifth Minstrel comes out.)

FIFTH MINSTREL

How can I be of service to you?

FIRST PICKET

I want to demonstrate something.

FIRST MINSTREL

Will I get a commission?

FIRST PICKET

Not this time. This is for the public good.

FIFTH MINSTREL

Something constructive then, I hope.

FIRST PICKET

Very constructive. You're the Colt Patent Firearms Manufacturing Company. I guess you better run and get a blue eagle first.
(Fifth Minstrel runs out. The First Picket speaks to the other two.)

Now look, in 1933, the government signed an agreement, the N.R.A. Code, with this gent. One of the provisions guarantees you the right of collective bargaining. Section 7a in fact.
(First Minstrel very proudly returns with a blue eagle attached to his coat.)

That's that the blue eagle stands for. Now you guys have got the right to bargain collectively with him on any grievances you've got. Go ahead, try it.
(Smilingly with folded hands. The Fifth Minstrel waits. The two Pickets go up to him.)

SECOND PICKET

We formed a union in this plant of yours and we're the representatives of the union. We want to discuss certain matters with you. Will you do it?

(Fifth Minstrel shakes his head smiling)

THIRD PICKET

Then we'll have to strike.

(Fifth Minstrel shrugs)

SECOND PICKET

We'll appeal to the Labor Board. They'll make you bargain with us.

THIRD PICKET

If you don't they'll take your blue eagle away from you.

(Fifth Minstrel shrugs)

Do you realize that'll mean your going against the government itself.

SECOND PICKET.

All right. We'll force the issue. We'll appeal to the Labor Board.

(The Third Minstrel comes on, goes up to the Fifth Minstrel, takes the blue eagle off his coat and shakes hands with the pickets.)

There what did I tell you.

(The Fifth Minstrel offers to shake hands. He and the Third Minstrel shake hands. The pickets shake hands.)

THIRD PICKET

(to first picket)

This won't prove much. Look how friendly everything is.

FIRST PICKET

Now see what the Colt Manufacturing Company says.

SECOND PICKET

(to Fifth Minstrel

Aren't you scared? The government's a pretty big thing to try to buck. Look what happened to Al Capone.

(Fifth Minstrel smilingly shakes his head)

THIRD PICKET

He can't sit tight and just say nothing.

FIRST PICKET

Oh yes, he can.

THIRD PICKET

But, what if the government is behind us?

x (Fifth Minstrel shrugs)

FIRST PICKET

(interrupting)

Watch!

(The Second Minstrel comes on wearing the Army officer's cap. He goes up to the Fifth Minstrel and hands him a sheaf of paper.)

SECOND PICKET

What are they?

FIRST PICKET

Orders. From the War Department of the United States Government (the two Minstrels bow and shake hands.)

THIRD PICKET

Hoy!

(running after the Second Minstrel who is starting to go out.)

Haven't you heard? The Blue Eagle's been taken away from that guy. No Department of Government can give orders to a company that's flaunting it.

(The Second Minstrel indicates that he neither sees nor hears nor speaks.)

Is the War Department deaf, dumb and blind?

FIRST PICKET

(as the Second Minstrel goes out)

Is it? Maybe so. But maybe there's another reason too.

(he goes up to the Fifth Minstrel.)

Supposing the War Department had been able to hear that the Blue Eagle had been taken away? What would have happened then?

(The Fifth Minstrel smiles and hugs the sheaf of papers too.)

I suppose those

(indicating papers the Minstrel holds)

are orders for weapons and instruments essential for national defense?

(The Fifth Minstrel nods.)

And national defense comes before the welfare even of the people who are supposed to be defended, like the workers of a country?

(The Minstrel nods eagerly)

And you hold a patent on such instruments?

(The Minstrel nods again.)

SECOND PICKET

(Incredulous)

And the Government even can't compel you the way it can us?

FIRST PICKET

The Fifth Amendment protects his property. He's safe behind the Constitution and National Defense.

FIFTH MINSTREL

Now Gentlemen -

SECOND PICKET

Look, it talks.

FIFTH MINSTREL

Yes, that's just the point. You have done all the talking, now we Minstrels have been very patient. We would like to do a little talking ourselves, but of course we can't talk freely with you around. In fact we'd like to have a little celebration, just the Minstrels. Would you mind giving us the stage. It's only fair you know.

FIRST PICKET

Well, boys, what do you say?

SECOND PICKET

If they're just going to bob their heads, yes and no and don't understand when we try to talk to them, why not let them have the stage?

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First Picket
(To Fifth Minstrel)
It's yours and a lot of good may it do you.

Fifth Minstrel
Thanks, boys. I'll do the same for you some time.

First Picket
(as he exits with the others)
Like hell you will.

(he goes on out with the others) (The Minstrel scurries across the stage to see if the three are out of sight. Then he scurries back to the other side and becons.)

Third Minstrel
(poking his head out of the wings)
All clear? Any difficulties?

Fifth Minstrel
They were meek as lambs about it.
(Third and Fourth Minstrel come on carrying a table between them.)

Third Minstrel
The Average American is pretty docile and easy-going, unless he's stirred up by agitators, of course.
(They put the table down in the center of the stage.)

Fourth Minstrel
And we got methods of dealing with agitators.
(The First, Second and Sixth Minstrel and the two End Men come on bringing chairs with them. The Second Minstrel wears the Army officer's hat, the others the same hats they wore in the first scene at the opening.)

First Minstrel
It's nice having this quiet little get-together.

Second Minstrel
Oh well, it never hurt anybody to have a little relaxation. Even us.
(They all sit down at the table, very much at their ease. They light cigars.)

First Minstrel
It was really a very nice war, wasn't it, all things considered. We learned things out of that war. Very valuable things.

Third Minstrel
Now, gentlemen, no business please. We're here for relaxation.
(He starts applauding and the others join in with shouts of "All right, let's go!")
"Where's the show!" "We're here to be relaxed!"
(The Interlocutor comes on.)

Interlocutor
Gentlemen, gentlemen, patience please. We're having a little difficulty. We only want the right kind of entertainment, and it's sometimes difficult to get.

(He goes off again and returns leading a young girl by the arm, but with difficulty for she protests every step of the way.)

Girl

(Grabbing hold of the proscenium)

No, I don't want to. I wanna go to the movies.

Interlocutor

Now, now, you mustn't be selfish. You must help entertain our great industrial military minds.

(he seizes her around the waist and yanks her away toward the table. There is applause from Minstrels.)

Girl

(struggling)

I wanna go to the movies.

Interlocutor

You see gentlemen, how difficult it is. You see, I have to work while you are resting.

(he suddenly swings the girl up on the table.)

Girl

I don't want to.

Interlocutor

Gentlemen, allow me to introduce for your very special entertainment, Miss America.

(There is fanfare from the orchestra. The Minstrels stand up and applaud. The Girl is embarrassed but flattered. The Interlocutor steps up on to the table beside her.)

Gentlemen, I want you to see what lovely lips this young lady has.

Girl

(pushing in the way.)

Oh you get out.

Interlocutor

(not getting out)

See what a splendid shade of lip rouge she has on. See how it matches her complexion.

Girl

Flatterer!

Interlocutor

(paying no attention to the girl's remark)

Do you see gentlemen?

(and he suddenly slaps a sticker on her lips.)

A tax on that rouge.

(applause. During this the orchestra softly plays "Yankee Rose" pausing each time for the Interlocutor's remarks. The Girl indignat, now, tries to get off the table, but with much laughter, the minstrels and the Interlocutor do not let her.)

First Minstrel
(laughing)

You can't tax only tow or three percent of the people. It's got to be everybody.

Interlocutor

Look, how daintily Miss America is shod. Leather. A tax on leather.

(and he slaps stickers on both her shoes. Again she tries to get away.)

Powder on her cheeks. A tax on those checks.
(same action)

Second Minstrel

We must all bear our share of war, not just these gentlemen, but you little lady.

(and he too slaps a sticker on the girl)

Interlocutor

Her dress! Cotton. A tax on cotton.
(Same action)

Have a chocolate bar.

(the girl backs away.)

Third Minstrel

Oh take it, take it. Take anything you can get.

(Unwilling the girl takes the chocolate bar. The Interlocutor slaps a sticker on it.)

Interlocutor

A tax on that

(The Minstrels are hysterical with laughter.)

Fourth Minstrel

Have some oleomargerine.

Fifth Minstrel

Have a soft drink.

Sixth Minstrel

Have some brass knuckles. There's 100% tax on those.

First Minstrel

Have a tax.

(all of them shouting at the girl who continually tries to escape.)

Have a tax.

Interlocutor

Rolling an enormous piece of tax paper.) Have a tax.

(and he bundles the girl completely up in it and gets her down off the table. Bears her off. The Minstrels collapse in their chairs, overcome with laughter.)

First End Man

(above the laughter)

What's an Optimist, Pop?

Second End Man

An optimist is a man who thinks that the people who make money out of the war, pay for it.

(applause from the minstrels)

Interlocutor
(returning)

How was that, gentlemen?

Third Minstrel

It's the most refreshing experience I've had in a long time. It puts things where they belong. And how relaxing it is for a tired business man.

(more laughter from the Minstrels)

Fourth Minstrel

What's next on the program?

Interlocutor

Oh patience, gentlemen, patience. What do you want. The world with a little white fence around it?

Fifth Minstrel

Let's see it please.

(the Interlocutor suddenly flings his hat on the ground, throws his coat open and begins to shout.)

Interlocutor

Down with the bankers! Down with the bosses! Down with the government.

(The Minstrels, all but the second, are thrown into considerable consternation and when a group of men in black face carrying National guard hats in their hands, come running and shout, "Hurray" that's telling them," and continues to cluster round the Interlocutor who continues to shout his previous remarks, the minstrels, all but the second take refuge under the table behind the chairs.)

Fourth Minstrel

It's a trap. We're betrayed.

(Second Minstrel is perfectly calm.)

Interlocutor

(orating to the group of men in black face)
Strike! Burn down the factory! Destroy it!

(The group of men cheer and suddenly converge towards the opposite exit. But they are met by a group of men wearing National Guard's hats, carrying guns with fixed bayonets. The latter advance hurling mimic gas bombs and the other group retires before them shouting, "Down with the Bosses!" and with them goes the Interlocutor still shouting his remarks, As the second group drives off the first, the Minstrels crawl out from their places of refuge.)

What the hell was that for? Third Minstrel

(Second Minstrel smiles and sprawls in his chair, very pleased with himself.)

Second Minstrel
It takes a military man to be brave. You're all soft from too much civilian life. How about a little military training, gentlemen?

Fourth Minstrel
Was that somebody's idea of a joke? There are like demands and imprecations from the others.

Second Minstrel
(calmly)
That gentlemen, was a sham battle between a group of strikers and the National Guard. Thought we'd show you we're prepared for international emergencies as well as for external. Defense on two fronts.
(The Interlocutor returns followed by both groups, all with National Guard hats on. All with guns and very pleased with themselves.)

Interlocutor
That was something a little different, wasn't it? How did it suit you?

Third Minstrel
Now that I see the point of it, it suits me fine. But it had some of us worried for a while.
(National Guards laugh and jostle one another.)

Interlocutor
I am sure our general here will give any one of you industrial gentlemen, who make tear gas and such things, a recommendation for your products which were so successfully used before your very eyes.
(Second Minstrel nods agreement)

Fourth Minstrel
By golly, gentlemen, I think we ought to do something for these boys here. It was a damn good show and I appreciate it. I suggest we take up a collection for these boys. The way it was done after the San Francisco General Strike.
(He passes his hat around and the Minstrels put money in it. The Interlocutor takes the hat and passes the money out to the National Guard. Ad they get paid, they go out.)

Interlocutor
(during the pay off)
Nice work, boys, We'll use you again, some time. Nice work. You make fine rioters.
(The Minstrels burst into applause as the last of the National Guards go out.)

Second Minstrel
And now gentlemen, it is my turn. To hand out the favors. To each and every one of you, a favor. A souvenir of this little get-together.
(He is provided with toy cannons, toy machine guns, toy airplanes, toy tanks, etc. He passes them out to the other minstrels. There are excited cries from them and they immediately fall to examining and playing with the various toys.)
These are the latest developments. By manufacturing these and

(Second Minstrel continued)

selling them to other countries, you are of course aiding in readying your factories for our own national defense. In fact, gentlemen -

(here the others all listen)

I can fittingly quote the words of Lieutenant Colonel C.T. Harris:

"The War Department is convinced that in the event of war, American industry must produce the major portion of the required munitions. It follows that so far as practicable industry should be prepared to perform its war mission. Therefore the War Department has encouraged production of munitions not only for the United States government but also for export."

(applause)

And I think I can assure you, gentlemen, that the War Department does not favor nationalizing the war industry. It would not be practical.

Fifth Minstrel

(standing up)

I wish to thank you sir, on behalf of my colleagues, to say in the words of Major K.K.V. Casey, Congress is too short-sighted to see the necessity to appropriate funds to help us make sales to other nations. This is our country and not the country of Congress.

(He sits down, prolonged applause)

Interlocutor

This has been a very enjoyable occasion, gentlemen, hasn't it?

(There is enthusiastic response)

But I want to ask you gentlemen, if you believe patriotism is adjourned simply because the war is over.

Fourth Minstrel

Never. You just lead us to another war and we'll show you how patriotism is sitting up and taking notice. It's never us, you know who don't want to be patriotic. Look, we're patriotic even when we're enjoying ourselves.

Interlocutor

Splendid! That's all I want to know. We have already prepared out of our many lessons a plan for the next war. It's all drawn up and ready to thrust under Congress' nose the moment an emergency arises. Let me assure you, gentlemen, that this time there will be no nonsense. Every man, woman and child will automatically be a part of the war machine.

(Consternation among the minstrels.)

Third Minstrel

Even us?

Interlocutor

Well, any scheme for fixing prices on the products you may sell to the government, for war purposes, would constitute taking private property for public use and that's unconstitutional. I don't think you need worry.

(A sigh of relief from the others)

But Gentlemen, we had some difficulty with labor. You know the principle of fight was scarcely invoked in the last war, but next time, gentlemen, I assure you, it will be the principle. I want to leave you with one comforting thought before you go about your

(Interlocutor continued)
business of disposing of these

(indicating the toy samples)
for the good of our country, is a thought expressed by Mr. Bernard Baruch and a thought embodied in the War Department plan for the next war. The draft of men for industrial employment is not only impossible. It is wholly unnecessary. The "Work or Fight" method is a better way. It is compatible with our institutions and far more effective than any chain gang or imprisonment that could be invented. I ask you, gentlemen, did Mr. Avery Brundage think we could learn things from Hitler? Gentlemen, I answer Mr. Brundage we are like true Americans, self-taught.

(There is more applause, handshaking, as the people not in blackface appear in the entrances. Immediately and simultaneously, in consternation, the Minstrels break into)

First End Man

What was that battleship I saw you with last night?

Second End Man

That was no lady.

Interlocutor

Something in war satisfies something in Man.

First Minstrel

(singing)

Even under the fiery spell of patriotism
Even under the great surge

First Picket

(suddenly)

Cut it!

(There is silence. He turns to the audience.)

You've seen us go through a lot here tonight. We've taken you through the last war the United States was in, in our own particular fashion and we've shown you what it did to -

Second Picket

To me, a worker.

Girl

To me, Miss America.

Third Picket

To me, a veteran.

American Soldier

To me, a soldier.

(and so forth, until all are unenumerated. Immediately the truck driver comes on with tooth pick in his teeth. He runs up to the First Picket.)

Truck Driver

Say, you guys have been giving us bad dreams. All I could dream about is that we were in another war.

First Picket

What did you want to do about it?

Truck Driver

Well, I wanted to wake up.

First Picket
(to the audience)

Well, that's a beginning for him, anyway. What about you? Not only have you seen what happened to us, but you've had a chance to listen to those who profited out of what we went through. Just before we came in again, they were enjoying themselves making plans for another way.

Interlocutor

If you don't mind my interrupting, I should like to point out something to these people too.

(He speaks to the audience)

This whole case is full of holes. War debts were not mentioned. Everybody knows how important they are. The importance of trade with foreign countries in the recovery of business and so on and so on, I tell you they don't even present their own case well. For example consider the awful plot of the army that is only turning up to take over the CCC and militarize it. Of course everybody knows those boys want guns. Why they told a Daily News reporter themselves.

First Picket

Shut up, will you. Every time you start to speak you try to give arguments that will help your side.

Interlocutor

Well, naturally. But in this instance, I was only trying to contribute -

First Picket

(interrupting)

We know what you were trying to contribute and we've had enough of it. What we want those people out there to know is that we're serious.

(turning to audience again)

We're serious as hell. We haven't shown you everything by a long shot. We'd never come to an end if we did. Stopping war is like trying to catch a ventriloquist. When you don't know who it is that's throwing his voice. But you can hear it in the Daily papers over the radio, even in the man you hear talking next to you on the bus about big armies. You may not know who it is, but it's worth your life and hours to find out. And find out quickly!

Announcer

(In the manner of a train announcer)

Hurry! Hurry! There isn't much time. Latest war scare headlines -
Hurry!

First Picket

Yes hurry. But listen, before you go and we go -

(he walks over and grabs the two nearest Minstrels and hauls them to the footlights.)

Look here, don't think the people who are interested in having a war look like this; this is only make-up.

(he rubs some of the make-up from each of their faces.)

This is burnt cork. But what they've done and said is not make-up. It's true. And for your satisfaction and mine, this might help.

(Then he begins bumping the heads of the two Minstrels together as the curtain descends and the orchestra loudly plays "The Stars and Stripes Forever.")