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Organ Revolutionary Workers League, U. S.



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TWO SETBACKS FOR U. S. LABOR

The working class suffered two important setbacks in recent months, which were dressed up to them as "victories". Phil Murray, Walter Reuther and the Stalinist leadership in the United Electrical workers accepted an 11½c to 12½c wage increase for two million workers. In order to make this pittance more palatable they figured out what their "fringe" gains (holiday pay, inequities, etc.) were and added it to the general increase. They thus arrived at a 15c figure.

Since May of 1946 there has been a rise in the cost of living of 26 points—over 20%. The great "victories" of Murray and his cohorts amount to a raise of approximately 8%. No wonder therefore Big Business "yielded" to the C.I.O. brass hats! Why not? Their products had gone up by three or four times as much as the wage increase. They knew that actually the workers were taking a 12% CUT in pay over last year.

Murray and the Stalinists prepared the way for this latest treachery by painting a dismal picture of "reaction in Congress," about "the heat is on" and other demoralizing propaganda in order to avert a strike. The strategy was effective. The Stalinists went so far as to undermine the Auto Workers at General Motors for the second successive year. They acted as agents of the Dupont-controlled GM corporation by accepting the 11½c offer for 30,000 workers, while 250,000 members of the UAW-CIO were still in negotiations!

TELEPHONE STRIKE

The other set-back for the American workers was the disintegration of the telephone strike. Starting with a demand for a nation-wide \$12 raise for over 300,000 phone workers and for nation-wide bargaining, the independent phone workers group succumbed to dissension within its ranks and settled for different raises in different parts of the country—the highest of which was an average \$4.79 raise for the New Jersey phone workers. Failure of the AFL and CIO bigwigs to spread the phone strike to the Western Union system and to other vitally connected industries made it possible for American Telephone and Telegraph Company to ride out of the storm easily.

As unemployment grows and as pressure for speed-up and other anti-union practices multiplies, the working man will realize in 1947, as he did belatedly in 1946, just how ineffective and poor the present wage formula established by Murray is.

WHO SAID IT CAN'T?

Representative Hydrick of Marshall, Texas, introduced a bombshell into the Texas legislature recently. This great apostle of "democracy" amended a law outlawing sympathy strikes by inserting a few "minor" points such as:

- 1—Unions shall hereby be outlawed.
- 2—All their property shall be confiscated.
- 3—"All union members shall be lined up against a rock wall and executed by firing squads."
- 4—Their families shall be sent to concentration camps.

It's hard to believe, but it actually did happen here!

Wall Street executed Fascists in Germany like Ribbentrop, Goering and others. Why isn't fascist Hydrick thrown into jail?

THE ROAD TO FASCISM IS PAVED WITH TAFT BILLS

As we go to press the Taft Bill has been approved by the Senate and is awaiting action by Senate-House conference. Under the fraudulent guise of "equalizing the power of capital and labor," Taft is taking advantage of the meekness and retreat of the leaders of labor to forge shackles around the tottering ankles of the working class.

The new bill if it becomes law provides for sure-fire action to break strikes.

In the big industries it provides for issuance of court injunctions to stop strikes for at least 75 days. Even after the injunction is vacated the strike may not take place. The Labor Board must then hold an election where the workers vote on the last offer of the Company.

In the smaller industries strikes can be broken by an even more simple formula. During the strike an employer may petition the Labor Board for an election. The Board must then hold the election but the right to vote is exclusively with the scabs. Strikers are prohibited from voting.

The bill also offers a strike-breaking sure-fire

"relief" to any employer against organization of his plant. He can demand an election at any time. Thus the day that a Union puts out a leaflet at his plant he demands and receives an election—before any organization work can really get under way. If the Union loses the election it can not try to gain bargaining rights for at least another year.

Other sections of the bill are still more reactionary. Unions may—if the bill becomes law—be sued in Federal courts. Their treasuries can be depleted by ceaseless legal wrangling. Industrial Unions can be carved into a number of crafts. Closed shops are eliminated and restrictions placed on Union shops. The bill prohibits an employer from bargaining with a Union which has "Communist" officers. Under this formula, any militant union with a militant leadership can be deprived of all bargaining rights. Any union which "violates" a contract also loses its bargaining rights.

(Turn to Page 3)

WALL STREET FIGHTS GERMAN HUNGER WITH JAIL THREAT

The differences between noble capitalist democracy and fascism must be very much on the academic side, as far as the starving German workers now living under British and American "benevolence" are concerned.

The allies had promised the German people a food diet of some 1,500 calories a day. That's about the equivalent of 5 slices of bread and two teaspoonfuls of sugar—a very delicious diet indeed. However, even this starvation fare is denied to the German proletariat. They are forced to get along on 887 calories per day.

Strikes against this outrage have been common in the British zone of Germany. Recently, however, trade union leaders in Stuttgart, American zone, decided to call a general strike on May 22nd. This was immediately countered by General Clay with the "democratic" statement that:

"If any political agitator attempts to capitalize upon the serious food situation, and if he is caught he will be put behind bars."

For demanding food, German workers are called "agitators!" After two years of American occupation the German workers—including those who spent ten years in Nazi concentration camps—are eating less than the concentration camp occupants of a few years back.

Wall Street (as well as the four-zone system) is bleeding the German economy. Manufacturing is kept at a ridiculously low level ostensibly to cut down the German war potential, but actually

to eliminate some competitors of American big business. The result is that the German farmer can not supply himself with the manufactured necessities of every-day life.

FARMERS AND BLACK MARKET

A typical German farmer, interviewed by Time magazine, reported that his yearly income is about 6,000 marks per year. After all taxes and expenses he has 4,000 marks left. But what good is that money if a pair of shoes for his wife costs 800 marks? If he wants to buy some nails or other necessities of farm life he can only do so by resorting to sales on the black market. American occupation forces thus find themselves in the position where German farmers are withholding produce from the legal market. The result is a far worse hunger than anything under Hitlerism.

The imperialist policy of vindictive handling of the German masses will yet pay these vultures in the coin of revolt and uprisings. The German proletariat which was bled white by defeat in four revolutionary situations since 1918, is being forced into the position of either new revolutions or complete extermination. It is learning the lesson over again—that between "democracy" and fascism there is no unbridgeable gulf, that both are part and parcel of the same moribund system; that support of "democracy" means in the last analysis paving the way for fascism.

STAGE 1

"Keep Wages Down" Is Popular Front "Solution" for French Crisis

Temporarily the Ramadier government in France is out of the crisis. The removal of five Stalinist ministers from the regime was followed immediately by a quarter billion dollar loan from the new World Bank. American capitalism was quick to prove to the capitalist regime in France that financial support will be forthcoming quickly to any government that puts up a stiff fight against the working class.

The crisis developed as a result of a number of wildcat strikes, climaxed by the shutdown of the great Renault plant. Thirty thousand workers led by a group of young progressive elements, opposed to the Stalinist leadership of the General Federation of Labor (CGT), demanded that

QUESTIONS and ANSWERS

QUESTION: Why do Marxists work in Trade Unions?

ANSWER: The task of Marxian revolutionists is to create the vanguard party which successfully can lead the proletariat in its revolution and eventually towards a classless society. Yet we speak of and advocate a "mass orientation". Revolutionists work actively in mass organizations of the working class, especially in trade unions. Why? What is our aim there and how is the economic struggle of the workers related to our political tasks?

A vanguard party can be the true leader of the working class if it has influence in the working class, if it and its political program are known and followed. Our work in the Trade Unions must have as its principal aim to make our problem known. That is simply another way of expressing Lenin's formula of elevating the level of the workers from trade union consciousness to political, socialist consciousness.

Obviously we do not advocate for each revolutionist to get up on the trade union floor and wave the red flag. The work of Marxists inside a union must be aimed at the building of progressive groups, based on militant unionism. Within these, they must always push the political issues to the fore. They must in each concrete instance demonstrate to the workers, that the capitalist state along with the boss is their enemy; bring them to the realization that it is the bosses' state; make them understand finally that whether they win a specific economic fight or not, they will always lose in the last analysis until they themselves put an end to the capitalist system.

In this task, revolutionists in a trade union have to depend largely on the cooperation of their political organization, and especially its paper. Most often they can only bring up part of the problems in the Unions. Otherwise they would face reprisals at the hands of the labor fakers. The complete political answer must be given by the Marxian paper in order to supplement the activity of its individual members in the Unions.

While shop units are the natural basis of a revolutionary organization, the revolutionist in the trade union would be unable to be more than a militant trade unionist if his organization as a whole did not engage in the many aspects of revolutionary activity. Hand in hand with active participation in the class struggle must go a theoretical understanding of that class

the Socialist-MRP-Stalinist government discard its "no wage increase" policy and grant a ten franc (10c) an hour raise. The Stalinists at first denounced the strike, but when they realized how widespread strike sentiment was they grudgingly went along with it and tried to effect a compromise with Ramadier. The compromise—calling for a production bonus, speed-up in other words—was a shameful treachery. Any labor leader in America who proposed a raise based on increased speed-up would be hooted out of the labor movement. Yet Stalinism in France had nothing more substantial than this scab policy as an alternative to the demands of the strikers!

The strike of the Renault workers is merely a reflection of the deep-rooted crisis through which the French working class is going. More than 700,000 families are homeless. Bread forms a third of the workers' caloric diet. In some areas there is none, in others only every three days. Approximately 50,000 factories were destroyed and 145,000 damaged.

The capitalist class has been content for the time being to remain in the background and let the Communist Party do its usual scab job of betraying the workers. Benoit Frachon, Stalinist Co-Secretary General of France's General Federation of Labor, answered the Renault strikers by having Eugene Henaff, a party hack, issue instructions: "We have a small wildcat strike chez Renault. Get down there and fix it."

Then in the most shamefaced manner the workers were told by these Communist Party henchmen not to ask for a wage increase, since it would wreck the policies of the French Capitalist Government. However, realizing that the bread-and-butter demands of these workers could not be so easily overwhelmed, the Communist Party withdrew from the Government, so that it could all the more easily lead these workers into the blind alley of betrayal and defeat.

Said Thorez, the leader of the Communist Party, "The General Federation of Labor has been overrun, or is in danger of being overrun, by Trotskyist elements. IN ORDER TO PREVENT THIS MOVEMENT FROM GETTING OUT OF HAND, (our emphasis) we decided last night to support the workers' demands."

DE GAULLE AGAIN

Charles De Gaulle and the forces of the right are again gaining strength. His party has 1,000,000 members, as many as the Communist Party. De Gaulle is now making a tour of France attempting to gain recruits to his program for a strong executive, and elimination of the two houses of parliament. American Ambassador Jefferson Caffrey appeared with De Gaulle when he announced the organization of his new party "Rally of the French People". It is noteworthy that the fascist Admiral Thierry d'Argenlieu who carried out the suppression of the colonial revolt in Indo-China is one of his supporters. Interestingly enough, followers of this movement use a military two-armed salute.

As the workers attempt to gain their demands for a decent living, the struggle between the

forces of the Right and the Left grows more sharply. Fascism again rears its head.

Development of progressive trade union groups is widespread. Gabriel Heater recently spoke of the "young hotheads" who "threaten" French economy. Consolidation of these trade union militants behind a Marxian Party is a prime essential of the growing struggle of the French masses for real liberation.

R.R. UNIONS ASK FOR 20c BOOST

On April 25, seventeen non-operating rail unions presented before the railroad companies their demand for a 20 cent an hour wage increase. Until now no effective action has been taken by any of these unions to enforce their demand.

In view of the pattern set in the recent contracts signed by the steel, auto, and electrical unions for 11¹/₂c or 12¹/₂c an hour it is certain that the railroad companies despite record profits will not give a larger wage increase. In fact there is no guarantee of even obtaining the wage increase set by the pattern. The telephone workers who fought on the picket lines for over a month got much less.

On the railroads the companies have a time honored device to hamstring the workers. All railway disputes must go before the national railway mediation board for arbitration. The way this board functions is brought to light by its recent settlement of 743 disputes between the Illinois Central Railroad and the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen. After TEN MONTHS of negotiations between the company and the union, grievances which were an accumulation of twenty years standing were finally settled. And then it came, only the basis of a strike threat.

Many of these seventeen industrial union railroad crafts are affiliated to the A. F. of L.; some are independent. In the last few decades a trade union bureaucracy of pie-card artists has been established, which has been content to hamstring the railroad workers demands and grievances, by allowing them to be placed before the blind alley of the national railway mediation board. The result has been that the conditions of the railroad workers compared to workers in similar occupations, has been substandard in hourly pay, overtime allowances, etc. They may, in order to maintain their position take a more "militant" stand in this dispute since the C.I.O. is attempting to organize workers in the railroads. In the East, amongst the Pennsylvania & Long Island R.R. workers the C.I.O. has made a beginning.

The interests of the railroad workers lies not in affiliation to one or the other craft unions but rather in a trade union organization based on the unification of all the crafts into one. Industrial Unionism will make possible a militant struggle against the railroad companies, and the government.

The railroad workers, whose livelihood stems from the most basic industry in this economy, must understand that any struggle they may make for higher wages or better conditions, is confronted immediately with the full force of the U. S. capitalist government. Without the idea that this government represents the interests of the companies and runs counter to the interests of the workers, no first step to improve their conditions can be taken.

JOAN DEWEY—

"A MARXIAN CRITIQUE"

By SID OKUN

10c

ANTI-NEGRO HYSTERIA

St. Clair Drake and Horace Clayton's book, "Black Metropolis," records the influx of 60,000 Negroes between 1940-44 into Chicago. This, under already inadequate housing, congestion, overcrowded schools, lack of recreational facilities, etc. provides the material for the Chicago boss class to boil the pot for anti-Negro hysteria.

In California since 1940 the Negro population increased from 124,306 to between 300,000 and 400,000. After the shameful mass deportation of thousands of Japanese-American workers, many Negro families found living quarters in San Francisco. Nevertheless the housing shortage was so great that 13,000 Negro families were jammed into 6,500 housing units.

Just a few facts about the economic and social factors underlying the mass exodus of Negro workers from the South will help to give a deeper insight into the problem. A recent study of Southern agriculture revealed that the average tenant family receives an income of \$73.00 per person for a year's work. The earnings of sharecroppers went from \$38.00 to \$87.00 per person. Those whose incomes averaged \$390.00 per year were able to spend \$49.00 per year on food, \$31.00 on clothing, \$12.00 medical care, \$2.00 on education, \$1.00 on reading matter, and \$1.00 on recreation. The average industrial wage of Negroes in Southern industry is only \$865.00.

LAST HIRED, FIRST FIRED

The diet of the Southern tenant farmer, sharecropper and worker is almost calculated to produce pellagra, malaria, tuberculosis, and pneu-

monia. It consists chiefly of fat back (fat portions of pork) cornbread, molasses, coffee, etc. The mortality rates and health standards are simply appalling. More attention (alho precious little) has been given to the conservation of wild soil, forests, and minerals, than to the preservation of human life.

Now as after the 1st imperialist war America stands on the verge of a depression. And as in all depressions, the Negro is the first to be fired. It goes without saying that he is the last to be hired. Under the guise of siphoning off an excess supply of labor and spelling it into a reservoir of unemployed, American capitalism, along with its anti-labor, red baiting hysteria, will begin more and more to organize anti-Negro hysteria. The Chicago boss class is already implanting in the minds of its workers the foul propaganda that the Negro will be a menace to the white wage slave in the coming depression. Having been used to produce wealth for American capitalism in World War II the Negro is being slated for service in the army of the unemployed. If the white worker has not learned till now—he will learn from his own bitter experience that an attack on the living standards of the Negro working class is an attack on the whole working class. As long as one Negro is underpaid, segregated, overcrowded, oppressed, that will be the lot of the entire working class. The coming depression will surely pose the need for the working class, black and white, to forge a united FIGHT in the heat of the struggle for jobs, housing, and unemployment relief.

WHAT WE STAND FOR

1. Capitalism can not be reformed. The profit system can only bring more misery, war and depression.
2. We are therefore opposed to all reformist parties, including the Labor Party, which strive merely to patch up the present capitalist system.
3. We are for independent working class action on all fronts, starting from strike action at the point of production and leading up to the revolutionary destruction of capitalism.
4. We are for full equality for all oppressed minorities, for the right of self-determination for all colonies.
5. Defend the Soviet Union. Reestablish a Marxian Party, Soviets, Trade Unions and Armed Workers Militias to accomplish the Political Revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy. Extend the October Revolution throughout the world.
6. For a Revolutionary Marxian Party in the United States and a New Fourth Communist International on a world scale.
7. For the establishment of workers control of production for use under a workers council government.

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TAFT BILL

(Continued from Page 1)

Added to all this the Bill increases the red tape of the Labor Board. Which means that an employer can be sure that workers discharged for union activity will have to wait years before their case comes up.

There is something macabre about the present drive against Unions. Business profits increased by 283% in the first quarter of 1947 over a similar period in 1946. Obviously the stuff about "strikes threatening business" is just bunk. This is the lushest profit season in all world history.

The vicious reactionaries in Congress have merely taken advantage of the cowardly retreats of Green, Murray and company to wield a hatchet over the heads of labor. The more Murray and company try to show what good boys they are by prohibiting strikes, by making poor contracts and by other capitulation, the more the Congressional stooges of big business will lay it into the trade union movement.

The answer to Congress does not lie in "fan mail" to the hard-hearted representatives of Wall Street. Only effective strike action against this political hold-up can scare the pants off the semi-fascists in Congress now hell-bent on an anti-worker crusade. That action will obviously not come from Green and Murray who are tied to the capitalistic machine by a thousand different cords. Green in fact supported for election Representative Hartley of New Jersey, the author of the even more vicious House Bill. Murray supported people like Senator Scott Lucas of Illinois, who supported the Taft version in the Senate.

The answer to Congress will come from rank and file leaders, organized into a nation-wide progressive group, not from the misleaders of labor sitting in their swivel chairs.

Socialists Smash Chicago Left Wing

The situation in the Socialist Party in Chicago has passed its climax (see Fighting Worker, March 29). The left wing forces were smashed. As we predicted, the extreme left grouping has left the S. P. and is today becoming atomized and demoralized.

The National Action Committee of the Socialist Party got together on April 22nd to celebrate this victory over the left. The minutes of that meeting and the report of Thomas-Becker show that the N.A.C. is proud of its achievements. The report contains vicious statements regarding the Revolutionary Workers League and one former comrade of the S. P.. The insinuation of the report was that this comrade was disloyal to the S. P. while in its ranks. During the period while this comrade was a member of the S. P., no one dared to present formal charges of disloyalty. But now that this comrade has left the Socialist Party and can no longer defend himself, these vicious charges are made, based on the mere OPINION of a few prejudiced individuals.

We wonder, is this a sample of the "Democratic Socialism" about which Norman Thomas speaks so glibly?

FASCISM AND "DEMOCRACY"

But this organizational question is really secondary. The tragedy of the whole affair is that these workers of the left-wing are not today presenting their political orientation to other workers. This orientation states briefly, that Bourgeois Democracy and Fascism are opposite sides of the same Capitalist coin, that Capitalist Democracy paves the road to Fascism (Italy, 1921-22; Germany, 1930-33; Spain, 1936; France and England today) by leading the workers to believe that their problems can be solved in a parliament instead of by independent political action. Hence, any support to a capitalistic government even of "Left" varieties (Labor parties, Commonwealth parties, Socialist-"Communist" coalitions, etc.) can only lead inevitably to Fascism. They therefore opposed any efforts to organize or support any reformist Capitalist party, even with left "criticism."

For holding this correct Marxian position, these workers were persecuted into leaving the Socialist Party. A cynical victory was won by the Norman Thomases and their left tails in Chicago. The Socialist Party is once again pure —pure reformist!!

This again proves that the workers can never achieve power with the aid of these social reformers, but rather that the workers must seize power in SPITE of this reformist rot.

In closing our series of articles on this affair, we again extend the hand of comradeship to those workers who are determined to fight capitalism in all of its forms and manifestations. The Revolutionary Workers League offers them the only organization with a mass orientation based on the Marxian line towards which these workers have moved independently.

AGAINST BOURGEOIS DEMOCRACY AND "LEFT" CAPITALIST GOVERNMENTS!

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AS THE ONLY FORCE CAPABLE OF DEFEATING
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FOUR DEAD, BUT NEGROES STILL FORCED TO LIVE IN FIRETRAP

The trial of the six tenants of 1733 Washburne St., Chicago who face eviction from their rat infested, fire trap home in Chicago's Jim Crow ghetto on the South Side, is a cruel indictment of American capitalism even though the case was temporarily thrown out on a weird technicality.

On January 16, fire swept the home of these Negro workers. Four children of the Hickman family were trapped in their attic room and burned to death. There was no way of escape from the house, no door, no fire escape. The building had been condemned and was in such violation of health and safety ordinances that to date the owners have paid over \$200 in fines. Since the fire the six families have lived without water, without electric or gas and with no toilet facilities. The government refuses to find new homes for them and yet it has done nothing to force the landlords to make these homes habitable.

Rats run around freely and frequently bite children in this dwelling. Holes which resulted from the fire are still not repaired, and rain seeps into the homes of these Negro tenants. As a result the six families refused to pay their rent until the building was made habitable. They made appeals to the city authorities to take some action, but to no avail. Mary Porter Adams, the alleged owner of the building, brought suit to evict these families for "refusal to pay rent." Outside of the courtroom she stated that the only reason that she wanted these

tenants evicted was because the building was unfit for human habitation and she wanted to rebuild it.

UNFIT HOMES

It is common knowledge that the landlord wants to remodel the building for kitchenette apartments which will bring in four times as much as the present \$11 apartments.

The former owner was an agent for a mortgage company, and there is some doubt as to whether Mary Adams is in reality the owner or a secret agent for some company.

The case of the Washburne tenants is merely one of numerous examples of the miserable housing conditions which exist in this "democratic land of plenty." According to a very recent survey of the U. S. Health Service 100,000 homes in Chicago are unfit for human habitation. This means a total of nearly one-fifth of the city's population have unfit homes. Furthermore there are more than 4,000 homes with outside privies inside the city limits.

The capitalist system which could produce masterpieces of engineering such as the \$2 billion atom bomb project, refuses to utilize its energies or monies for peaceful projects to improve the living standards of the oppressed.

Billions for murder, nothing for homes—that's capitalism!

LYNCHERS WIN AGAIN

In the welter of last moving events there are two events which deserve to be highlighted because they cast some shadows on the shape of things to come.

In Greenville, South Carolina, several men (?) seized Willie Earle, a young Negro, from the Picken county jail. Thirty-one minions of good old fashioned bourgeois democracy (and shall we say defenders of Southern bourbon hospitality) carried him off to a cattle slaughtering pen where he was beaten, sadistically slashed with a knife, and finally blasted in the head with a shotgun.

The event is certainly not unique. It follows the same bestial pattern as the 5,000 lynchings of Negroes since the civil war period. However, unlike most cases, in which it is reported that lynchings were perpetrated "by an unknown person or persons", this case may set the pattern for legal lynchings. It was a foregone conclusion that while the capitalist courts would go thru all the motions of fixing the blame and the penalty, the gun and the rope, will continue to constitute the fountainhead from which "justice" will be portioned out to the Negro working class. The lynchings were all acquitted despite their 26 confessions!

Event number two while of less dramatic impact more clearly demonstrates the economic and social roots of lynch justice. Now that the war to make the world safe for capitalism is over and many war-time industries folded up in California a campaign (which has all the earmarks of being centrally organized) is being conducted to drive the Negro out of California. For example, a Negro family living near Henry Kaiser's Fontana steel mill ignored repeated warnings to move. One night their home was set afire and the entire family (husband, wife and their children) were burned to death. In Redwood City, a Negro war veteran after coming home from the battle for "the 4 freedoms" (or

is it freedoms?) started building himself a home. The next day's mail brought him a letter "signed in niggers blood." This vet was warned that unless he moved he would be nailed to a fiery cross.

There are other instances which could be mentioned but they all indicate a concerted effort on the part of California's bankers and manufacturers to drive the Negro out of the local labor market into adjoining states at jobs which pay less under worse social conditions.

WAR III M-DAY IN PLANNING STAGE

War plans must be prepared long in advance. The next day's mail brought him a letter "signed according to Rose M. Stein in 1920. Plans for the new mobilization for War III are already very far advanced.

If you are a worker, expect to be told where you will work, what you will do, and at what wages—if the so-called "national safety" is jeopardized. The Labor Draft will go into effect immediately the next time we face an "emergency." The source for this statement is the very authoritative mouthpiece of finance capital, the Wall Street Journal. The plan is now being headed up by the Army-Navy munitions board. The civilian chairman of the board is Richard R. Deupree, who divides his time between preparing for the next war and the presidency of Procter and Gamble. Other board members are Under Secretary of War, Kenneth C. Royal and Assistant Secretary of the Navy John Kenny, along with the military brass hats and various industrialists.

FIGHT JIM-CROW ON STATE STREET

The limitations of consumer action were aptly illustrated by a meeting called together by the Committee on Racial Equality, Monday, May 26 to fight against discrimination in the Chicago State Street Department stores.

CORE which successfully conducted a campaign to force the Wonderbread Co. to hire Negro truck drivers is planning a similar strategy in Chicago Department Stores. Present at the meeting were representatives of the Chicago CIO, CIO Retail Clerks, 3 AFL Building Service locals, AFL Retail Clerks, NAACP, CORE, a number of liberal organizations as well as representatives of both Trotskyite groups.

The Trotskyites, CORE and NAACP favored visiting the management of one or two department stores and instituting boycott when or if they refused to hire Negro salespeople. Sid Lens, representing Local 329, AFL, Martin Heckman, representing Building Service International, and Emily Smith, of the C.I.O., all pointed out that to institute a boycott at this time would have a negative effect in organizing the workers on State Street. Workers at these stores are filled with all kinds of Jim Crow hostility. The boycott would increase these hostilities because it would cut into the commissions of these backward and mostly unorganized sales people. The unions all pointed out it was necessary first to educate the workers of State Street to the economic disadvantages of Jim Crow, to point out that discrimination was a device for driving all wages down and for utilizing minority groups as scabs.

Once the union members understand this problem, the union would then be in a position to take up the matter of discrimination as part of its regular negotiations. Under such circumstances boycott and any other mass action is helpful in supplementing the activities of the workers involved. Boycott under the present circumstances might almost have an adverse effect in that it would increase rather than decrease discrimination.

After much wrangling by all the representatives present, they finally accepted the proposals put forth by the union representatives and mapped a campaign to visit management as well as an educational program for the State Street employees and the consumer public.

A Steering Committee of 12 members was elected to continue the work. Opposition to placing representatives of radical political groups was frustrated when the delegate from Local 329, AFL attacked the proposal. He stated "While I disagree fundamentally with the political organizations represented here, it would be just as discriminatory to exclude groups for their political beliefs as for their racial and religious beliefs."

PAMPHLETS BY R. W. L.

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"Why the R. W. L."
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