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Labor Views

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REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS LEAGUE—CHICAGO

WORKERS! FORM DEFENCE SQUADS TO PROTECT NEGROES

THREAT of TERROR
against
NEGROES CONTINUES
while
13 LOCAL UNIONS
in
"CONFERENCE TO COMBAT
TERRORISM
AGAINST MINORITIES"
FAIL TO FORM
DEFENCE SQUADS

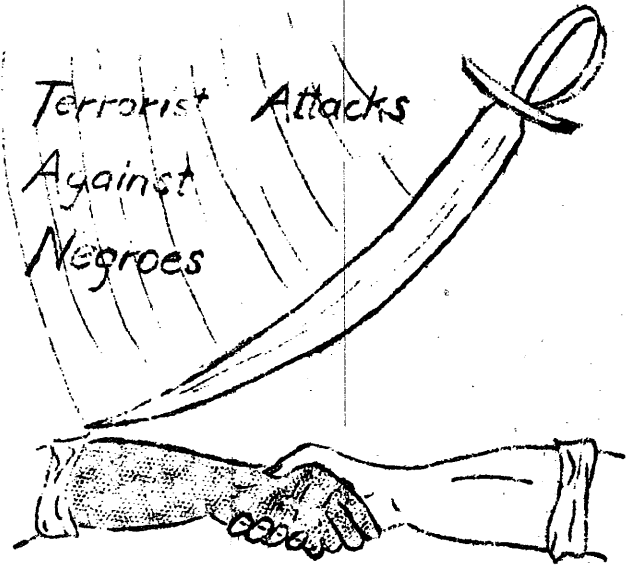
The defence of Negroes against terror attacks here in Chicago has hit a "snag".

The Socialist Workers Party, which has taken the lead in calling for defence squads within the Conference to Combat Terrorism Against Minorities held a "mass" meeting of its own last Friday evening (Aug. 16) at 708 E. 47th Street. To the 125 people there the SWP proposed a new "compromise" defence guard plan: Demand that Mayor Kelly deputize one thousand special guards chosen by Negro, labor, and "progressive" organizations to defend Negroes threatened with terror attack. Since it is an obvious fact that Mayor Kelly will refuse this demand, workers are still left the urgent problem of providing their own defence of Negroes. SWP has offered us nothing.

The Conference, composed of more than 50 church, inter-racial, "liberal" and labor groups has so far refused to form workers' defence squads to police the areas where Negroes are in danger. The reason: such defence squads are not legal. "They would have to carry weapons without permission." Such are the worries of these timid souls.

Plans for a mass protest march through some of the neighborhoods where the terror attacks have taken place remain "up-in-the-air" because the Communist Party (Stalinist) refuses to cooperate with the "Trotskyist" SWP, and the "liberals" who dominate the Conference are afraid to attempt a mass protest without Stalinist support.

Why has the Chicago working-class so far slept on this problem? First, there is a general lack of awareness of the recent violence against Negroes in Chicago.



"...to Cleave the
Unity of Labor"

The daily press has suppressed the news of the 59 bombings and terror attacks against Negro homes in the last two years. Second, the AFL and CIO leadership have taken absolutely no steps to publicize these attacks as a threat to the whole working-class and they have resisted any militant suggestions that the hundreds of local unions in Chicago be mobilized in defence of Negroes.

Thus the practical problem of organizing the workers toward the defence of Negroes has not been met. The agencies for reaching the organized body of workers are in the hands of capitalist-minded labor bureaucrats.

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UNION "LEADERS"
HARP ON O.P.A.

Get Field Warehousemen a "Soft" Contract

On the first of this month, the leaders of the Marshall Field Warehousemen's union, Local 291 AFL, shamelessly betrayed its 100 members into a contract as soft and sour as buttermilk. Of all the workers in the Marshall Field set-up these could least afford a "soft" contract. Field workers call the warehouse the "Siberia" of Fields; it is the place where older workers who have spent their best years of heavy stock of floor work are often sent to work out the rest of their years - at less pay.

The new contract provides for a maxi-

DEFEND NEGROES

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The S.W.P., which has taken the lead in calling for defence squads in the Conference to Combat Terror Against Minorities, is also consistently moving in the political direction which will sabotage the formation of a workers' defence of Negroes.

The S.W.P. has openly endorsed Henry McGee and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People as a "boni-fide leader of the Negro people" without pointing to what the section of the Negroes the NAACP represents. It is the tool of small fry Negro capitalists and is so conservative as to even resist McGee's "liberal-ism".

Under McGee's leadership the Conference is dominated by church and "liberal" groups who are afraid of direct worker action in defence of Negroes. They now offer weak, legalistic measures and when workers attempt to take strong, independent action these same leaders will sabotage it.

There are at least thirteen local trade unions represented in the Conference. These locals should immediately approach scores of other locals to join them in this urgent project. The Conference as it is now, will never take this step. The union representation must do it. Militant rank-and-file labor pressure can and must become the dominant force in the conference if it is to play any effective part in the defence of Negroes.

... 3-dollar-a-week raise which brings the minimum hiring rate to \$24.00 per week for a forty-hour week. (This is raised to \$26.00 in 90 days!) These are the measely crumbs thrown to Fields workers, and approved by their union "leadership".

At the beginning of negotiations, the rank and file at a membership meeting showed willingness to fight management every step of the way. But the union leaders took three months to maneuver them out of this feeling. When the union asked for a \$6 raise Fields offered \$3 and replied:

"...three dollar increase would place the warehouse employees above the rates paid in this area."

"...any rise in living cost...is...uncertain."

"...revised OPA may again limit the rising prices." This was on July 26th.

The union negotiating committee came down to \$5. Management still said, "NO!"

In the face of this arrogant attitude of the Field management, the union leadership issued a leaflet to its workers offering them two courses of action:

1. "Accept the Management's proposal - waiting to "discuss further wage adjustments should inflation develop..."

2. "...employees could refuse the Management's offer..." and "...delay further meetings with Management until (we) know where the OPA stands."

Were these the only two choices open to the workers? What about strike action? These two choices acted like two buckets of water on the little fire of worker militancy which was still burning. So the negotiating committee succumbed to Management's \$3 a week maximum raise, \$26 a week minimum, a few adjustments in wage classifications, but no increases in vacations. \$26 a week! Is this a living wage in Chicago, OPA or no OPA?

This "soft" contract is a clear-cut example of the collaboration of union "leaders" with the capitalist class. The "leaders" carefully maneuvered the rank-and-file right into Management's hands. Militant, independent workers action would have resulted in a strike - the first step toward victory of worker demands.

TRUST-BUSTERS SHOOTIN' UP CHICAGO

— but they're only firin' blanks

Operating from its headquarters at 208 S. La Salle St., the Midwest office of the U.S. Department of Justice anti-trust division is on the prowl for trusts. 20 trained investigators are out to get them. Judging from their discoveries one would think they were hunting a white whale. Yet trusts are as easy to locate as trees in a forest.

To date these trust-busters boast of discovering collusion between the Yellow Cab and the Checker Cab Companies to control Chicago's streets. Also chalked up is a charge against the optical wholesalers for kicking back on glasses to the 5,000 eye specialists here. Indeed an achievement! The big boys are really down with a case of fright. These trust-busters are proving as effective as an umbrella at Nagasaki.

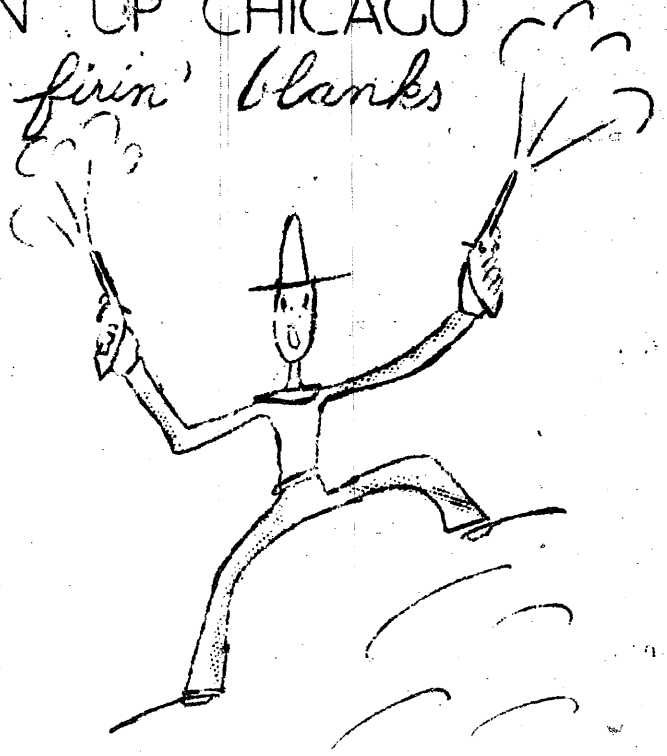
Everyone knows the big trusts. The First National Bank, Continental Illinois National Bank and Trust, the Northern Trust Co., and the Harris Trust and Saving Bank, conveniently centered in the loop, have over \$3,000,000,000 in assets. Illinois Bell Telephone Co. and Western Electric are part of American Telephone and Telegraph Corporation which is worth a mere \$3,990,000,000. Chicago's wealth including personal property adds up to about \$5,200,000,000 or less than these banks plus A T & T.

Do you want to find a trust? Then hike it over to 79th and the lake to the South Works of Carnegie Illinois the steel subsidiary of U S Steel. U S Steel's capital - \$1,820,000,000. Control - 35.2% of steel production. Another trust? End up at 26th and Western and spend the afternoon walking around International Harvester, the big baby in the farm equipment field. They make everything from twine to tractors. If you still have pep march around the mile square stockyards between 35th and 43rd, Halsted and Ashland. Meet Chicago's Big Four: Swift, Armour, Wilson and Cudahy. They try to put a tape measure around Sears Roebuck on the West Side and Montgomery Wards at Chicago and the river. From January to July

these pigmies have already \$1,250,000,000 in mail order signed and delivered. On the way home for supper stop in the A & P and count the customers. This grocer did \$1,250,000,000 in '45. And to round out the day pour over the books of State St's eight largest department stores. You'll find that they did 61.5% of Chicago's department store business last year.

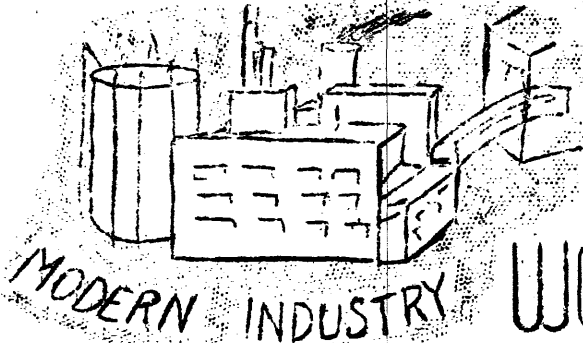
But one does not even have to go out of his way to find a trust. They just come to you. Wake up in the morning and switch on the light. Commonwealth Edison - 100% monopoly. Off to the kitchen to place the coffee on the gas range. Peoples Gas & Coke - 100% monopoly. Pour in some Borden's cream and you are drinking part of the produce from 3,000,000 dairy farms used by Borden exclusively. Light a Lucky, Chesterfield, or Camel. These companies manufacture 80% of the cigarettes. Then into the car. If it's a Ford, Chevy or Chrysler it's made by the Big Three in auto who are beyond competition. Need gas? Stop at Standard Oil N.J. It is one of the 20 companies producing 60% of the petroleum, and it has a larger share than the bottom twelve on that list. And so it goes. If it's a shot of Hiram Walker - one of the 4 Big Pins in the whiskey alley. If it's Balaban & Katz Theatre -

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WORKERS REVOLUTION CAN MAKE THIS RULING-CLASS MONOPOLY A WORKING-CLASS TRUST



(from page 3)

well, it would be difficult to find a neighborhood without one.

What does this prove? Only that capitalism grows like anything else. It gets bigger and bigger. The large firm crowds out the small one, swallows it up. The larger firm shoves the large one into a corner, repeats the act. The result: the industrial and financial giants we see today. Competition leads to the victory of the company that produces the most goods cheapest. Decades of such competition brings a few huge magnates to the top of the industrial pile.

In another sense we see in these great combines the profit extracted from the American working class for the last 150 years. Each generation of sweat and grime has added to this tremendous heap of accumulated profit. For what else are our factories and cities but the handiwork of labor. Take away this labor and Chicago would be a wilderness, its boulevards earthen trails, the site of its buildings swamp and forest.

Under capitalism monopolies give the ruling class a super-profit. Through them production is dominated, the market held more in control, prices raised. The destiny of the country falls into the grasp of less and less hands, and as the pirate band shrinks, its power grows.

Can the U. S. Department of Justice anti-trust division (which, incidentally, just had its appropriation cut by congress) stop this process? Did Jiggs ever get the best of Maggie? The policy of the government is to serve these trusts. When the American monopolists' war broke out against Japan and Germany the first act of Roosevelt was to give the trusts

the green-light. In 1943 there were 17% less companies than in 1941. The billions of dollars in war contracts were handed down thru a clustre of corporations. Today these giants are richer and fatter than ever.

But it is not in the working class interests to destroy this industrial plant. Middle class prattlers would make us a country of farmers and cobblers toiling dawn to dusk in never-ending drudgery. This great economic machine can be made our slave instead of master. Unleash the full industrial facilities of America for a generation and the 8 hour day will have become old-fashioned religion, the housing problem, a fable. "I've got plenty of nothing" will no longer be the working class national anthem.

But first the economy must be taken from that greedy, evil few whose heaven is \$ signs, whose patriotism is profit, whose knowledge is the ledger, whose culture the ring of a cash register, whose religion is the agony of toilers. These plunderers few and weak by themselves could be squashed like an annoying insect were it not for this same state which would lull the working class to sleep with deceitful songs of trust-busting. Congress, courts, army, police - the entire governmental apparatus from the village sheriff to the presidency, here is the guardian of the ruling class. Here is the watchdog of the monopolies that the working class must beat to death. Beat unmercifully with the club of revolution till its lifeless body can be kicked easily aside. Then will come a democratic government representing all who toil. Then this huge industrial machine, nurtured on generations of grief, want and insecurity, will become a means to plenty and contentment.