

THE FIGHTING WORKER

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BILLIONS FOR WAR, PENNIES FOR HOUSING

Chicago, Jan. 1, 1947 — On December 30, 1946 fire swept a tiny frame house at 1443 N. Park Avenue. The lives of Katherine and Rosemary Morrison, aged 23 months and 10 months respectively, were snuffed out in that fire. Only the twisted remains of a baby buggy and the charred traces of a crib provided the mute testimony to the tragedy. To make the cup of bitterness even more full, every personal possession of Mr. and Mrs. Morrison including clothes and money were burned, leaving them in a position comparable to the refugees of bombed-out areas in Europe.

The kept press of a capitalism will wring their hands in mock agony and shed a few crocodile tears, but essentially the housing problem will remain unsolved. And the Katherines and Rosemarys will continue being burned and destroyed in ramshackle homes which are inferior to the housing of the Stone Age. A glance at a few pertinent facts will indicate why housing will remain a topic for academic discussion or a beautiful dream of the architects and "city planners".

HOUSING IN 1936

It is often argued that the dislocation of American economy due to the needs of war production is one of the causes of the housing shortage. The truth of the matter is that housing shortages of varying degrees have occurred many times within the last 50 years. In fact the Roosevelt administration prior to the war made political capital out of the housing shortage by admitting that "one-third of the nation is ill-housed, ill-fed and ill-clothed". It was recognized by housing experts in 1936 that in the 10 ensuing years at least 7,000,000 homes would be needed. Prior to the war two-fifths of our non-farm homes were considered to be below minimum standards of decency. In the rural area the picture was (and is) no brighter. Two-thirds of our farm families occupied sub-standard homes.

Despite all the grandiose schemes for building adequate housing for low income groups, housing is and will remain a luxury for broad sections of the middle and working classes.

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CIO Drive In South Stalled

New Orleans, January 4, 1947. — The CIO organization drive in the South is making only half the progress of the AFL. Outside of the wood industry, a major field in this area, progress elsewhere is disappointing.

The AFL "success" is based on collusion with management and the vicious jim-crow policies of the AFL labor skates.

Here is an example of how it works. In a small factory in this area there were about 90 Negroes and 50 whites. The CIO organizers went out to the plant one afternoon and signed up anyone who wanted to join. The Negroes responded enthusiastically, about 60 of them joined. But the AFL had already started organization in the plant but only amongst the white workers. The CIO work amongst the Negroes made it possible for the AFL to consolidate its white people behind it, with the aid of management which was duly lectured on this "revolutionary" practice of organizing Negroes and whites together. The Company quickly agreed to a card check with the AFL Union, recognized it and signed a contract in three shakes of a lamb's tail.

The CIO Union, of course, had a majority in this plant, but the majority was based on

all Negroes. The CIO leadership felt that to pursue the matter further would merely create a race riot and not a Union.

NEED MILITANT EXAMPLE

Undoubtedly the Negro issue is a great problem for the CIO in the South. CIO organizers point to it as the reason for the slow tempo of the drive. That is completely untrue. The fact is that the CIO leadership in the past 8 or 10 years has been indistinguishable from the AFL leadership. The white worker sees not much difference between the two, and so he follows the path of least resistance. He has no INCENTIVE for joining hands with his Negro brother, because he isn't convinced that he can do better in the CIO framework than in the AFL. The behavior of the CIO bigwigs during the war and in last year's strikes weakens the CIO even further.

The organization drive down south is greatly dependent on the militancy of the rank and file in the North. Only when the fighting spirit of the workers in the bigger industrial sections of the country captures the imagination of the Southern worker will he forget his Jim Crow heritage and enthusiastically join hands with his Negro brothers against the common enemy.

SLAVERY IN FRANCE

After the loss of a large part of its colonial empire, French imperialism is forced partially to replace its colonial slaves with war prisoners. These white slaves are compelled to do forced labor without pay. Thus capitalist profits are enormously increased, the wages of the French workers are fixed and, in case of strike, the State will force the war prisoners to work — which is already happening in Belgium.

"Le Monde" of November 12 cynically exposes this slave market:

"Of the 700,000 prisoners we have left, 450,000 approximately are distributed among the different sectors of French economy. Agriculture absorbs 230,000 and forest cultivation 21,000. Their leaving would have serious consequences in a more or less near future."

Serious consequences for the profits of the slave-owners.

"Le Monde" specifies that one-quarter of all the miners is made up of prisoners of war:

"The number of those who are thus occupied is estimated at 55,000; they are actually working at the bottom, that is one quarter of our mining forces . . . The productivity of a prisoner being 800 kilos a day, the monthly production of the prisoners can be estimated at 920,000 tons of a total of 4 million."

The United States furnishes less than the German prisoners of war: 750,000 tons per month. What a source of profits!

8,000 prisoners of war work in the quarries, 10,000 in the metal industry, 6,500 in hydraulic workshops, 32,000 at clearing away mines, etc.

All these unfortunate victims, whose terrible working conditions we know, are proletarians. Yes, that's what we said: proletarians, class brothers. For the same A. Brisson who on November the 12th exposed cynically the profit that "France" reaps from this slavery, on November the 13 admits in the same "Monde" that nazis are not at all forced to work.

In a camp of political internees in Germany, French zone, 3,000 nazis "are merely used for trifling work . . . Certain specialists are used as mechanics by the French organisms . . . A library is at their disposal . . ." etc.

French imperialism acts like German imperialism which superexploited and starved the large mass of simple prisoners of war, while pampering the higher officers and the bureaucrats from Daladier to Blum.

SEMI-SLAVERY IN THE COUNTRY

The prisoners of war who are also employed in the country, are not the only slaves in France. "Le Monde" admits:

"We have actually 300,000 foreign workers. Regions such as Guyenne are only exploited thanks to the Italian and Spanish workers. The department of Seine-et-Marne has 12,720 foreigners out of a total of 20,230 agricultural workers."

The wages of the agricultural workers are extremely low; about one half of the wages

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Nice Work If You Can Get It

Pity the United States Steel Company! Business in the first nine months of 1946 fell by one-third, from \$1,368 million to a mere \$1,015 million.

But income per share of stock rose from \$2.85 in 1945 to \$4.45 in 1946.

How did they do it? You guessed it — Total steel wages fell from \$852 million dollars to \$505 million.

Housing

(Continued from Page 1)

By and large the building industry under Capitalism has functioned for the upper one-third of the population. In 1941, 25% of all non-farm families had incomes under \$1000 and 41% earned under \$1500. For these families the Federal Housing Administration did next to nothing. Only 1% to 3% of the FHA homes were produced at a price within their range. With building costs today up 60 to 100% only the higher income groups can afford to build any appreciable amount of HOME building.

CASH REGISTER THINKING

The inability of Capitalism in its old age to provide housing (which is rapidly becoming a luxury) is more glaringly illustrated than in most sections of Capitalist economy. The building industry involves the utilization of 30,000 parts and twelve trades. The building, contracting, and subcontracting parasites all must get their cut before any building is done, with the consequent effect that one dollar's worth of plaster is increased 300% in passing from the factory to the site where it is used. Is the final price too high for the returning vet and average worker? So what? To the financial and industrial pirates with their cash register mentalities this is an unimportant detail.

Those who look forward to an upturn in housing in 1947 are in for a sad disillusionment. The latter part of 1947 according to even the most conservative calculations will usher in a recession. It is estimated by U. S. News that production will drop around 21% in between present levels and the lowest point. The sharpest declines are expected in the production of textiles, chemicals, paper, printing and publishing. In the construction industries the number of workers may drop 10%, from the present level of 1,190,000 employees. By late 1947, 8,000,000 workers will be pounding the pavements looking for jobs. This picture is certainly not overdrawn; if anything it is a conservative forecast. In any case it knocks into a cocked hat any illusion that housing can be solved or even appreciably eased under capitalism.

Slavery in France

(Continued from Page 1)

of industrial workers, and they have stayed fixed. The length of the agricultural working day on the contrary is unlimited.

A proposed law considered 2400 hours rest per year and regulated weekly rests. This modest reform, voted unanimously on April 15, 1946, has not been realized, and will never be realized, because the Bidault-Thorez government is opposed to its extension to Algeria.

The second Constituent voted it (unanimously) on August 29, 1946, but the government maintained its position. Here is a beautiful example of what bourgeois parliamentarism means.

We denounce slavery and semi-slavery in France. We fight for uniformity of agricultural and industrial wages, for general raising of wages according to the cost of living and above all for immediate liberation without reservations of all prisoners of war.

With the war over, only the profits of the rapacious capitalists and their exploiting State reduce 700,000 proletarians, to slavery. Let those who want to return home be repatriated; let those who want to stay in France be made free-workers with equal wages!

R. K. D.

CHISELING ON VET PENSIONS

The system employed in the granting of disability pensions to disabled war vets is one of the most revolting and nauseating in the whole structure of capitalism. During the war the GI is a "hero", after it's over the government forgets this fact quickly and begins to chisel on what's coming to the vet.

In order to get a disability pension there must be a record of a disability which is connected with his service, or if there is no record the vet must submit proof of his own. The government disregards the fact that thousands today and in the future will become partially or totally disabled due to the physical and mental rigors of their past war duties. Many of these men were released as "physically fit", and so will not be granted any pensions.

Another wrinkle in this old face of patriotism is that some doctors of the Veterans Administration try to blame disabilities to pre-industrial accidents. These gentlemen forget the fact that the men were passed as "physically fit for military duty" by government doctors. They forget too that many pre-industrial ills, which weren't enough to keep a man out of the service, were aggravated by the rigors of military duty and have caused partial or total disability subsequently. These men do not, however, receive pensions.

PENSIONS CUT

Countless vets have had their pensions cut on one pretext or another. Disability ratings have been dropped from 30 to 10%, by the reports of the V. A. doctors. "General routine" (the old red-tape) is applied to cut down on the pittance the vet is receiving and to force him into a shop during the period when labor is short.

Veterans' organizations have handled thousands of these cases since the first bloodbath of 1917 and many vets have taken up their grievances through local politicians. On the whole, however, only a small percentage have succeeded. Quite a few disabled vets are patched up and sent back into the shops and mills, but the work is invariably too strenuous for their condition. The joke around vet hospitals is "you'll be back again". Mr. Moneybags who owns the mills and shops is looking for healthy men. He uses partially disabled vets only in a pinch, but when a depression comes the vet must either drive himself far beyond his physical limits or get out.

As time goes on the VA will forget all the promises given to the "soldier-hero". Articles are already appearing in the press to give the impression that the "soldier-hero" is now becoming only a "bum". An article published recently was called "Are we making a bum out of GI Joe", and it sharply criticized veterans for taking advantage of the miserable public law 396 and unemployment compensation.

The vet's problem can not be solved under capitalism. There are too many veterans — 20 million of them. Capitalism does not intend and cannot give them any real security. The ruling class controls all the force of the state, the veterans' organizations and the big political parties. It uses the veteran organizations as a wedge to divide the veteran from the rest of the working class (divide and conquer).

There is only one way to solve the problems of the vet worker and his millions of brothers as a whole—by the destruction of the capitalist system. The veteran will draw close to his labor union and to the Revolutionary Marxists to fight today to gain redress from the veterans administration and the government; and tomorrow to fight for the establishment of a new society based on production for use instead of profit.

STEEL WORKERS DECRY BONUS PLAN

The CIO big three, the U.A.W., U.S.W.A., U.E., met recently to plan common strategy for getting higher wages. The steel workers' contracts end in January and a strike is a strong possibility. Steel workers tend to believe it may be a three month's struggle.

In addition to demanding higher wages to meet the rise in living costs, steel workers must face the issue of the collective piece work bonus according to tonnage produced. It is the practice in the mills to lower hourly wage rates with promotions. The promoted worker is compensated by an increase in his tonnage rate. Thus a promotion does a worker no good unless the mills are operating and the tons of steel processed and rolled—steel that must pass inspection-increase. If the mill is down these promoted workers can make no more than the laborers 98c minimum, no matter how hard or skillfully they work.

The workers, therefore, speed each other up to the detriment of health, safety and solidarity. Steel workers hate the speed-up and financial uncertainty of the bonus system. It should be made a strike issue along with the closed shop, better safety regulations, higher wages, etc.

At present, other strikes are also set for January, and a coal strike is scheduled for later. The steel workers must take steps to cement closer ties with the miners. That is even more important than unity with the other two CIO giants. For steel workers, a natural big three is formed with the miners and railroad workers whose solidarity helped win steel struggles before.

A measure of the U.S.W.A. leadership is its acceptance of the lowered hourly rates with the tonnage set up. As elsewhere, a militant leadership and a progressive group must be built up. The steel worker will win his demands not by arbitration and mediation but by his ability to strike militantly.

"PEACE, IT'S WONDERFUL"

French Imperialism has agreed that Cochinchina (part of French Indo-China) could have an election to determine whether it wants to join the "free state" of Viet Nam, composed of two other parts of Indo-China. The only hitch was that the Imperialists demanded that "separatist agitation must stop".

The French government evidently believes in elections without discussion.

The Viet Nam, a nationalist colonial group with partial Stalinist leadership, could easily see that such an election would be rigged.

And so — there is now civil war in Indo-China. The French are pouring in tanks, planes and troops. To the warped mind of French Imperialism (very much like other Imperialisms, including our own American Imperialism) guns and tanks and planes seem to be cheaper than . . . democracy.

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What About a Labor Party?

The question of a "Third" party is today being hotly discussed amongst not only the trade unionists but even the liberals. Henry Wallace's New Republic is conducting a debate in its pages over this issue. A Kentucky businessman named Harry Schacter says we should have a new "liberal" party. Governor Ellis Arnall of Georgia, says no — let's "bore from within" and capture the Democratic Party.

Within the labor camp a similar dispute rages. People like Walter Reuther, Sam Wolkoch and George Baldanzi as well as the Stalinists and Trotskyists in the CIO want a Labor Party set-up now. Phil Murray and his supporters are content to keep the Political Action Committee rolling as an adjunct of the Democratic Party.

It must be obvious even to a naive child that a "Labor" Party can be nothing but a unification of the top labor skates and some liberals. Its main political action must therefore be action in Congress, introduction of "progressive" bills, etc. A "Labor Party based on the trade unions" can obviously be only a third capitalist party based on reforming the system by gradual change. If it were anything else it wouldn't be a "Labor" Party, but a Revolutionary Party.

Those who wish to reform capitalism

naturally flock to such a Party, including many liberals. We Marxists recognize, however, that capitalism can NOT be patched up or reformed; it must be destroyed and a new social order based on production for USE erected in its place. Only a Revolutionary MARXIAN Party can give leadership to such a crusade.

ALL KINDS OF POLITICS

The common argument against our position is: "well, you must be for some kind of political action; what's wrong with supporting 'progressives' in Congress?" Yes, we of the Revolutionary Workers League are for political action. But voting in elections is only one part of political action — and only a very small part at that. We vote in elections EXCLUSIVELY in order to use the elections as a FORUM to expose the fake capitalist democracy and the fake Congressional "liberalism". If one of our comrades were elected to Congress he would serve, but he would concentrate the overwhelming majority of his time organizing MASS DEMONSTRATIONS AND STRIKES. Legislation introduced by himself for better conditions for the masses, would be subordinate to this independent class activity.

Yes, we are for political action; but it is of a class struggle and revolutionary nature,

not the class collaboration of a Labor Party.

We advocate such forms of political action as demonstrations against the government for higher unemployed benefits; veterans activity, including marches on Washington, for security and for carrying out of the promises made by the government; political strikes against the tide of reactionary legislation in Congress; organization and utilization of trained workers defense corps to protect workers against police hooliganism and vigilante terror; political strikes in solidarity with workers who are fighting capitalism in other countries; etc. etc.

Our political action is directly opposite to that of the "Labor" Party politicians (including the Trotskyites). Our action is based on always and everywhere OPPOSING the CAPITALIST STATE. Their action is based on RECONCILING themselves to the capitalist state and its rigged congressional machinery.

Should Labor support a "Labor" Party? The answer is NO!

Should revolutionists advocate a "Labor" Party? Again the answer is NO! If such a Party is ever organized we must appeal to its rank and file by leaflets, by word of mouth, etc., to leave their Party and join the Marxists. Some of our members will "bore from within" such a party. But to ADVOCATE THE BUILDING of a "Labor" Party is merely to advocate a policy of reformism, of left-wing support to capitalism.

The U. N. and Disarmament

The United Nations conference with its high-flown and hypocritical words about disarmament reminds one of a movie being seen for the second time. The present United Nations, like its predecessor, the "League of Nations", is a "thieves kitchen". Despite the eloquent phrases of Wilson, Briand and Company, the former League proved itself in life to be nothing but an organization which gave Anglo-French imperialism the inside track in the fight for world domination. Until it fell apart it was used as an instrument against the Soviet Union and the rebellion of the workers and colonial masses in Europe, Asia and Africa.

The U. N., unlike its prototype, is an instrument being forged by American Imperialism, which has come out of this war as the strongest power on earth—and therefore dominates the U. N. In this new "thieves kitchen" Britain merely plays a second fiddle. And both Britain and America are constantly pitted against the Soviet Union.

The talk about disarmament fits in very nicely with this general pattern. After every war it becomes necessary to quiet the masses with words about "no more war". Preparations for new bloodbaths must take place under the cover of propaganda that we shall never fight again. The big powers therefore attempt to show that they are only too willing to disarm . . . if only other powers would stop being hostile. The United States today offers to disarm and to gradually (!) give up the secret of the atom bomb . . . if only the Soviet Union would give up its right to veto any measure of the U. N. This formula is an ideal one for American Imperialism. If all the powers destroyed every gun and every weapon of war, America would be the best prepared of all the powers for new wars—because Uncle Sam has the most developed economic machine of all and could easily rebuild a war machine in half the time it would take either Britain or the Soviet Union. Furthermore, if the Soviet Union gave up its veto power in the Security Council of the U. N., America would be able to pass all kinds of rulings completely liquidating the position of the Soviet Union in the U. N., since the United States is in complete control of the machinery

of the U. N.

Talk about disarmament, therefore, is so much bunk. Disarmament can not stop wars from occurring; it merely assures (assuming that it could take place) that the strongest economic power could be rearmed most quickly for the next war.

The deeds of the U. N. do not match the psalm-singing words of the U. N. hypocrites. The Stalinist bureaucracy keeps 4,000,000 soldiers armed against her peace-loving (?) allies, Britain and the U. S., who likewise maintain 5,000,000 men themselves under arms, and a considerable and growing stockpile of atom-bombs. If the extension of conscription in Britain is any indication, the tendency will be toward a series of skirmishes in which the U. S., Britain and the Soviet Union will jockey for position while the imperialists try to use the U. N. as a rubber stamp for their aggrandizement. The conflict of the powers in Germany, over Trieste, Turkey, Albania, Yugoslavia, Greece, Palestine and China, provides for us the real background against which disarmament is being discussed.

The forces which precipitated World War II are now at work setting the stage for the next imperialist war. The idea that the capitalist world can set up a central authority to which individual capitalist nations will give up authority and sovereignty, is sheer utopia. For capitalism there is no higher justice than the need for markets for capital investment, raw materials, and cheap colonial labor.

We will do well to remember a lesson of the past. In the medieval period in many parts of Europe feudal barons organized private armies and made wars against their competitors. Society was incapable of organizing itself into strong national structures. It wasn't until rising capitalism swept out feudalism that a central government was established and these intra-national wars eliminated. But this took a social revolution to achieve.

Capitalism in turn set the stage for wider conflicts between large world powers, but it is incapable of taking the next step, a worldwide unified international authority. Just as capitalism eliminated the wars between feudal armies and boundaries, the proletarian revolu-

tion will put an end to capitalist wars and national boundaries. Only a thorough going social revolution can organize a Socialist United States of Europe and a Socialist World. This is the only road to world peace.

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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A NEGRO LOOKS BACK AT THE ARMY

The Negro in the army often speaks of civilian life as the "FREE WORLD." I was a little surprised at this when many of them told me that their homes were in the deep South but my surprise faded rapidly after I had experienced the full flavor of army racism and brass hat dictatorship, as an enlisted man and a Negro. Because even in the benighted South, with its myriad of restrictions and jim-crow laws, the Negro has a modicum of choice, movement and independency that is denied him in the army. Then, too, there is always the possibility of escaping the South, a feat well-nigh impossible in the army.

There is little or nothing in the organization and character of the army, with its rigid pattern of racial discrimination and caste gulf between officers and enlisted men, to cause the Negro to have any faith in the vaunted aims of the past conflict. The army could only be considered, in our minds, as an extra and a more excruciating parishship.

AVIATION SQUADRON

During my entire tour of duty, I was stationed in the southern part of the United States (on three different air fields) in what is known as an aviation squadron. These squadrons were formed very early in the war. (I have never seen or heard of any corresponding white unit of this nature in the Air Forces). The duty of these units was to perform all sorts of unskilled labor and to provide the officers' mess, clubs and hunting lodges with domestics.

Though the army claims that men are placed according to their ability and adaptability, as ascertained by the general classification test, I have seen Negro youth working in pick and shovel gangs with AGC scores of 140 and 132, for the lack of any other place to put them in the army's jim-crow set up.

Such cases may be exceptions, but the fact remains that the general policy of the army is to confine Negroes, in all branches, to menial work. The true exceptions were the Negro combat divisions (one fought in Italy and the other in the South Pacific) and the Negro fighter and bombardment units in the Air Force. Upon these units the army brasshats and the War Dept. bureaucrats relied for their cloak of "fairness". Yet, the unjust criticism of the Negro combat division in the Italian campaign, plus the fact that this division was officered by inefficient white officers, among whom were many who ascribed to Hitler's racial theory showed there was little semblance of fairness.

"MASTER PLAN"

There is so much uniformity in the army's racial policy that you can easily envision a "Master Plan". There are white and there are Negro soldiers and never the twain shall meet. Camps, air fields, post exchanges, service clubs, gyms, libraries, etc., are erected and placed according to this dictum. Theoretically, the Negro soldier is supposed to have access to all these off-duty facilities, but in general practice he is excluded or discouraged from using them as freely as the whites. Here is the pattern on Eglin Field, Fla.

The Negro area is securely isolated from the rest of the field in sort of a military ghetto. There is one theatre, in a state of decay, that will hold 300 men; one barren, unattractive service club with a few dozen books. Aside from the PX the above two buildings housed the entire recreational facilities of 1500 Negro sol-

diers, the largest unit on the field. If the white unit suffered from this poverty in recreational facilities, there would be no need to raise the cry of discrimination, but such was not the case. Negro soldiers had not only no place to go, but they read each week in the field's paper the varied planned recreational activity offered each week for whites—dancing, bowling, fishing trips, music concerts, camera clubs, etc.

Fifteen minutes after the theatre is open in the Negro area it is jammed to its capacity. Men fight and scramble for seats. Once the Negro manager of the theatre, after having repeatedly turned away large groups of men, advised them to go to the theatre on the "hill", in the white section of the field. They went to this theatre—a large, attractive, stucco building with a carpeted foyer and an air-conditioning system—but they were firmly turned away by the officers in charge. This theatre is never crowded; it runs three shows daily and can accommodate about 600 persons. (I am speaking only of Eglin Field. On other fields there were Jim-Crow seating arrangements in the theatres).

The same was true of the library. Negroes were barred on the false pretense that they would only use it to shirk duty. The USO building outside the gate was barred to Negroes as a general practice throughout the South.

SAME STORY EVERYWHERE

These are only some of my personal experiences; they are limited, but the hundreds of stories that I have heard from Negroes from

every part of the U. S. and foreign theatres of operations can duplicate them thousands of times. Very often the conditions were worse and the military authorities not quite so benevolent. Actual violence against Negro troops is not unknown.

Upon these experience the average Negro G. I. has drawn certain opinions. They are not always articulate opinions, but they show themselves in action and general morale. "They have drafted me, let them try and make a soldier out of me".

This attitude has been highly condemned by the War Dept. and the newspapers. The more vitriolic have compared the Negroes' attitude to that of the Italian army. The logical idea that follows is: the American Negro's condition is little better than that of the Italian peasant-soldier under fascism.

It is not to be construed, however, that the white soldiers lived in an Army heaven. The Army's court martials and the caste system confined all soldiers to an inferior status. Soldiers strikes and the avalanche of criticism that has descended upon heads of the brass hat from ex-soldiers, dramatized this.

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Workers Have Memories

Chicago, January 5, 1947 — Much to everyone's surprise, 1,200 members of the Department Store Employees Union, Local 291, AFL, voted S. F. Sullivan, leader of the Local, out of office in the Union's election on December 27th. Sullivan lost out for the presidency to Alfred Molenhouse, worker in the Fair Store, by 120 votes.

Prior to the election Sullivan had been the Secretary-Treasurer in charge of all the Union's affairs. At his insistence the constitution was changed to give the President complete powers over the Union and Sullivan thereupon announced his candidacy for the Presidency, fully expecting to breeze in.

But Sullivan did not reckon on the memory of the Fair Store workers (the Union is composed of employees of Chicago's Fair and Boston stores). A few months back the Fair management (whose profits rose from \$35,000 to over \$3 millions in a few year's time) offered a raise of \$4.00 for selling employees and \$5.00 for non-selling. The Boston Store offered a straight \$5.00 raise. At separate meetings workers at both stores rejected the proposals and sent their committees back for further negotiations. At Boston Store a strike vote was taken and preparations made to strike.

WORKERS REMEMBERED

At the Fair, however, Sullivan and his cronies gave the workers a long song and dance about how the Company would take away thousands of dollars in retroactive pay in case of strike and how costly a strike would be. In a tu-

multuous meeting, where workers were denied the floor and Union leaders who opposed the agreement were booed by organized boogie squads, the original proposal was accepted. At the Boston Store however, a day or two later, the Company raised its proposal by another dollar, and it was quite obvious to everyone that it could have been raised much more if not for the stab in the back given it by the actions of the leaders at the Fair.

Although Sullivan was confident of victory, the workers evidently did not forget his role at the Fair. They voted for Molenhouse even though Molenhouse has not distinguished himself as a militant. Their vote was a protest vote, more than anything else.

Unfortunately the Local 291 membership has not been educated to progressive trade Union principles. The personal element played a major role in the election, rather than a discussion of trade union policy. Only one leaflet was put out in the whole campaign, and that only on the day of the election, by Molenhouse and his running mate for the post of organizational-director, Walter (Scotty) Deans.

Since the surprise election results the Union is filled with dissension. If the new Molenhouse-Deans leadership does not engage in a strong organizational drive—particularly at Goldblatt's—and a sustained educational campaign, this dissension will continue and will seriously weaken the Union. Molenhouse and Deans can serve the Union by building a progressive group based on militant trade union principles, rather than personalities and by organizing positive militant action by the Local.