

The Negro Question

by Robert L. Birchman

Negro Paper on Commencement Day

The Chicago Defender (June 22) in an editorial "Diplomas For What," after mentioning that thousands of youth are now graduating from the schools and colleges states: "The diploma says they are qualified. But life itself asks, 'Qualified for what?'"

"There are no jobs. The thousands who were graduated last year and the year before and for several years before that, are in the ranks of the unemployed. There are no jobs for youth—unless you are thinking of war. That is a big job. Youth can trade the diploma for a gun. That is all that is offered. No education of the kind youth has just completed is needed in Flanders field. There is no future there, among the dead."

"Mothers may say, 'I did not raise my boy to be a corpse upon a European battle field.' But there are no jobs. War can help ease the unemployment situation. What? The mothers of America are against it, you say. Then let them speak out, let them cry to the housewives. Tell Washington: Not war, but peace and the jobs of peace are on the order of the day. This is not our war."

"One of our weekly contemporaries is offering graduating students \$5 for success stories. The graduate who gets a job is regarded as a real story. But the story which should be printed is: Why is it that millions of jobless youth can't get work? That's America's story. Why are there no jobs?"

"Will these boys and girls be called fifth columnists if they demand that their government assume toward them a responsibility equal to the responsibility it assumes toward those who are receiving and are to receive billions for war subsidies?"

"Shall we malign that youth whose years in school were filled with the hope that by graduation time we would have learned how to cure the ills of unemployment in the midst of untold natural resources? We have failed them, not they us. Why not tell them the story of our failure?"

"Commencement Day! Will it be the end of hope? Negro youth faces the hardest future. If there are a few jobs, it comes last. Black America is the most forgotten man."

"Is it any wonder it questions the mental competency of its elders? We have no cure, or have we and are we afraid to fight for posterity?"

"It would indeed be a bankrupt world if there were no jobs outside the ranks of armed men and the grave diggers who plow them under. Youth graduates! It demands! We have got to answer! Europe has no answer for our youth upon its battlefields."

Negroes O.K.—For Cannon Fodder

But last week, as Hitler's legions forced the Allies back against the walls of the English channel, the recruiting officers were advised to scuttle the war department's "no Negroes wanted" refrain for a theme which might induce approximately 70 young Negroes of Kansas City to answer the call to the colors." So ends an item dated from Kansas City appearing in the Negro press last week-end. This is but one indication of what will become more and more apparent as the day for America's entry into the war draws nearer. That when America's Sixty Families need Negro youth for cannon fodder to protect and expand their interests, the color bar will be forgotten—for cannon fodder.

British Drop Colonial "Improvement"

The British Colonial Office announced last week that the colonial development plans that were embodied in the recommendations of the Royal Commission on the West Indies and in a statement of policy by the Colonial Office would not be carried out because of the intensity of the war in Europe. The British Government previously had decided to appropriate the miserable sum of £1,000,000 annually for a period of twenty years for the purpose of initiating public health, housing, slum clearance, social welfare and agricultural reforms throughout the West Indies. This sum amounted to an average of a penny per native annually.

British imperialism is forcing the exploited and oppressed colonial peoples to bear greater and greater burdens of the war, in the form of increased taxation, higher cost of living, longer hours, and finally with their lives to guarantee that their enslavers will remain their masters.

Ethiopians Distrust British "Help"

A dispatch from London appearing in the Chicago Defender last week, reporting that the Ethiopians are attacking the Italian troops, states:

"The Emperor, after four years of betrayal and neglect by Britain, was suddenly invited to come to London from his modest home in Bath for a conference with British government officials.

"While determined to utilize the present situation to press the armed struggle for Ethiopian independence, the natives are reliably reported to be highly suspicious of Britain's intentions regarding Ethiopia, in the event of an Allied victory."

Recording of Song Insulting WPA Workers Stopped by Union

The Boston Guardian reports: "that vulgar, barrel-organ song about the WPA ('Sleep while you work, while you rest, while you play, lean on your shovel to pass time away') is no longer to be recorded, owing to the decision of the New York Local of the American Federation of Musicians to condemn it. For a long time this record has insulted colored and white workers, whom unemployment, created by the depression, has compelled to work on the projects initiated in the early years of the Roosevelt administration, to provide the jobs which private industry could not furnish."

War! It's Wonderful

Profits of leading corporations zoomed skyward even before the latest gigantic armament appropriations got under way. Jumps ranging from 25 per cent to 2,500 per cent are recorded for the 1st quarter of 1940, as compared to the same period of 1939. Some figures compiled by the CIO Economic Outlook:

Company	1st quarter 1939	1st quarter 1940	% Profits Increase
U.S. Steel	\$ 660,551	\$17,113,995	2500
Bethlehem Steel	2,409,059	10,891,139	350
Republic Steel	532,899	3,111,723	480
Studebaker	56,914	511,503	800
General Motors	53,177,928	67,028,461	26
Chrysler	11,638,290	15,742,388	35
Douglas Aircraft	771,552	1,804,877	134
Fairchild Aircraft	56,254	209,102	274
Glenn L. Martin	682,496	2,162,670	213
General Electric	7,373,431	11,951,450	62

Even these figures don't tell the whole story. For instance—the 26% increase of General Motors' profits is an increase over what was a world's record for corporation profits!

Mpls. Labor Movement Fights War Drive

MINNEAPOLIS, June 21—The labor movement of this city, some of whose members are still serving terms in the federal prison at Sandstone because, in last summer's WPA strike they violated Roosevelt's edict that "You can't strike against the government," isn't being taken in by the patriotic war drive.

The most outspoken voice of the workers here is the "Northwest Organizer," weekly organ of the Minneapolis Teamsters Joint Council. In this week's issue a blistering editorial takes the measure of Roosevelt's cry for "national defense." It says, in part:

"National defense, for an imperialist nation, has never been anything but a slogan to justify war, to make war appear as legitimate and just.

"To endorse the idea of national defense is to approve the war for which the machinery of 'national defense' will be used. To endorse national defense is to approve all the repressive measures directed by the government and industry against organized labor under the guise of strengthening national defense—such as the use of G-men, against unions and strikers, the jailing of union men and women, the outlawing of strikes, big slashes in wages, lengthening of hours, the campaign against aliens.

"It is true that the average worker does not at all think of national defense in this way. When the worker or farmer thinks about national defense, he is thinking about defense of his wife and children and relatives and friends, defense of his home and neighborhood and the school where his kids go—defense of these things from some vague invader, from bombs, parachutists and poisonous gas. At most he thinks of national defense as meaning the defense of the border of the United States—the two coasts and the Mexican and Canadian borders.

"But when the industrialist and his general staff, his newspapers, his educators, his news-reel and radio commentators, speak of national defense, they mean the seizure of colonies and markets abroad. They mean diverting funds from the unemployed to war, they mean

Seniority Rights In New Union Contracts Protected In War

MINNEAPOLIS, June 21—A number of new contracts signed by General Drivers Union Local 544 carry a new clause, safeguarding seniority rights against the contingency of war-time service in the army.

One such clause, appearing in a contract signed this week between Local 544 and 28 excavating companies reads as follows:

"Employees shall not suffer any loss in their seniority standing by reason of their enlistment or induction into any branch of the military or naval service of the U.S.A. in event of an official declaration of war by the United States."

A similar clause appears in a contract signed last week by Local 544, St. Paul General Drivers Local 129, the two filling station attendants locals of the Twin Cities, and eighteen major oil companies operating in the Twin Cities.

Old-timers remember how "patriotic" bosses around here urged their employees to go over there in 1917, promising them their jobs when they came back—and when the survivors came back they didn't get their jobs back. Minneapolis workers are perhaps more anti-war than anywhere else in the country, and if they're going to be dragged off to war they're determined to have jobs to come back to.

the opportunity to whip up hysteria against those unions who oppose war, such as the vile Mooney-Billings frame-up at the Preparedness Parade in San Francisco in 1916; they mean dealing smashing blows at organized labor of the type that organized labor would not tolerate in peacetime.

"That is the REAL meaning of national defense."

NEW YORK COPS CLUB PICKETS AT AIR KING

The strike at the Air King Radio Corp., Brooklyn, N. Y., conducted by the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers Union (CIU), took on the aspects of a battle to preserve the right to organize and picket, as La Guardia's police force fought several pitched battles with the pickets at the plant in Brooklyn last week.

Captain Leahy, of Brooklyn's 66th precinct, has been promising that if no mass picket line was put around the plant, he would allow mass picketing in case scabs tried to enter the plant. The workers took him at his word and abstained from mass picketing until Lieberman, owner of the shop, took a large group of scabs into the plant on June 12.

The workers then tried to throw a mass picket line around the plant. Whereupon Captain Leahy declared, "I know why you want a mass picket line. Now that Italy is in the war the Italians in your ranks want to tie up American industry." The captain's statement, providing a pretext for breaking the picket line, shows how "anti-alien" moves are really directed against labor.

The police then attempted to break the back of the strike in one of the most brutal attacks that has ever been seen in New York City. Over 100 police officers, under the direction of Captain Leahy, with 4 riot cars, 5 motorcycles and a squad of police on horseback, drove against a group of 1,000 unionists and their friends who were trying to form a mass picket line around the plant. The police charged the line with night sticks flying and beat everybody that they could reach mercilessly. Young girls were struck on the head and face with sticks, and when they fell to the ground unconscious they were kicked by the police. The cops on horseback, riding up onto the sidewalk chased young men and women down the street and swung sticks at their heads in a manner reminiscent of a cavalry charge.

One of the girls, Kathleen Kramer, suffered a bad leg fracture and was lying in the street unconscious when several officers came over to her and beat her with clubs and kicked her. Captain Leahy, standing close by, directed this brutality. When a male striker tried to assist his fallen fellow worker he was brutally beaten and knocked unconscious. In the attack officer No. 7687 was especially brutal.

One mounted cop even went so far in the pursuit of his "duty" that he rode on horseback into a live poultry shop in pursuit of a girl and injured the proprietor.

About 20 of the strikers were seriously injured and 4 were arrested. Paul Goldblatt and James Lustig were charged with disorderly conduct. At the hearing at nightcourt Lustig had the additional charge of "inciting to riot" placed against him. Two other workers who were engaged in a routine stopping of trucks in front of the plant were arrested and a frame-up charge of grand larceny was placed against them.

But the strike goes on, the ranks firm.

COPS CLUB AIR KING PICKETS



Preparing the war for democracy—New York cops ruthlessly clubbed pickets outside the Air King Radio Corporation plant in Brooklyn, N. Y., last week. The striker stretched out above was one of 13 injured in the attack by hundreds of policemen.

MILITANT CAFETERIA WORKERS DEFEAT STALINIST CANDIDATE

The members of the Cafeteria Workers Union of New York, Local 302, delivered a decisive defeat to the Communist Party machine dominating the local, when William Kincheloe, Progressive, was elected president by a margin of 240 votes over his Stalinist opponent. Almost 5,000 workers voted in the special by-election, held on Tuesday, June 25, after the incumbent president had resigned to assume his post as Executive Manager of the Local Joint Board.

The election aroused tremendous interest among the cafeteria workers and food workers generally, for Local 302, with a membership of 10,000 is the most important in the Hotel and Restaurant Workers International. Local 302 had remained a Communist Party stronghold after decisive defeats in Local 16 and Local 325, and even after the Opposition had broken through in the regular elections last December and elected 2 Business Agents. Now, for the first time, with a majority turning against the C.P., their complete elimination from the leadership of the union in the regular elections in December is confidently looked forward to.

In the four-year domination of the union by the Communist Party, it has been completely exposed

as an agency of the bosses within the ranks of the workers. Rebuilding the Bosses' Association, acceptance of an arbitration board and breaking down of job security, signing of a two-year contract, and non-enforcement of union conditions in the shops were some of the crimes of the Stalinist administration, and their defeat was long overdue.

In the election campaign, the Stalinists, seeing the handwriting on the wall, resorted to the most unscrupulous nationalist demagoguery, appealing to the large Greek membership to vote for their candidate because he was a Greek. Kincheloe, the Progressive candidate, had the support of a coalition of opposition groups, calling themselves the United Orange Ticket. He also had the support of William Mesevich, the resigned president, who broke with the Stalinist machine after supporting it for three and one-half years.

The big task of the Progressives now is to prepare for the elections in December, when the Stalinists can be completely swept out. The bylaws must be democratized, the two branches of the union must be united into one, and the progressive program of the Opposition must be put into effect.

TOLEDO BAKERY UNION STANDS AGAINST WAR

TOLEDO, Ohio—Bakery Workers Local 302 of this city declared its solidarity with the anti-war stand taken by its brother union, the Ohio State Butchers and Meat Cutters, denouncing the present war now raging in Europe as imperialistic and in the interests only of the profits of the few.

There were 150 present at the meeting on Saturday, June 15.

After a full discussion a unanimous standing vote was taken in

were to be sent to the local newspaper of the resolution. Copies papers, and the union's delegates to the AFL Central Labor Union of this city were given permission to present it there.

The text of the resolution follows:

WHEREAS, there is now in progress a war in Europe which threatens to engulf the whole world, and

WHEREAS, the present war being fought is an imperialist one, and

WHEREAS as workers we can have no common interests with the aims of those countries involved in the slaughter of the workers fighting their wars for the profits of the few,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Local 302, Bakery Workers of Toledo, support the Amalgamated Meat Cutters & Butcher Workmen (AFL) and go on record as being unalterably opposed to the United States being involved in any such war, and that we shall oppose any attempts to stampede or involve us in this catastrophe, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we support the Ludlow Amendment for a referendum vote on war.

Subscribe to the "Fourth International"

Perk up!
There is a PICNIC
WE'RE SAILING FOR CLOVE LAKE
(Staten Island)
on
SUNDAY, JUNE 30
MEET AT SOUTH FERRY
10 A.M.
Take Bus No. 6 to Clove Lake (near Silver Lake)
Boating-Tennis-Games
Home Cooked Food
Grand drawing of World's Fair Souvenir Book
Auspices: West Side Br.

Anti-Alien Drive Revival of Palmer Raids

By MATTHEW ROAN
The present government drive against aliens brings to mind the similar attempts of the government, after the last war, to break the solidarity of the workers by creating a hysteria directed against our foreign born brothers.

With the spread of revolution in Europe and the great strikes in coal and steel on this side of the ocean in 1919, the bankers and bosses began to quake with fear. They raised the cry of "foreign-born agitator" in an attempt to break the workers' unions.

Congress obligingly appropriated \$2,600,000 to Attorney-General Palmer, with instructions, as the report of the Attorney-General of the United States explicitly declared, to give special attention to the coal and steel disturbances.

Palmer called in as his chief assistant William J. Flynn, head of a labor-spy detective agency, to help in this government-sponsored strike-breaking. He and J. Edgar Hoover—who still runs the FBI—did the job.

They found one special excuse for attacking America's organized workers when, on May 1, 1919, some two dozen bombs were "found" in the mail. The same thing happened on June 3rd of the same year. Who sent those bombs was never clearly determined. The best guess points to government provocateurs. But Palmer and Flynn stated to the press that they would get the "Bolsheviks and Anarchists" who were responsible.

Typical Example of Those "Red" Raids

On November 7, 1919, second anniversary of the Russian revolution, which Flynn considered the psychological date on which to attack, raids were made in the principal cities of the United States. The raids in New York City are typical of those which occurred throughout the country in their brutality and terrorism.

On that night a gang of terrorists and hoodlums descended on the Peoples House, a school and assembly hall operated by the Federation of Unions of Russian Workers of the United States. Classes were in session and all was quiet, when suddenly the government agents broke in. Swinging clubs and breaking heads, even though they met with no resistance, they arrested all the workers that they found in the building and, without even a single warrant, threw them all in jail. They carried away a truckload of "subversive" literature, including not a few mathematics textbooks. At the prison they submitted the arrested workers to a third-degree. The packed cells were full of moaning victims of police brutality.

The same scenes were duplicated in all the raids which occurred throughout the country. Thousands of arrests were made. In January, 1920 further raids were conducted in the search for "weapons." 2,500 were imprisoned at this time. The total haul of weapons were four rifles, about two hundred years old, which were used by an amateur theatrical group.

In the series of raids 6,350 warrants were issued for alleged deportable aliens; 3,000 arrests were made. Of all of these only 271 were actually deported, so flimsy were the charges against them. 249 of these were of Russian birth and the government arranged that they were all to be deported at one time on the S.S. Buford, an old unseaworthy crate. The refined cruelty of the government agents was shown once again at the sailing. Not only were the deportees not permitted to take their families, but the families were not informed of the time of the sailing so they could say good-bye. Those women and children who managed to come to the pier were scattered and driven away by soldiers.

Typical of many of the deported was a young worker who was not a radical or a member of any radical organization. He had been attending a class in mathematics at the Peoples House the night it was raided and this was held sufficient grounds for deportation.

Attorney General Palmer made no bones about his strike-breaking role in the great coal miners' strike of 1919. He announced himself "ready to curb radicals and protect working miners," and proceeded to secure a federal injunction prohibiting the United Mine Workers Union from paying out strike benefits. The courts obliged, of course, whereupon Palmer boasted:

"No strike can go on without being directed, and if this injunction is obeyed this strike of the coal miners cannot continue, for this restraining order acts to make it leaderless so far as the national scope of it is concerned." (New York Times, November 1, 1919).

They're Just Repeating 1919

It must be said that the 1919-1921 wave of "anti-alien" and "red" persecutions largely achieved what the bosses wanted from it. Millions of foreign-born workers were terrorized into accepting wage-cuts, and foreign-born and native workers stood divided and therefore powerless to fight back against the wage-cuts. Then things quieted down, it became fashionable to be ashamed of the "excesses" of Palmer's red raids, and the Assistant Secretary of Labor, Louis F. Post, wrote a book about it entitled "The Deportation Delirium."

But the bosses didn't forget the bag of tricks they had learned. And now, with a reluctant working class being pushed toward war, those tricks are brought out again. And the same man, J. Edgar Hoover, still heads the FBI, which is charged with the dirtiest work connected with the revival of Palmer's red raids.

The bosses didn't forget. The workers also must not forget. Defend the alien workers against the FBI and against all these "anti-alien" laws! For they are all, in reality, directed against all workers, foreign-born or native.

WORKERS' FORUM

Write to us—tell us what's going on in your part of the labor movement—what are the workers thinking about—tell us what the bosses are up to—and the G-men and the local cops—and the Stalinists—send us that story the capitalist press didn't print and that story they buried or distorted—our pages are open to you. Letters must carry name and address, but indicate if you do not want your name printed.

First Effect of Minn. Bloc with Democrats

Editor:
If any conscious Minnesota trade unionist was ever tempted to recommend a coalition between the Democratic and Farmer-Labor parties as a solution to the workers' political problems, he was certainly cured of this temptation if he attended the Olson Memorial Banquet on June 17th. The Banquet held in honor of Minnesota's famous Farmer-Labor governor, Floyd B. Olson who died in 1936, was sponsored

by the Railroad Brotherhoods, the Farmer-Labor Association, a large number of AFL and CIO—and the Democratic Party. Two thousand workers attended the Minneapolis banquet and other thousands of workers attended similar banquets in other parts of the state.
The Democratic program—or lack of program—prevailed in the speeches made at the banquet. No proposal was made for a way out for the workers from the danger of involvement in another bloody war. Rather, each speaker—with the exception of Senator Burton K. Wheeler—emphasized his faith in Roosevelt's program

for keeping us out of war. The only anti-Roosevelt, anti-war speech was made by former liberal, Senator Wheeler. However, even his mild attacks on the warmongers were wildly applauded by the workers who heard him. His very timid hint at the end of his speech that "a new and great liberal anti-war party will be created unless they (the Republican and Democratic parties) bind themselves in unmistakable terms to a program of keeping the U.S. out of the European war" brought the meeting to its feet.

It should be recorded that the Stalinist stooge, Elmer Benson, also criticized the Administration's war position and pleaded for a stand by Farmer-Laborites against the growing war hysteria. Although his speech was roundly applauded, very few Farmer-Laborites, except the Stalinists, place any confidence in former Governor Benson as a consistent anti-war fighter. It is no secret to Minnesota workers that Elmer Benson is and was a Stalinist captive. Before the recent change in the Communist Party line, he was whooping it up for collective security and pleading with Roosevelt to place an embargo on the aggressors, etc., etc. If the Stalinists return to this position, Benson will again make an emotional demand for faith in our great leader, F.D.R.
No, there was no speaker at the

Olson Banquet whom the workers could trust as a leader in the fight against war. Vince Day, John Devaney, Dewey Johnson, John McDonough, and even John Boscoe, the President of the Minneapolis Central Labor Union, all swore their allegiance to President Roosevelt, the "flag and the country for which it stands." Old-line Farmer-Laborites shook their heads and said that they had never seen such a chauvinistic display at a Farmer-Labor gathering.

It is very clear that the coalition ticket of Democrats and Farmer-Laborites planned for this fall's state election has already wiped out the traditional anti-war position of the Farmer-Labor movement, at least on the part of the present leaders of this movement. Rank and file delegates from the unions to the coming State Convention of the Farmer-Labor Party must try to write a bold, anti-war, anti-Roosevelt platform. If this fails, Minnesota workers will turn away from the Democratic-Farmer-Labor pro-war ticket this fall. Advanced workers must be on guard to keep this wave of anti-war feeling of disillusioned Farmer-Laborites away from the equally pro-war Republican Party and on the path of independent working-class action.
Grace Carlson
St. Paul, Minn.