

Labor's Policy Toward the Draft Boards

An Editorial

The local draft boards have just been named. Throughout the country they have been packed with bosses and their agents.

Sweat-shop operators, vigilante inciters, utilities sharks, bankers, petty waid bosses, were hand-picked for these posts. The loyal "regular" who lost out for state assemblyman; the machine-man who failed to get a job at City Hall; the lawyer who dines with the judge, and the judge who is mindful of past favors rendered—in a word, all the corrupt and corruptible have been named to the draft boards.

As for the labor movement, it is "represented" only by a very few of the most conservative craft-union officials. And very few of these.

Organized labor everywhere, both AFL and CIO, has been quick to recognize the anti-labor character of the draft boards.

But the remedy for this evil proposed by some union officials is no solution at all. For example, the *CIO News*, Frank Martel, president of the Detroit Federation of Labor and other voices in the trade unions, say that what is needed is greater union representation upon these boards. But such a set-up, in which bosses and union officials sit and work together, sounds as phony to us as a union executive board composed of bosses and workers. As in every agency of this type, the union representatives would serve simply as a cover for the capitalist class holding the power.

And even if the draft boards were composed entirely of union men, how much good could they do for labor? They could be fair and honest, and keep discrimination down to a minimum. But they would still be sending the workers into a boss-controlled army.

The present regime in the army and navy is a mere extension of the boss regime in society and industry generally. The officers are largely drawn from the middle class and the rich. They exercise an unrestricted dictatorship over the worker-soldiers. The general staffs are reactionary cliques, tied by a thousand threads to Wall Street and Big Business. In their professional journals and public utterances, as well as in the policies advocated by the War and Navy departments, the military heads stand revealed as a virulent anti-labor force.

Moreover, they are a counter-part of the fascist-minded French military heads who deserted so quickly before the Nazi onslaught, who preferred to safeguard the property interests of the French ruling class rather than the lives of the workers and soldiers.

If Martel and other like-minded labor officials had their way, and they got on the draft boards, they could do little more than prevent a few bosses' sons from escaping the rigors of army service. But the workers have much more at stake than this. The working class is confronted with the menace of universal capitalist militarism and fascism.

The workers must have arms and military training. The real problem facing the workers is to control these arms and determine the objectives toward which they will be directed.

Only if the workers control the military machine can they successfully defend their own interests against the treacherous designs of the bourgeois "democrats" and the unreliable officer-caste.

There is only one answer to this problem. LABOR MUST SECURE FULL MILITARY TRAINING—BUT UNDER THE CONTROL OF ITS OWN UNION ORGANIZATIONS! Within the armed forces, the workers must have the power to select their own officers—trusted union men.

If military training and leadership are controlled by the trade unions, we need not be too concerned about draft boards which grant deferments to the sons of the rich. Indeed, when the workers hold the guns and control their own armed destiny, they may decide to extend to the heirs of the ruling class a permanent deferment!

The draft boards are only one part of the boss machine. The highest expression of that machine, its greatest source of power, is its control over the armed forces. It is this control that must be broken by the workers.

Mein Kampf--U.S. Style

The "Infantry Journal", authoritative and semi-official organ of United States army officers, in its issue of Sept.-Oct., 1940, page 482, publishes an article, "Propaganda Techniques", which gives the following list of six purposes of war propaganda. We quote verbatim:

(1) Fasten the war guilt on the opposing nation. All wars, then, become defensive to those engaged in them...

(2) Call for unity and victory, in the name of history and the deity.

(3) State war aims. In the last war, the Germans failed to do this successfully. The Allies made successful counter-propaganda of it. Security, peace, a better social order, repudiation of international laws, are frequently projected as war aims...

(4) Fortify the mind of the people, who already believe that the opposing enemy is responsible for the war, with examples of the enemy's insolence and depravity.

(5) Make the public believe that unfavorable news is due to enemy cunning. This weapon will conquer disunity and defeatism at home...

(6) Follow this with horror stories. Horror stories... should have authoritative, or seemingly authoritative sources.

Then the article, written by the advertising expert, Edward J. Bernay, concludes:

"The army of the United States must make full use of this art and this science, (of propaganda), if it is to have the highest potential morale within its own forces, and the highest efficiency in attack and counter-attack on the enemy in the psychological warfare of today."

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DRAFT BOARDS ARE PACKED WITH WALL STREET STOOGES

Trade Unions Protest Against the Appointment Of Anti-Labor Men on All Local Boards

Workers Excluded From Omaha Board

OMAHA, Nebraska, Oct. 21—A check-up on the local Douglas County draft board shows it to be made up entirely of individuals who can be depended upon to be friendly to the anti-labor employers' group here.

Included among the 45 members of the nine local board divisions are eleven lawyers, ten medical big-wigs, two real estate operators, two insurance company executives, an oil company operator, a faculty member of the Presbyterian Seminary, two professional city politicians, a retired army colonel, the chairman of the Chamber of Commerce's Military Affairs Committee, and the treasurer of the Nebraska Power Company.

Not a single worker or trade unionist was appointed to the board, not even for the purpose of giving the board an "all-inclusive" impartial appearance.

Corporations Pack Draft Boards

LOS ANGELES, Oct. 16—Of 323 members named to Los Angeles County's draft boards, 178 are leading business owners, brokers, manufacturers and corporation executives. In addition, 62 members are listed as "retired"—living off investments and inheritances.

Others listed are 22 professionals, including newspaper editors, lawyers and doctors, five educators and three Boy Scout officials.

There are also 11 ranchers and big farm owners. Among these are several known for their support to the terroristic strike-breaking against California agricultural workers.

In a word, of the 323 members named, all but 36 are obvious representatives of the employing class. Of the 33 listed as workers, all but two are department store clerks, office employees, foremen, etc. One linotyper and one carpenter are listed. The only union men are three officials of local AFL craft unions. There are also 16 salesmen, largely from insurance and realty firms.

In listing the board members, however the Los Angeles News headlined its story, "L. A. county draft boards drafted from all classes!"

Bosses Fill Local St. Paul Boards

ST. PAUL, Minn., Oct. 23—Seven business proprietors, five corporation executives, four lawyers, two salesmen, two office clerks, two bookkeepers, one police official, one state officer of a veteran's organization, and a high school principal give the bosses 25 direct representatives out of a total of 33 members on the local draft boards.

Six union officials of ultra-conservative stripe and two completely unknown workers fill out the remaining posts.

Two of the business owners appointed have had strikes against them recently, and one is a notorious open-shopper. An executive of the American Telephone and Telegraph Corp., and the publisher of the

Hillman Buries CIO Plea on War Orders

WASHINGTON, Oct. 19—The CIO was blocked yesterday in its efforts to prevent war contracts going to labor law violators when Sidney Hillman referred the issue to his advisory committee, which will not meet for another two weeks. It is expected that all war contracts will have been awarded by the time this meeting is held.

Hillman, who is head of the Labor Division of the Defense Commission, took this action at a meeting with his advisory committee, which includes Van A. Bittner, regional director of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee, Daniel Tracy, Second Assistant Secretary of Labor, and W. J. Hogan, of the Railroad Brotherhoods.

Bittner presented to the meet-

Park Avenue Socialites Appointed in New York

NEW YORK, Oct. 19—To ensure complete boss domination of the local draft boards, Mayor LaGuardia and the city draft director, Colonel McDermott, have secured from the War Department the cancellation of a World War regulation requiring draft board members to reside in the areas in which they serve.

By this device, the draft board members for the huge working class and slum districts could be chosen from the Park Avenue and Riverside Drive social registries.

The conservative N. Y. Herald Tribune today revealed the motivation for this move, stating, "At the personal instance of Colonel McDermott and Mayor LaGuardia, the War Department cancelled a World War regulation that draft board members must live within the area in which they serve. New York City's complaint against this was that in slum areas during the World War drafts it was next to impossible to find high-type citizens to serve on the boards."

Northwest Publications, a reactionary Republican publishing firm, are on the boards.

The high school principal listed once gained eminence by banning an American Student Union speaker from his school.

Detroit Union Men Protest Appointees

DETROIT, Oct. 12—Both the AFL and CIO local central bodies have sent protests to President Roosevelt against the approval of the draft boards designated by Governor Dickinson of Michigan.

Frank Martel, president of the Detroit and Wayne County Federation of Labor, declared in a letter to Roosevelt:

"There is every evidence that a studied effort has been made to place the administration of the draft law entirely in the hands of the business and professional men of the community, thereby permitting them, through control of the machinery of its administration, to exempt and shunt their own sons into safe berths, while inducting into the active military forces the working people of this community."

Martel added: "The draft board's list for Wayne County is made up almost exclusively of lawyers, coal dealers and undertakers."

Ignoring the appeal of organized labor, however, Roosevelt has approved Dickinson's entire list of proposed draft board members.

The Detroit Labor News (AFL) in protesting the composition of the Michigan draft boards declared: "One can readily see that an employer can get rid of a union-minded employee for a year with the greatest of ease, and, when one glances over the list of attorneys, undertakers and shop keepers that Governor Dickinson has suggested as draft board members, it is easy to see that these men know little or nothing of a worker's indispensability to industry or why an employer should be eagerly willing to pack one of his men off to camp."

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Fascists Appointed In Boston

BOSTON, Oct. 22—A typical appointment to the local draft boards is that of Judge Harold P. Williams. Judge Williams gained prominence as one of the anti-labor prosecutors in the Sacco-Vanzetti case.

Local district judges head each of the 27 local draft boards. These judges get their appointments through political drag, and are glorified ward-healers. Boston political history is replete with many scandals involving these district judges.

In selecting the draft boards members, Republican Governor Saltonstall deliberately chose them from the nonentities among the local ward-healers and dis-appointed political job-seekers. To avoid charges of partiality, he included a liberal sprinkling of Democratic two-bit politicians.

Most of those on the boards are known as "fixers" for traffic violations, fines, jail sentences, licences, etc.

A number of ward politicians were appointed, most of whom are members of the fascist Sons of Italy. One is remembered for his giving the fascist salute in a parade here.

Here are some typical board appointees in other towns around Boston. In Brookline, the head of the Chamber of Commerce and the former chief of police. The president of the Chamber of Commerce and the author of a bill to outlaw radical parties are on the board in Milton. Frank Volpe, lawyer for a Cambridge politician recently on trial for beating a relief client almost to death, is on the Cambridge board.

Minnesota Appoints Anti-Labor Men

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn., Oct. 17—Charges that the draft boards in Minnesota have been stacked against labor were made in the Northwest Organizer, weekly paper of the Minneapolis Teamsters Joint Council published today.

The labor publication declares that a survey of the personnel of the 137 draft and appeals boards appointed by Republican Governor Stassen "reveals that Stassen has run true to form. He has packed the boards against the worker and farmer groups of this state."

"Of the approximately 550 persons serving on the 137 state draft and appeal boards, the overwhelming proportion are bankers and businessmen—about 350. There are 150 lawyers. There are only about 35 farmers. The trade unions are represented by about a dozen persons."

"The bankers, lawyers and businessmen of Minnesota are going to decide the fate of the working-class and farm youth who will make up the huge majority of the army."

Only two Farmer-Laborites have been appointed. The Northwest Organizer declares on this fact, "Apparently it was just an accident that only two Farmer-Laborites could be found in Minnesota 'respectable' enough to serve on the draft boards."

The Urban Leagues locally had asked the government to appoint some Negroes to the boards, but not a single Negro was chosen. Other groups unrepresented are the Finns (60,000 in the state) and the Indians. Not a single CIO man was chosen.

Boat Firm Nets Large War Orders While Using Yellow Dog Contract

BAYONNE, N. J.—The Electric Boat Company, which has received millions of dollars of government orders and contracts for motor torpedo boats, enforces a violent anti-union policy among its workers.

When a man is hired he is given an "employment card" consisting of the "conditions of employment." It provides: "(b) No solicitation for membership or any other activity in behalf of any labor organization during working hours (except meetings with the management)." The "any other activity" means that if the workers spoke to each

other about a union that would constitute an "activity." The management itself goes in for lots of activity for the "Elco Employees Association," a typical company union.

Another section, (f), says: "No interference with and no attempt to reduce the output of or intimidate or coerce any employee." Any worker knows what this means. It is just another way of saying: anything a worker does or says to his fellow worker about the plant's labor policies will be defined as intimidation.

Cromwell Is Anti-Labor, Says L.N.P.L.

Which Is One More
Good Reason To
Vote for Breitman

NEWARK, N. J.—"Cromwell (Democratic candidate for U. S. Senate) must be defeated if labor is to remain a respected part of the community of our state," said Labor's Non-Partisan League in a statement this week.

"He is thoroughly opposed to collective action on the part of labor, and to collective bargaining between labor and management."

"He would shoulder the entire expense of the Federal Government upon the backs of the wage earners, through a universal sales tax on everything the worker buys."

"He is opposed to Unemployment Insurance... would suspend and reduce old age pensions... is opposed to Federal and State Child Labor legislation... would abolish the National Labor Relations Act..."

"Cromwell has been expressing these sentiments for more than ten years. Appearing before the Bankers Club in New York he reaffirmed his opposition to Social Security legislation and the National Labor Relations Act, as late as this past spring. Mr. Cromwell cannot, as he is attempting to do now, repudiate the past ten years for the brief period of two months before the elections."

Vote for Breitman
"Which means," said Daniel Mayes, Socialist Workers Party campaign manager, "that there is no real choice for labor between Cromwell and the Republican, Barbour."

"Barbour also favors the 'adoption of governmental policies designed to encourage rather than punish business'."

"He too favors slashing relief, only his formula is giving the states greater autonomy in administration."

"Labor can express its opposition to these policies by voting for George Breitman for U. S. Senator on Nov. 5."

Many Homeless Turn Up For Draft Register

NEWARK, N. J., Oct. 18.—The draft registration last week brought to light 10,000 to 12,000 men comprising a "floating unknown population in Newark," said County Clerk Gates (Republican) at a meeting today.

"Those boys seemed to come up out of cellars, out of gutters, out of ash cans, from everywhere. The election board workers had never seen them before. Nobody had ever seen them, heard of them, or knew anything about them. But they came to register. They didn't want to get caught without one of those little cards."

Their appearance threw the estimates of registration supply needs askew. "We had to pour a steady stream of additional cards into the Third Ward" he said. The Third Ward is the section heavily populated by Negro workers.

Nobody knows these workers; nobody hears of them; they don't even have homes. Nobody cares about them in peace time. But now they are being called on to protect "their homes and interests."