

threatening Railroad strike. The fact that the Powers that Be are so frightened by such a strike leads us to conclude that a strong and aggressive organization of the transportation workers is, as far as the class-struggle is concerned, a far more important factor than an organization of any other industry. In ordinary times one regiment in an army is just as important as any other. But when war is declared and the soldiers are led to the battlefield the General in command usually picks the best regiments, for then there are good regiments and better ones. The same holds true for the class-struggle.

Of course, a carpenter, a cloak-maker, an iron-worker, a surface-car conductor must be organized if they are to make an honest living. But for the class-struggle in the broad sense of the word it is much more important that the Railroad workers shall be organized than it is that the textile workers be organized, for example.

In order to realize important demands a Railroad strike is far more effective than a strike in an individual industry which may be localized.

And we know as a matter of fact that in the countries where the workers have obtained control in the last few years it was due to the fact that the transportation workers were organized and under the control of the radical parties. Every Revolution is begun by a strike on the Railroads, which takes away from the central government the power to send forces to subdue the masses and suppress the voices of protest.

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It is also characteristic that the Railroad workers are not contented with the fact that their wages will be raised. They demand that the exorbitant prices of commodities be immediately reduced. It is the first time in the history of the trade-union movement in America that the workers of one industry make such a *general* demand.

The Railroad workers, it seems, have at last begun to realize that higher wages alone does not better the condition of the worker, especially here in America.

The trusts control not only the production—the factories, the shops, the coal-mines, etc.—but they also control consumption. We not only have a steel trust, an oil trust, a railroad trust, but also a meat trust, a milk trust, a fish trust, etc. The trusts are all combined and chained into a sort of combination which I would call the trust of trusts.

If the workers are successful in a strike and have gained an increase in wages the trust immediately gets on the job and

balances up its loss. It raises the price on commodities. The cost of living goes up. The result is that what the worker gained in the factory he loses in the store.

The trusts control both fronts, production and consumption. If they lose on one front they counterattack and beat the workers on the other front.

It is for this reason that the Railroad workers should be congratulated. Their double demand—to raise the wages *and* decrease the cost of living—should be heartily welcomed. It is the first time that those in control were attacked on both fronts simultaneously. Thus from an economic demand a great political issue has arisen.

S. D.

### The Negro Problem—A Labor Problem

For the moment the race riots that raged in Washington and in Chicago are quelled. But they will break out again, there and in the cities where colored people have congregated in great numbers. For decades the states of the North have looked passively on while the conflict raged in the South between Black and White, with the quiet superiority of the on-looker who refuses to interfere in affairs that are none of his business.

But the last two years have radically changed the situation. The acute labor shortage brought about by the artificial stimulation of American industries during the war and the withdrawal of hundreds of thousands of young men from the labor market led to the mass importation of Negro labor from the South. And with the Negro the North has imported his problems; without attempting, however, to find a solution for the difficulties that were sure to arise.

Among the first of these was the housing problem. Even under more favorable circumstances it has always been difficult for a Negro family to find quarters in the large cities of the North. To allow a family of colored people to live in a house in a respectable neighborhood in decent houses, among decent surroundings meant an immediate exodus of the Whites living in that vicinity. Real estate values consequently decreased and houses were bought for a song by profiteering speculators, to be rented out, at enormous rentals, to the colored population. Indeed, this method has been used on more than one occasion in real estate controversies, one party to the difficulty renting out his property to Negro ten-