

NEW BOARD PLANNED TO CURB LABOR

Bill Of Rights Defenders Hold N.Y. Rally To Free 18

700 At CRDC Meeting Support Fight to Aid Defendants Convicted Under Smith Gag Act

NEW YORK, Dec. 15. — Seven hundred genuine defenders of civil liberties met here tonight, on the 150th Anniversary of the Bill of Rights, to support the fight for freedom of the 18 Minneapolis "sedition" trial defendants, recently convicted on charges of violating the anti-labor Smith "Gag" Act of 1940. The meeting, held in the Hotel Diplomat, was sponsored by the Civil Rights Defense Committee.

Outstanding representatives of civil rights groups and workers parties joined in condemning the Minneapolis convictions as a violation of the free speech and free press provisions of the Bill of Rights and urged the necessity of defending civil liberties in war-time as well as in peace.

Roger Baldwin, National Director of the American Civil Liberties Union, declared that it was essential to fight for the preservation "in practice" of the Bill of Rights during war. "Our liberties exist as a means to an end," he said, "Preserving civil liberties is essential for the kind of peace we all want after the war."

Mr. Baldwin charged that the Smith "Gag" Act was unconstitutional and that the convictions under it were a "clear violation" of civil rights guaranteed by the Bill of Rights. He warned that "to uphold this conviction would be to establish a precedent that can gag the mouths and stop the presses for thousands."

RESISTANCE TO A VIOLATION

During his speech, Mr. Baldwin told of two banquets in celebration of Bill of Rights Day that he had previously attended. They were held in swanky hotels and the dinners cost \$6 and \$2.50 per plate. "I heard a stream of oratory from individuals whom I have never heard from before in the battle for the Bill of Rights," He stated that the real defenders of the Bill of Rights were those he was now addressing. "I am celebrating with you not the glorification of a document, but resistance to a violation of it."

James P. Cannon, National Secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, chief witness for the defense and a convicted defendant in the Minneapolis trial, roused the meeting with his exposition of the principled manner in which the defendants upheld their beliefs at the trial.

"Our defense was an aggressive defense," Comrade Cannon stated. "It was an accusation, it was a seized-upon opportunity to say in 'Great detail' — and with the utmost precision what we have to say about the real issue that brought us to trial. We were able to discharge that duty and on the very eve of the beginning of war confront our accusers, and all those who in the future will study this trial, with a clear and ample and precise record of what we stood for in the courtroom and what we stand for after the conviction took place."

REVOLUTION AND THE BILL OF RIGHTS

The speaker said that "free speech has a real dynamic meaning in connection with the question of free speech for a purpose, to expound ideas that aim at social ends. The moves that are being made against the labor movement to throttle the right to strike are in essence far more reactionary, far more vicious than a mere abridgement of free speech in itself, because they constitute an abridgement of the right to do things . . ."

There is every reason for revolutionists to sincerely defend the Bill of Rights, said Cannon. "I said in the courtroom and, I be-

Marine Cooks and Stewards Vote to Aid Defendants

SAN FRANCISCO. — The CIO-Marine Cooks and Stewards Association of the Pacific Coast has adopted a resolution protesting the prosecution of the 28 members of Local 544-CIO and the Socialist Workers Party in Minneapolis, and requesting affiliated CIO locals "to give their full moral and financial aid to these 28 defendants."

The union also voted to condemn the use of governmental agencies to oppress and harass any labor or political organization in the pursuit of their activities.

Victims, that they will not be friendless in the day of adversity, in the day of persecution."

GOLDMAN EXPLAINS THE CHARGES

Chief defense counsel and defendant Albert Goldman in his talk stressed several important aspects of the Minneapolis case which the defense had emphasized in the trial.

He pointed out that the charges (Continued on page 2)

New Yorkers Get Taste of War



These New Yorkers are getting a taste of war as they vainly scan the skies for enemy bombers during a false air-raid alarm last week. Printed instructions told the people to 'walk, don't rush to the nearest air-raid shelters.' The nearest shelters, so far as anyone could find out, are in London, England.

War Profiteers Scored For Causing High Prices

Consumers Union-Lawyers Guild Survey Shows Bosses Responsibility for Rising Prices

The advent of all-out war poses the problem of inflationary prices more sharply than ever before. Unless present rapid upward trends of prices are checked, the workers and farmers face in the coming weeks and months a serious cut in their incomes and living standards.

A report issued last week by the Consumers Union of the United States, Inc., prepared in conjunction with the National Lawyers Guild, gives facts and figures about the impending danger of inflation that should jolt every wage-earner. The report also fixes the responsibility for this abnormal trend.

The report points out that prices of basic raw commodities just prior to the outbreak of the war in the Pacific were more than 50 per cent higher than the August 1939 pre-war level. While the consumers have already felt the initial impact of price increases, the worst is yet to come.

Retail prices are just beginning to reflect the upward trend in wholesale commodity prices. "This increase (in commodity prices) is a red light to the country, giving advance warning of a future sharp rise in the cost of living unless effective action is taken by the government," declares the report.

Contrary to the widely circulated notions that these price rises are the result of labor's demands for higher wages and consumer hoarding, the report flatly charges that profiteers and monopolists are to blame for the inflationary situation.

"Big business and speculators have raised prices, fostered artificial scarcity, and made huge profits from shortages which in most cases could have been avoided if the government had taken action in time. The American people are now paying for the early failure to expand production of critical items like steel and aluminum, and to develop such transportation facilities as freight cars and pipe lines."

The report cites the example of the policy of giving most of the war orders to a few of the giant monopoly corporations which have been gouging the public, while many small plants, which might be producing additional goods and thereby reduce prices by increasing the supply,

Rubber Workers Endorse C.R.D.C.

CHICAGO. — Local 120 of the United Rubber Workers, CIO, last week adopted a resolution protesting the Department of Justice persecution of the leaders of Local 544-CIO and the Socialist Workers Party, and endorsed the work of the Civil Rights Defense Committee, the organization mobilizing public support for the 18 defendants convicted in the Minneapolis case.

Local 120 also sent a financial contribution to the C.R.D.C., and a copy of its protest resolution to Attorney-General Biddle.

The first place, low-income consumers spend about one-third of their income for food, which is plentiful. Secondly, many other consumer purchases besides food can in no way be considered as diverting materials away from the armaments production. . . The fact is that most critical shortages are due to the deliberate failure of big business to expand vital production. . . Shifting the blame to consumers simply conceals the actual culprits: the monopolists and profiteers."

Effective measures to halt

New Bail Must Be Raised For Eighteen Defendants

MINNEAPOLIS, Dec. 17. — A new difficulty for the 18 "sedition" trial defendants came last week when the Western Surety Company served notice that it was cancelling the bonds on which the defendants are out on bail.

Pending the appeal to the higher courts, the defendants were released by Federal Judge Matthew M. Joyce on a total of over \$50,000 bail, the same amounts for each individual as they were out on during the trial. The Local 544-CIO members among the defendants are on bail of \$3,500 each, while the others are on bail of \$2,500 each.

Similar Body In 1918 Undermined Union Conditions

No-Strike Agreement Demanded of Labor; Anti-Labor Bill Threat Hangs Over Heads Of Union Leaders at Capitol Conference

With the Smith Slave Labor Bill hanging over them threateningly, AFL and CIO leaders were called this week to Washington to commit the trade unions to a War Labor Board similar to that of World War I.

Like its 1918 predecessor, the new board has as its main function the task of depriving organized labor of its right to strike "for the duration."

The AFL and CIO representatives are being called upon to agree "voluntarily" to the essential sections of the Smith Bill, with the broad hint that any balking by the unions will result in the enactment of the bill, which has already been passed in the House of Representatives.

An additional bitter pill was provided for the CIO when William H. Davis was named "moderator" of the employer-labor-government conference. Only a few weeks ago the CIO leaders denounced Davis, chairman of the National Defense Mediation Board, for his anti-labor attitude, and they resigned from the board. Davis' appointment as moderator by President Roosevelt symbolizes the fact that the CIO is being called upon to return to essentially the same kind of board that the CIO repudiated.

The AFL top leadership has already explicitly endorsed formation of the board on the same basis as the War Labor Board of World War I.

What will happen now may be partially indicated by the experiences of the labor movement with the War Labor Board of 1918. To begin with, the workers suffered a terrific slice in real wages during the last war, primarily because of their inability to employ their most potent bargaining weapon, the strike. While money wages were on the average 30 per cent higher in 1918 than in 1914, the cost of living rose 74.4 per cent at the same time. The effect of the no-strike policy, supplemented by the conspicuously pro-employer decisions of the War Labor Board, was the virtual "freezing" of wages in the face of constantly soaring prices. Thus, during the last war the workers suffered an average cut in real wages of 23 per cent.

At the same time there was no parallel "freezing" of profits. The big monopoly corporations increased their profits many times over. As examples, Standard Oil of N. J. increased its profits from \$7,000,000 in 1914 to \$45,000,000 in 1918; Du Pont's gross revenue rose from \$25,000,000 in 1914 to \$300,000,000 in 1918; U. S. Steel netted \$137,000,000 profits in 1918 as contrasted with \$23,000,000 in 1914.

HOW THE BOARD FUNCTIONED

It was impossible for the War Labor Board to consider all the thousands of appeals made to it by the workers. The Board soon became swamped with complaints. Thousands of workers' grievances were swallowed up in red tape and delay.

The Board finally assigned 50 field examiners — all regular government agents — to travel around the country and investigate complaints. These agents were then given the power to make awards, and the Board itself acted merely as an appeals body.

A 1921 report of the Department of Labor showed that these examiners made decisions in over 10,000 labor disputes during a 12 months period. The Board itself during its entire existence heard only 1,251 cases, and reached a decision in only 39 per cent of these.

Thus, the workers in over 90 per cent of the cases had to submit their grievances to the arbitrary decisions of individuals who in no sense could be counted on to be sympathetic to the interests of labor. The workers had less than one chance out of ten of having the Board itself hear and make a decision on any appeal.

PLENTY OF LOCKOUTS

The record of the 1918 War Labor Board decisions conclusively demonstrated its pro-employer character. Although one of the rules adopted by the Board was that "there shall be no strikes or lockouts," it was only the first part of this ruling that was ever enforced. There were many lockouts during the last war, but there is no record of the Board having disciplined any employer for a lockout.

If workers, however, went on strike before the Board had ruled on their grievance, their case was "outlawed." If they struck after a decision, they were fired and (Continued on page 2)

