

SCHOOLS LEAD THE PARADE ...DOWN-HILL

Corrupt ed. system earns
Chicago a special name

Even some of the big murder stories have gotten smaller headlines in the yellow press than the news late this month that James B. McCahey, president of the Board of Education, would resign from the board next April.

This was a key event in a series of upheavals in the Chicago school system. The whole picture makes a lively story of political chicanery and points to the grim reasons why the millions of Chicago workers who want the highest quality of free education for their children are being cheated.

On November 31st the North Central Association (NCA) announced that if McCahey and the four other "old guard" members of the school board failed to resign, the NCA executive would recommend next April that member colleges refuse to recognize the credits of students from Chicago's schools. High school graduates would have special trouble getting into most colleges. Mayor Kelly immediately answered the NCA with a stirring defence of his "old friend" McCahey and proclaimed, "I will never ask him to resign!"

The mayor said the NCA would have to prove the accusations against McCahey and the present school administration. Now, it so happens that even LABOR VIEWS with its limited connections in the school system can point directly to specific people who hold down jobs in this system simply because they are connected to or are members of McCahey's family. For example at the Chicago Teachers College there is a Miss McCahey (the board presy's sister) who spends a very leisurely few hours a day in the school as a "clerk" at the reported salary of \$260 a month. And this is only one form of corruption which the NCA with its vast authority evidently could prove. So with Kelly still slapping him on the back, McCahey is resigning.

McCahey's action is hailed as a partial victory for the "liberals" who are fighting for what they call a "non-political" school board. Representatives of the Citizens Schools Committee, the Church Federation of Greater Chicago and the Womens City Club expressed their sentiments by asking, "Why wait 'till April?" "When will the other

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Labor Views

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holdover members resign?"

The special set-up in the Chicago School system has made it quite unique throughout the country. Unlike these of other cities, Chicago schools are run by people appointed specifically because of their loyal affiliation with the political party in power. In most school systems a professionally trained educator is made superintendent, is given over-all executive power to manage school affairs. Only broad principles are laid down by the school board. But in Chicago...ah, it's different. Here the superintendent has only one third of the administrative power. The other two-thirds are shared by the business manager (at present John Howatt) and the president of the school board.

Since the eleven man school board hires both of the other two executive officers and pronounces school policy, the school board president is obviously dominant in this little trio. McCahey, a coal dealer and the Mayor's "old friend", has been the actual boss of the schools for twelve years. The president of the board - and finally the entire board with him -

has his hand in every little detail of school administration.

And, of course, the eleven school board members being trusty Democrats (except for one, Walter Truc, a Republican who years ago refused to resign) appointed by Kelly, the entire school system is easily administered as a patronage plum for the party faithfuls.

Reputable educators refuse to even consider the offer to become superintendent of Chicago schools under this set-up. It can easily be seen why leading educators who face a crisis throughout the nation in the great downward slide of school standards view Chicago with special alarm: it leads the parade in rottenness.

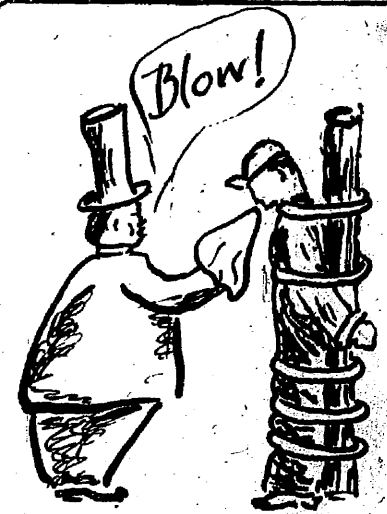
To stem this tide "liberals" and finally the NCA are demanding two changes: (1) A "non-political" school board. One chosen without consideration of party ties. (2) The amendment of the Otis Law to make the superintendent the chief officer of the school system. Six of the present board members are now "non-political" ones who joined the board September 7. In a following article we'll examine the "non-politics" of this board.

CHRISTMAS PARTY IN A RUBBER DUNGEON

It was the day before Christmas and even inside the dungeon-like American Industrial Rubber Co. plant at 4401 S. La Salle there was a yuletide cheerfulness among the workers...everybody going home at noon to begin the holiday early.

But the previous day the company had made the announcement, "Mr. Trilling (owner of the plant) is giving a Christmas party"; and sure enough, toward noon sandwiches, pop and cases of beer were assembled in the pressroom.

Now no matter how you look at it, these workers of local 288 URWA will tell you, a party in the pressroom of this broken-down factory could never be a very bright affair. This room where the workers slave day after day is windowless and dark. Presses and tables and rubber junk fill the place and a peculiar grey rubber dust mixed with a dark steam from the hot presses seems to hang continuously in the air and cover everything with a morbid



CAPITALIST CHARITY!

blanket.

But management already had plans to make the workers stay to the party. The pay-checks, which are usually passed out in the morning between eleven and twelve o'clock were being withheld.

"Don't worry about your checks,"
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AT AIRPORT HOUSING PROJECT

**LABOR TAKES
A STIFF RIGHT
TO THE JAW
without putting
up its guard!**

The anti-Negro violence at the Airport Homes Housing Project in the West Lawn community is simmering low. The police have been reduced from 500 on December 5th to a few dozen. Of the 9 Negro veterans and their families assigned apartments only two, the Fort and Waddles families, have moved in.

Recalling the frenzy with which the real estate men attempted to bar Fort and Waddles from entering the neighborhood, his case cannot be considered closed. Alderman Hogan and the Democratic machine of which he is a part will try to seek means to drive these families away while using the excuse that this prevents real estate values from falling.

If the Democrats were also motivated by votes for their candidates in the mayoralty election next spring, they did not help themselves. The jim-crow residents at West Lawn were infuriated with Kelly for preventing them from killing the Negro veterans. Placards were carried which stated boldly, "Down with Kelly". The harassed Negroes subject to police partiality to the attackers can feel little confidence in the administration.

What arises most clearly from this bitter experience is the complete failure of the trade union and other labor organizations to play a part commensurate with their great strength and numbers.

Kelly's hoodlums in blue were out. As LABOR VIEWS No. 30 reported, they permitted the violence to fester until the lives of Negroes venturing into the neighborhood were in great danger before intervention.

Priest, minister and rabbi were out. On December 15 at the request of the Chicago Federation of Greater Chicago, representing 1,250 protestant churches with 400,000 members, most of the ministers of these churches devoted a special sermon against the intolerance at West Lawn.

The "liberals" were out. Beside a number of ineffective conferences on December 21st thirty-eight white civic leaders released a letter of regret to the Negroes of Chicago.

Russell Ballard, Director of Hull House; Dr. Ernest Fremont Tittle, minister of the First Methodist Church of Evanston; Dr. Edwin R. Embree of the Rosenwald Foundation and Mr. Milton J. Kerensky of the American Jewish Congress were some of the signees who declared in part,

"The mob violence against Negroes is violence against democracy and against religion and is an insult to the vast majority of whites and Negroes alike in our great city."

The fact of the matter is - and this is why the near-abstention of the labor movement is so shameful - the violence against Negroes is an "insult" and danger to ALL of the working class. UNITY IN THE FACTORY AGAINST THE MERCILESS ASSAULT OF THE RULING CLASS IN THEIR BOTTOMLESS GRIND CANNOT LONG ENDURE IN THE FACE OF RACIAL STRIFE OUTSIDE THE FACTORY. THE UNITY OF WORKERS IS ONE AND INDIVISIBLE.

West Lawn is only a small, bright spark in the friction produced by the fact that 400,000 Negroes are now crammed 90,000 to the square mile. White neighborhoods are populated on an average of 36,000 to the square mile. As long as Chicago's Negroes squirm in their ensufferable black ghetto there must absolutely be a tendency to spill

RUBBER DUNGEON

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the workers were told, "We're going to have a party now, and don't punch the time clock until after the party is over!"

So, like it or not, the workers attended the party one hundred percent.

Baloney, minced ham, cheese and salami sandwiches; pickles, pretzels, cake and potatoe chips; three cases of beer and later three more. Not much place to sit down, of course. Talk was cheerful enough. "We'll get our checks later." Mr. Joffe, plant manager, made solicitous moves to see that everybody had enough. Someone suggested that he perhaps had a guilty feeling because of the low-wage pay-checks he'd have to give out.

"Our pay should be enough for us to be able to throw a party of our own if we wish, enough for us to always have plenty of food on the table at home," comments one worker.

Afterwards, Mr. Joffe stood to the front and addressed the workers:

"Do you know who made your sandwiches today? Mr. Trilling!"

Christmas or not the workers had an answer to this:

"Booo!" they chorused.

over into other communities. When this occurs and the real estate men feel their profits are threatened, down comes the cruel lynch arm of the bigots.

In the Chicago area there are 2,400,000 workers. A total greater than during the war. Over 1,000,000 workers are organized into the trade unions. LABOR VIEWS has written time and time again:

Acquaint workers, principally the organized ones, with the dangers of racial discrimination.

Organize educationals and projects to cement the Negro and white worker together.

And, as the most practical and convincing demonstration of this spirit, organize and train thousands of workers to move into places like West Lawn to protect Negroes when working-class unity is endangered.

"Well, you've eaten his sandwiches, haven't you?" replied the embarrassed Mr. Joffe.

But were these workers to be treated like little children at a charity Christmas party?

"Booo!" they answered. Were they supposed to forget who is responsible for the conditions in this dirty, hell-hole of a factory? "Booo!" roared back the workers.

Were they supposed to forget that 40 women still have only one toilet and no place to wash; that the lunch-room started three months ago is apparently not to be finished; that safety levers on the mills have been installed only after one worker lost his hand and the local union brought in the Illinois State factory inspection department AND THAT THESE SAFETY LEVERS ARE STILL NOT SATISFACTORY; that the management attempts to cheat workers out of their yearly vacation by making them sign new employee cards whenever they are sick for more than three days) that Mr. Trilling paid women workers 40 to 50 cents an hour and men 75 cents throughout the war; and that he has tried everything from bribery to intimidation against the union? Does this management think these workers will ever give up the fight against such abuse?

The overwhelming sentiment of the local 288 workers is that they cannot be so easily "bought off". Neither the \$5 to \$10 bonus given to a few of the skilled workers, the little boxes of candy for the women, the left-overs some few of them took away from the party, nor a gift of cigarettes can satisfy these workers' basic needs:

Decent working conditions and a living wage.

These just demands hung like a dark cloud over the boss' Christmas party.