

# Lay-offs Hit the Organizers

*By Frank Chodorov*

Faith in labor unionism as a means of solving our economic problem must have been rudely shaken by the recent dismissal of several hundred organizers by the Committee for Industrial Organization. A wag might suggest a union of union organizers, with perhaps a sit-down strike at union headquarters, if not "secondary" picketing before the home of C.I.O. President John L. Lewis.

But to the student of economics this news item teaches a lesson. The lesson is that organizations of labor can neither create jobs nor raise the general level of wages. Apart from their educational possibilities, labor organizations have but one function—a function made necessary by our monopolistic social order. That function is to obtain for their members a little more of what remains of production after monopoly rent is exacted by the owners of the earth. In its nature the bread-and-butter union is, and must be, monopolistic, non-democratic. It cannot raise the general level of wages. It can only attempt by force, physical or moral, to obtain something for its own membership. That done, its efficacy as a social instrument ceases.

The lay-off of union organizers is blamed on the "business recession." Overlooking the euphemism, this means only that when there are no jobs there is nobody to unionize. If, as some unionists claim, unions can solve the economic problem, the obvious question is, why don't the unions create jobs or raise the level of wages during a "business recession"? The query is not unfair, in view of the loud claims of some labor leaders.

Natural sympathy for the "under

dog" should not blind us to a realization that the "under dog" might be confused or mad. The confusion of some unions is seen in their emphasis on harmless—but ineffectual and therefore time-wasting—palliatives. The "madness" of other unions is in their ignorance of the laws of economics. In the avowed belief that wages are paid by capital, in spreading the doctrine that governmental action can control economic forces (though it should not, forsooth, control the unions), in the increasing acceptance of Marxian dialectic, some labor organizations are as much a menace to democracy as are the fascistic movements of monopoly.

The solution of the labor problem is in permitting labor, and capital, to go to work on the earth—removing the land speculator who blocks the way. Given this free permission to labor, the worker will not need any paid organizers to "protect" him. Nor will he fear the "exploitative power" of capital, since capital will be competing with free land for his services. Wages will be determined not by any boards of arbitration, but by what labor can get working for itself, on the best land available without payment of rent. Nature has a just way.

See: George, H., "The Condition of Labor"; George, H. Jr., "The Menace of Monopoly."