

Lynching and Strike Violence

By WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

DURING THE PAST few weeks two shocking events have happened in the American class struggle. Of these the first was the brutal lynching of the 14-year-old Negro boy, Emmett Till, in Mississippi, to the shock of the whole country. The second was the strike of the workers of the Perfect Circle Corporation in



Indiana, armed strike-breakers shooting through the plant windows at the demonstrating strikers with guns brazenly furnished by the company.

The link that binds these two expressions of aggressive reaction is that they both represent a common tendency for a sharpening of the class struggle in this period. They are reminiscent of the days of not so long ago, when savage lynchings of Negroes in the South were an almost daily occurrence and when company thug violence against striking workers was commonplace. The two sinister events are deadly warnings of serious struggles lying directly ahead.

The big thing that took place at the historic Geneva conference was the lifting of the war threat from the world, at least temporarily. Wall Street's leaders, facing an aroused world came to realize that they could no longer brandish the threat of the atombomb over the world's peoples. So they had to

put their war program on the shelf. One of the effects of the relatively relaxed cold war will be a sharpening of the class struggle, even as of the struggles among the capitalist states and monopoly groups.

THE TILL LYNCHING and the Perfect Circle strike violence by the plantation owners and the employers are samples of what these reactionaries have in mind for the sharecroppers and the workers. They want to establish once again the practice of terrorizing the Negro people by wholesale lynching outrages and to intimidate the workers by strike terror. Those who think that the United States has become "too civilized" to indulge in such practices are living in a fool's paradise. The only guarantee against a spread of the perpetration of such monstrous crimes must be the stern resistance of the workers, the Negro people, and other democratic forces. As for the exploiters, they are always ready to indulge in such violence if they are allowed to do so.

The workers and the people generally must not underestimate the dangerous significance of the occurrence of the Till lynching, the first open lynching (but not of Negro assassination) during the past few years, nor of the deadly thuggery during the Perfect Circle strike. Such malign developments must be stamped out in the very beginning. They must not be allowed to get a start again in this country.

THE SAVAGE LYNCHING of the Till boy must be fought militantly. This has already been well begun by many demonstrations and other activities. The Eisenhower Administration, and especially the FBI, should be held responsible for a thorough investigation of it and also for punitive action in the matter. The coming kidnapping trial must not be permitted to be a farce like the murder trial. The whole American people should be aroused to the terrible outrage of this boy lynching. And, not the least important, this case should be publicized all over the world. Abroad it will get a powerful response from the democratic peoples, who already thoroughly hate the U.S. jimcrow system, with all its oppression, exploitation, and murder.

The Perfect Circle Co. employer-thugs and their violence should also be combatted with the greatest vigor. The UAW and other unions have made a start in this. The men responsible for the arming of these plug-uglies should be arrested and jailed. Organized labor should let it be known that it will not permit the products of such a murderous outfit to circulate in the economic bloodstream of this country.

The Till and Perfect Circle cases are tests of the vigilance, understanding, and determination of the democratic forces in this country. Organized labor especially must not be wanting in the prosecution of these two shocking developments, and in erecting barriers against their recurrence.