



**TRADE
UNION
PROBLEMS**

by Farrell Dobbs

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Trade Union Problems

by

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FOREWORD

THE PICKET LINE suddenly grows tense, a deep quiver of anger surging through its ranks. The scabs are coming out of the plant! The cops press against the pickets, seeking to make a break in their ranks to let the finks through. The pickets refuse to be pushed. A tear gas shell explodes. It is picked up by a striker and hurled back at the cops. More tear gas comes; the air becomes saturated with it. But the pickets stand their ground. Then comes the police charge. Riot clubs descend upon the heads of the unarmed pickets. Police revolvers spit out their leaden messengers of death. Riot guns bark and spray the strikers with their lethal charge. The strikers, retreating slowly before the assault, reform their ranks and at the first lull in the attack press back against the scabs.

The battle finally ends, and as the last ambulance departs, with siren screeching, the strikers count their dead and wounded. Despite the unevenness of the struggle there are also scabs and cops who leave the scene in the ambulances. Negotiations with the bosses may follow. Or maybe there will be still another police assault upon the picket line. Whichever the case may be, the bosses are finally compelled to recognize the union and sign a contract. This is a typical and not infrequent event in every part of the country. It is the class struggle in all its grim reality.

On that picket line were workers who had spent many years of their life laboring in the struck plant. They were law-abiding citizens who had taken seriously their legal right to join a union and bargain collectively with their employer as to the conditions under which they would sell their labor. All they had asked was a few cents more an hour, a few hours less work per week, and for an improvement in some of the worst conditions on the job. This they had asked, and no more. The employer refused to meet the union committee. They were forced to go on strike. The boss challenged them to sustain themselves and their families on police bullets, or else come back to work without a union and on his terms, if he saw fit to take them back.

With them on the picket line were other workers from other industries, members of their union and members of other unions. All realized that their future was also at stake in this strike; that their situation as workers would be adversely affected if this fight were lost.

Among the scabs there were workers who had also labored long years in the plant and who had been friends of the workers on the picket line. They may have scabbed for any one of many reasons, but they scabbed. They kept company with professional strikebreakers and other degenerate elements placed among them

by the union-hating employer. Strikes often draw sharp dividing lines in families, break up life-long friendships, and cement new ties with the bond of solidarity in struggle. The dividing lines are as ruthlessly drawn as they were in the American Civil War. Strikes are civil war. They are the sporadic, violent flareups of the unceasing class struggle.

It cannot be denied that there are fatal defects in a social system under which such violent injustices against the workers are part of the normal state of affairs. The workers in the mines, the oil fields, the factories, the sailors on the ships, the laborers on the corporation farms—the workers in every industry know how hard they must struggle for their daily bread. They know that, wherever he can, the employer denies them every legal right and works them at the lowest possible wage. They know that the police stand ready to do the employers' bidding, to break up the workers' picket line by the most violent methods. They are slaves of an economic system under which they receive even less consideration than the machines which they serve.

The employers, a small minority of the population, continue their domination over the workers not by the force of their numbers, and not solely through the use of the clubs and guns of the national guard. They rule mainly by the myriad of divisions they have sown in the ranks of the workers themselves. The division between striker and scab is only one of many. The entire trade union movement is burdened with a mass of contradictions which seriously hamper and impede all progress. The workers occasionally break through this web in brief periods of struggle, only to again become dangerously entangled, only to find their efforts impeded by new obstructions and new confusions. No one understands this better than the auto workers.

To cast off the shackles of confusion and internal discord it is not unreasonable to suggest that the workers pause occasionally in the busy round of their activities and reflect seriously on these problems. The full lessons of each experience and the combined lessons of the experiences of the entire trade union movement must be learned and learned well.

As an aid to this, the SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY presents this brief review of the broad problems of the trade union movement. It is offered, not as a pretention to a complete analysis of all problems, but as a brief survey of some of the most pressing issues before the movement today. A more complete treatment on the various subjects involved may be found in the "Socialist Appeal" and "Fourth International," the official newspaper and magazine of the SWP, and in the books and pamphlets which it publishes.

If only one worker should read this review and thereby find his way onto the road of militant trade unionism, our efforts will have been well spent.

Trade Union Problems

THE IMPENDING ENTRY of the United States into the rapidly spreading Second World War is the most serious immediate threat confronting the trade union movement as a whole. The hour of entry is known in the parlance of the War Department as "M-Day." The plans of the bankers, the industrialists and their government depend upon the keystone of war to complete the arch of American imperialism. The working masses are to have the democratic right to be "patriotic." Beyond that point all democracy will be a pure myth.

M-Day is close at hand. The carefully prepared plans for a war-time military dictatorship are an open secret. Detailed arrangements have been completed for the regimentation of the workers in the war machine. Elaborate formulas have been worked out for the suppression of the workers in industry as well as for their conscription into the military forces. The anti-labor drive has already begun.

Roosevelt Prepares for M-Day

TWO CAMPAIGNS in preparation for M-Day have already been launched by Roosevelt. One in the open, the second under cover.

The open campaign takes form around the Roosevelt dictum: "You can't strike against the government." This slogan has been picked up by the entire governmental apparatus. La Guardia hurled it at the New York subway workers as he prepared to smash their union. The cop shouts it at the unemployed worker as he shoves him into the patrol wagon for picketing a relief substation.

The under-cover campaign has been entrusted to the Department of Justice with its rapidly expanding Federal Bureau of Investigation. The anti-trust laws are being applied against the trade unions. Unemployed workers are subjected to criminal prosecution for exercising their constitutional right to strike against the starvation dole. The FBI today cooperates closely with the local police on all

labor cases. Wherever the slightest possible pretext can be found, the Department of Justice takes full jurisdiction. Workers have already been incarcerated in the federal prisons as a result of the new drive; others are under heavy bond pending appeal of convictions to higher courts; still others are under probation to federal officers, with penitentiary sentences hanging over them.

The FBI has openly requested notice of all public meetings, parades and demonstrations. They have asked the trade unions to advise them of any known "subversive elements." Noisy investigations of "sabotage" are made of even the most minor industrial mishaps.

Submission or Jail

IN THE FACE of these acts the trade union leadership continues to defend Roosevelt before the workers. They interpret the failure to appoint Thurman Arnold to the office of Attorney-General upon the resignation of Frank Murphy as a disciplinary action by Roosevelt because of Arnold's anti-labor activities. They triumphantly clinch the argument by pointing to the paring down of the budget requested by the Department of Justice. The CIO does not protest the FBI drive against the AFL building trades unions. They ignore the fact that it is fundamentally a drive against all labor. They are more interested in remaining silent for factional reasons than in making a principled defense against the governmental anti-union campaign. The AFL leadership only fumbles with the problem of defense against Roosevelt-Arnold. Both AFL and CIO agree that "You can't strike against the government."

Make no mistake about it! This is not the independent program of an insubordinate Thurman Arnold or J. Edgar Hoover. It is the official policy of Roosevelt, of American imperialism, in preparation for M-Day. They are mobilizing reaction on all fronts. They seek to intimidate those who cannot be won over voluntarily to the support of the war. They intend to jail those who refuse to be intimidated. Only an aroused proletariat, fighting on a class struggle basis, is capable of meeting the campaign to plunge the American workers into another blood-bath of imperialist war.

Industry Prepares

THERE HAS BEEN a sharp increase in "educational" orders for war materials. The revision of the Neutrality Act not only made possible the supplying of armaments to the future allies of the United States. It provided the basis for a sharp increase in tempo in the preparation of industry to serve the American war machine. Some employers have already openly demanded that new union contracts contain a clause which would automatically void them on M-Day.

It is of more than passing significance that Alfred M. Landon has participated in the "good neighbor" spade-work in the Latin-American countries in preparation for war, and that Herbert Hoover headed the Finnish Relief Committee. The bourgeois political parties differ on the question of how most successfully to exploit the workers, but they are very careful about public disagreements on the delicate question of herding the workers into war.

New Deal Now War Deal

THE NEW DEAL has proven a complete failure. After eight years of Roosevelt's leadership the nation which possesses the mightiest instruments of production yet developed by mankind is still confronted with the contradiction of millions of unemployed while factories lie idle or operate only part time, and great sections of the working class suffer from hunger and go in want of the most elementary needs.

Because of the low mass purchasing power the profit system cannot find an adequate market at home. It ignores the problems of the unemployed, the underpaid, the undernourished workers. Instead, it prepares to use them as cannon fodder in a war for greater supremacy in the world market and for new fields for the exploitation of labor.

There are today over twelve million unemployed in the United States; yet, the WPA is in a process of liquidation. Federal relief appropriations fall ever lower; armament budgets rise ever higher. Soldiers do not need WPA jobs, but they do need guns. The New Deal has become the War Deal.

Sharpening Class Struggle

THE ARTIFICIAL WAVE of patriotism which will no doubt accompany the opening of hostilities by this country will

not be of long duration. There is little likelihood that the American workers will submit as docilely as in 1917-18. Twenty-two more years of capitalist mismanagement since the First World War have created new cracks in the foundations of the bourgeois state. Great economic struggles have sharpened the class-consciousness of the proletariat; it will crystallize under the impact of war.

Continued postponement of the entry of the United States into the war is possible. Maneuvers for alignments, military-strategic considerations, developments on existing war fronts are among the external considerations. But preparations for entry into the war are speeded up. Internally a spirit of war fever must be whipped up: "Poor little Finland (Belgium)"; "Save democracy from Hitlerism (Kaiserism)." The extension of the arena of conflict into the Scandinavian countries has led to the almost complete abandonment of any pretext of neutrality by the United States propaganda machine. Meantime the economic and social contradictions continue to pile up: strain of war budget, unemployment crisis, strike struggles, resistance of the workers to regimentation.

World imperialism sits on a powder keg of potential revolution. The colonial countries are seething with revolt. Deep rumblings are heard from the working classes of the belligerent nations. No matter where the first explosion may occur, the flames of revolution will spread swiftly. There will be deep reverberations in the working class of the United States.

The sharpening class struggle will in the next period be waged with increasing fury. American capitalism will not yield without a desperate fight. There will be war to the knife, war without quarter. The outcome will be socialism or fascism. There is no middle road. The workers must have a class struggle leadership. They must know what they are fighting against and how best to wage the struggle.

Capitalist Propaganda

THE YOUNG WORKER begins life under the tremendous disadvantage of a great burden of miseducation. The books in the public schools falsify history to laud the capitalist system and hid the grim realities of life in the bourgeois slave

market. War is glorified. Famous patriots are deified. Pæns of praise are sung to the great exponents of rugged individualism. The epic struggles of the exploited working class are not recorded in the pages of the official textbooks. A man is considered a great liberal, even a radical, who will venture to introduce a book, even a lecture, which only records the historic facts of the class struggle. Such is the bourgeois educational system.

The adult worker, seeking to peer through the fog of these false teachings, is confronted with a new barrage. The daily press, the popular magazines, radio, movies—all are used to twist and distort facts, to put capitalism in the most favorable, and the workers' movement in the most unfavorable, light.

The highways and the city streets of the nation are placarded with slogans which sing the siren song of class collaboration. "If you work for a living you are in business. What helps business helps you." Pictures appear showing a worker in a nice home, well furnished. There is a radio and a telephone. With him are his wife and children, all well dressed, all healthy looking and obviously happy. Other pictures appear showing the same happy working class family in a good car, speeding down an excellent highway for a day's outing in the country. Underneath the pictures appears the slogan: "The American Way." The workers in the slums raise a skeptical eyebrow as they examine these pictures.

In its efforts to screen its mismanagement of the economic life of the nation the bourgeoisie turns to the world's most backward nations to find "proofs" of the superiority of the American standard of living.

Divide, Deceive and Rule

FOUNDED on class privilege the bourgeois state denies the existence of social classes. Raping the natural resources of the land, robbing the workers and the farmers, capitalism blandly labels its critics, one and all, as un-American. Dissatisfied workers are "agitators." Strikers are "lawless hoodlums." Militant leaders of the workers are "reds."

Divide, deceive and rule—these are the tenets of the bourgeoisie. Unemployed are pitted against employed,

skilled against unskilled, favored against unfavored, farmer against worker, Gentile against Jew, Catholic against Protestant, white against black, Irish against Pole, unenlightened against enlightened.

Bourgeois Solidarity

LEFT to their own devices with a docile labor market at their disposal, the capitalists tear at each others throats with full abandon in mercenary competition for business. However, the moment one employer is confronted with a strike, the others spring to his assistance with full class-conscious solidarity. The bourgeoisie has well-oiled machinery for this defense. Nothing is left to chance. No threat is taken lightly. Understanding that one victory by the workers will lead to other victories, the bourgeoisie watches for strike-fires with the vigilance of a forest ranger, and moves just as quickly and energetically to put them out.

Each industry has its trade associations, each city its Chamber of Commerce. State and regional groups are the next broad links of coordination. The crowning edifice is found in the National Association of Manufacturers and the United States Chamber of Commerce. Skilled specialists in the various fields of employment relations devote full time service in this machinery. Vigilant watch is kept over the honor students in the colleges and universities. Training for their special work is begun right in the schools. The most brilliant and promising young lawyers, technicians, statisticians are pressed into the service of the industrialists. This is the machine which the trade unions must combat. The labor movement can learn a great deal by studying the organizational methods of the bourgeoisie.

The attack on organized labor begins in the public schools. It continues incessantly through the many instruments of propaganda at the disposal of the capitalists. Divisions are sown by every conceivable means between the workers on the job. Various special devices are used to delude the worker into thinking he has a stake in the business—stock subscription plans, bonuses, etc. If the workers begin to grow restless and talk of organization, company unions are formed to talk about ventilation, toilets, any-

thing but wages and hours. If the workers begin to attend trade union meetings, spies are sent to take down their names. Every effort is made to get rid of the leaders of the organization movement. Provocateurs are sent into the union to try to force a premature strike, to provoke an excuse for police violence, to frame union militants.

If the union wins, an effort is made to curry favor with the union leaders. The company interferes in every possible manner with the inner life of the union to cause discord, curb militancy, prevent close collaboration with other sections of organized labor, all the while girding itself for another open fight. The bosses never quit fighting the unions, and they never will as long as the profit system remains.

No employer is ever left to his own devices in fighting a union. Occasionally it appears that the other employers are neutral or even helpful to the union in a strike against a company. This is the case only when a larger combine feels that it is safe under existing circumstances to stand aside or help while the union attacks a competitor.

If it appears that there is real danger in a union victory the competitors will go so far as to protect the struck employer in the market. The banks will liberalize his credits. Slush funds will be raised on a broad basis for his aid. Landlords will evict the strikers. Other capitalists will repossess their furniture and their cars. Their lights and gas will be shut off. The police and the courts will zealously protect the employer's "property rights." The hospitals will notify the police of the arrival of injured strikers. The national guard stands by ready to reinforce the police. "Law and Order" is glorified by recruiting special deputies from the dregs of society for use against the strikers. No stone is left unturned in their efforts to defeat the workers.

Pressure on Unions

THE EMPLOYERS wage a continuous, well organized campaign against the legal rights of the unions. Compulsory arbitration is a perennial theme song. A long campaign has been conducted to force the incorporation of the unions so that they may be more easily sued for damages. Meantime suits against the unions are instituted constantly on every

possible pretext. Favorable decisions are often obtained by the employers, especially in the lower courts. Appeals taken into the higher courts place an added expense burden on the unions. Each minor success lays another stone in the foundation which is being carefully built to make possible the realization of the full program of incorporation.

Employer "plants" are utilized in the unions to institute suits for accounting with the object of smearing the union with unfavorable publicity in the daily press as a minimum, and with the hope that serious discord can thus be fomented in the union. The courts dig up dust-laden statute books to find "due processes of law" so far outmoded that even the capitalists no longer need them, in order to have a pretext for setting aside the constitution of the union and taking immediate jurisdiction over such suits. The FBI, state and country attorneys and grand juries grow increasingly bold in seizing union books and records without regard for the "due processes of law."

Labor Relations Acts

SECTION 7a of the NIRA was hailed by the trade union movement as the "magna carta of labor." The Marxists pointed out that it was nothing more than a disciplinary action by the capitalist government to force the bourgeoisie to help itself out of a dangerous social crisis, and the first step in the preparation for the regimentation of the workers in the war machine. The Supreme Court outlawed the Act when the worst of the storm had passed. They acted with true "democratic" consideration for the "forgotten man." The case of a New York City chicken dealer was used as the vehicle for this shift in basic political policy. Fewer people would have been deceived if the case had involved one of the huge corporations.

The Wagner Act followed soon, accomplishing the dual purpose of more carefully harnessing the labor movement and at the same time easing the anguish of the class collaborationists who had been so cruelly let down by the Supreme Court. It is now also "Labor's magna carta," but its offspring, the NLRB, is already serving as the vehicle for its decapitation.

The AFL launched an attack on the NLRB on the

grounds that it was showing favoritism to the CIO and submitted proposals for changes in legislation regarding the conduct of the Board. This was quickly picked up by the employers and sharp attacks were directed against the NLRB on the basis of charges of favoritism toward the unions—all of them, including the AFL. The Board soon announced a change in policy, including the right of the employer to petition for an election in labor controversies. The battle for the emasculation of the Wagner Act now rages in Congress.

The popularization of the labor relations acts by the trade union movement has already proven a boomerang against them in several states—Oregon, Minnesota, Michigan, to mention a few cases. In the name of “labor relations acts” elaborate machinery is created to obstruct the calling of strikes—“cooling off period,” “last minute conciliation,” “fixing the blame.” These laws are cleverly designed for the purpose of forcing the unions into arbitration through the pressure of deliberate unfavorable publicity. Certain types of strikes are outlawed, especially jurisdictional strikes, which can just as well be strikes against a company, in which the employer has set up a fake independent union, as an AFL-CIO conflict. Restrictions are placed on picketing. In Wisconsin an attempt was made to license union business agents.

This legislation in the states is merely the forerunner of similar national legislation against labor. Of all the devices which the bourgeois state has at its disposal, the labor relations acts, because of the blind policies of the trade union leaders, have proven to be the most effective instrument for the expansion of the powers and role of the government in worker-employer conflicts.

The progressive trade unionists defend those features of the Labor Relations Acts which facilitate union organization and utilize these Acts in practical union work as dictated by the circumstances surrounding specific trade union problems. All attempts to emasculate those provisions of the Labor Relations Acts which are helpful to the unions and all efforts of the anti-labor forces to convert the Acts into instruments for the regimentation of labor must be vigorously opposed.

Strikes

REFORMIST PROPAGANDA that strikes are impossible during periods of economic decline must be vigorously opposed. However, in such periods it is necessary to organize the strikes very carefully and to deliberately pick the most favorable time. At all times care must be taken to guard against the dangers of strikes conducted by small minorities.

The sit-down strike is an important weapon for the workers which must be defended against all attempts to outlaw it. Tending to break down the conventional awe of bourgeois private property, it is a forerunner of the mass slogan: "Workers Control of Production."

Care must be taken to guard against foolish, indiscriminate use of the sit-down strike so as not to expose this weapon unnecessarily to attack in minor controversies.

The AFL has openly stated its disapproval of the sit-down. The CIO leadership gives lip service to its defense before the rank and file, but the general official policy is to quickly call the workers outside the plant when they sit-down and conduct the strike by means of an outside picket line.

The government has not yet felt prepared to definitely proclaim the sit-down a criminal act. Penalties against the workers in sit-downs have thus far been confined in the main to the denial of certain civil rights, such as the right of appeal to the NLRB. In general such criminal prosecutions as have occurred have been for contempt of court because of the violation of injunctions.

So-called unauthorized strikes are to be seriously considered. Not on the cowardly premise of the Thomas-Addes policy in the UAW-CIO which threatens union penalties against members who engage in unauthorized strikes because "our enemies (will) call the union irresponsible and say that it does not live up to its solemn agreements." The progressive trade unionists seriously considers the danger of unauthorized strikes because of the vital need for the widest possible working class support in every mass action.

The calling of a strike is the prerogative of the rank and file, not of the officialdom. This right must be defended. While the membership of other unions are not ordinarily

concerned about whether a strike has been authorized by the officials once the striking workers are in action, it is nevertheless a fact that the officialdom of these unions can many times block financial and other aid to the strikers on the ground that the strike is not officially called. These circumstances dictate the advisability of making all possible efforts to secure official sanction before a strike is called.

Failure to get official authorization does not necessarily mean that the strike cannot be called. The final decision must be made on the basis of existing conditions—the degrees of solidarity among the workers, rank and file sentiment in the other unions, the nature of the issues on which the strike is being called, the possibilities of getting material support, the length of time the workers in the strike can go on their own resources, etc., etc.

Every strike must be carefully prepared for in advance. Broad committees must be set up for the management of the strike. Provisions must be made for regular meetings of the strikers to keep them advised of developments and to keep the morale at a high level. Arrangements must be made to feed the strikers while on duty and to provide food for their families. Evictions will be attempted, furniture and automobiles replevined, lights and gas shut off. Medical aid will be needed for the sick and the injured. There will be bail, fines, attorneys' fees, court costs. Gasoline, oil and repairs must be furnished for the picket cars. Shifts for the picketing must be organized. The main lines of the strike strategy must be carefully worked out. These are only a few of the problems. A group of workers on strike must go without their wages, keep scabs from taking their jobs, find a means of subsistence for their families and prepare to meet all the exigencies of the fight. This is not a small task. But the ingenuity of the workers in coping with the problem, with the help of a few practical suggestions, is a most stirring demonstration of the dynamic character of the proletariat.

Class Collaboration

THE POLICY of class collaboration flows from a false evaluation of the nature of bourgeois economy and the resultant failure to understand the true position of the working class

in present-day society. Capitalism is accepted as the best possible economic system. The accumulation of private property is looked upon as the only conceivable incentive for human initiative and social progress. The employer must have a reasonable profit if he is to pay a fair wage. The intolerable contradictions of bourgeois economy are regarded as the result of the social backwardness of all mankind. The defeats of the European workers in revolutionary struggle are interpreted as indisputable proof of the vitality of capitalism. The degeneration of the workers' state under Stalin is pointed to as the crowning proof that socialism is a utopian dream. The downfall of bourgeois democracy and the complete destruction of the trade union movement in the fascist nations is deplored, but it is pointed out that this can't happen in "socially enlightened" America, especially as long as we have a Roosevelt. Not all of those who practice class collaboration have thought this policy through to these complete conclusions. But those who follow its strategy and tactics are traveling in this direction.

The class collaborationist visualizes the trade union as a miniature pattern of the bourgeois state in which he plays the role of the bourgeois statesman. He seeks to pattern union democracy after the methods of bourgeois democracy. He must have a constituency. Therefore he demands of the employer the right to organize his employees. He must have an apparatus and a treasury and is thus strongly interested in closed shop contracts and checkoff systems for the collection of dues; not in the loyal manner in which the workers pose this demand for protection against finks, but in the interest of assuring income without valid service. He attempts to convince the employer that a union is a necessary part of his business, as necessary as the accountant, the supervisor and the workers themselves.

Harmonious relations with a union having a "sound" leadership are posed as an indispensable adjunct of modern industrial management. The class collaborationist must have something to offer the membership if he is to hold the union together. So he demands that the employer "sit down across the table" with him and negotiate a "reasonable" contract. If the workers are not willing to accept the results of this negotiation, he proposes that an "impartial" third

party be selected to arbitrate the differences. The class collaborationist does not like strikes, and he will go to considerable lengths to see that a strike is prevented. And he does not want anyone in the union who does not believe in his theories.

This is class collaboration in its worst form. It is most often not applied in this complete sense; but to know the whole pattern is to be able to quickly identify the worst symptoms of the practice.

The ever-recurring militant strike struggles of the workers impel the employers to recognize the need of class collaborationist labor leaders to keep the leadership of the mass movement in safe hands. During periods of exceptional militancy among the workers the bourgeois state itself feels constrained to grant special privileges to safeguard their leadership. Bourgeois politicians are always willing to trade a few favors for the union vote. The recipients of all these considerations do not always understand that they are being used as bulwarks against the social revolution. Instead, they impute their apparent successes to the soundness of their policies. They begin to distinguish between "good" employers and "bad" employers; "friendly" politicians and "unfriendly" politicians.

On the question of war, the class collaborationist, if he is true to his theories, cannot fail to support the military machine of the bourgeois state. History is more than surfeited with evidence that he will.

The policy of class collaboration is followed in one manner or another, to one degree or another, by virtually the entire predominant section of the trade union officialdom—AFL, CIO and the Railroad Brotherhoods.

Arbitration

THERE IS NO such thing as an impartial arbitration of disputes between the contending forces in the class struggle. The conflict between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the big bankers and the huge industrial corporations, is irreconcilable. There is no middle ground. There is no individual, no group, no independent social class that stands unaffected by the struggle. The theory of impartiality is a myth.

Between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie stands an amorphous mass of humanity known as the petty-bourgeoisie. Incapable of pursuing an independent program, this middle class group is buffeted by both the principal contending classes, responding to the greatest pressure regardless of the side from which it comes. This is the customary source from which the arbitrators, the so-called impartial persons, are selected—lawyers, jurists, professional men, clergymen, small employers with a liberal reputation, etc. They are not impartial. The pressure of capitalism is as continuous for them as their daily life. They accept its institutions. They aspire to a more favored position in the capitalist world. They make decisions which favor the workers with great timidity and then only in response to real pressure. Whether the union contract is written through negotiations with the employer or by arbitration, the workers get just what they fight for and no more; often not as much. Many times the workers have won a decisive victory on the picket line only to lose most of their gains in an arbitration proceedings.

Arbitration of disputes over the interpretation and enforcement of a contract is permissible under certain conditions. However, every effort should be made to avoid this course whenever possible. Certain minor points may, for tactical considerations, be submitted to arbitration in the negotiation of a contract, both with and without strike action being involved. This should be considered as a sometimes necessary evil, not as the best tactical procedure. The basic issues under dispute in a controversy with the employers, issues around which real mass sentiment is mobilized, should not be submitted to arbitration, except in most exceptional circumstances; for example, as a final effort to salvage at least some concessions out of an otherwise lost strike.

A union should not in any case agree to a contract containing a clause providing for the arbitration of the terms of the renewal contract to be negotiated upon its expiration. To do this is to give up the strike weapon, to handcuff the workers.

Attempt to legislate compulsory arbitration upon the

unions must be fought with every ounce of energy which the workers can rally.

Craft Unionism

THE RISE and decline of craft union organizational methods is graphically reflected in the history of the American Federation of Labor. The story of the AFL is the story of its inability to adjust the organizational structure of the unions to conform with the changing social organization of industry. The organizational policies of the AFL are not the unanimous expression of the opinions of all the leaders, much less of the rank and file. There are many sympathizers of industrial unionism in its ranks, even in high circles. The Executive Council, however, is dominated by a case-hardened core of craft unionists who stand facing the past, stubbornly refusing to recognize the new conditions produced by the grinding wheels of history. They have their main roots in the building trades and metal trades, supporting themselves on a brittle mass base of one-time privileged workers who also stand with their faces to the past. William Green is not a part of this core. He is their helpless tool. It is one of the ironical pranks of history that a miner had to turn musician to remain at the head of the AFL.

The AFL today reports a membership which represents about ten per cent of the organizable workers. Prior to the NRA it had never more than seven per cent and more often less than five per cent of the organizable workers on its membership rolls. There is one exception, the period from 1919 to 1921. The wave of militancy which swept through the American working class under the impact of the Russian revolution, symbolized by the great strikes in the steel and packing industries, flooded the AFL. The crest of the wave was reached in 1920 when the reported membership exceeded by 72,386 the 4,006,354 represented by the delegates at the 1939 Cincinnati convention. But craft union methods and class collaboration policies had whittled this figure down to 2.9 million by 1923. Ten years later, on the eve of the New Deal; the AFL membership had dropped to 2.1 million, the lowest figure since 1916. Then came the NRA and with it a new crisis for the craft unionists.

Under the impulse of Section 7A, the first wave of

workers came into the established unions outside the basic industries. Then the mass production workers began to stir. With ominous forebodings of the future in store for them, the craft union bureaucrats immediately pressed demands for their jurisdictional rights in the big plants they had never tried seriously to organize. True, they had sought to organize the skilled craftsmen in the plants, but they had no place in their unions for the mass of semi-skilled and unskilled workers on the mass production belts. Then, too, as good class collaborationists, they had no desire to enter into serious class struggle conflict with the huge industrial trusts. Their demands for jurisdiction under the new conditions did not represent any change in basic policy. They still had no desire to organize the semi-skilled and unskilled; they just didn't want anybody else to organize the skilled workers. That they were prepared to fight desperately for their craft interests and policies has been indisputably demonstrated by events.

Lewis, Hillman and Dubinsky, representing unions already patterned along industrial lines, and therefore finding no serious contradictions for themselves in the problems of organizational structure in the mass production industries, sensed the dynamic character of this new mass pressure for unionism and saw a great future for themselves in taking the early leadership of the movement for industrial unionism. As class collaborationists of long training, as experts in this field of policy, they were confident of their ability to harness the revolutionary spirit of the workers and direct the new industrial unions into the safe channels of employer-employee, government-union cooperation. Lewis had learned this trade well in the miners—how to stem the tide of class struggle and how to bend the principles of union democracy out of shape in order to protect his ruling position. Hillman and Dubinsky had played the same game in the needle trades. Not as skilled as Lewis in strangling democracy in the unions, although they are far from being amateurs at this, both surpassed him in the more refined points because of their practice in giving a class collaborationist twist to the radical political movement. For the tasks at hand Lewis, Hillman and Dubinsky were a good working combination. With Roosevelt—a clever bourgeois poli-

tician who knew a good class collaborationist scheme when he saw one—in the White House, they felt that their plans could not fail.

The conflict broke into the open at the 1934 AFL Convention in San Francisco. A compromise was reached through the agreement of the AFL to issue Federal Charters under the control of the Executive Council. For immediate organizational purposes these charters were to have general jurisdiction in the basic industries. The final decision on jurisdiction was to be made later. The craft unionists decided to lay back until the plants were organized and then demand their pound of flesh. The Federal Charters were issued. The workers flocked into the AFL.

On the field of action against the employers the mass production workers found themselves thwarted. The fight in auto was steered into a governmental board. The same thing occurred in rubber, although some gains were made in spite of the leadership as a result of militant strike action. A hard-fought strike in textiles, where the workers went up against police, special deputies and national guardsmen, was steered into a similar cowardly settlement. Decisions on even the vicious speedup and stretch-out systems were referred to governmental boards. The steel workers fared no better. In sharp contrast stood the militant, victorious struggles of Toledo and Minneapolis. And in the midst of it all the craft unionists began to clamor for jurisdictional guarantees. The AFL was through in the basic industries. The workers were tearing up their membership cards.

Lewis-Hillman-Dubinsky had stood on the sidelines and cheered the workers as they fought the craft unionist leaders to a standstill. They now had a clear field before them. The industrial unionists had rolled up an impressive minority vote at the 1936 AFL convention in Atlantic City. The time had come to act.

The Committee for Industrial Organization was formed, under the Lewis-Hillman-Dubinsky leadership, at the end of 1935. Its announced purpose was to work as an organized group within the AFL to promote the cause of industrial unionism. Suspended in advance by the AFL Executive Council, they didn't get to the 1936 AFL convention at Tampa.

Industrial Unionism

THE INDUSTRIAL UNIONS correspond to the modern organization of industrial life. The development of modern industry, with its automatic machinery, capable of great precision, has sharply reduced the need for the skilled worker. In his place has appeared a predominant element of semi-skilled and unskilled workers, chained to the production machinery in such a manner that dividing lines cannot be drawn among them as is demanded by the craft unionists. In each industry there must be one union for all the workers in the plant, with all the plants tied together through the democratic organization of the administrative machinery of the industrial union. In like manner the various industrial unions must be linked together. The complete organization of labor must envisage the uniting of all unions in the closest bond of cooperation, with full democratic rank and file control on the job and in the administrative apparatus of the entire union movement.

The organization of the industrial unions has produced a decisive change in the social composition of organized labor and tapped new reservoirs of working class power. The workers in the basic industries are the most complete proletarians—creators of wealth who share in none of its benefits. They have introduced real militancy into the trade union movement in their first wide-scale struggles. Their full power is yet to be shown. The great sitdown strikes, conducted in spite of the restraints by the class collaborationist leadership of the CIO, are only heat-lightning. The revolutionary courage and determination of the American workers, once it unfolds in full scope, will sweep everything before it.

The relation of forces between the repressive leadership and the aggressive rank and file has been sharply altered in the new industrial unions. The rapid development of the shop steward system, plant committees, grievance committees, industry councils; the immediate appearance of broad strike committees when open conflict breaks out with the employer; the decisive manner in which the workers take matters into their own hands when the union leadership fails to force the employer to abide by the union contract—

these are the convincing evidences of a rising pressure for rank and file control in the unions. This pressure from the ranks upon the class collaborationist leaders reduces their value as an insulation between the workers and the employers. Capitalism feels ever more keenly the heavy hand of the working class.

The CIO, now the Congress of Industrial Organizations, has enjoyed a speedy growth, especially among the unorganized workers in heavy industry. Since its suspension from the AFL in 1936 it has recruited two new members for every one taken in by the AFL. Beginning in 1936 with an organization only two-fifths the size of the just purged AFL, it today claims a membership equal to if not larger than that of the AFL. The actual size of the CIO is a disputed point. Most of this growth and the resultant mass actions have occurred in industries controlled by the most powerful sections of the bourgeoisie.

There is great ferment in the ranks of the industrial unions. Dissatisfaction with official policies of the CIO leadership is widespread. Failure of the officials to enforce the union contracts is leading to frequent strike revolts initiated by the workers in the plants. Important contracts are coming up for renewal. The workers want action. The 30 hour week at 40 hours pay is today demanded by the auto workers, ground down by chronic unemployment. The 30 hour week with no reduction in pay is the slogan of the ladies' garment workers. Demands for constitutional conventions, democracy in the unions, are heard with increasing frequency in the CIO. Pressure for independent working class political action, an independent Labor Party, takes on new force. These CIO sentiments are telegraphed into the more progressive sections of the AFL. A new wave of working class militancy is on the way.

Position of the AFL

THE AFL has replaced the one million members lost with the suspension of the CIO and has added an additional half million. Its membership today is slightly over four million. The tonic effect of the CIO campaign immediately gave new life to the AFL. The CIO sitdown victories, the contract with U.S. Steel, gave new courage to all the workers.

The AFL registered increased vitality and strike activity. The favoritism of the employers toward the AFL as against the CIO added to its recruiting power among less advanced workers. Outside the basic industries the workers were more inclined to lean toward the AFL as the traditional organization of labor. It had stable unions of long standing. There were partial adoptions by the AFL of the industrial organization form in a few specific cases. In the first stages of the campaign the CIO carried on little activity outside the basic industries. The AFL continued to remain the union of the skilled workers. The absolutely unprecedented activity of the AFL organization staff was also a large contributing factor in its growth.

The main foundation of the AFL is the building trades, the metal trades and the truck drivers. The secondary strata is composed of actors, bakers, barbers and beauticians, brewery workers, building service employes, clerks, fire-fighters, laundry workers, postal employes, stage hands, teachers, affiliated railway organizations and small miscellaneous groups. The secondary organizations are in fields not seriously disputed by the CIO, but they also are not a decisive factor in the movement. Among them are groups with strong sympathies for the industrial union movement.

The building trades, the metal trades and the truck drivers are all the main strength and the greatest weakness of the AFL. The building trades are now under direct attack from the CIO. At the outset of the struggle they have felt themselves compelled to begin experimenting with new organizational policies. The heat of the battle will force more radical changes. The metal trades have before them the futile task of protecting their hegemony over the skilled workers in heavy industry as the only substantial possibility for growth. Failing to grow they cannot help but retrogress. The powerful and fast growing truck drivers organization, whose aid is especially vital to the building trades in its present fight, is becoming more and more outspoken in its demands for unity. The craft union core is in dire straits.

Position of the CIO

BEGINNING IN 1936 with about one million members, the CIO today claims more than four times its original size. Its

main base is in aluminum, auto, mining, needle trades, oil, radio, rubber, steel and textiles. The extent of organization varies in these industries, but it does not follow that failure to organize decisive majorities will result in successes by the AFL. It is more often the case that those workers who are not in the CIO are either unorganized or in company unions.

The most serious defection suffered by the CIO was the withdrawal of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, which is headed by Dubinsky, one of the original CIO leaders. The ILGWU, now independent, has just recently negotiated a jurisdictional agreement with the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, CIO, headed by Hillman, also one of the original CIO leaders. There is a possibility that the ILGWU will return to the AFL. If so, there is little likelihood, in view of the pact with the ACW, that a jurisdictional fight would develop in the needle trades as a result. However, reaffiliation to the AFL on the part of the ILGWU would give unwarranted moral and material support to the craft union core.

Among the secondary CIO fields not seriously disputed by the AFL are the distillery workers, certain sections of the transport workers and numerous small organizations. The newspaper editorial workers are generally with the CIO, but there has been quite a battle in this field in Chicago.

The disruptive AFL attack upon the CIO in auto turned out to be a dud. The auto workers have definitely had their fill of the craft unionists. It will take a great deal more than a Homer Martin, gone haywire, to change their minds. The AFL campaign in mining has been noisy but ineffective.

The main danger to the industrial unions does not come from the attacks of the AFL; it lies in the bold counter-offensives of the corporations and in the governmental preparations for wartime regimentation of the workers. The ignominious and still unretrieved defeat in Little Steel, the failure to organize Ford, the retreat of the union leadership before the onslaughts of the corporations and their government—these are the most serious dangers to the CIO workers. Nor can the industrial unions afford to maintain silence while the FBI attacks the AFL unions. They will be next

on the list of victims of the Roosevelt-Arnold-Hoover drive.

Fields of AFL-CIO Conflict

HEALTHY GROWTH has been recorded by the AFL and the CIO where they have functioned as parallel organizations operating independently and in separate sections of industry. On the other hand, the practice of organizational cannibalism in certain fields has resulted in many cases in the complete failure of both unions to make any substantial headway. In other cases the internecine struggle has weakened the contending organizations to a point where a maximum of militancy is required of the workers in their fight against the employers in order to realize a minimum of gain.

Even when the most principled tactics are followed by the combatants in this civil war, the employers are able to direct their strategy in such a way as to strike heavy blows against the entire union movement under the subterfuge of demands for the protection of their "neutrality" toward the contesting unions. The workers draw many incorrect conclusions about trade union principles which they then have to unlearn before they can effectively fight against the employers. The employer on the other hand finds new ideas for the artificial creation of phoney independent unions. In watching one union fight another the employer learns new methods which he will use in fighting all unions. These are present-day conditions under the best of existing circumstances.

There are individuals and groups participating in the conflict between the unions that are not motivated primarily by trade union principles. They turn an already bad situation into a state of complete chaos. The outstanding example of this unprincipled type is the Communist Party.

A classic specimen of the work of these disrupters is to be found in the maritime unions. The Stalinist leadership in the CIO maritime unions has launched a drive for a "Five Year Peace Plan" in the industry. The CIO workers on the waterfront and on the ships are to be bound hand and foot and thrown upon the quicksands of arbitration while their heroic Stalinist leaders "fight the shipowners in

their real base—the agricultural fields” (!) The Stalinists estimate that it will take only five years to do this. Five years during which the workers are to sail the high seas under wartime conditions, denied any opportunity to fight for their rights. The workers are asked to bind themselves to arbitration when the capitalist government is already openly backing the ship owners to the hilt. And to do this in a period when it is not impossible that within five years there will either be no bosses or no unions in the United States.

It is not enough, however, for only the CIO workers to have this privilege. The other union maritime workers outside the CIO must also have these five-year “benefits.” The Stalinists therefore launch a drive for “Unity” which is just as deceitful as the “Peace Plan.” The first candidates are to be the Marine Firemen, the second the Sailors Union of the Pacific. The MFOW is independent, and the SUP is in the AFL. They support the principles of industrial unionism, but they refuse to join the CIO because of the domination of the Stalinist misleaders in its maritime section. The Stalinists propose that the MFOW and the SUP shall have both “Unity” and a “Peace Plan,” or else. This is the policy of disrupters whose loyalty is not to the trade unions.

Both the AFL and the CIO contend for membership in the packing houses. The CIO has been most successful in gaining members, but their tactics in dealing with the Big-Four packers have been weak and largely fruitless. The AFL only plays with the problem of organization in this industry. It places the main emphasis on the recruiting of employees in the retail meat markets. Company unionism remains strongly entrenched in the industry.

The accomplishments of both organizations in the utility field are even less impressive than in the meat packing industry. The AFL has managed to recruit telegraphers only from the secondary sections of the workers. The CIO has launched a campaign in the major companies, but no great results have been reported to date.

Organization by the AFL in the tobacco industry has been directed especially toward the smaller companies. They have recently made important gains in one of the larger companies. Their main argument in the negotiations

with the employers has been a discourse on the merits of the union label on tobacco products. The CIO has suffered one bad defeat in this industry and has reported no impressive victories.

There are sporadic conflicts between the two unions in the furniture, glass, paper and shoe industries. Competition is stronger in the struggle for members among the wood workers, government employees and office workers.

The newly developed AFL organization drive in the South is mainly a move against the CIO. The minimum objective is an additional block of members recruited from every possible field in this poorly organized section of the country. A stronger motive is the desire to make a flank attack on the CIO by attempting to organize the Southern plants of the mass production industries. These plants in the South are steadily increasing in size and number as a result of the attempts of the industrialists to evade the rising militancy of the Northern workers.

The printing trades have not been included in the arena of jurisdictional conflict. The important Typographical Union has from the beginning been an active supporter of the CIO. Although the union remained in affiliation with the AFL and was not suspended with the other CIO unions, the late Charles P. Howard, president of the ITU, was the official secretary of the CIO. The overthrow of the Howard leadership in the ITU, hailed by the AFL as a victory for craft unionism, was followed soon by the refusal of the union, through membership referendum, to pay the special assessment levied by the AFL for the fight against the CIO. The AFL suspended the ITU and it now has an independent status. Although the union clearly does not endorse all the policies of John L. Lewis, it is also plain that the typographical workers, themselves dominated by a craft psychology, do not give approval to the policies of the AFL in fighting the CIO.

Trade Union Unity

THE MAIN RESPONSIBILITY for the AFL-CIO split rests upon the AFL as does the main burden of the blame for the continuation of the split. The formation of the CIO was a progressive action. The continued refusal of the CIO lead-

ership to negotiate a unification with the AFL is progressive only insofar as they defend the industrial organization methods against the onslaughts of the craft unionists. Both leaderships are class collaborationist, both are subservient to the bourgeois government. The basic differences in policy between the top leadership of the AFL and the CIO relate formally to the question of organizational structure. The leadership of the CIO, however, is based on a more dynamic stratum of the proletariat and is more sensitive to their bitter discontent.

This explains why the CIO has followed a somewhat more enlightened policy of social legislation, on the problems of the unemployed, and on the housing question. It has given more concrete expression to the political sentiments of the workers. But its superiority to the AFL in these respects is more the result of rank and file pressure than of a more enlightened policy on the part of the leadership. This pressure from the ranks will continue with increasing vigor in a united labor movement.

The manipulations of the two leaderships for positions of power in the united movement are of interest to the workers only to the extent that the CIO leaders represent tendencies which are more or less progressive. They have no interest in the aspirations of the leaders to positions of special influence with the bourgeois politicians. Nor are the workers concerned in the ambitions of the officials to enthrone themselves in high positions in the bourgeois political apparatus. On the contrary, the workers need democracy in the unions and their own independent political party. The criminal action of the leadership in utilizing the division in the movement for the achievement of their own personal ambitions is against the wishes and the expressed desires of the trade union workers.

Formal trade union unity at the expense of the industrial form of organization and the gains of the industrial unions would be a catastrophe. But once the preservation of the industrial unions has been assured in the united movement, there can no longer be any justification for a continuation of the split. Despite these indisputable facts the strongest impelling force that has caused any serious movement to-

ward unity on the part of the national leadership of the unions is the pressure from Roosevelt.

Roosevelt's Kind of Unity

ROOSEVELT wants unity not for the benefit of the workers, but to serve the interests of the third-term movement and the war machine of American imperialism. To make war it is necessary to have straitjacketed workers in the factories and patriotic worker-soldiers in the army. The best guarantee for this is to have a peaceful, orderly labor movement, dominated by leaders who believe firmly in the defense of capitalism in imperialist war as well as in its defense against the proletarian revolution. Roosevelt is justifiably confident that a majority of such leaders are at the head of both the AFL and the CIO. All that remains to be done in this phase of the war program is to bring these leaders together in a united labor movement, thus eliminating further possibilities of internal friction. That is why Roosevelt is for unity—his kind of unity.

Many labor leaders, not otherwise impelled to action, are becoming increasingly energetic in the fight for unity under Roosevelt's pressure. They do not tell the workers why he wants unity. Some are not clear-sighted enough to understand. Others are flattered by receiving the confidence of "state secrets" and will not tell. The workers are told that the division in the trade union movement jeopardizes the reelection of their "friend," Roosevelt, because of the united opposition to him by the workers' "enemies," the anti-Roosevelt Democrats and the Republicans.

John L. Lewis has brought down more wrath upon his head in official trade union circles by openly criticizing Roosevelt than he ever did for espousing industrial unionism. And all that Lewis wants is to elect some other capitalist politician. Lewis has serious differences with Roosevelt on one main point—Roosevelt shunted him off the inside track at the White House.

For a Rank and File Referendum

THE TEST OF TIME has proved to the hilt that craft union organizational methods are outmoded. The success of the industrial unions has demonstrated to the rank and file

AFL workers the false position of the craft union core of the AFL Executive Council. The decisive majority of the organized labor movement agrees that the industrial unions have proved to be an indispensable instrument for working class organization in modern industry. The lessons of the recent struggles, gained the hard way, have literally penetrated the trade union movement to the marrow. The only ones who remain unconvinced are the craft union leaders and the small section of skilled workers who support them. They no longer deceive anyone but themselves. They are discredited.

The great majority of the workers want unity and yet it does not come. The usurpation of the right of policy making by the present undemocratic official apparatus of the trade union movement is responsible for this intolerable situation. The trade union workers must insist upon a referendum vote in the AFL, the CIO, the Railroad Brotherhoods and all other bona fide independent unions for the complete unification of the organized labor movement, on the basis of full guarantees for the preservation and extension of the industrial union method of organization.

The launching of a big movement for such a referendum would provide the trade union militants with the best opportunity to fight for full union democracy and rank and file control in the united movement, and an orientation toward class struggle policies on the field of action against the employers. Such agitation, in turn, is the best way to develop an unyielding opposition to the war.

Building Left Wing

THE WORKERS must now fight for the unity of the trade union movement with the same determination that they have fought and won the battle for their industrial unions. A rank and file decision would bring the immediate unification of the movement. The officialdom, entrenched behind its usurpation of the policy making prerogatives of the membership, is not prepared to make the decision desired by the workers. Nor are the officials willing to let the membership make the decision in spite of them. There is little democracy in the unions so far as any control over the

higher officials is concerned. The workers must fight for the return of the policy making powers to the rank and file where they rightfully belong.

All the progressive forces in the trade unions must be organized into a national left wing movement. These groups must be formed first in the local unions. The linking together of the various progressive groups in the left wing movement must of necessity follow the organizational lines of the trade unions—industry and trade councils, city assemblies, district committees, etc.

As against the AFL, the CIO is the more progressive union. This does not mean, however, that in all cases and under all circumstances the progressives give blind loyalty to the CIO. Present conditions in maritime are an eloquent proof of the need for careful consideration of all factors before making a decision. Under certain specific circumstances, when the CIO is strangled by Stalinist domination, the affiliation of an independent union to the AFL is the better alternative; for example, the affiliation of the Marine Firemen to the Seafarers International Union. Under different conditions such action could be a reactionary step; for example, the affiliation of the ILGWU to the AFL. While the tactical line in each particular case must be subordinated to the general line of support to the industrial unions and the complete unification of the trade union movement, it does not follow that the tactical and general lines coincide in every given instance or at every given moment.

It is necessary for the party forces to work in either the AFL or the CIO according to specific local circumstances. The progressive trade unionist does not withdraw from a union just because it may be conservative in policy or leadership; on the contrary, such a condition is usually all the greater reason for progressive activity in the union, always provided, of course, that the union embraces the decisive sections of the workers in its particular field.

The decisive question is for the various progressive groups in both the AFL and CIO, as well as the Railroad Brotherhoods and the bonafide independent unions, to be ideologically linked together on the basis of a common fundamental program:

1. A rank and file referendum for the unification of the entire trade union movement on the basis of the preservation and extension of the industrial form of organization.
2. Unity of the employed and unemployed. The trade unions to assume full responsibility for the organization of unemployed.
3. Full democracy in all the unions. The return of the policy making powers to the rank and file.
4. Against class collaboration. For class struggle policies.
5. For an Independent Labor Party.
6. Against racial discrimination. For the immediate repeal of all union laws restricting membership rights of the Negroes and other racial minority groups.
7. For special attention by the trade unions to the problems of the youth.
8. For the defense of the strike weapons, including the sit-down. Against all attempt to incorporate the unions or impose government regulation.
9. Against imperialist war.

Progressives in the Unions

TO WIN the confidence and respect of the workers it is necessary to show them capabilities of leadership through practical demonstrations of ability. A leader must strive to be the most useful member of the union. He must be efficient even in the smallest details of union work and must not be afraid to do the Jimmy Higgins duties. The workers respect most those who volunteer their service on any and all union business and who are at the same time courageous fighters on the picket line.

The flippant use of trite names, hackneyed language and patent formulas should be avoided. Terms such as "bureaucrat," "faker," "sell-out," "betrayal," are dangerous if lightly used. Laziness of thought is caused by this tendency to substitute a catch-phrase for a serious analysis. The workers are not very much impressed by bombastic language. They respond much better to a penetrating analysis and the resultant convincing arguments. Any other pre-

sentation is apt to discredit the critic instead of the criticized.

There are no patent policies for the handling of trade union questions. That which applies in one case may work with opposite effect in another. One must study the industry in which he is organizing. Government reports and the trade journals of the employers are excellent sources of information. The workers can give the clearest picture of all as to just what the conditions are and just what immediate practical steps can be taken for improvement. The question of locality—deep south, industrial east, agricultural west, etc., is also an important factor.

Policy in the trade unions must flow from a careful analysis of specific conditions with the resultant general conclusions. The economic trend, the direction of development in the labor movement generally, the immediate nature of bourgeois political policy and its general trend, the strength of employers in the given circumstances, the level of development of the workers—these are a few of the important considerations. Guard against catering to mistaken sentiments of the workers which could only result in unnecessary injury to them and the movement generally.

Avoid the tendency to make arbitrary categories for each type of individual in the mass movement. It is a serious mistake to form snap judgement of people on the basis of the first speech heard, their position in the first discussion, or on the basis of rumor and generally accepted ideas about them. It is necessary to determine first if the individual reflects in his attitude the experiences of the union, or if he has failed to learn the lessons of these experiences. It must be remembered that not all who practice class collaboration in one form or another are conscious class collaborationists. The question is one of level and *direction* of development.

It is necessary to check carefully each person's past. What has he contributed to the movement? What mistakes has he made and under what circumstances? Has he had bad teaching? How does he now respond to progressive proposals? Is he learning from experience? All the factors responsible for his present attitude must be thoroughly analyzed, and every effort must be made to accelerate his progressive development. A worker who through ignorance

scabs today may be a militant striker another day. A leader who at one time supports reactionary policies may at a later time become a progressive. The ideology of human beings is not a static thing, especially in the labor movement.

Even in the case of those who appear to be hopelessly reactionary, the progressive dare not turn his back upon them. The problem is to find a way to attenuate their opposition, even halt it, if only temporarily, and it is not impossible that under the impact of certain experiences the direction of their development may be reversed in a progressive direction. Ways and means must be found to attempt to cause each individual in the movement to voluntarily, or if necessary, involuntarily, play a certain progressive role.

It must be remembered that each trade union is a tiny mirror which reflects a small though distorted image of the whole class. On the right stands the class collaborationists, the conscious reactionaries. On the left are the elements who stand for the class struggle. Between these two forces lies the great mass of the trade union membership, deceived by false education, poisoned by vicious propaganda, chained to the wheel of capitalist exploitation, ground down by the struggle for their daily bread, dreaming of freedom but failing to understand the only road to its realization. The progressive seeks to guide these masses along the road of class struggle. The class collaborationists seek not only to block this road, but also to drive the progressives out of the leadership, and if necessary, out of the unions. In spite of this brake upon them the workers surge forward in struggle, only to recede again into a period of passivity. The progressive must learn to understand the moods of the masses and he must adjust his tactics to them. He must press at every opportunity for the sharpening of the class struggle, but he must not press the workers into actions against their collective will. To attempt to do so is to play into the hands of the reactionaries, to risk the loss of the workers' confidence, to become isolated from them. The progressive trade unionist dare not forget or ignore this.

Unemployed and Unorganized

ROOSEVELT has pursued a cold and calculating policy in dealing with the question of unemployment relief. His in-

tentions have been to provide just enough relief to the unemployed to prevent the sharp edge of hunger from causing riots and serious social upheaval, but he has deliberately intended to provide no more than just enough. Understanding clearly that a static policy would be too dangerous, he has followed a more flexible plan which has given him the desired results.

With the adoption of a given federal relief policy, the increasing pressure from the unemployed forces the government to make greater concessions. Organizations are formed among the unemployed workers on the basis of this struggle. Roosevelt retreats slowly, fighting every inch of the way, giving up very little and then only under extreme pressure. The relief budgets increase, however, and he is soon brought into conflict with the bourgeoisie. The banks and the big corporations crack down on "government spending" and the "unbalanced budget." He then discards the entire existing relief program and begins the transition to a new one based on reduced relief allowances.

The organizations of the unemployed attempt to fight the cuts. Roosevelt does battle with them. The unemployed, unaided by the trade unions, cannot muster the necessary strength to win. The economic foundations of their organizations have been cut away with the junking of the relief program on which they were based. Having only the will to fight, but not the material means, the unemployed wage a losing battle. The relief cuts go through. Their organizations decompose. They must begin to rebuild under the new relief program. Each defeat makes the task of reorganizing more difficult.

The relief policies of the New Deal may be summed up as CWA—cut off; FERA—cut off; WPA—war.

The Roosevelt-Woodrum campaign to slash the WPA allowances didn't stop with the unemployed. It hit the trade unions also, especially the building trades. The strike called against the layoffs and the wage cuts was a miscarriage from the start. Class collaborationists who haven't the courage to fight the bosses can always be expected to back down before the bosses' government. It was only in a few isolated places where the workers displayed great militancy

that anything at all was salvaged from the fight. Roosevelt took vicious reprisals against the Minneapolis unemployed. Several are now in federal penitentiaries or jails. Many are on probation. The trade unions cannot afford any longer to ignore the unemployed. They must act for their own preservation.

In the event of a continued postponement of United States entry into the war, it will be necessary for Roosevelt to make certain alterations in policy on the WPA or replace it with a new program. Whatever his decision may be, the point of departure in his plans concerning unemployment relief will be his estimate of the probable date of entry in the war.

The trade unions cannot afford to calmly drop their unemployed members from the union rolls and forget them. Nor can they ignore the great mass of the unemployed outside their industry. The unions must create auxiliary sections for their unemployed. These sections must be linked together according to the pattern of the various union councils. All the unemployed workers, regardless of their trade, must find a place in these special trade union sections. The unemployed must have the full right of voice and vote on all questions directly affecting them and their specific problems. There must be full unity of the employed and unemployed workers. Pending the acceptance of this responsibility by the trade unions, the unemployed shall have to continue with their own independently organized unions.

There are approximately 41 million organizable workers in the country. This figure includes 6 million workers who have entered the labor market since the 1930 census. A bare one-fourth of them are included in the combined membership of all the trade unions. There are over 30 million unorganized.

The unification of the labor movement will bring many unorganized workers into the trade unions. The organization of the unemployed by the union movement will help greatly in reducing the ranks of the unorganized. Among these 30 million unorganized are certain of the most oppressed layers of the working class who are drawn into the

struggle only in periods of exceptional upsurge. Many who cannot be successfully drawn into the trade unions will give their loyal support to a policy of independent working class political action under the leadership of the union movement.

Bourgeois Politicians

THE WORKERS show increasing strength in the fight with the employers for the recognition of their unions and the right of collective bargaining to determine wages, hours and general conditions of unemployment. Victories are won in the face of support to the employers by the officials of the federal, state, county and municipal governments. Some of the most serious defeats have been suffered where dependence upon government officials and agencies was substituted for militant class struggle policies; for example, in Little Steel.

These officials are elected by the workers who take their promises at face value, and they, in turn, always double-cross the workers. Some are cleverer than others and are able to deceive the workers for a longer period of time. When a politician takes a more or less bold course in opposition to the workers, or piles up too long a record of anti-labor actions, the workers turn against him. Sometimes he does not survive the next election. However, when he is replaced, it is not by a workers' representative, but by another slick politician, subservient to the employers, who is palmed off on the workers as their "friend."

The traditional AFL policy is to reward political "friends" and punish political "enemies"—by votes. This so-called independent political policy means only that they do not line up solidly with any bourgeois political party; they pick and choose between various bourgeois politicians, Democrat, Republican, or what have you? The CIO-sponsored Labor's Non-Partisan League is nothing more than a variation of this same theme. Obviously the CIO does not mean to be non-partisan as between the bosses and the workers. What they mean by "non-partisan" is to avoid independent working class political action and to influence

the workers to vote for the "good" and against the "bad" bourgeois politicians regardless of which bourgeois political party they represent.

The record shows that the policy of supporting the "friendly" bourgeois politicians has in reality been the practice of supporting those *least hostile*. It cannot be otherwise. There is no independent labor party to present candidates. The bourgeois political parties have an open field, and as political parties of the employers, their candidates, no matter how cleverly they try to hide the fact, are basically anti-union because the employers are against the unions. The cowardly policy of the trade union officialdom in leading the workers into the support of these treacherous bourgeois politicians must be overthrown.

The class collaborationist leaders must be put on record as either approving or disapproving *all* the actions of the government officials. Nothing must remain unmentioned or covered up. They will seek to evade this demand, claiming that there is danger of embarrassing the workers' bourgeois "friends" by exposing their actions against the unions, and they will pose the alternative of a bourgeois "enemy" being elected instead. But the workers must insist upon an end to support of such "friends" and the election of government officials from the ranks of the working class by the workers' own party.

For An Independent Labor Party

AN INDEPENDENT LABOR PARTY, sponsored and led by the trade unions, will represent the political power, not only of the organized workers, but also of a broad strata of the unorganized industrial and agricultural workers who will give it their support. The farmers, small merchants, professional people and other middle class elements will also, in large numbers, follow the independent political leadership of the dynamic proletariat as opposed to the present leadership of a decaying bourgeoisie.

The workers do not elect bosses and boss stooges to lead their unions; it is just as ridiculous to elect them to political office. Workers' representatives can and must be

elected. This will not entirely solve the problems of the workers, but it will be a long step forward.

Class collaborationists have been and will continue to be in political office as timid before the bosses as they are in the unions. On the other hand, class conscious working class leaders will fight as militantly in political office in the interests of the workers as they do in the unions. An independent labor party would no doubt elect to political office, among others, many class collaborationists. Their performance in office will help to show them up in their true colors before the eyes of the workers, and they will thus be eliminated entirely from any capacity of leadership in the working class movement.

Labor's Non-Partisan League and the middle of the road American Labor Party, Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party and the other reformist political organizations attempt merely to substitute other and more subtle class collaborationist methods for the reactionary political policies of the AFL. The history, program and present policies of these organizations must be carefully studied and the full lessons drawn clearly and simply before the eyes of the workers. In this manner many can be saved from the necessity of learning the same lessons by bitter experience. The road to true independent political action will more quickly become clear to them.

This road is a long and torturous one, but the workers must find a way to oust all class collaborationists and reformists from leading positions in the movement. They must elect, in their place, a complete leadership of class conscious workers' representatives to lead them toward their goal of complete social emancipation. There is already increasing evidence of the awakening of the American proletariat to a realization of its true social position and its tremendous creative power.

A worker in an automotive assembly plant in Michigan recently remarked: "The manager was away from the plant all day yesterday, but we turned out just as many cars as we do when he is there." The bourgeoisie and the class collaborationists will of course think that he was paying a tribute to capitalist management. But that isn't the case.

If we can turn out cars according to schedule for a day with the capitalist manager absent, this auto worker was thinking, then we can also do the same for a week, a month, a year—forever.

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