

## THE AGITATOR

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THE AGITATOR does not bear the union stamp because it is not printed for profit. But it is union, every letter of it. It is printed and published by unionists and their friends for the economic and political education of themselves and their fellow toilers. Much of the labor is given free. On the whole it is a work of love—the love of the idea, of a world fit for the free.

Government is the great blackmailer. . . . No good ever came from the law. All reforms have been the offspring of Revolution. Buckle

## REVOLUTIONARY TACTICS

## III

The four chief causes to which I have attributed the failure of the I. W. W.'s dual organization program are: First, The wholesale condemnation of all non-I. W. W. unions; second, The I. W. W. lays itself open to and encourages scabbing on the part of these unions; third, The I. W. W. places itself in the unsavory position of a disruptive organization; fourth, The I. W. W. violates the principle of the militant minority. It will be seen they all four arise from the warlike relation of the I. W. W. toward the non-I. W. W. unions in general. These unions present the I. W. W.'s most serious problem. Were they but out of existence, the I. W. W. would have comparatively plain sailing. But they refuse to go out of existence and wherever the I. W. W. tries to organize it comes in conflict with them and wastes its strength in fruitless combat. They (ensemble) as well as the I. W. W., claim jurisdiction over the whole working class and don't tamely submit to competition.

The seriousness of the problem presented by these unions is generally, if vaguely, recognized in the I. W. W. and many and varied are the solutions offered for it. Just a few typical ones held by prominent I. W. W.; Haywood, St. John—ignore the A. F. of L., and organize the unskilled—the "Let Gompers have his million we'll take the rest throng—Troutman, Williams, Ettor, break up the A. F. of L.—Williams says, "We must bore the A. F. of L. all to pieces;" Ettor has stated it is the duty of every revolutionist to use all his energies to destroy the A. F. of L., because while it exists a revolutionary movement is impossible in the United States; Walker C. Smith says we must "bore from within" and "build from without"—a combination build-it-up and bust-it-up theory; Rosini would have I. W. W. members work in the old unions, yet preserve an organization on the outside to serve as a sort of haven for those workers discouraged in the A. F. of L.; Hall, in whose brain the idea of the I. W. W. was conceived, would, as I understand him, have the I. W. W. a sort of propaganda organization, consisting solely of rebels, yet taking the form of a dual labor organization; Thompson says we should encourage the industrial union idea wherever possible, get into the old unions, capture them, and swing them into the I. W. W. He says he has often deterred I. W. W. coal miners from forming I. W. W. unions, advising them to stick in the U. M. W. A. And so it goes, about every second member having a different theory—their violently contradictory theories running gamut of every possible line of tactics.

The best comment on these theories—none of which touch the root of the evil—is to be found in that none of their holders, so far as can be seen, are making any efforts to have the I. W. W. adopt them. They are leaving the organization peacefully go along in its planless, haphazard, wasteful method of organizing a member or local wherever possible. They themselves don't believe their theories are "worth a damn." Belief in their proposition explains the present activities (obnoxious) of the members advocating "boring from within" tactics for the I. W. W. These proposed new tactics are briefly as follows:

## New Tactics for the I. W. W.

The I. W. W., as an organization, shall give up

its present unsuccessful and patriotic attempt to build up a completely new labor movement and shall limit itself to propaganda work. We must give up our unsuccessful program—dual organization—and prosecute our successful program—propagation of industrial unionism. We must separate the church from the state, as it were, dissociate the propagation of industrial unionism from dual organization and concentrate our efforts on the former, leaving the latter to take care of itself—as will be indicated later. We must cease trying to be the labor movement and must develop our organization into an effective propaganda league.

We would thus be but adapting the tactics being used in all effective Syndicalist movements and those which would unquestionably have been originally adopted by the I. W. W. had it been formed by Syndicalists, who would have given the question serious study, instead of by a bunch of politicians, who, believing that if a new political party could be made a success, so can a new labor movement.

## National Propaganda Organizations

The English, Italian and French movements present types of national Syndicalist propaganda organizations. The English Syndicalist propaganda league, of which Tom Mann is the head, and which has played such a prominent part in the recent series of great uprisings in the English labor movement, is a national dues paying organization. It is not trying to build up a new labor movement, but to revolutionize the old one. To which end it is turning out vast quantities of literature and everywhere "butting in" on the labor movement, spreading its revolutionary doctrines.

The national organization of the Italian Syndicalists is the "Committee of Direct Action," in Parma. It is composed of delegates from all Italian unions controlled by Syndicalists—be they independent or affiliated with the conservative Confederation of Labor. It carries on propaganda activities similar to the English Syndicalist organization and is not a dual labor organization. It serves simply as the medium through which the Syndicalists secure more concerted action in propagation and realization of their doctrines in the Italian labor movement in general. It is a power in the Italian movement.

In France the Syndicalists, being in control of the national labor movement, haven't the need for such a strongly developed national propaganda organization as the weaker Italian and English Syndicalist movements. They secure the necessary concerted action in their eternal fight against the Socialist politicians through their national unofficial papers and magazines owned and sustained by rebels.

Of these three types of organizations the English Outline of New National Organization for I. W. W. undoubtedly is the best fitted for American conditions. The I. W. W. naturally could easily be changed into such an organization. The greatest change necessary would be that it change its aim. It would have to cease trying to build up a new labor movement and instead devote itself to the propagation of industrial unionism. This change of aim would, of course, involve the discarding of its present constitution and the adoption of a new one.

The national headquarters would be maintained then—as now—by dues. As the organizations in the industries would have full autonomy, as will be explained later, the national officers would be few and their duties of a clerical and propaganda nature.

## National Organ.

A national paper (or papers) would be indispensable to such an organization. This paper would differ from the rest of the organization papers, in that it would not specialize in any particular industry, but would occupy itself with the whole labor movement. It would be the national organ and the medium through which the whole movement clarified itself and shaped its general policies.

The French equivalent to this paper is "La Bataille Syndicaliste," a daily. It is not an official organ of the C. G. T., nor any union, but may be called the official organ of the impromptu national syndicalist propaganda league, it being founded and supported by direct action rebels, to propagate their doctrines and fight the politicians.

## Corps of Organizers.

A national corps of organizers would also probably be necessary. (These might be later replaced by

representatives of the various unions controlled by the Syndicalists who would serve as organizers, etc., similar to the members of the Italian Committee of Direct Action.) These organizers, in addition to their other propaganda activities, would have as their special function to take part in every important labor war, asked or unasked, by the conservative unions engaged.

During strikes workers readily accept revolutionary ideas and, if given the slightest encouragement and organization, repudiate their misleaders and act together in a revolutionary manner. Consequently, it would be the best and most natural policy of the national organization to concentrate its force as much as possible on great strikes—which occur with sufficient frequency to keep it thoroughly employed. The strike districts would be flooded with organizers and literature, pointing out the fallacy and futility of craft unionism and the advantages of industrial unionism, etc., and generally educating and stimulating the workers to revolutionary action.

The great value of this propaganda would be that it would be disinterested and taken at its face value by workers. At present the I. W. W. is excluded from this rich field of work. First, it has no interest in aiding old unions to win strikes; indeed, it would much rather see them lose, so they would go out of existence the quicker; and, second, even if it does send organizers into strike districts, they are inevitably and justly considered disrupters and their propaganda practically neglected. As a result, while rich situations like that presented by the great Harriman strike lies unexploited, all over the country one can find able I. W. W. organizers on "soap boxes in fevered competition with the Salvation Army, warming chairs," etc.

This national corps of organizers, acting in conjunction with the organized militant minorities in the unions involved, would be a powerful force. The mere fear of its activities would undoubtedly force labor fakers to give up many of their demoralizing practices. It would be a potent means to the revolution of the American labor movement.

Though this form of national organization would be effective—if we may judge by its results wherever tried—it would be but a minor feature of propaganda organization. The most important features would be the organizations in the various industries. These organizations will be treated of in the next article of this series

WM. Z. FOSTER.

## HERVE AND THE GERMAN VICTORY

There appeared recently in several socialist periodicals, Chicago Daily included, a translated article on "German Victory," original of which was written in La Guerre Sociale by Gustave Herve, an imprisoned syndicalist of France.

As an introduction to that article, the Chicago Daily says:

"Herve is the most prominent direct actionist and syndicalist in the world. Sometime ago he was sentenced to two years imprisonment for his anti-military activity. While in prison he continued to edit his paper and has since been sentenced to nine more years for articles written while in prison. He was at one time a member of the Central Committee of the French Socialist Party, but finally resigned because, as he said, he felt that his advocacy of direct action was injuring the party."

What an exhibition of loyal constancy on Herve's part with gaping-mouthed, credulous naivete of the Daily! From now on we, the direct actionists, had better leave the Socialist Party alone; our presence within its ranks is injuring the party which must be preserved at any cost.

The Daily gleefully winds up saying: "In view of these facts his comment on the German election is most significant." Then follows Herve's article, from which, for want of space, I am quoting only the most vital parts.

"Without giving offence to any one, it seems to me that even if I were an anti-voter (a mania with which I have never been tainted) I still could not repress a certain jubilation when I see the magnificent slap in the face that the German Socialists have administered to the Kaiser, and to the united Protestant and Catholic clericals.

"I have formerly jeered somewhat at the German Socialist. I believe that I even said to its face, to be sure it was only for the purpose of spurring it on, that it was only a machine for gathering votes and dues.

"When last summer our German Comrades made their splendid manifestation against war, and when, in France, we had shown so little of brilliancy, then it was that I recognized that this formidable machine for the