

THE AGITATOR

Issued twice a month, on the first and fifteenth, by THE AGITATOR Publishing Association from its printing office in Home, Wash.

Entered at the postoffice at Lakebay, Wash., as Second Class Matter

Subscription, One Dollar a Year.
Two copies to one address \$1.50.

Address all communications and make all money orders payable to THE AGITATOR, Lakebay, Wash.

Articles for publication should be written LEGIBLY on one side of the paper only.

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.

Everywhere the strong have made the laws and oppressed the weak; and, if they have sometimes consulted the interests of society, they have always forgotten those of humanity. Turgot

REVOLUTIONARY TACTICS

V

(This article is a continuation of new tactics for the I. W. W.)

ORGANIZATION IN THE INDUSTRIES.

The propaganda organizations in the industries would be the organized groups of militant direct actionists in the various unions in these industries.

A common and effective method of organizing a militant minority is through the medium of a rebel paper. A few militants get together and found a paper to circulate among the members of their union.

Such militant minority organizations will eventually have to be formed in the ranks of the I. W. W. unions if they ever grow to any considerable size—even as these organizations exist in French unions. This is manifest as a large percentage of their membership—perhaps, then, the vast majority, would inevitably be ignorant and even hostile, it would be impossible to keep the organization revolutionary without thorough co-operation between the rebels. To make rebels of all workers before accepting them would be impossible. Even if possible, it would be unnecessary. Every great strike, however revolutionary, shows that but a comparatively few clear-headed rebels scattered through the mass are sufficient to make it act. Any attempt to put an educational test barrier to the entry into the I. W. W. would render it even more of a sect than it is now.

Through the columns of this paper they expound their revolutionary doctrines, carry on a merciless criticism and exposure of their conservative or fake union officers, advocate and participate actively in strike movements, standardize their policies of opposition to their opponents, etc., etc. Inevitably all the rebel and progressive elements in the union group themselves about this paper. Consequently the old and usually more or less decrepit conservative machine which hitherto had controlled all means of inter-communication in the union and be able to do about as it pleased, uncontested, finds itself confronted by a vigorous national organization of militants willing and prepared to fight it at all points for the control of the union. It finds itself faced by an organization advocating much fitter doctrines than it does, and one which exploits fully every piece of crooked work it commits.

In this type of organization no headquarters are maintained, nor dues paid, the paper serving as the means of organization. It is supported by donations and subscriptions. For an illustration of its effectiveness, we don't need to look further than the despised A. F. of L., from which, by the way, we could learn much if we but studied instead of blindly condemned it.

The Revolt in the I. T. U.

For years past the International Typographical Union has been dominated by one of the most powerful and best organized machines in the A. F. of L. This machine is an oath-bound secret organization known as the "Wahnetas." Jim Lynch, president of the I. T. U., is at the head of it. Its purpose is to seize and conserve in the hands of its members the control of the I. T. U. and the cream of the work to be had in the printing in-

dustry. It is a job trust within the I. T. U.

As long as there was no thoroly organized opposition to it the "Wahnetas" formed one of those all powerful, invincible A. F. of L. machines, we I. W. W. talk so much of.

But now it has fallen on evil days. It is in serious danger of fighting for its existence. This change has been wrought in a few months by a few militants who are opposed to the methods of the "Wahnetas," and inspired by the I. W. W. doctrine that nothing can be done in the old unions. They gathered "the dope" on the "Wahnetas," and founded a paper, "The Progressive," in Denver, in which they exposed this machine, root and branch. The result was magical. Immediately all thru the ranks of the conservative I. T. U. the revolt spread and a strong organization sprang up around "The Progressive." At present all indications point to the dissolution in the near future of the "Wahnetas" and the defeat of Lynch for president at the next referendum election by the candidates of "the progressives." "The Progressive" is supported by subscriptions and donations.

Organizing the Militant Minorities.

In our organization of the militant minorities in the unions, we must pattern after this type of organization around a rebel paper, as it is the most effective extant. We can improve on it by having the members of these minority organizations—at least the live ones—organize and assess themselves to support their paper, get out literature, maintain the general national headquarters, perhaps keep a few speakers of their own in the field, etc. Such organizations and papers must be started in all unions, industries and industrial centers possible or advisable.

Probably the best way for us to proceed, after establishing the general national headquarters, would be to choose the most likely looking industry—probably the mining industry, as both the U. M. W. A. and W. F. of M. have big radical minorities—establish a paper therein and put it on a self-sustaining basis as soon as possible by organizing around it the rebels in the industry. This accomplished, the next most promising industry or industrial center could be selected and the process repeated until every important group of organized workers had an organized militant minority at work within its ranks.

Opportunist Policies.

The militant minorities would be organized on the theory of the evolutionary development of the labor movement from a conservative to a revolutionary status, consequently they would be opportunistic and vigorously exploit every occasion to speed this development. Say, for instance, a paper was established in the building trades to serve as the organ of the rebels in the various unions in this industry, to function much as "The Transport Worker," edited by Tom Mann, does in the English transportation industry. Around this paper the organized minorities in the various unions would develop.

The collective program of these militant minorities would be to organize and educate the building trades workers to fight as a unit, and on a revolutionary basis. To this end they would war singly and collectively on the obstacles in the way of this consummation. In this campaign their paper, or papers, would be invaluable as a means of securing coherent action, carrying on propaganda, etc. They would expose crooked union officials and politicians, show the futility of "craft" unionism, contracts and political action, carry on a propaganda for the general strike, sabotage, anti-militarism, etc., work for the fusion of building trades unions, the extension of their scope so as to take in helpers and other unskilled workers, and so on in every possible way, seeking to revolutionize the industry.

There is every reason to believe that such concerted action on the part of the coalesced building trades minorities would be successful. But if it were not, if some or all, of the present building trades unions proved incapable of evolution and had to be replaced by new organizations, these same militant minorities would be excellent agencies for bringing this about.

Dual Organization.

The formation of a dual labor union—even a craft union—is a serious undertaking for the workers involved and should not be undertaken

unless no other alternative remains. This is because rival labor unions usually quit fighting their employers and spend their energies fighting each other. Very often one union will ally itself with the employers to the better crush its rivals. (I. W. W. history is replete with such tactics on the part of A. F. of L. unions.) The interests of the workers are thus compromised in general.

Nevertheless, occasionally, such dual organization offers the only, or at least most practical, means to depose an executive committee that has ceased to represent the interests of the organization, or to revolutionize some decrepit old union. In such a case the organized militant minority in the union in question is the best agency for the successful launching of the new organization—the old organization must be wiped out completely, for while a rag of it is left the excuse for jurisdictional warfare remains. The rebels, thoroly organized and taking active part in their union affairs, carry on a big propaganda against, say for instance, their corrupt and domineering union officials. When they believe they have created sufficient sentiment against these officers, they await some flagrant misdeed on their part, and when the resentment of the rank and file is at fever heat against their officers they launch their dual union. They seize a live issue at the psychological moment and stampede the mass into their organization. A case in point from the French labor movement.

French Tactics.

The French railroaders' union, including railroaders, except firemen and engineers, was controlled by Socialists and consequently strongly centralized with vast power resting in the national committee. During the recent railroad strike the abuses and incompetence of this committee were very harmful and manifest. At the union's recent convention—several months ago—the organized rebels made an issue of this national committee, and, tho in minority, forced a motion thru to reorganize and decentralize the union. (European Syndicalists invariably decentralize unions wherever possible). The old national committee, to whom this reorganization was entrusted, refused to obey the instructions of the convention. Thereupon the rebels launched a new railroaders' union, claiming the national committee had outlawed itself.

How this new organization, so cleverly launched, has succeeded may be inferred from a recent statement of Gustav Herve's in "La Guerre Sociale," that about all the old national committee has left is the handsome banner it recently patriotically carried at a prominent government official's funeral. (It was by a similar process to the above that the successful split among American electrical workers was engineered.)

An interesting case of successful dual organization tactics of a different type was mentioned in "The Chicago Daily Socialist" recently. The musicians' union of New York, controlling the best jobs in town, was a job trust with a prohibitory initiation fee. The musicians on the outside organized themselves into a rival union which the job trust was eventually forced to admit in toto into its ranks. This course of tactics, intelligently applied would doubtless go far towards breaking up the notorious job trust unions, which are such a drawback to the American labor movement. Compare this practical method with the I. W. W.'s present planless system of dragging militants out of the old unions or discouraging them from taking any active part in their affairs, thus disorganizing the militant minorities and rendering them incapable of taking advantage of the combination of live issue and psychological moment which is so essential to the success of a dual labor union.

This "coup d'etat" principle of founding a dual labor organization applies as well to the A. F. of L. itself as to any of its unions. Some of the founders of the I. W. W. were more or less aware of the principle and that, that in founding the I. W. W., they were seizing the live issue at the psychological moment. They thot the A. F. of L. would rapidly go to pieces from the desertion of its unions to the I. W. W.

WM. Z. FOSTER.

(The next issue will contain the concluding article of this series, with summary by the Editor.)