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Reply To Norman Thomas

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LABOR AGE

Vol. XX—No. 9 **September, 1931**

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THE C.P.L.A. NEEDS A HEADQUARTERS

THE suggestion has been made a numbre of times that we ought to have in New York an open forum definitely devoted to the problems of the labor movement. Workers on the one hand, and friends and students of the labor movement on the other hand, have expressed a desire for such an institution.

One of the important functions of such a forum would be to furnish a weekly analysis of current events in the field of politics, business, internal affairs, etc., their bearing on the labor movement and the interests of the workers. The other, and perhaps more important function, would be to discuss and analyze trends in the labor movement itself, the internal problems of labor organizations, the significance of strikes and other labor organizations, etc. Of course representatives of various points of view and especially rank and file workers should have a full opportunity to express themselves at such a forum. There is at present no regular opportunity for such discussions anywhere in the country.

If the matter of a meeting place can be taken care of, the financial side would be provided for, since there would be practically no other expense; and such expense as there might be can easily be met by collections and a nominal initiation fee.

It is possible to rent at the present time a loft, an entire floor in a building on a main thoroughfare, readily accessible to subway, elevated, etc., for a comparatively small monthly rental. Partitions could be put up at one end of such a loft and space used for offices by the C.P.L.A., which has become hopelessly cramped in its present quarters, and has no place to which Brooklyn Edison workers, for example, and workers from other groups can come at night, which is the only convenient time for them. Thus several birds will be killed with one stone.

We must have about $500 to make sure of a couple of months rent (there is an offer of a month's rent free during the year if rent for a couple of months is deposited in advance), to put up some partitions, purchase chairs, etc.

C.P.L.A.'ers, what do you say? Shall we have a forum? It is for you to decide!

CLEAN UP IN LATHERS LOCAL 308

CORRUPTION in the building trades is no surprise to anyone. But what is a welcome surprise is the thorough house cleaning put through by the progressives of Lathers Local 308, which for a considerabl eperiod was a very pest hole of crookedness and thievery by the officials of the local. Upon hearing a report of the Board of Trustees of the union, the membership voted by 300 to 50 to oust the entire administration including the president, vice president and all seven members of the executive board. A special election will soon be held for officers of the local and for a new executive board. The indications are that the practice of raiding the treasury of the union has been stopped and that the resources of the organization from now on will be utilized for the purpose of making Local 308, a genuine, militant organization of the rank and file.

ANOTHER FIGHTING BABY IS BORN

FOLLOWING up a campaign of steady and persistent activity during the last few months, the workers of the Brooklyn Edison Company have now launched their own organization, to be known as the Brotherhood of the Brooklyn Edison Employees. Reviewing the company's policy of lay-offs, speed-up and spying, the declaration issued by the men on August 16 declares, "Under these conditions the employees of the company were confronted with the only alternative open to them, namely to organize in order to effectively protect their interests."

One of the first acts of the Brotherhood was to send a letter to President Hoover demanding the withdrawal of the name of Matthew S. Sloan, president of the Brooklyn Edison Company, from the list of members of the advisory committee formed to assist Walter S. Gifford in relieving unemployment during the coming winter. Mr. S. William Levich, secretary of the Brotherhood, calls attention to the lay-off of over 2,000 men in March and April, 1931, by the Brooklyn Edison Company, and points out that the name of Mr. Sloan "cannot appropriately be included on a committee for unemployment relief." This aroused widespread discussion in the press of New York City.

The Brotherhood will continue the previous policy of basing its organization on squads in the various departments and bureaus in order to protect its members against victimization. These squads are spreading rapidly throughout the company.

CORRECTION

In the article "New Parties and Prospects in the British Labor Scene' by Mark Starr, in the August issue of LABOR AGE, we have Mr. Starr say that Bevin was "typical of t. u. leaders disconnected . . . (top of col. 3, p. 23). The word disconnected was discontented in the original.

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· L A B O R · A G E ·

September, 1931

EDITORIALS

HERBERT HOOVER's plan for unemployment relief has been made public. A year and a half after his announcement that the depression was at an end he changes his tune and admits that the need of relief will be even greater next winter than it was last. This is indeed revolutionary progress for our present administration.

Hoover's "Plan"

Hoover's plan for unemployment relief is inadequate and in many respects vicious. Progressive laborites will condemn it without qualification.

In the first place, it is based on the general assumption that the relief given thus far by private and public agencies has been sufficient to prevent real suffering. This is a patent lie. Grown-ups have died of starvation and millions of children have been undernourished among the miners (e. g., in Ohio, Pennsylvania, Kentucky and West Virginia), among the farmers in a score of States and in other groups. Mr. Hoover's own investigators have told him so. When he proposes a little more co-ordination and activity on the part of existing agencies, but no new and sweeping governmental action, "the Great Philanthropist" shows himself callous indeed to misery.

In the second place, Mr. Hoover's plan means that needy workers and their families are condemned to live on charity. Society will not give them relief as a right. The "generosity" of the people is to be drawn upon and thus "hand-outs" will be given to those who have no jobs or bread. By this means the "self-respect" of the poor, which according to Hoover would be destroyed if governmental unemployment insurance were given, will be preserved. Surely it is obvious that the self-respect of the workers would be better preserved if they marched to where there is food and took it rather than accepting the insult of charity.

In the third place, the Hoover plan means that terrific pressure will be brought to bear upon those workers who still have a few pennies left to contribute to the private relief funds, community chests, etc. Thus "the noble spirit of giving" will be developed in them. Nothing will be accomplished by this means, however, to put more purchasing power into the hands of the masses. We trust that workers will refuse to permit employers and politicians to extort any more money out of their pockets for charity funds.

Fourthly, Hoover and his supporters frankly confess that a showing must be made in order to prevent the enactment of "Socialistic" measures such as governmental unemployment insurance or compensation. To prevent unemployment insurance is more important than adequate relief! America must never, never, descend to the "dole" system! The animus behind the president's manoeuvres is plainly shown in the make-up of the Advisory Committee which is to help Mr. Walter S. Gifford of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company, who is to be Dictator of Charities in Mr. Hoover's herculean effort to keep America safe for Rugged Individualism. The labor men on that committee are carefully confined to such thick and thin opponents of unemployment insurance as William Green and Matthew Woll.

Finally, Mr. Hoover's scheme is based on the assumption that no fundamental dealing with our economic system is necessary and none must be tolerated for a moment. "Private initiative" will see us through the depression and into the promised land. So cautious an authority as W. B. Donham, head of the Harvard School of Business Administration, may speak of the critical need of a general plan for American business and mourn that he sees "nowhere signs of an attack" on the problem. Our business and political leaders will have none of it. Planless, profiteering capitalism must go on. So be it. Mr. Hoover and his allies will do much toward instilling revolutionary ideas and spirit in the American workers.

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THE C.P.L.A. does not often engage in criticism of other progressive or radical elements in the labor movement. There is too much work to do and there are too many reactionaries inside and outside of the labor movement who need to be attacked and put out of the way. We have always stood for a united front of progressives and radicals against such reactionary elements. There comes a time, however, when it is necessary to speak out about the tactics of certain groups unless we are to be a party to deceiving the workers and betraying the radical movement itself.

Communist Strike-Breaking and Union-Wrecking

It is time, therefore, to speak out about the strike-breaking and union-wrecking tactics which have recently been pursued by the Communist Party of the United States and its affiliated organizations. We confine our references for the present to two or three typical situations.

Mining and textile, for example, are basic industries, employing over a million and a half workers, many of them unskilled and semi-skilled. Communists are loud in asserting that these workers must be aroused to struggle against the conditions under which they now labor, and they profess to believe that these workers must be organized in militant industrial unions. Whenever Communists have gone into unorganized situations, progressives and radicals have refrained from interfering with them, under many instances have given help; but whenever some other group makes a strike or an orgnaizing effort, Communists break violently into the situation, confuse the minds of the workers, set them to fighting against each other and so help the bosses and the state to crush the efforts being made by these workers.

In Allentown a general strike of silk workers began in April and continued throughout the summer. A few

of these workers had belonged to the United Textile Workers before the strike; and the vast majority of them joined that organization during the early days of the strike. Certain U.T.W. organizers together with a splendid body of local leaders were guiding the strike. For weeks the workers stood solid to a man, and the strike was being extended to other centers. It is true that certain mistakes were made. As is well known, the C.P.L.A. has no apologies to make for many of the organizing and strike methods of the U.T.W. and other A. F. of L. organizations. It is a fact, however, that a very effective and united strike was on in Allentown. The first general struggle of the workers in all the industry in that center.

Just at the critical period when the strike had been going on for several months and the weaker workers were beginning to wonder whether it might not be well to give up the struggle; and when on the other hand the employers were beginning to wonder whether it was ever going to be possible to break down the united resistance of the strikers and whether, therefore, they had not better settle with them, the Communists suddenly moved a lot of their organizers away from the mine fields, where the strike was petering out, into Allentown. They tried by strong-arm methods to "capture" the strike. They threw the workers into a turmoil. The police were given an excuse for extra pressure on the picket lines; worst of all, the weak workers were given an excuse for going back to work: "What chance have we of winning the strike now that all this confusion has come about?" they asked.

If Communists claim the shred of an excuse for such strike-breaking activities in Allentown on the ground, for example, that the U.T.W. is in charge, and that it is not a really militant organization, not even the faintest shadow of an excuse exists for the union-wrecking tactics that the National Miners Union are pursuing among the miners in Illinois.

For a couple of years efforts have been made to clean house in the Illinois district organization of the U.M.W. of A. and in John L. Lewis' national administration and to build a militant miners union. Back in the spring of 1930, when the so-called re-organized U.M.W. of A. under Alexander Howat and others was organized, the Communists, especially in Southern Illinois, refused to go along with this movement and helped to keep the locals in that section lined up with John L. Lewis. They gave two reasons for their tactics: 1) That the Fishwick-Walker district machine was just as corrupt as Lewis' and that the district should be cleaned out first. 2) That the re-organized movement was being engineered from the top and was not a genuinely rank and file effort.

Now in July 1931, as has already been reported in LABOR AGE, a convention was held in Belleville, Illinois, at which 75 per cent of the Illinois membership were represented by duly accredited delegates from the local unions. This convention met both the points which the N.M.U. regarded so important a year and a half ago. The Belleville convention was absolutely in the hands of the rank and file. The constitution was adopted which, among other things, took the appointive power out of the hands of the officials and required that every official, after one term in office, was to retire and go back to work "in or around the mine" for a term before standing for the reelection. Also the Belleville convention came out definitely for having nothing further to do with the old district machine and likewise for swearing allegiance to any of the present officials of the U.M.W. of A.

What are the Communists doing now to support this movement and the rank and file coal diggers of Illinois. They are lined up with John L. Lewis, the coal operators, the sheriffs and other local authorities, and the agents of the U. S. Department of Labor, *against* the rank and file movement. They are doing everything in their power to prevent the workers from going into it.

The hollowness and sham of the Communists for a united front is thus exposed. They will have nothing to do with any strikes or unions which are not absolutely under their own sectarian domination.

The Communists claim to be the divinely appointed all-wise leaders of the revolntionary movement in the United States. Actually by posing as revolutionists and then constantly misleadnig, confusing, dividing and deceiving the workers, and by pursuing the asinine sectarian policy which we have illustrated, they are doing far more to advance the cause of reaction and to make impossible a militant mass labor movement in the United States than Herbert Hoover and Matthew Woll themselves.

The workers will have to sweep away this stupid and childish leadership in order that they may be free to unite on a broad front and march on to their goal.

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MacDonald's Betrayal

THE sudden fall of the British Labor government under the premiership of Ramsay MacDonald is a fresh and dramatic illustration of how seriously the whole structure of capitalist economy has been shaken, even in the nations whose finances are supposed to be the soundest. The flight from the pound sterling set in, as had the flight from the mark and other European currencies in an earlier day. People must begin to wonder when the flight from the dollar is going to begin and just where surplus wealth will flee to when that moment arrives. However, those who believe that the present system is essentially unjust, inhuman and economically unsound can only rejoice at this new evidence that its day has come.

We were never able to wax enthusiastic about the British Labor ministry under MacDonald's leadership. We are shedding no tears now over the fall of his cabinet. Our tears are for the shameful degree to which the MacDonald ministry failed to live up to sound labor and socialist principles during its term in office and for the betrayal of the workers by those members of that government who are now entering into a coalition cabinet with the Tory party.

MacDonald's sole aim, in recent months especially, has been to maintain the existing financial and economic system in Great Britain and in Europe. For this he was willing to cut into the meager incomes of British workers, particularly the unemployed, and to split his own party wide open. To sustain the financial structure of British capitalism, he proposed that "all classes should sacrifice equally," i.e., that the relative position of those who toiled for a pittance and of those who lived in ease off these toilers should remain the same.

Back of this is a theory which MacDonald and certain other Socialists have long cherished, and many more have acted upon in crises, namely, that fundamental steps toward Socialism can be taken only when a country is at peace and its business on a sound footing. If business is in trouble, it must be put on its feet first and workers must make whatever sacrifices that may entail. Chaos will result and not Socialism, on this theory, if an attempt at economic reorganization is made when the business structure is seriously shaken and war exists or is threatened.

What this involves is the fatuous belief that capitalists

will let you make fundamental changes for the benefit of the workers when they are confidently in the saddle and that you must never boldly take advantage of the mess into which plan-less, profiteering capitalism gets itself, in order to seize power for the workers and build a more sane and just economic order. No course could be more ridiculous, or more certain to plunge the masses hopelessly and forever into slavery and misery.

The opposition of the Trade Union Congress and the Independent Labor Party to the MacDonald betrayal is encouraging as far as it goes. It is to be hoped that the false leaders will be thrown out of the party and that the party itself will be reorganized on a more militant and genuinely labor base.

The election of Henderson as leader of the party by no means guarantees that it is definitely and finally launching on the right road. As Mark Starr points out in his article elsewhere in this issue, the manifesto issued by the Labor Party, after its repudiation of MacDonald, provides for "The taxing of the rich to provide necessities for the poor" and for the defense of the various social services, such as, unemployment, old age pensions, health, etc. The manifesto, however, still talks about "dollar national interests" without rallying the workers to an out and out Socialist program or pointing out the national aspects of the class struggle.

The British Labor Party, if it is to be the instrument for the emancipation of the working class, cannot periodically betray their interests, and must come out clearly for the abolition of capitalism and the establishment of a National Workers Republic. It must clear itself once and for all of illusions about a "National Community" in which profiteers as well as proletarians are supposed to have a share.

It may well be that before the party arhieves such a clear position, still more pruning away of doubtful elements will have to take place. Let us hope that the leftwingers in the party see this clearly, and consciously prepare themselves for carrying out this task.

Finally those who are interested in the building of a political labor movement in the United States may well be warned by these distressing developments in the British movement to take special care that any political movement started here is from the beginning "by labor" in fact as well as in name. Furthermore, the need for the kind of left wing political organization about which the C.P.L.A. has been talking recently stands forth now in the clearest possible light. In the Socialist Party in the United States today there are far too many elements of the MacDonald, Snowden, Thomas type to give us confidence that the Socialist Party can fulfill this crying need. In view of the situation in which the British Labor Party, the German Social Democracy, etc., govern themselves we would be indeed blind and foolish not to see the need of a thoroughly militant conscious and realistic left wing in any mass labor party that may be developed. There is no question of the need. The question is whether there are enough elements in this country who see the need and who have the vision, courage, and organizational sense to meet it.

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Wickersham Committee Discovers Police Brutality!

A GREAT noise has been raised throughout the country by that part of the Wickersham Report dealing with police brutality. The press of the country pretended to be greatly surprised to learn that the use of "third degree" methods for eliciting confessions and making arrests is so prevalent. Editors waxed indignant, and police officials by the dozen denied everything—some of them even didn't seem to know that such a thing as the "third degree" existed.

But nobody with a realistic understanding of capitalism and a knowledge of capitalist law is fooled. A brutal system cannot be maintanied and enforced by any other than brutal methods. Neither can a society in which it is not only possible but legal for a few to acquire the right to rob the many of their labor and in which those who live by owning are honored above those who live by working expect to keep free of so-called "crime waves."

But don't let us blame the police. They are not responsible. When they club and kick and trample handcuffed prisoners, and shoot down unarmed workers, they are only obeying orders. They are protecting the robbers from the robbed. Our real enemies are the legal robbers from whom the cops get their orders.

Norman Thomas, The Communists and Our Political Discussion

COMRADE NORMAN THOMAS prefaced a recent criticism of the C.P.L.A.'s suggestion that it might be necessary to build a new militant working-class political party in the United States, by saying some very complimentary things about the C.P.L.A.'s present activity in the Paterson silk strike. We may preface our remarks in reply to his criticism by referring to the splendid support he has given by raising relief funds and in other ways not only to the Paterson strike but to one industrial struggle after another in West Virginia, the South, Passaic, etc.

Incidentally he seems to be straining to make a point when he says, in reference to the C.P.L.A.'s industrial activities, that it has a good idea by the tail but has not made much progress with it and that "some of its leaders have had influence in the country in their own right, but the organization as such has had little to show except in the Paterson strike." What about the efforts, extending over two years, of C.P.L.A. members or adherents in Illinois, Kansas, Ohio, etc., to build a clean miners' union? What about Larry Hogan's work in the South, the work in steel centers, the Brooklyn Edison Company campaign, the Westchester laborer's strike, the fight against corruption in the Lathers' Union and many others? Doubtless certain leaders have figured prominently in some of these stiuations, though not in all. To use effectiveness of leaders as an evidence of the ineffectiveness of their organizaiton is, however, to employ an argument that cannot bear much weight. Of course there are many who think along similar lines and hold that there is no Socialist Party in this country; there is only Norman Thomas with "influence in his own right," though with less influence than would be his if he had no connection with the S. P.

Furthermore, if the C.P.L.A is still weak throughout the country, as we freely admit, that is in no small measure due to the fact that with few exceptions Socialist party members have not given themselves heartily to carrying out the C.P.L.A. program in the unions and among the

unorganized workers, and that from the beginning, and largely because of our militant industrial program, prominent S. P. leaders have done everything in their power to prevent the growth of the C.P.L.A.

That, however, leads directly into the chief points in Norman Thomas' criticism. He contends that C.P.L.A.'ers, unless they "believe in dictatorship and the inevitability of large scale violence," should join the Socialist Party which "has been carrying on the fight and has always welcomed those who would come in to make the fight better." He advises that if we do believe in these things we had better "join the Communist Party and try to improve it." This is unquestionably the argument which advocates of another working-class party will have to deal with most seriously. As some would put it: if you are reformists, join the Socialists, if you are revolutionists, join the Communists. Here and now we can touch upon only one or two phases of the answer.

It is a fact that there are a very considerable number of militant laborites and friends of labor who cannot bring themselves to join the S. P. and not a few in the S. P. who are not entirely comfortable there. They cannot, *e.g.,* swallow the attitude of indifference or of positive hostility toward Soviet Russia held by many Socialists. They hear Hillquit defend his accepting a job as lawyer for oil corporations in a suit involving the right of the Soviet government to confiscate oil properties and based in large part on the failure of the United States to recognize that government. Then they hear Thomas severely condemning Hillquit for this action. And then, after Hillquit's withdrawal from the suit subsequent to clamor in the Party and outside, they hear Thomas exhorting everybody that now "no controversy about this suit" can "interfere with united Socialist action in the immensely important situation which confronts us here in America"—although Hillquit still contends that he was not justly subject to criticism and gives no hint of having changed his views! Surely people may be pardoned if they fail to see how there can be any theoretical consistency or practical vigor about a party in which leaders can be poles apart on such a fundamental issue and still work harmoniously together. Surely there is ground for the suspicion that the controversy was a sham-battle; that the S. P. will not "go through with it" and weed out hopelessly reactionary elements.

We have just seen the Labor Party in Great Britain seriously compromised and some of its leaders shamefully betraying the workers. The Party as a whole has now gone into the opposition and for the time being seems to have abandoned the policy of bending all its energies on saving the capitalist system in Great Britain at the expense of the living standards of the workers. Much harm has, however, already been done. As the *New York Times* pointed out recently, the Social Democrats in Germany are pursuing under the Bruening premiership what, for the present at any rate, British Laborites have refused to do under the MacDonald leadership.

Socialists get themselves into this position because of two convictions which they cherish, some of them unknowingly. The first is the belief that Socialism must be established by parliamentary methods, by voting in the new order—shall we say "the inevitability of parliamentarism" in contrast to Thomas' "inevitability of large-scale violence?" This means, in practice, that if the powers that be control the agencies of education and propaganda and count the votes, as they do, you never can have Socialism. Certainly prominent Socialist publicists, including Norman Thomas in his recent book, have not seriously faced the problem involved. A second Socialist fallacy is the idea that you must not and cannot establish Socialism when business is badly shaken, when "the national interest," a la MacDonald, is seriously threatened. This involves the childish belief that capitalists are likely to permit you to make fundamental changes when they are "sitting pretty" and that it is unthinkable that Socialists should take drastic steps when capitalists have gotten themselves into a really serious mess. Is there any convincing evidence that Amercian Socialists would not follow the course of the German Social Democracy or certain prominent British Laborites in these matters? If not, is it any wonder that there are many militant laborites in the United States who cannot join the S. P.?

Such considerations as these help also to explain why some cannot see much chance to "make the fight better" by joining the S. P. If a party is on the right road, it may be speeded up. If it is going absolutely in the wrong direction, it becomes very doubtful whether anything can be gained by joining it. On the industrial field one must often make a united front with those whose views are radically different. On the political field men can work together fruitfully only if they are agreed on really fundamental issues.

Then why not confess that we believe in the inevitability of "large scale violence" and join the Communist Party? To this question let a brief answer suffice for the present. First, "large-scale violence" is not the only way to express militancy, not the only alternative to using the processes of democracy so-called to bring in a new order. There is *e.g.* large-scale violation of injunctions, general strikes and passive resistance. Second, the fact that violence may be the only alternative to "voting in Socialism" does not excuse failure to face realistically the question whether the latter can be done.

Third, there are those who believe that it is highly probable that capitalists will force workers to fight for their own dictatorship or else to accept a Fascist dictatorship, but who do not believe that there is any historical law which makes this in every case "inevitable". They would, therefore, place the facts before the workers and take care not to feed them illusions as to what is likely to be gained by "democratic methods." Yet, in revolutionary practice, they would be guided by the necessities of the situation as it develops, not by preconceived dogmas as to how it must develop. This is a sound Marxist attitude, but there is some question as to whether one is permitted to hold and act upon it in the Communist Party in the United States today.

One may go further and actually believe in "the inevitability of large-scale violence and yet also believe that the cause is not likely to be advanced by a party which puts this dogma in the forefront of its propaganda at a time when its oratory has no force behind it, is therefore ludicrous, and a made-to-order shield for agents provocateur.

There are other perfectly good reasons why joining the Communist Party is not the only conceivable alternative for those who are not in the S. P. We mention only this one, that if the C. P. continues much longer the strike-breaking, union-wrecking, confusion-creating, insanely sectarian policy which it has recently been pursuing it will have no mass following left at all and will have forfeited forever its chance to provide leadership for the revolutionary movement in the United States. It will be a corpse hardly to be "improved" by joining it.

The political question we have raised still merits discussion.

Paterson Builds a Union

Strategy Used in the General Strike of Silk Workers • • •

By LOUIS FRANCIS BUDENZ

IT was on Monday, August 3, that Paterson was electrified by the news that the workers of the Henry S. Doherty Mill in Clfiton had walked out. Doherty's is the largest silk mill in northern New Jersey. With a normal capacity of 1,200 to 1,400 workers, it then had 750 within its walls. Compared to this working force, most other mills and shops in the Paterson district appear to be pigmies.

But Doherty's is not only the largest mill. It is also the most anti-union. Ever since the Great Strike of 1913, it has held its working force inside while other workers from other mills went out. In 1924 and 1928, when the silk workers went into battle with the bosses, Doherty's worked on "undisturbed" by the excitement.

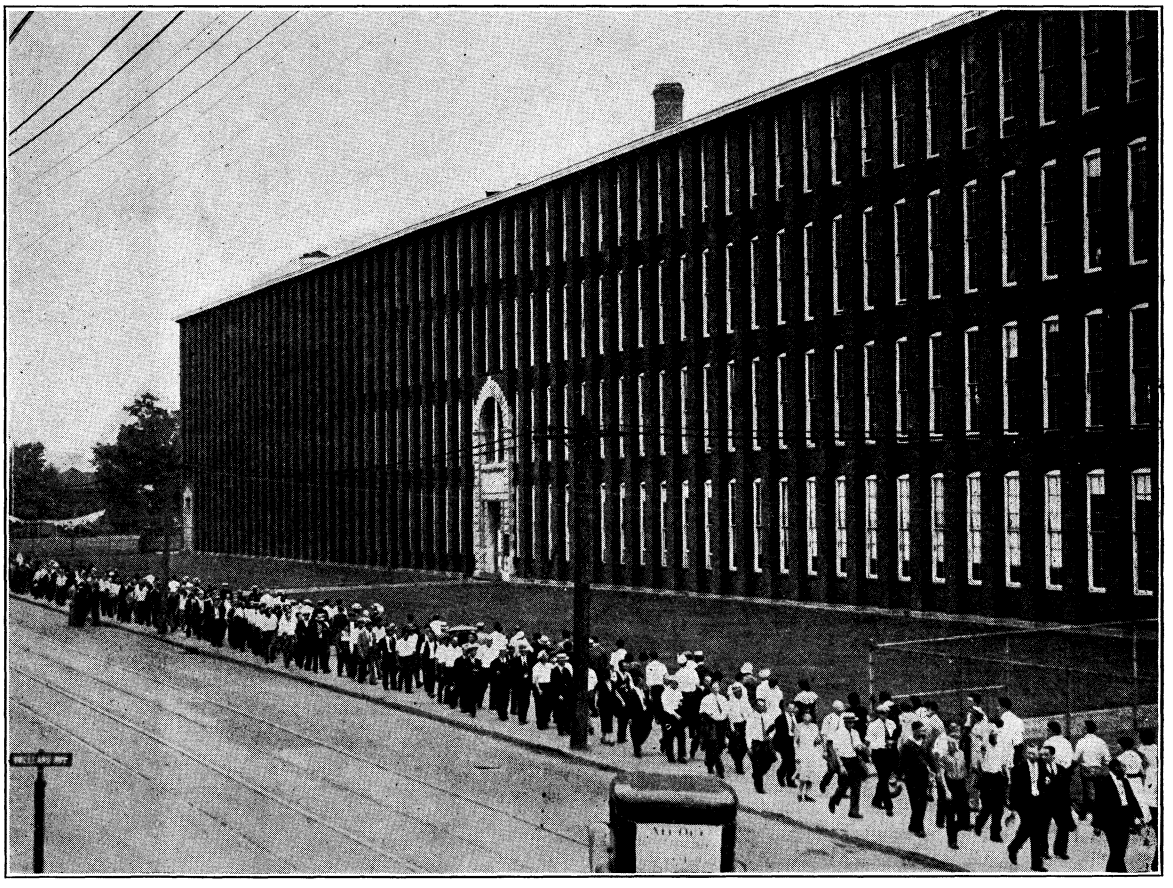
The mill in this particular general strike of 1931 had been pulled by the pickets of the amalgamated unions, under the American Federation of Labor. The police of Clifton had ordained that no picketing could be carried on at the mill. They had lined the frontier of Clifton and Paterson with cops, ready for action against any picket line. They had placed numerous police at every corner and vantage point around the mill and for several blocks away.

Our decision was accordingly to filter through the police lines and establish our pickets across from the mill. To divert the police, 60 to 100 pickets were to come in buses. While they were being ordered back, out of Clifton, those who had filered through would do their picketing work.

The business turned out as we had anticipated. The buses were turned away and sent back to Paterson. But our pickets on foot had set up an effective line, and at 8:15 a. m. the power was shut off and the "shop" came down. The workers held a meeting of their own in the mill yard and decided to come out definitely at noon, which they did.

The Doherty workers, however, continued to meet by themselves and were chary of uniting with any union group. They held meetings in Plog's Grove, near the mill. A committee of them came to invite me to speak to their meetings. But when I approached the grove with Leo Kryzcki, general organizer of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, I was escorted by three policemen against my volition down the street and into the auto in which we had come to Clifton.

This afforded an opportunity for getting a message in the public press to the Doherty workers, which we did not neglect. We wired Governor Lar-



There were more than 1,500 strikers in this picket line before the Henry S. Doherty mill in Clifton in defiance of the order of the chief of police that there should be no picketing.

son and got the action in the press. We wrote to Acting Chief James Coughlan, attacking his statements that no "official reign of terror" existed in Clifton. We challenged him to prove his statements on the following week, when we would come to Clifton. The effect of this publicity on their situation was that the Doherty workers moved their meeting place to Paterson, and invited Carl Holderman and myself to address them.

This we did. Representatives of the National Textile Workers Union insinuated themselves into the meeting and demanded the floor. They were allowed this privilege, but spent so much time in attacking the amalgamated unions and unionists as "fakers", "sellers out", etc. that the Doherty strikers booed them. Upon a vote of the workers, with all outside representatives absent, they decided unanimously to affiliate with the amalgamated groups and to reject the N.T.W.U.

Then came the test at Clifton that helped so much to make the strike doubly effective. The next day the Doherty workers, with Eli Keller and myself at their head, marched toward Clifton, singing "Solidarity". We walked two by two, ten paces apart, as required by New Jersey law. When we reached the Clifton line, the police met us with clubs and drove us all back. Our demand that we either be arrested or allowed to pass was ignored.

We then retired to a vacant lot on the Paterson side of the line, where I addressed the strikers and additional pickets who had come down from Paterson. We reformed our lines, over 1,000 strong, and marched down the street on the Paterson side until we came to the intersection where we had made the attempt to "go through."

There I announced in a loud voice that we were asserting our right to picket peacefully and that the police should either arrest us or allow us to pass. Instead, they proceeded to club us, tear our clothing and rush us back.

This went on for twenty minutes when Acting Chief Coughlan finally agreed to put 15 of us under arrest. As it turned out, 12 of us were allowed to pass the police line, under heavy police guard, into Clifton. My shirt had been completely torn off, one of our strikers had three ribs broken by police clubs, another had a broken wrist, a third a broken ankle.

The police now showed how rattled they had been. They marched us the three blocks to the Doherty Mill, marched us across the street in front of the mill, marched us up and down before the mill, and then dramatically put us under arrest a second time. In the police station we were denied counsel for hours. At first put under $200 bail each, we were suddenly told that the bail of the 14 had been reduced to $25 each but that my bail was $525. It was not until my release, ten hours after having been arrested, that I was advised of the charges. We had all been accused of loitering, but I had been further charged with assault and battery upon one Patrolman Sullivan, who had been one of the most ferocious of the cops in the attack, although he had been no where near me.

Public opinion soon asserted itself. The police had made the serious mistake of clubbing one reporter and attempting to club another. The *Paterson Evening News,* certainly not overfavorable to the workers' cause, reprimanded the Clifton police for their conduct, in a leading editorial.

Two days later 2,000 pickets assembled in Plog's Grove and, behind a committee of liberal clergymen and lawyers from New York, they were allowed to picket the Doherty Mill at their own good free will. The American Civil Liberties Union has materially assisted in winning this victory by writing the Mayor and threatening the police with an injunction, prohibiting them from interfering with the pickets.

This successful outcome to the militant determination to picket in Clifton is an index of the entire tempo of the strike. The Joint Action Committee of the Associated Silk Workers, United Textile Workers and Conference for Progressive Labor Action has been able to draw into the struggle every available shade of labor opinion. There are Anarchists, S.L.P.'ers, Socialists, Communists of the Majority Group, and workers without any other viewpoint than their desire to be unionized. The excellent functioning of this organization, despite the many difficulties of the situation, demonstrate that a united effort is possible in many battles, if there be the will to unity. From the beginning the picket lines of the amalgamated unions have been militant and in mass. The insistence of the C.P. L.A. that mass picketing is the only sort of picketing that can be adopted, has been agreed to. It is indicative of the spirit of the strike that the picket lines of the amalgamated groups have grown in numbers as the strike has progressed.

On Monday, August 24, the Joint Action Committee could report, after a careful checking up, that 1,586 workers had returned to work under union settlements in 52 shops, while 6,783 additional strikers were enrolled on the books of the union and were still out. This means that almost 8,500 workers in the broad silk had joined up with the fight of the amalgamated groups.

Our strategy in this general strike in a nutshell has been as follows:

1. Militancy has been stressed. We have continued large and enthusiastic mass picket lines, and have insisted upon such forms of picketing in the face of numerous police attempts to restrict this form of demonstartion. Our plan has been, while standing on our rights, to propagandize the police. Our picket lines have not only stood solidly for the right to picket but also fought to outwit the police.

2. There has been an evil in the silk industry, particularly in recent years, known as the fake settlement. The workers of a particular shop, during a strike period, will make a secret agreement with the employer to work under less desirable conditions than those set down by the union. The shop then advises the union that it is ready to reach an agreement on union demands. In order to prevent fake settlements, the amalgamated unions set up an inspection system for every settled strike and, in addition, required secret ballots of the entire shop on the honesty of the settlement before it was finally agreed to. Every effort was thus made to prevent fake settlements.

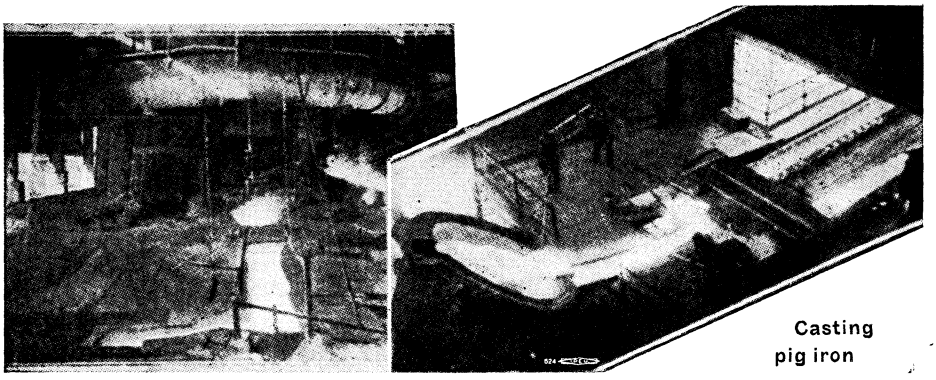
3. The same strong policy was followed in regard to the question of union demands as a whole. During the fifth week of the strike forty plain-goods manufacturers offered union recognition and the 8-hour day. They stipulated, however, that the piece-price should be 5½ cents for 60 pics. This would have meant, on the 8-hour day, a reduction in the weekly wages, although it would have represented a slight increase in the piece-price. The union demands were for such a settlement as would establish an increase in wages on the 8-hour basis. The General Strike Committee recommended rejection of the employers' offer as one that would not solve the problem of the silk workers.

4. In regard to the National Textile Workers' Union: The Amalgamated group pursued a policy of ignoring the attacks of the N. T. W. U. and are concentrating their energies on the positive work of fightig to win the

(Continued on Page 29)

Heaven *in the* Steel Mills

By LEM STRONG



Casting pig iron

IT may have been just a hangover that bright May morning that made James Farrell, president of the United States Steel Corporation, rudely dump their high wage applecart into the ample laps of his brethren of the American Iron & Steel Institute.

"We are living," so ran his extemporaneous remarks to the gentlemen in convention assembled, "in a fools paradise if we think that every steel manufacturer in the United States has maintained the current rate of wages. I am not going to mention names of all the companies in this room that have cut wages; I do not want to embarras them. But I think it is a pretty cheap sort of business."

Whether, after a shower and a good meal he repented of his haste, we cannot know. His speech, in any case, is exhibit A in any examination of the way this greatest of all industries is meeting its duty toward its workers during the depression. Every large company in the steel brotherhood has at some time during the last two years gone on record for the maintenance of wage rates. Now on the word of the big boss of them all, they stand convicted as liars. It is typical of the way in which the industry has handled every problem that the crisis has presented.

Bluff and brutal oppression have been the most potent weapons of the steel kings. The beaming smile and happy jowls of Charlie Schwab, the wonder boy of Bethlehem, has assured the world that all was well, while an overwhelming flood of high wage pap, has, by its sheer bulk, smothered all sceptical voices. Interview after interview with Grace of Bethlehem, Campbell of Youngstown Sheet and Tube, and Wier of National Steel, has brought the oath in ringing tones, that the purchasing power of the American worker, by God, was going to be upheld. It's been a bit too much of a job to fool the men in the mills, however, and after a few feeble trys at it, even the best of the happiness boys recognized that it was just as well to be honest and tough about it, since the policy to bluff didn't work anyway and was a good deal more expensive.

The Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers, affiliated with the American Federation of Labor is the only organization which has wage agreements with manufacturers. Its 5,000 members are paid a piece work rate that fluctuates with the price of their product on the market. Two kinds of workers, the sheet mill men and the wrought iron puddlers comprise practically its entire membership.

Wage Slashing

"Huh," remarked a member recently on reading Bill Green's speech to the Longshoremen. "Think I'll write and tell him that we've had some pretty good cuts here lately."

And they have. Since the beginning of 1930, the organized sheet mill men have been cut a total of 16.5 and the puddlers 15 per cent. Cut under a union agreement of course, but the fact remains that their purchasing power is not being upheld or their standards protected. A more serious effect is that on the wage scales of the unorganized. The sheet mill workers of the Youngstown Sheet & Tube for instance, were cut 10.5 per cent, several months ago, and the decline in the union scale was the excuse given.

But the organized, are not of course the only ones whose wages have been slashed. The picture of the unorganized must be fragmentary because their cuts are very rarely brought to light. Those Sheet & Tube men were asked not to talk to the other men about their slash, as it "might hurt business sentiment." But some of the evidence may be trotted out to show that wage cuts in steel are as extensive as those in other industries.

According to the Department of Labor, 22,000 workers were cut an average of 10.3 per cent. in the month ending March 15. Of these, 4,500 or one-fifth of the total were iron and steel workers with cuts averaging 10.5 per cent. Nor can this be atrributed to the union men because they received a slight raise in this period. Among other quiet cuts are the following:

A cut of 10 per cent for the sheet mill men and 20 per cent for the rollers of the Inland Steel Company at Chicago.

Reductions of 18 per cent for the strip mill men of the Republic Steel Company at Warren, Ohio. These men have been cut a total of 36 per cent in the past year.

A "wage adjustment" of 10 per cent for the entire force of the Corrigan McKinney Steel Company of Cleveland.

Reductions of 20 per cent for all the salaried employees of the Wheeling Steel Corporation of West Virginia.

Slashes totaling 45 per cent for 2,000 workers of the Empire Steel Company at Niles and Mansfield, Ohio. Readers of LABOR AGE will remember that a strike forced the company to withdraw the last 15 per cent decrease.

Nor are these wage cutting firms the small, insignificant ones. Rather are they the giants of the industry, employing thousands of workers in their mills and shops. And should any one believe that other reductions are not being forced thru it might be well to point out that the men of the Empire Steel took cuts of 40 per cent before the strike let the cat out of the bag and gave the outside world one whisper of what was going on.

A favorite method of cutting labor costs during the depression has been the victimization of the salaried men. A steel firm boldly announces a 50 per cent cut in the hours and salaries of its clerical employees. It sounds plausible on the face of it. Less office work takes fewer men and the sensible thing to do is to cut hours and keep everyone at work. It is a peculiarity of this depression, however, that while the size of orders has decreased, the quantity has not. The stagger system of employment hasn't simplified the job of payroll accounting to any extent. As a result, employees who are officially working a 4-hour-day are putting in their eight hours or more, just as they did when they were paid for a full day's work.

The tricks that have been used in all other industries to keep from technically cutting wage scales, have not, of course, been allowed to go unhonored in Blast Furnace land. So Youngstown Pressed Steel fires a group of men and hires them back for lower wages. United States Steel lays off labor gangs and hires unemployed rollers and other highly paid men to do their work. Were there really need for proof that America's Steel Corporations give not a hoot for the standards of American labor, a glance at the coal situation should supply evidence aplenty. Among the leaders in the wage cutting campaign in the mine regions have been large and prosperous subsidiaries of steel companies. Bethlehem Steel, Jones & Laughlin, and the Colorado Fuel & Iron have made drastic inroads on the income of the men who work in their mine shafts. It is a queer sort of economic reasoning that preaches the maintainence of wage scales in steel mills while it drains the last poor drop from the miner's veins.

Stagger System Put in Cellar

But the doctrine of high wages was not the only form of rattlesnake oil that the steel kings balleyhooed as a depression cure. The famous stagger system of employment originated in their fertile brains when they first made an attempt to hold on to as large a labor supply as possible. But as the depression muddles cheerfully along, it is becoming increasingly clear that there is no danger of labor shortage, and will be none for a good long time. So its work done, the stagger system is being stored safely in the cellar until another depression calls for its services. As far as I can judge from reports over a fairly wide field, all companies are gradually eliminating their surplus employees, whole gangs and crews of men who formerly received a little work are now being laid off permanently. The reason is clear. Carrying a normal number of men on the payroll means the maintenance of a larger accounting and clerical staff than would otherwise be necessary. In this way, every cut made in the number of wage workers can be paralleled by a slash in the office.

Speed up and the frantic introduction of labor displacing machinery have made a bad situation worse. Local lodges of the Amalgamated Association are fighting desperately to keep the same number of men on sheet mill crews. The manufacturers insist that the mills must be manned by fewer workers. How the unorganized men are being victimized, can be imagined. New mills, a half mile long, and designed to be operated by three or four men are being completed regularly. "We take fewer men to make a ton of steel," reports Tom Girdler, president of the Republic Steel Corporation, "than ever before in the history of the companies making up the Republic Steel Corporation. We made about thirty cost records in March."

What, in the face of these conditions, have the companies done for the victims of their greed? The Steel Corporation, true to its individualistic philosophy, has done nothing. Some of the independents have set up relief organizations to gather cash and old clothes. The experience of the workers of the Youngstown Sheet and Tube is probably typical of these schemes. Cards were handed around last winter and all men were asked to contribute at least one day's pay. There had been no official announcement on how the money was to be distributed, for what it was to be spent, or how much the company was to give as its share. A rumor was circulated however, that the worker's contribution would be used only for food and clothing while the company would take care of rent, light, water and gas bills. The day after the money had been pledged, the first official word was given to the newspapers. The company—bless its munificent soul—was to extend credit to its workers at the company stores. But all actual cash payments were to come from the employee's fund. To this day the men have received no accounting of how much was collected or what was done with it.

Community Chest Racket

Another rank weed that flourishes in most steel towns is the Community Chest, probably one of the best devices ever invented to saddle the cost of unemployment on the back of Labor. From Birmingham to Chicago, steel mill workers have a day's pay checked off for this purpose in spite of protests by organized and unorganized men.

A pitiful sight it is, this greatest of our industries in the grip of the depression. Not sick like coal or textiles, it made fabulous profits for its owners, and fairly good wages for its workers during the golden '20's. But the skeleton in the capitalist closet has laid it low and its centralized ownership, its elaborate price control structure, and its vast technological recources haven't helped a bit. The furnaces are cold and the mighty rolling mills idle, and the men who juggled white hot ingots and played with Vulcan's fires sit for weary hours in hot and crummy employment offices or slouch from house to house looking for an odd job.

It is a time of golden opportunity for an intelligent, crusading labor movement. The steel kings are worried, for sitting on the lid they can hear the thunder beneath. As a result of the activity of a small group of C.P.L.A.'ers in Mahoning Valley Mills, one large corporation has sent letters to every man on its police force warning them that they are laying down on the job and that in the future they would have to "keep their ears to the ground for all rumors and agitating" if they expected to keep their jobs.

The workers in the mills are ready. There is a hopelessness and an angry restlessness among them that is a marked contrast to the strained optimism that prevailed a year ago. The drive for increased production, the terrible threat and fact of unemployment, and the growing recognition of their individual helplessness has made them fit subjects for the attention of progressive labor.

Outcome of West Virginia Miners' Strike

By **HELEN G. NORTON**

HUNGER and "legal" violence have beaten back the West Virginia Mine Workers in their first skirmish with the coal barons. After six weeks of unequal struggle the union has been forced to order its members back to work in the mines controlled by the Kanawha Valley Coal Operators' Association with no other concession than the operators' promise not to victimize the union members. The strike is being continued, however, at the mines of seven non-association companies in the hope of getting individual agreements.

There was a surprisingly generous response to appeals for money and clothing, considering the isolation and limited area of the strike. Unions from all over the country sent contributions—garment workers, miners, railway workers, butchers, building tradesmen, food workers, teachers, hosiery workers, and printing tradesmen. Miners' locals in Illinois sent regular assessments.

The C.P.L.A. collected funds from 14 states. The Emergency Committee for Strikers' Relief sent substantial amounts each week, which were the backbone of the relief work. The Church Emergency Committee, the Chicago branch of the League for Industrial Democracy, Consumers' Cooperative organizations, and Young People's Socialist League groups contributed substantial sums. Individual contributions ranged from $1 to $1,000.

Nevertheless, not enough money came in for the colossal task of feeding 7,500 miners and their large families, even on the limited rations issued by the union. As the strike progressed it became more and more evident that to attempt to prolong it would merely result in large numbers of miners being starved back to work until the more loyal unionists would find themselves shut out of the mines permanently. On several occasions trucks coming in for food supplies had to be sent back empty because the wholesaler refused further credit. Strikers were wholly dependent upon the union for food because the scrip system of payment precludes credit at independent stores.

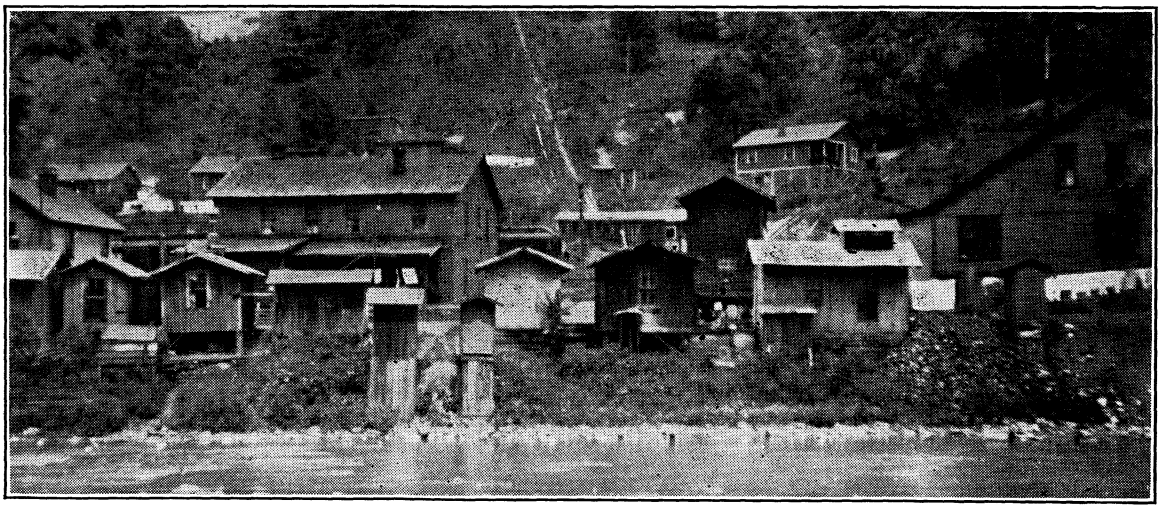
380 Eviction Cases

Legal violence against the miners took various forms—evictions, injunctions, intimidations, arrests. Some 380 eviction cases went through the courts in the six weeks of the strike, all but four of which were decided in favor of the company. At Ward, where the Kelly's Creek Collieriers Company was desperately anxious to break the strike, 58 of the earlier cases were appealed, over $9,000 in cash for bonds being furnished by Mrs. Ethel Clyde of New York. Some appeals were taken in other places, but it was utterly impossible to furnish appeal bonds for more than a fraction of the cases because of excessive damages alleged by the companies. Two hundred more Ward eviction cases were scheduled for the week of August 10, 41 at Hugheston, and a large number on Cabin Creek. Three tent colonies have been established—at Hugheston, Blakely, and Cabin Creek.

The constable who evicted the Hugheston families was assisted by two men who had sat on the jury when the cases were tried. Families were not allowed to take anything from their gardens at Blakely but had to leave it for the scabs whom the company imported to take their jobs.

Intimidation was to be found everywhere. Company guards—seemingly all the thugs and riff-raff of the county were rounded up and given arms—rode up and down through the camps and terrorized the tent colonies. One guard, rendered too enthusiastic by West Virginia corn licker, fired into a union crowd at Burnwell, shooting a white-haired woman in the abdomen and wounding a boy. He was bound over to the grand jury, but so were five miners, charged with throwing sticks and stones at him as his fellow guards hurried away. Two mine superintendents assaulted strikers—and were highly indignant when they were arrested and fined. The county jail was full of strikers, arrested on pretexts ranging from trespassing on company property to being found with wet shirts after shots were fired at a scab train during a shower. Picket lines were turned back by state police, access to the post office denied, and every effort made to provoke the strikers to violence.

The extent to which coal production



Intestional diseases such as hookworm, roundworm, dysentery and typhoid fever are prevalent throughout the coal mining regions. This picture tells why.

has been cut down is somewhat problematic. The operators' association admitted that railway car loadings were cut 114 cars in the second week of the strike but the actual cut in production was undoubtedly a great deal more because reserve coal piled along the tracks for months was then loaded. Certainly a great many of the mines were effectively tied up, but with the vast over-development in the field, a fifth of the mines working six days a week could produce as much coal as all the mines working their normal shifts.

Scabs (called transportation men in West Virginia) were brought in by some companies and at Ward, where there was a particularly fine spirit between white and colored workers, large numbers of Negroes were imported with the evident intention of creating race feeling. However, the chief menace to the union was not imported scabs but the great number of unemployed miners already in the area. It speaks well both for the effectiveness of the union's organizing campaign and the innate class consciousness of the miners that, despite the tempting offers of the operators and the uncertainty of strike relief, comparatively few of these went into the mines.

One of the greatest aids in keeping up the morale of the strikers was the Labor Chautauqua conducted by the League for Industrial Democracy under the leadership of Mary Fox. This group of 14 young men and women was in the field seven days a week for six weeks, giving labor plays or talks on history and economics, leading singing groups, organizing children's recreation. The wail that went up when their stay expired and the extent to which they drew out the native ability of the local groups in speaking and singing suggest that the chautauqua program is perhaps the form of workers' education best adapted to this field.

Strike Breaking U. M. W.

The United Mine Workers were a negligible factor in the strike situation. At the beginning of the strike, William Houston, Lewis appointee to the presidency of District 17, appealed to the miners to remain at work and to the public to ignore the strike. Later he and other Lewis men went about the field telling the men that the U.M.W. could get a contract for them without a strike. "Oh yeah?" was the reply they got from the miners, who knew that the recent contract in the Morgantown area provides for a scale even lower than the prevailing rates in the Kanawha Valley. The National Miners' Union has so far not attempted to enter the Kanawha field beyond sending in a few scouts.

However, the Communist bogey was raised repeatedly. Houston reports in the United Mine Workers' Journal that "this struggle is not directed by miners but is being directed by a bunch of New York Communists." Apparently he generously lumps the C.P.L.A. representatives such as Tom Tippett, Lucile Kohn, and Katherine Pollak and the Labor Chautauqua group under this heading. Houston prophesies the failure of the West Virginia Mine Workers, after which "it will be possible for the old reliable United Mine Workers which has done so much for the miners of this country in the years gone by to put on a real campaign of organization which will bring real results to this field."

For seven years, since the resignation of Frank Keeney and other officers of District 17 in protest against Lewis' suicidal "no backward step" policy, the "Old Reliable" U.M.W. has been in the West Virginia field—or at least in its Charleston office—and the "real results" of its tenure are all too apparent. Local unions were allowed to go into complete decay, checkweighmen disappeared from the tipples despite a state law making them mandatory if a majority of the men demanded them, and wages have been driven down to unbelievable levels.

How much can be salvaged from this initial struggle of the new union remains to be seen. So far there has not been any flagrant victimization of strikers, but that is no sign that the coal operators have "got religion." A permanent union structure, such as is now being planned, must be maintained or their despotism will soon reassert itself.

A few of the operators who pay relatively high wages were inclined to deal with the union and undertook to argue the whole association into doing so on two occasions with the theory that a union would help whip into line the low-wage operators who are now undercutting the others on contracts, and the fight could then be extended into Logan County, which has been getting more and more of the Great Lakes coal trade. However, the majority of the association operators were obdurate in their determination not to deal with any union, and the negotiations fell through.

It would be possible, of course, to call the operators' agreement, to take the men back without victimization "a glorious victory" and to say that the correspondence and conversations with individual operators constituted "recognition of the union" thus creating the pleasant fiction that most of the objects of the strike had been accomplished. Certain A. F. of L. organizations have won many such "victories" in recent years. I prefer to say that the outcome of the strikes is in a considerable measure a defeat, and to recognize it for what it is, as presumably all Progressives have the courage to do. Insofar as it is a defeat, however, it is an honorable one and almost inevitable.

The new union, hampered as it was by lack of funds and by the fiasco of the Reorganized U.M.W. movement in Illinois, took a long chance in calling the strike. However, the only alternative, in face of the operators' ruthless victimization of men who joined the union, was to abandon all attempts at organization. Although the union has made very slight tangible gains this time, it has at least demonstrated to the operators that it can control the men in the field and that they can no longer starve and victimize their workers without opposition.

The spirit of unionism, dead these seven years in West Virginia, is alive again. "We're licked this time but we've got to keep the union going"—this was the sentiment of the miners at every meeting when they were told what the situation was. They are grand, these gaunt, poverty-bitten victims of capitalism's senseless exploitation. And they are aware, as they perhaps have never been aware before, of the extent and shamelessness of that exploitation. It is no longer individual hard luck, local suffering that they see. They have visualized the whole bitter struggle of the workers. What will remedy it? Trade unions, political action, workers' control—the answers come quiet and sure in their southern drawl; answers not learned from any books or parlor pink debates, but learned from life. "I want to go to Brookwood so I can come back to West Virginia and make an agitation," says one young miner.

With this spirit and with the courageous, intelligent leadership of their president, Frank Keeney, and other officers, the miners are determined to carry on the fight for unionism and against feudalism in West Virginia. It will be a long fight and a difficult one, in which they will need the backing of every progressive worker in the country.

"Solidarity" in Kanawha Valley

By LUCILLE KOHN

Miners and their families marching from Ward to Cedar Grove to attend an L. I. D. meeting

THE Kanawha mining camps are echoing with "Solidarity Forever" as men, women and children flock together on the picket line, at strike meeting or study class. It is the League for Industrial Democracy Chautauqua that has introduced the note of song into the West Virginia Mine Workers' strike—the note of song as well as many other constructive notes.

On July 7, fourteen men and women from New York, Chicago, Detroit, Pittsburgh and other cities, under the aegis of Mary Fox and the New York L. I. D., pitched camp in Charleston to conduct an experiment unique in the field of workers' education. When the program was planned in the spring, the Chautauqua group was to be a part of the organizing campaign of the West Virginia Mine Workers. When they arrived on the scene, it was to carry on in the midst of a strike. That naturally necessitated a complete realignment of activities.

Instead of nightly classes for adults rather carefully planned with "Your Job and Your Pay" to be used as text book, the tense strike atmosphere called for a very different approach, which the Chautauqua met in a way that seems to have solved many a knotty problem with a rare degree of success.

Whitesville, Cedar Grove, Prenter, Dry Branch and Eskdale were chosen as strategic points for headquarters, in view of the fact that they were central to four or five satellite camps. In these centers two large public meetings were held each week, one a lecture meeting and one a Chautauqua meeting of entertainment, in which all members of the staff participated. At the lecture meetings topics of special interest to workers such as "Causes and Cures for Unemployment," "The Role of the Worker in History," "Debs," and "The Present Day Status of the Mining Industry," were handled by Josephine Colby of Brookwood, Joel Seidman of John Hopkins, Winifred Chappell of Mehtodist Federation of Social Service, William Nunn of New York University, Maurice Schneiroev and several union representatives. Although speeches were the main feature of these meetings, they were always supplemented by some sort of program arranged for the children and by impromptu talks and singing on the part of the audience. From week to week this singing increased in volume, originality and fervor, and the size of the audience kept growing.

The special Chautauqua meetings began with labor plays and animated cartoons prepared and acted by the staff, but before long the miners groups, under the skillful direction of Victor Wolfson who had his training at the Wisconsin Experimental School, developed plays drawn from their own experiences, and there were vivid portrayals of picket-line, state police, company gunmen and all the other familiar strike manifestations, done by the miners themselves. All over the field they composed songs with splendid local tang, and got as much kick in singing them as the audience derived from listening.

The Chautauqua song book is a dramatic historical story of the current strike in West Virginia and the psychological reaction of the strikers to the new set-up. It was inspiring indeed to hear a group of Negroes at Ward singing, "The New York people has decided, we shall not be moved," in a crowded Negro school house, when evictions were threatening thick and fast on every front.

When it became apparent that classes, as such, were not compatible with a strike atmosphere, the Chautauqua staff modified its plans to meet the situation. So, gradually, classes became "clubs," but the educatinoal program was never discarded, and twice a week men and women met to discuss in an informal way the most elementary problems of the workers' world.

Much of the day-time work of the Chautauqua leaders was devoted to children. That, according to the concensus of parent opinion, was extraordinarily successful. Time and again a mother in the crowd would say, "There is no keeping my children home when they see their teacher," or "If we can't have her here, we sure want somebody else like her." The youngsters had baseball games, plays and picket-lines all of their own with labor songs aplenty. They built play villages "without company stores," as they eagerly explained.

The Chautauqua also brought in some special features in connection with community life. Dr. Ruth Fox, of the Fifth Avenue Hospital, made a carefully supervised social study of over fifty families. In Charleston itself the Chautauqua tried to function as auxiliary to the union. Shortly after the outbreak of the strike, they drew up a ringing statement on the situation in the Kanawha field mines with an appeal for funds, and broadcasted this statement through the city.

On the whole, as a strike auxiliary, the Chautauqua performed a most valuable service. It brought life, laughter and singing into the hungry and sometimes homeless communities. It reinforced union meetings with its own songs and it knit the camps together,

These members of the Eskdale Actors' Club, after brief coaching by members of the L. I. D. staff, wrote their own plays which they perfromed in the Eskdale Theatre. Two of the plays these young miners wrote and performed thruout the region are "The Decota Chain" and the "Logan March." These plays, for which they won the prize, deal with intimate happenings in their own lives.

animating them with a common interest.

It is difficult to evaluate the Chautauqua as an experiment in workers' education, because the strike made the whole situation an abnormal one. However, there are certain conclusions that may be drawn from the six weeks' activity of the L. I. D. in Charleston. Unquestionably the communities are eager to welcome and cooperate with an educational program brought in to them from the outside world. Unquestionably the children are waiting for such an adventure as the Chautauqua offered them, and a fertile field lies open for enterprising groups interested in education with a very definite workers' slant. It has been demonstrated too that a labor culture can be developed among the adults in the coal fields, for the Chautauqua in just six weeks gathered a whole book of songs and plays that really were made by the miners themselves.

The great problem that the occurrence of the strike left pretty completely unsolved is how much formal education can be given to the miners and in what way should classes be conducted. Certainly an entering wedge has been made; mass education has been inaugurated, and a technique is being developed by which workers can learn on their native heath, without the danger involved in a complete enironmental change.

The Miners Situation Today

(From Miner Correspondents)

A MIGHTY and varied array of force has been thrown into activity during past months, especially in Franklin County, Southern Illinois, in an attempt to destroy the Rank and File Miners, District No. 12, U. M. W. of A., which was launched at the Belleville convention in July and on which we reported in the last issue of LABOR AGE. It will be recalled that nearly 75 per cent of the membership of Illinois was represented at that convention by regularly accredited delegates from local unions. The convention was absolutely under the control of the rank and file, and adopted a constitution under which officers no longer have unlimited power to appoint organizers and so build up a personal machine. And furthermore, officers, after each term in office, are forced to go back to work, "in or around the mine," before being eligible for re-election.

John L. Lewis has thrown all the forces of his international office into the fight to break down the rank and file movement in its stronghold in Franklin County, which ought to go a good way toward answering the charge that the Belleville Convention was "a Lewis movement" to break up the Walker control of District No. 12 so that Lewis himself might dominate the situation. On the other hand, John H. Walker and the other officials of the "regular" District No. 12 organization are doing what they can to hold back the rank and file movement, but they happen to have very little influence in that section of the State.

The coal operators have begun to discharge active workers in the rank and file movement, and thus indicate that, as usual, they are allied with corrupt union officials in order to prevent the building of effective and militant unionism. The local law enforcing agencies, sheriffs, police, etc., are ably assisting Lewis, breaking up meetings and in other instances arresting the chief spokesmen of the rank and file movement in the local unions and keeping them locked-up while the local meeting, to decide the question of affiliation with the rank and file, is under consideration.

Secretary of Labor Doak's deportation hounds have suddenly appeared in force in the same sector, and are terrorizing leaders among the foreign-speaking miners with a threat of deportation. Thus the United States Department of Labor, which has for some time been playing the role of strike-breaker, is now also being pros-

tituted to an agency for telling members how they are to vote and act on internal union affairs. Along with local sheriffs and Department of Labor Agents, Uncle Sam's prohibition enforcement officials have suddenly learned that home brew is being sold by many of the adherents of the rank and file movement. John L. Lewis' friends among the Southern Illinois miners being all bone-dry, it would appear. United States Department of Justice agents too have suddenly located Franklin County and are nobly earning the salaries which are being paid them out of Federal taxes by making it known to the miners that the rank and file is a red organization.

But this is not all, dear reader. We have a real surprise in store for you, or at least for some of you. Fighting shoulder to shoulder with John L. Lewis, Walker, the Fishwick machine, the coal operators, the Department of Labor, prohibition agents and the Department of Justice, in trying to destroy the rank and file movement in southern Illinois, are the representatives of the Communist Party and the National Miners Union. This is their way of promoting the cause of labor and revolution in the United States. A matter on which you will find some further comment in the editorial section of this issue.

The result of this opposition is, for the time being, 27 of the local unions from southern Illinois, which were represented at the Belleville convention, have voted for the present not to affiliate with the rank and file, but to go back to paying dues to John L. Lewis and John H. Walker.

It must be frankly admitted that this is a serious set back, because many of these local unions are large and work in mines where there is fairly steady employment. The picture is not, however, altogether black. From the other sub-districts in Illinois only five local unions represented at Belleville have so far voted not to affiliate with the rank and file. Seventeen local unions have so far not balloted on the matter at all. Thirty-five or more locals have definitely voted to affiliate with the rank and file movement without paying dues to the rank and file district office. The Belleville sub-district stands practically solid for the rank and file. The provisional president, Edmonson, and Secretary Keck have opened an office on the seventh floor of the Ferguson Building in Springfield and, with their colleagues, are hard at work. We are confident that the tide will set in for the rank and file again before long. Lewis showed his fear of what the rank and file can do by throwing all his forces into the Franklin County section and rallying all the local state and federal political support at his command. He cannot for long, however, keep up such a high pressure campaign. When the terrorism lets up somewhat, the men who are at heart for the rank and file and who have not changed their minds, though they may have been temporarily silenced, will swing into action again. That the majority of active miners in southern Illinois are still with the rank and file is proved by the fact that at local meetings the rank and file repeatedly carried the vote by large majorities. It was only when a referendum ballot was taken and hundreds of men belonging to the union, but not active, and perhaps not working in the mines at all, took part in the balloting, that rank and file affiliations were voted down, and then only by a small vote in practically every instance. President Edmonson's own local voted not to affiliate with the rank and file for the present, but turned right around and almost unanimously nominated him again for the sub-district presidency office from which he retired in order to take the presidency of the rank and file district organization.

The men in the two big Orient mines, who were on strike this summer for equal division of work, were driven back to work by Lewis who stepped into the situation just when the rank and file organization was about to get favorable settlement for the men, promising that as soon as the men were back to work he would adjust the situation with the company. Nothing whatever has been done to improve conditions since the men went back to work. That will sink in presently.

Sometime ago sub-district No. 9 adopted a new constitution in which the appointive power is taken away from officials and they are compelled to go back to work in the mine before they can be returned in office. Lewis is now "examining" this new constitution to decide whether it is in line with that of the International. An election for sub-district presidency is supposed to be held under the new constitution. Lewis is forbidding it. All this will presently have its effect on the miners and start the anit-Lewis movement once more in full swing.

There are other important factors which in the long run will work for the rank and file movement.

Last summer John H. Walker announced that a district convention would be held on October 6. Some of the weaker locals have postponed affiliation with the rank and file and are saying, "let's go to the regular district convention and make one more effort there to clean house and put the membership in control." There is more than a slight chance, however, that John H. Walker will never call that district convention. For one thing it would involve a very great expense for the district treasury which is in a decidedly unhealthy condition. Furthermore, John H. Walker will be called upon, if a convention is held, to make some explanation of his deal with John L. Lewis. The miners will insist upon adopting a new constitution, or at least will make the attempt to get a new constitution drawn. There will be a considerable element trying to force immediately a new district election. If Walker does not call a convention, that will go far to convince the weaker locals that they have nothing to expect from the "regular" organization. If he calls the convention, then the rank and file will actually take control of his local. If he calls the convention and his payrollers control, they again will be playing into the hands of the rank and file movement.

The officers and Executive Committee of the rank and file district organization are pressing steadily on and, in the face of a temporary hurricane of opposition, are carrying on various union activities and attempting to solidify the district organization. They have ruled that for the time being local unions, affiliated with the rank and file district organization and paying dues to it, but which insist upon paying their national dues to John L. Lewis, will not be cut off from the district organization, confident that eventually all these locals will see the need for a clean-up nationally as well as in the district, and that if they finance Lewis, they are simply giving him ammunition to fight themselves. If the organization will just press steadily on, refuse to be discouraged and refuse to sacrifice any essential principles because of temporary setbacks, it will soon have the actual affiliation, as it already has the confidence of the membership in Illinois, and it will be ready to do its bit to build on a national scale a militant progressive union of miners. It would be a fatal mistake for the rank and file movement to compromise itself. Its source of strength lies in its honesty, militancy, and rank and file control. In the long run it has no other assets that are worth anything.

In the meantime the strikes which

(Continued on page 29)

The Iron Heel

Drawn for Labor Age by Jerger

Can Business Acquire Social Conscience?

By LOUIS ADAMIC

FOR a year now people have been writing letters to newspapers that something must be done "at once" or at least "in the near future" about the unemployment situation, which, according to many prophets, is likely to be no better—and may be worse—next winter than it was last winter; and it seems that, in their deep perturbation, most of them have little, if any, faith in Congress and the Government as agencies to remedy the situation. They are appealing to industrial and financial leaders of the country for "drastic steps by and within the industry" and for "heroic action for the sake of humanity"—to quote from two letters printed in the New York *World-Telegram* on the day that I begin this article. Several people of my acquaintance believe that business will eventually solve the problem if business is only left alone by the politicians.

Lectures on social topics are calling upon industrialists to "stabilize" and "humanize" industry, for periodic depressions such as the present one, they cry in tones of alarm, are having vicious social consequences. An eminent Yale professor wants industrial managers to make periodic "human audits" of their industries as well as financial audits and inventories, for, in his belief, they owe consideration to the human element in their business. Dean Donham, of the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration, writes a book, "Business Adrift", in which he outlines the duties of business to society and to itself, and suggests what business should do to fulfill them. He appears to believe that business can be mindful of the interests of society without outside pressure. Also, lately several prominent business men have discoursed upon the necessity as well as the ability of business to become social-minded and idealistic. Last spring the leaders of the United States Chamber of Commerce held a conference in Atlantic City to devise ways and means whereby business might be equipped with intelligence and conscience.

Editorial writers, both on progressive and conservative newspapers, are pointing with alarm to the degenerating effect of unemployment and other industrial evils on the national character, and emphasizing the desperate need of "enlightened, social-minded leadership in the business community;" but few newspapers are prepared to say that Congress or the Government should do anything fundamental about the conidtion. The Chicago *Tribune* has been looking "to business for leadership" for over a year. The editorial page of the *Saturday Evening Post* is definitely opposed to drastic legislative measures, for "unemployment is a problem for industry to master." Such well-known business and financial journals as *Forbes, Nation's Business,* the *Magazine of Wall Street,* and *Barron's* of course, are sharply against any "political meddling in business." They represent the opinions of an overwhelming majority of American business men, big and small.

The Hoover Administration and, perhaps, even the majority of Congress are also against legislative "interference with business." The same, no doubt, is true of most of the governors and state legislators. Last May President Hoover declined to call a special session of Congress, which Senator La Follette asked him to call for the purpose of dealing with the economic crisis, because he feared that certain leaders in the Senate and in the House had evil designs upon business which might disturb the delicate process of economic recovery. On Memorial Day, in his Valley Forge speech, the President again spoke—this time rather vaguely—against legislative action to get the country off the dumps, or even to redistribute the burdens of the depression. He was against the "deadening restraints of Government" and expressed himself in favor of "the cooperative force of individual ability and initiative" to meet the challenge of the times.

The pulpit has been keenly conscious of the economic crisis for a year and a half. Last spring the parish priests of hundreds of Catholic churches throughout the United States read the Pope's Encyclical on unemployment and wages which contained some fairly sound generalizations. A few days before, the Pope had spoken on a radio hook-up which included the United States. From his own radio station in Los Angeles, a Fundamentalist Savonarola broadcast his indignation at "the greedy capitalists" and their "industrial inhumanism." From Detroit, a Catholic radio preacher, who is listened to throughout the country, called for "a showdown" in the matter of unemployment.

Such organs of the Christian churches as the *Christian Century* and the *Commonweal* are devoting much space to economic problems, and most of the writers and editors appear to think that the solution of those problems depends largely upon the ability of business men to develop social-mindedness in themselves and re-organize their industries so that they can pay higher and higher wages for less and less work. Business men, it seems, must become "real Christians."

Unemployment—Whose Fault?

In an Eastern city a few months ago, I heard a Liberal preacher sermonize upon "Unemployment—Whose Fault?", which nowadays, I understand, is a startlingly popular subject with ministers of the Gospel in the larger cities. "It is un-Christian," he said, "this condition, with millions of men desperate for work and tens of thousands of families in dire want because of unemployment. . . . And who is to blame? In my opinion, our big business men. There has been—there is too much greed for quick, immediate profits in our industrial world. To make money, more and more money, and nothing else! Great industries employ and discharge workers without regard for human and social consequences . . . But industry shall have to cease dealing with human beings in this cruel, careless, inhuman, haphazard fashion, or else—indeed, I don't

know what our country may come to! It is hard to speak with restraint, for it is imperative that the managers of our great industrial enterprises should acquire a humane, a Christian social attitude toward their fellow human beings in the ranks of labor who contribute so greatly to the production of wealth. The employers must acquire and begin to exercise social sense . . ."

The sermon, considering the fact that it was delivered in a fashionable church, was a courageous one, but, like the letters to the "Vox Pop" dedepartments of the press and the lectures, the editorials, and the appeal from Yale and the book "Business Adrift" that I mention above, it was for the most part also absurd and futile. The good man in the pulpit demonstrated no sound knowledge of the history, organization, character and basic motives of business—Big Business—as it happens to be conducted in the United States. He was, it appeared, wholly unaware that business in its present stage of development, although by far the most important factor in the lives of the American people, is largely dehumanized and, despite all the Rotary and Kiwanis clubs, profoundly indifferent to vital human and social questions; that, in the very nature of its character, business can have no spontaneous and direct, no intelligent, "Christian" or benevolent interest in society.

Business a Hundred Years Ago

A hundred years ago business was a comparatively simple thing, even in the United States. An industrial or business enterprise was owned by one man, who operated it with the aid of a few employees. The master and the mechanics, as a rule, belonged to the same trade guild, whose principal aim was to promote good workmanship and service to the community. Living in the same village or town, they often were neighbors and intimate friends. If more than one man owned the enterprise, all the partners lived in the community and actively participated in the business. Close personal relationships existed not only between the bosses and the workers, but also between each of these and the customers, and business was thus an integral and intimate part of the communal life. Basically, business was then, as it is now, mainly a representation of man's acquisitive instinct functioning outside of social motives, but in those distant days unlike today, the wider humanistic interests, acting through the close personal contact between employers, workers and the public and the various communal agencies, had no difficulty in curbing it and making it actually serve the community.

Then the New Industrialization came and, of a sudden, huge industrial-financial organizations—corporations—were formed, in which personal relationship vanished almost entirely. These corporations were started because individual business men, suddenly excited by the hugeness and the resources of America, and eager to put over gigantic new undertakings, lacked sufficient capital for their purposes and had to take in as investors a great many other persons, living in various parts of the country, to whom they promised rich and quick returns for the use of their money.

On launching their corporations, the managers' most pressing concern was to fulfill their promises to the investors, mainly because if they failed to produce dividends they would be unable to secure financial assistance in the future. To the shareholders (most of whom had no close knowledge of the businesses which their cash was helping to create) the corporations were nothing more than magic instruments producing wealth. Their interest was solely or largely in the dividends. Moreover, the manufactured goods were sold through middlemen and, what is still more important, labor (of which more in a minute) became a "commodity". Thus business became impersonal, unsocial. It became what it is today—Big Business.

The Dehumanization of Business

Corporations grew and combined, and business became more and more intricate and gigantic, more and more impersonal, dehumanized, inhuman, unsocial, powerful, uncontrollable by society. To be successful corporation managers, men had to become dehumanized, almost inhuman, at least in their capacities as business men. Indeed, it can scarcely be said that corporations were managed by men. They were operated almost purely by policy, which soon jelled into tradition, and which had little, if any, consideration for the human elements in business. The central aim of corporation policy was higher and higher profits. Such slogans as "The public be damned!" and "Beat down the labor movement!" were uttered by individuals prompted by the impelling impersonal, unsocial —in many cases distinctly anti-social —character of corproations which they headed.

And the character of Big Business is essentially the same today as it was in the time of Commodore Vanderbilt, Jay Gould, and Henry C. Frick. But not that the Vanderbilts, the Goulds, and the Fricks, either of the 1880s or of today, are directly or personally to blame for this lack of social sense in business. The lack, you must understand, is inherent in the corporation system. It is inevitable. In its very nature, as I have hinted, Big Business can by itself have no social philosophy or social intelligence. It can have no statesmanship or long-range foresight. It is essentially opportunistic, anarchic, fatalistic. "If let alone," said Mr. Garet Garrett a few years ago, "it will seek its profit by any means that serve and then view the consequences as acts of Providence"—as it now views the current business slump and the unemployment situation.

Big business today, to be sure, has certain ethical rules, but they, forsooth, have nothing to do with the wider social morality. There is, for instance, considerable honesty in business, that is, in transactions between various firms, but not because honesty is a social virtue conducive to a higher civilization and nobler life; only because, quite apart from every other consideration, it is essential to business. Business honesty has nothing to do with honor; it is, as Mr. Garrett puts it, merely "formal honesty".

Society, of course, derives a great many benefits from modern business, but these benefits are largely incidental to the main and original purpose of our business organization—that of profit-making. Let us take the tendency of putting on the market dependable goods, which has become noticeable in American industry and commerce during the last two decades. The motive behind it is ethical in a purely narrow business sense, and not in any large social way. It is, like the practice of honesty by firms, simply good business policy, for in the long run, as a rule, the buying public supports the manufacturer of reliable articles, enriching him not only by its purchases but by automatically increasing the capital value of his trademark and his credit, which enables him to sell more shares and expand his business.

In fine, to look for social-mindedness and idealism in Big Business is to appear rather naive. And to call upon Big Business to fulfill its "social duty" to labor and to the community is to appear, I believe, worse than naive.

Big Business Naturally Unsocial

Big Business being what it is, then, its attitude toward labor is naturally, as the above-quoted preacher put it, "cruel, merciless, inhuman, haphazard" from the social or human point of view.

Before business became Big Business, the worker with a pair of able hands and a set of good tools stood on fairly even terms with the employer. He had produced directly for purposes of consumption and, indeed, had consumed much of his own actual product. Following the Industrial Revolution, however, when the corporations and the factory system came into existence and hand-tools yielded to machinery, production became indirect and suddenly machines were of greater importance than hands. The worker became an appendage to the machine. He was dependent upon conditions created by machinery. He labored not directly to produce, but to keep the machine going and create wealth for corporations, whose shareholders demanded high dividends. Labor, as I have said, became a commodity on the market, just as were the raw materials that fed the machines or the coal that was needed to generate power to turn the wheels.

Labor is still a commodity, and the corporations' attitude toward it is practically the same as toward the other commodities on the market. B. C. Forbes, a popular commentator on business conditions and industrial relations, writing in his own magazine, puts the following confession into the mouth of Big Business as regards labor:

> Business is business. The objective of industry is to make money. We are determined to make money. We concentrate solely on that aim. . . .
>
> One of the easiest ways to cut down expenses being to cut down salary and wage rolls, we of course lay men off right and left (as our production efficiency increases). . . . In our eyes the most valuable executive is the one who can produce the most with the least labor—the smallest number of workers and the smallest payroll. Our up-to-the-minute methods make it feasible for us to dispense with enormous numbers of workers. It is not uncommon for us to install one machine which enables half-a-dozen men to do what formerly took a hundred men.
>
> . . . What happens to all the hordes of workers we release is not our concern. Our responsibility begins and ends with running our business with surpassing efficiency, which means with a minimum of human labor.
>
> No, the unemployment thus created does not enter in any way into our calculations. Our bounden duty is to exercise every ounce of ingenuity we posses to do away with jobs, not to create them. . . . We are much too engrossed in increasing profits to give a thought to what happens because of our reducing the number of workers. How to take care of unemployment is a problem for others to solve. Let George do that. . . . We haven't the time to bother with it. It isn't our worry.

Mr. Forbes goes on to say: "American industry may disclaim that it *talks* that way, but it cannot disclaim that, collectively, it has *acted* that way." And, indignant, he asks: "Are United States business leaders morons?"—implying that, to all appearances, they are, for "industry feels perfectly free to dismiss breadwinners by the hundred and by the thousand without giving a thought as to how these breadwinners may succeed or fail in earning bread for themselves and their families. . . . It has been nobody's business to lie awake cogitating what happens to breadwinners denied opportunity to earn their bread."

To my mind, the industrial leaders of the United States are no more moronic than practically any other group of average men. The fact of the matter is that they, too, are victims of the immense, chaotic, dehumanized, impersonal, unsocial "system" of Big Business that I have sketched above, though, of course, their worst plight is seldom as acute and tragic as that of workers thrown out of employment. Since October, 1929, proportionately, perhaps, as many capitalists and industrialists have committed suicide on account of the depression as jobless men, and it is possible that, proportionately, more rich men die of melancholia, caused by the uncontrollable chaos in their businesses, than idle workers of starvation.

I don't deny that some business men are morons, nor that the "system" of Big Business deprives not a few industrialists and capitalists of whatever innate social sense they ever possessed; most of those whom I know, however, appear quite human—alas! all too human. My observation is that the average American business man does not become intrinsically unsocial or anti-social because of his material interests. It is merely that he does not run his business, but that, conversely, his business runs him. He acts according to the policy or tradition of his corporation: and essentially, as I have said, most corporations are alike. His social conscience is often uneasy, but—such being human nature—he never suffers severe pangs of remorse, for he neatly and conveniently blames all evils on the corporation. He passes the buck to the great organization, which, with its impersonal character, readily serves as a hide-out for the conscience. As a manager or director of the corporation, he says: "Well, if this were my own business, believe me, I'd deal differently with labor. But, you see, it isn't mine. I'm but an instrument of our corporation's policy. I'm responsible to our ten thousand shareholders, who, regardless of everything, want their dividends." And each of the ten thousand shareholders comes back with: "Well, what can I do? Am I running the business? I'm not. I'm but one of ten thousand people, none of whom has anything to say personally about how things ought to be run."

Irresponsibility of Business

In a word, no one is personally or directly responsible to society. Corporate business as a whole is responsible only in matters that pertain to business. To society it has only a few *legal* responsibilities, which the social will, struggling against the evils and tyrannies of Big Business, now and then manages to impose upon it through such agencies as the Congress, the Department of Justice, the Interstate Commerce Commission, and the Federal Trade Board. Very frequently Big Business gains control of these agencies and thwarts the social will, thus evading even its legal responsibilities. On the whole, Big Business is utterly irresponsible, "free from hope of heaven or fear of hell," as Mr. Garrett puts it; "in all ethical respects, anonymous."

And it must be remembered that, as it is variously estimated, from two-thirds to three-fourths of our national wealth is owned by these anonymous, impersonal instruments of modern business called corporations. They control, it is safe to say, every important process of the country's economic activity and, thereby, directly or indirectly influence every other phase of our national life. Indeed, every now and then they threaten, with their enormous money power, to gain full sway over the Government and overcome the social will.

The humanistic or social interests of the country have been fighting a feud with Big Business these seven

or eight decades. Occasionally the social will gets worked up and, acting through political parties and the Government, inflicts itself upon business and makes it behave, at least for a little while, until business, with its single-minded purpose, finds a way to rid itself of social control.

Now and then business willingly endures social control, but only when social control is obviously conducive to bigger and better business. Take, for instance, the pure-food laws. Twenty-five years ago Upton Sinclair published his novel *"The Jungle,"* which "hit the country in the stomach" and worked up the social will to an extent that the pure-food idea became a national political issue. Meat-packers and other food interests fought the idea. Later, however, when the idea was put on the statute book and the industrialists were forced to sell only good food, they gradually perceived that high quality merchandise was more profitable in the long run than low quality, and since then the food branch of Big Business has been vociferous in praise of the pure-food idea.

But society must always *compel* business to function for the social good, and not only for the social good but for the good of business itself. If space permitted, I could show that even honesty in business, which I mentioned above, like dependability in manufactured goods, was inflicted upon business by laws and other social pressure.

Unemployment Demands Drastic Action

The current unemployment crisis, which doubtless is the worst in the history of the United States, unquestionably demands drastic action. The condition will not "run its course" in eighteen months or "remedy itself" in any such fashion as did the several unemployment crises in the past, for industry, with its "scientific management" and "rationalization", will continue throwing men out of work with the same impersonal carelessness as heretofore, unless society can work up sufficient strength through progressive political action to control business and industry. To my mind, the serious-minded and well-intentioned people whom the situation perturbs so deeply are, as I have suggested, wasting their breath and ink in appealing to business to have a heart. They may as well yell at the crew of a speeding train not to crush the ants and caterpillars on the rails.

II

In November, 1929, President Hoover, eager to prevent just such a serious condition as we now find ourselves in, conferred with big business leaders of the country and naively asked them to refrain from wage-cuts and further lay-offs. They promised him that they would. They praised the President for his "foresighted measure." But most of the corporations in which they were directors and executives continued matter-of-factly to reduce wages and lay off employees. Between December 15, 1929, and February 15, 1930, the big railroads, which were heavily represented at Mr. Hoover's conferences, dropped over 84,000 men. As a rule, the great, impersonal corporations are bigger than the biggest individual in them, and their traditional policy, dating back to their origin, is to lay off men when it is unprofitable to keep them on the payrolls and cut the wages of those they keep when the labor market is full of jobless men, eager to work for low pay.

In December, 1929, when 100,000 men were idle in Detroit, one of the wealthiest cities in the United States, Senator James Couzens, formerly a partner of Henry Ford and now, perhaps, one of the most humanely inclined tycoons in the country, delivered a red-hot lecture to several hundred members of the Michigan Manufacturers Association, blaming them in severe terms for the condition of unemployment. He naively denounced them for not being awake to "the responsibilities of man to man." "Just think," he cried, "what it means to hire a thousand men today and a few weeks hence to fire them without any more consideration than if they were some animal other than human." The manufacturers of Michigan, as individuals, applauded the Senator for his impassioned speech. Most of them, I am told, heartily agreed with him. But in the ensuing three months, in Detroit alone, the number of unemployed men increased by at least another 50,000! Mr. Couzens might as well have kept silent.

Since December, 1929, unemployment in the United States has at least doubled and the earnings of labor decreased by approximately 40 per cent. Wage reductions, most of them in violation of the agreement with President Hoover, continue at a terrific rate. According to the Labor Bureau, Inc., a statistical organization in New York, in the month ending December 15, 1930, there were 61 wage reductions as against 9 increases; in the month ending January 15, 1931, there were 341 reductions and 72 increases, and in the month ending February 15, 1931, the number of reductions was 231 and the number of increases 8. . . . And I wager that individually most of the employers who are cutting wages believe in high wages—for the other firm.

Last May Mr. James A. Farrell, president of the United States Steel Corporation, delivered his sensationally honest impromptu talk before the American Iron and Steel Institute in New York, in which he referred to wage-cutting within the steel industry as "a pretty cheap sort of business." He was most severe with companies—"the most talked-of companies, the so-called big companies"—which he knew had slashed wages and were "honeycombing and pinching and that sort of thing" by discharging employees wherever they could. And, ironically, less than a week after his talk, according to press reports, the United States Steel Products, a subsidiary of Mr. Farrell's corporation, dropped 50 men in one department!

During the last year I talked with dozens of corporation officials in Eastern states, a few of whom were personally very much distressed by the unemployment situation, especially during the winter months, and conscience-stricken, were contributing liberally to the various emergency relief funds, while their organizations were cutting wages and discharging more employees.

"But," I said to one of them, pretending naivete, "couldn't you as a big shot in your company use your influence and change the policy pertaining to labor in your employ?"

He answered, impatiently: "My influence in our company, like the influence of most corporation presidents, is limited. I can't do much. I can suggest, yes, but a suggestion which goes contrary to long-established policy or tradition always encounters strong opposition. We have a board of directors which decides on matters of policy. Most of our directors are elderly men. Such a change in our labor policy as you suggest would immediately strike them as radical, and they are conservative men with set mental processes. Do you see what I mean? This is true of our company, which I think is a typical one. I, as president, and Mr. B——, as general manager, can be progressive only in such matters as installing new machinery and new methods, whereby our overhead is cut. We can be radical only when all our directors and our shareholders can see

at a glance that what we propose is sound business, that is, immediately profitable . . . I know what you mean, but 'stabilizing' our particular industry, I very much fear, would cause a row in our company. I doubt if I or anyone else could convince our directors that guaranteeing all-year employment to our people would be good business.

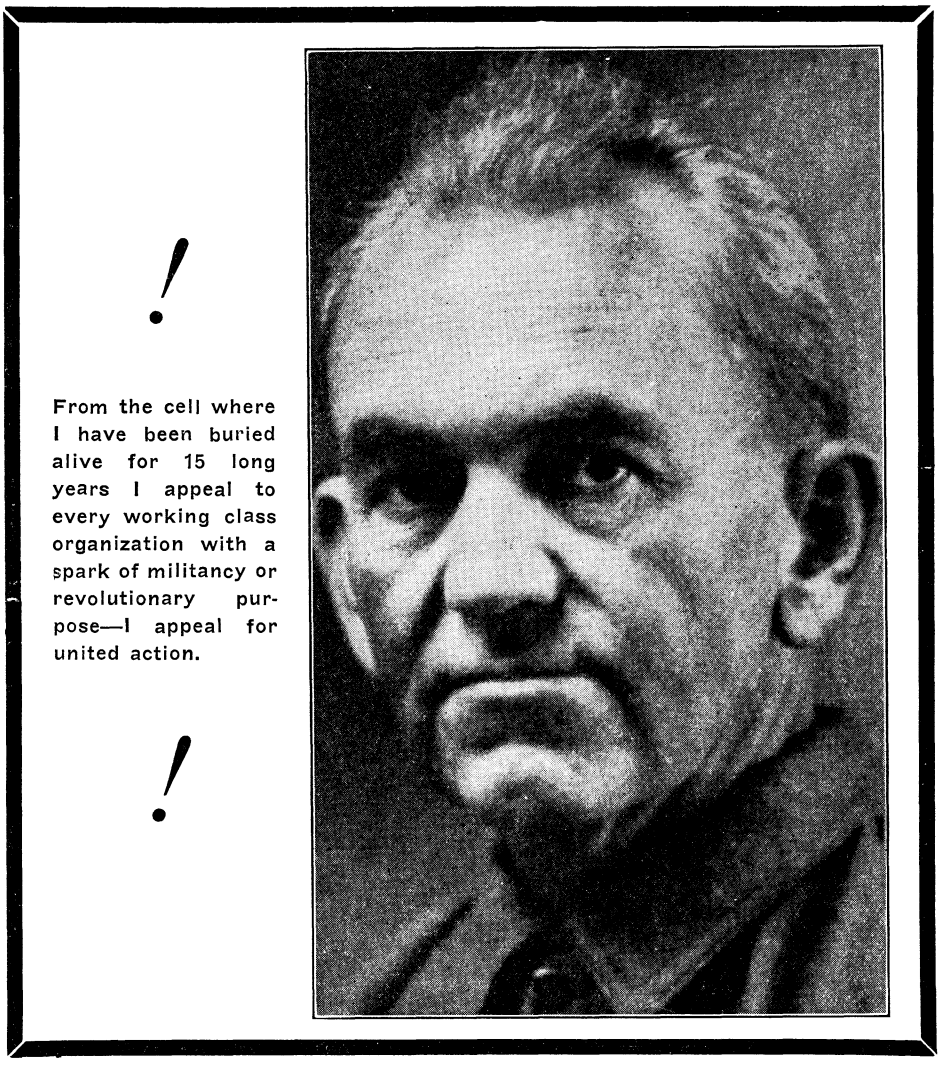
The "Intelligent" Employer

But the average employer seems incapable even of grasping and discussing the idea of industrial stabilization. He is usually a college graduate, but has no developed social ideas. He is solely a business man. He is keenly alert and opportunistic in keeping up-do-date with "progressive business methods" (most of which operate to reduce employment), but ponderously tenacious when business touches on anything outside of business. He is a hard worker and good at routine, conceited, eager to have people look up to him and to keep on the good side of his economic superiors. He is anxious to convince you of his own importance in the business he happens to be in; he calls himself an executive but, so far as I have been able to detect, hasn't the faintest idea where he and his enterprise are headed.

Last fall I spoke with an executive who had just laid off 600 men and reduced the wages of the remaining 700. I reminded him of President Hoover's request to industry in November, 1929. "That's all very well," he said to me angrily. "Mr. Hoover can talk. *We have to protect our stockholders,*" he emphasized. "Besides, why should we keep up our 1928 payroll, when other industries are reducing theirs right and left, both by discharging men and wage-cuts."

And, incredible as it may seem, I have met, or I know of, "executives" who deal with immense resources, millions of dollars and thousands of men, and whose only conception of the current depression is that "business is poor . . . I hardly remember when it was as poor as this." They have no more notion of what it is all about than had the owl that was recently caught in the traffic jam on Fifth Avenue in New York City.

Of course, there are highly intelligent, socially minded employers in the United States who see the immediate necessity of drastic reforms in business and industry, but, with few exceptions, they are bewildered and afraid. Many of them become ill, brooding over their problems; some commit suicide. I find that it takes exceptional mental and intestinal stamina in a man these days to *act* as an enlightened, progressive employer. The manager of a large textile mill in Massachusetts who, after years of hard work, has managed to introduce in his plant a progressive system of employment, which includes the recognition of the labor union, is being "kidded" and taunted by practically the entire Arkwright Club of Boston, which is an organization of New England textile manufacturers, some of whom consider him downright dangerous, a Bolshevik.



Futile to Appeal to Big Business

Yet our editorial writers, preachers and college economists, who, perhaps, should know better, are calling upon business to straighten itself out, to become "socialized" and "humanized" on its own initiative, to end the present crisis and make another depression impossible in the future. They seem to agree with President Hoover, who, in his last message to Congress, after trying to apologize for the shortcomings of business by declaring that the depression was "worldwide" and "recurrent," insisted that business must be left alone to right itself, for economic ills "cannot be cured by legislation." They don't seem to realize that, as I have tried to show in this article, there is no social sense, very little collective intelligence and not overmuch individual brains within the stupendous structure of Big Business.

They don't appear to know that Big Business, although addicted to "scientific management" in production and office administration, is economically inefficient, chaotic, given to overexpansion, lacking in statesmanship and foresight; that it is Big Business alone —with its impersonal character and ruthless profit-motive, uncontrolled by society—that has brought about, as the *Commercial and Financial Chronicle* puts it, "the most dismal year (1930) in the mercantile and financial history of the United States—with trade and industry prostrated as never before, with business activity in many lines steadily dwindling almost to the

(Continued on page 16)

Lessons of the British Crisis

By MARK STARR

SO much propaganda will be made in the United States about the alleged failure of the British dole and of Socialism as the cause of the Labor Government's downfall, and the startling switch-over of Ramsay MacDonald to the leadership of a "national" government, that an understanding of the crisis and its moral is imperative. The *New York Times* has already abandoned its usual editorial dullness so far as to call criticisms of the Labor Opposition, led by Arthur Henderson, only the "chirping of crickets" and to compare Henderson and his colleagues to the Gadarene swine.

The details of the struggle to balance the British budget are already well known. Premier MacDonald was prepared to put the main burden of retrenchment on the unemployed and the wage workers instead of on the rich, so that the fears and criticisms for which the left wing of the Labor Party has been maligned were all too well founded. But there is more concerned here than the defection of a few individuals. MacDonald's "evolutionary Socialism," his dismissal of the class struggle as a "melodramatic phrase", his concept of society as an "organic whole",* have been torn to tatters by the bankers. His theory, combined with the collectivism of the Fabians, is the nearest the British labor movement ever had to a philosophy to guide its actions. Such Marxian thought as existed was confined to the influence of educational and propagandist bodies and generated by the workers' experience in their every-day struggles. Sidney Webb's phrase, "the inevitability of gradualness", was the keynote of the official appeal and attracted recruits from other classes.

Yet the backbone of the Labor Party continued to be the trade unions, and it is only natural that Henderson—who, rather than MacDonald, remained in close contact with the organization as the head of the Labor Party machine and who has never been hampered by a false theory of Socialism—headed the defense of the workers when the testing time came.

The difficulties encountered by the British section of the capitalist class will be reflected in the leftward swing of the organized labor movement in Britain, and the mosaic of ideas and the rule-of-thumb methods which have been so noticeable in the past may be altered into a larger, clearer pattern by the bitter struggles now unavodable. MacDonald and Snowden, after they have been used by their Liberal and Tory colleagues, will be thrown into the discard. If J. H. Thomas feels that he is putting too great a strain on the loyalty of the members of his National Union of Railwaymen and if he is ambitious to retain his power therein, he may presently make an adroit retreat from the new government although his prestige would be at zero outside his own union, which would stick to him for past services.

The Tory chief, Stanley Baldwin, will seek a mandate for tariffs, which the Tory party considers a solution of British troubles. He will try to put a ring fence around the British Empire to make it self sufficing; and even if this scheme proves impossible, as is highly probable, because of the divergent needs of the dominions and their lack of geographic, racial, and economic unity, it will nevertheless add to the difficulties of other countries seeking foreign markets. In the present mad world where poverty is caused by plenty, there is every chance of tariff and trade war paving the way to military war with all its dread results. Mr. Baldwin will try to capitalize all the wounded pride engendered by Britain's present dependency upon outside bankers for his program of keeping out foreign goods, and it would be foolish to underestimate the strong appeal such a cry will make to the unthinking.

The Liberals, split into various sections, will in great part go over to the Baldwin supporters, and Labor will probably be in the minority after the forthcoming election in which it will retain, however, about 200 of its seats in the House of Commons.

Wishful thinking should not blind us to the weakness of the new Labor Party as seen in its manifesto. It will champion "the taxing of the rich to provide necessities for the poor" and defend the social services such as unemployment pay, old age pensions, education, and health. But it naively assumes that the capitalists would allow a labor government to mobilize the 20 billion dollars of British foreign investment. In the face of international attack upon workers' standards, the manifesto in its final appeal links "true national interests" with "constructive efforts toward a new social order" without a clear rallying cry of Socialism to the organized workers throughout the world. Even in a document written with an eye upon the general electorate, this note should have been sounded.

Nevertheless, the attack which the capitalist rulers are making on the workers' standards of life and the experience of how only discredit comes to Labor when it tries to clear up the mess of capitalism without the power to institute radical changes will compel the necessary militancy. Even the *New Republic* in its editorial comment rightly asserted that a real labor party must aim at creating a rational economic order and not attempt to reform capitalism.

Among the lessons taught by the recent experience of British Labor is the need for a workers' party to be based on a conscious recognition of the class struggle. Whatever members of other classes may throw in their lot with such a party, the primary appeal all the time must be to the wage workers. Again it seems proven that a Socialist government should not take office with only a minority backing of the electorate; that neither labor organization nor Socialism will come by the consent of the present rulers of society or by appealing to their "community sense".

A real labor party cannot confine itself to ambulance work for the victims of capitalism. Whatever reforms occupy a place in its immediate program, Labor must always look upon itself as the undertaker, and not the caretaker of capitalist society.

International sabotage of a labor

*Contrary to widely spread ideas, MacDonald's opposition to the World War was hesitant at first and was always based in the main, not on the opposition of a Socialist to capitalist war, but on the assertion that the war was hatched by secret diplomacy and could be ended by a negotiated peace.

government is also obviously to be expected, and Socialists of every country must think out much more clearly than hitherto their relation to national groups. We must live in nations and national groupings as one lives in a house on which the lease is expiring. We can defend a nation and be concerned with national affairs only as they relate to the *international* achievement of Socialism. This will be all the more necessary if imperialist rivalry becomes more intense. It is inevitable that the world economic supremacy of the United States will cause American finance to put pressure on other countries as it has upon the Labor Government in Britain in concert with the French and British bankers. This increases the responsibility of the American section of the working class and Socialist movement. And only to the extent that the British Labor Party clears out the MacDonald illusions of a "national community" (which always means surrender for the advancing workers at a critical moment) will it avoid the dangers of a too easy advance followed by disastrous retreat.

An Independent Labor Party

***By* JENNIE D. CARLIPH**

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The American worker will not give up his franchise just because some radicals want him to. The present absorbing discussion in LABOR AGE brings to mind the foregoing truism and adds its weight in making the affirmative answer to the question as to whether or not we need a new political party. Why should not the C. P. L. A. function on the political field, i. e., the field where the franchise is being exercised, as well as on the industrial field. Certainly for educational purposes if for nothing else, it would seem to be worth while trying.

Moreover, this latter point is being raised by one who has been and still is a firm believer in the prowess of the "economic arm" of the working class—the general strike, direct action, striking on the job, and all that goes with it.

The thought is advanced that it is not so easy to build a "new political party". True, but is it easier to build a new, really effective, industrial union? Certainly not. With workers out of jobs and those at work afraid to have any contact with persons who attempt to get them organized in any kind of unions, what are the chances for organizing workers into either new or old line unions? Quite obviously not many.

Furthermore, activities in the existing unions more often than not land the "borers from within" on the outside before they know it, if their work within these unions prove to be at all telling. This is a fact discovered not by this writer alone, and does not require verification in the pages of LABOR AGE. Also, it is no secret that any kind of activity on behalf of labor will have no easy sailing. Moreover, to the writer it appears that it is unquestionably more difficult to launch an effective industrial union than it is to launch an independent labor party. The obstacles in the way are obviously fewer on the political field than they are on the economic field.

An independent labor party should take on the form of a mass union, where workers could air their grievances, propound remedies and organize to strike en masse, while also voting as a unit.

The handicaps in the United States seem to arise from the fact that radicals of all varieties are super-cautious and, by their timidity, destroy the child before it sees the light. Furthermore, we are too much concerned with what is happening in England, Russia, China and with how it happened than with what would be the best thing to do for us in the United States. "In England it took 25 years to land a labor party," we are told. In Russia it happened thus and so. In Spain and China in some other way. Therefore in the United States it also must be thus and so. Now, we must realize that the European yardstick is not a good measure for the American cloth, at all.

In England, capitalism has all but died a natural death, and the workers, blinded by the tinsel of monarchy and the gains of the English colonial possessions, do not see the corpse, but allow it to rot on their body politic, without preparing for its proper interment or cremation.

This is not mere phraseology. Graphs and charts of business in Great Britain show not a single upward curve since 1920. And today we see the strange spectacle of the heir to the throne of England, racing around the globe to peddle British merchandise in competition with the U. S., Germany, etc. And, to quote the N. Y. *Times*, he returns to England "sad eyed" and "trying to rouse the business people of England to activity", "to shake them out of their lethargy." Must the workers of the United States wait for the same thing to happen in this country also, and allow the capitalist carcass to clutter up Wall Street before the workers here stir?

Never in the history of labor have the workers watched the throes of the old dying system with more helpless inactivity; with fingers clasped behind them and thumbs twiddling.

In Russia, a rotting feudalism with its stupid regime and insane religious oligarchy, kept Russian business from growing, native capitalism from developing and from mounting to power. The war was a monster it could not manage. Soldiers starving and in rags returned, with arms in their possession. The decaying order crumpled and the carcass was kicked into eternity. No such likelihood in the United States though; no, never!

Quite the contrary. In the United States, because of its most highly developed capitalism, the prophecies of the ages are now coming true. The sages of old Greece lamented that if it were possible to produce the goods of the world without work, slaves would not be needed and slavery would be wiped from the face of the earth. Marx pointed to the change that in our social system will take place when the machine shall have been perfected. We seem to have reached these climaxes in our own day and age.

Here the inevitable tendency is in the direction of "a workerless industry," as announced by a leading industrial engineer.

The machine is very much perfected and if all inventions were put to work little if any hand labor would at all be necessary. Yet here we are standing at the cradle of the new social order and the workers who are to usher in this new social order, with themselves mounting into power, are hesitating, halting, squirming, "conferencing," with their eyes unseeing. We are living the change from the old to the new and all we find is rationalizing and excuses.

Indeed we should not need a new labor party in this country if the labor unions were unions of labor, not in name only. Nor should we need a labor

party if the existing parties had any thing in common with labor. The Socialist Party had not. It is a middle class affair, catering to small business people and professionals. The Communist is not. This party is an American excuse for a Russian propaganda league. Is it not obvious then that a new political alignment is essential on the field of labor in this country?

Do we need a new political party on old lines? No, we do not, we already have too many. Moreover, did not the capitalist rulers of this country feel the need for a "double," as it were, in order to hold out the pretense that the American worker had the right of choice of political parties? Under such circumstances, only one of the major parties would more than fill the bill. But do we not need a new labor party? Not just a new political party, but a labor party? In the United States, on a national plane, no true labor party has ever existed. Thus a new labor party cannot be accused of "dualism". An independent labor party would be a new thing: a new venture to be tried out and adjudged on its own merits, whether or not it is the thing that will serve labor in its present dilemma. An independent labor party into which the American worker could be drawn and possibly weaned away from the old parties which he has been supporting and maintaining; also something different from either the Socialist or Communist party.

An independent labor party would be an educational medium if nothing else: a haven which 100 per centers, 75 or 50 per cent American workers might dare look toward and desire to associate with.

If there is a possibility that an American labor party will be a factor in rousing the workers of this country out of their lethargy, is it not worth trying to build such a party? Is not every thing worth trying that will pry loose the American worker from his old moorings? An achievement that neither Socialists nor Communists have ever effected.

Everything would seem to be worth trying that will be instrumental in kicking off the capitalist system from the backs of the workers, rather than risk the chances of having the system die on our hands, while its ghost befuddles the brains of the common people of this country, who are being ground to smithereens by the machine process in the meantime.

An independent labor party may not be a panacea for all labor's ills. But it will likely be a step in the direction of a permanent cure and the results may be superbly gratifying, to even the Industrial Union sceptic.

WHAT OUR READERS THINK

"AN AMERICAN CITIZEN"

Dear Comrades:

We are experiencing a disheartening struggle in our union. Our International president has lined up with the reactionaries who are attacking every sign of liberalism. As the spokesman of the radicals, I am exposed to a heavy bombardment of slanders and accusations, but I am weathering the storm with apparent success.

As an example of the kind of people I must work with I quote from a letter written by a fellow union member to the local paper in response to an article of mine which this same paper had published, in which I appealed to the workers to write to their Congressmen to vote for an anti-injunction bill then before the Senate. This fellow, who signed himself "An American Citizen," wrote the following:

"I do not believe any injunction issued by a Federal judge ever interferred with the rights of any man minding his own affairs. However, I am willing to leave the matter of the pending bill to the good judgment of our Senators who are much better qualified to pass on the merits of the bill than either Mr. ——— or myself.

"The criticism I have to make of Mr. ———'s article is that he is not a voter, and is not, I have reason to believe, an American citizen, lacking which it would seem rather presumptious on his part to advise American citizens what they should do about their laws.

"Just before the Senate gives consideration to anti-injunction laws, I hope they will take up the matter of dealing with some aliens in this country and arrange to deport those who are not satisfied with our institutions and are trying to undermine them. It might lead to less unemployment among American citizens and less occasion for the request for an injunction by employers."

Of course they are the same all over, but it does produce an unpleasant situation when one encounters too large a percentage of that kind. But one must, of course, not let pessimism conquer. Time and patience and determination often conquer the seemingly unconquerable.

For example, last fall we tried to donate some money to the Tom Mooney Defense and were emphatically denounced as Communists "who wanted to destroy the government" because we "interfered with the workings of the laws of our country." Yet this spring we collected more than $100 in this locality for Mooney, and most of those who so bitterly fought us last fall contributed their mite this spring.

You have perhaps at times wondered why I do not write. Well, the fact is that whenever there is enough energy left in me after a day on the job to be able to do any writing there is always something else that has to be written. But, of course, if anything of particular interest or significance occurs I shall try to inform you without delay.

Fraternally, O.

WHO IS MARXIAN?

Dear Comrades:

I was very much interested in the article by Comrade Oneal in your last issue suggesting that the propaganda and publicity by Norman Thomas which goes out to various labor papers represents the liberal element in the Socialist Party, against which Comrade Oneal as a Marxist (and I presume he would include Comrade Hillquit in the category of a Marxist) are struggling. The reason I say I presume that Oneal would include Hillquit as a Marxist is because Oneal generally follows Hillquit's leadership on such matters of party policy as our attitude toward Russia, toward the unions, or toward such bodies attempting to wake up the unions to more vigorous action, as the C.P.L.A.

It seems to me that Comrade Oneal has gotten the situation twisted. So far as they are vocal on trends within the party, Comrades Hillquit and Oneal have been highly critical of organizations seeking to make the unions act along lines of the class struggle instead of along their present more or less quiescent lines. When the question of approving a formal endorsement given to the C. P. L. A. by one of our party organizations came before the National Executive Committee, Comrades Oneal and Hillquit opposed it, while Norman Thomas, though not on the N. E. C., spoke in favor of it.

The same general trend was observable in our 1928 convention. Comrade Hillquit at that convention was chairman of the constitutional committee and

Comrade Thomas was on the platform committee. The constitutional committee, headed by Comrade Hillquit, voted to recommend to the convention to drop from our application card the phrase, "recognizing the existence of the class struggle." The platform committee, headed by Norman Thomas, specifically included in the platform recognition of the class struggle by name.

If recognizing the class struggle is being Marxian, and it is certainly one of the most important elements of Marxism, there is no doubt that Comrade Thomas was more Marxian than Comrade Hillquit, and Comrade Hillquit was distinctly liberal compared with Comrade Thomas.

ALFRED BAKER LEWIS.

Editor's Note: Comrade Lewis, in addition to being secretary of the New England District of the Socialist Party, is on the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party.

SCOTTSBORO AND THE I. L. D.

Dear Comrades:-

Colored Americans everywhere in the United States are challenged as never before by the vicious attempt at legal wholesale lynching in Alabama to unite as a powerful political-economic factor in the affairs of the Nation and fight to the death Jim-crowism, race hatred, segregation and lynching. I say "colored Americans" first, because it is the constitutional title of colored people, and, secondly, because the word Negro is no longer descriptive. There is no Negro race and the word, through misuse, has become more or less a brand. Progressive intelligent colored citizens assembled in many conferences have banned the word as a title and assumed their proper status as "colored Americans."

Much publicity has been given the farcical trial and malicious sentences meted out to the nine colored boys in Scottsboro.

Not so much space is given to the nine defendants or to the case as to the opposed factions squabbling for control of the defense, namely, the International Labor Defense, controlled by the Communist Party; the League of Struggle for Negro Rights, controlled by the Communist Party, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Here are the undeniable facts. States, south and south-west of Washington, D. C., are prejudice ridden, race hatred infested, breeding nests of Jim-crowism. State governments, governors, mayors, police officials, sheriffs, militia, judges and courts are all white and controlled by whites who have, with few exceptions as many prejudices and race antipathies as the average imbecillic hill-billy. It is a generally enforced ruling in the south to absolutely disbar all colored persons, no matter how intelligent or what their qualifications, from voting or serving on juries.

One of these juries, comprised of typical far south backwoods illiterates and Klansmen condemned to death eight colored lads in a whirlwind trial with no evidence, no justice, and a galaxy of ten thousand howling, blood thirsty, mob-mad whites. It is perfectly obvious that the boys' only crime was the fact of being colored and riding on the same freight train, not even the same car, with white women. The women's being prostitutes made no difference, they were white, or at least were accepted for white. The old Bourbon slogan of "white supremacy" has so distorted the judgment and warped the sense of values of the average white southerner that there are sections where stupid natives **insist** on having colored smokers ask for "Mr. Prince Albert tobacco."

The Communist Party, through the I. L. D., believes in demonstration, noisy remonstration and violence. Admitted that public mass meetings, demonstrations and fund raising campaigns throughout the country and abroad are good and do indirectly bring much pressure to bear on local officials if the cause be justified, nevertheless circumstances alter cases.

In this specific instance where black is opposed to white in the economic and political stronghold of the whites, who are dominated by demoniacal race hatred, it seems peculiarly impulsive and unintelligent to further antagonize them to more slaughter of innocent citizens or to their desire to burn up the nine lads now playing tag with the electric chair, until some sure measure of safety has been secured the potential victims.

In cases of court injustices, deliberate farcical trials and imposed inhuman sentences, isn't it the only intelligent procedure to hold mass demonstrations, protest meetings and defense fund drives outside the borders of the guilty state in a determined effort to take the case out of the state, out of the jurisdiction of prejudiced courts? In other words, to procure an entire change of venue so as not to in any way jeopardize the defendants' chances to secure fair, unbiased trial.

It has been and still is generally an impossibility to get fair trials for colored persons being prosecuted by the state or white plaintiffs in southern courts. Over-zealous and impetuous protests, threats or demonstrations only help to tighten the noose about the necks of unwitting offenders, if they be colored. Admitted, that politico-economic conditions in the south for colored citizens are insufferable, are we to assume those damnable conditions can be changed by unorganized colored groups going out to fight disciplined state troops' police, etc., with plow shares, pitchforks, and pocket pistols against machine guns, gas, steel armaments and areoplanes? Such foolhardy tactics are untenable, yet Communist organizers propose just such a plan (an eye for an eye!). To date they have succeeded in getting four foolish colored converts killed, over thirty-four jailed, and many wounded!

As a class-conscious colored citizen I am plunged deep in the maelstrom of chaos, doubt and suffering caused by the abuse heaped high on the heads of my people. I know that no organization, including the I. L. D. can help my people in the south by using methods and tactics that fan latent race hatreds into consuming flames and orgies of killing. I. L. D. and Communist organizers may know their Marx, but they don't know the southern United States or its inhabitants. Nor do they intelligently apply themselves to a study of the conditions and adequate solutions.

ARTHUR C. PARKER,
Socialist Party
Boston, Mass. Organizer

And These Are Our Rulers

For nearly two years President Hoover has been issuing consoling assurances that the end of the depression is now at hand. Strangely enough, matters became worse almost immediately after each of these assurances.

A few weeks ago came the pronouncement from the Great Engineer regarding the German moratorium, which was finally to cure all the ills of world capitalism. Mr. Hoover was hailed throughout the world as the saviour of humanity and the Messiah, who had led us out of the present serious crisis.

A picture of the world today, shows conditions materially worse than they were a few weeks ago and demonstrates beyond a shadow of a doubt that capitalism has no substantial and reliable way out of the present international crisis.

The picture is particularly dark in Great Britain. Ramsay MacDonald, it was said, would bring socialism to that country, by methods both gradual and gentlemanly, in direct contrast to the rough and ready methods of the Russian Bolsheviks. Yet we witness that by that very process of peaceful gradualism, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, the socialist, and conscientious objector against war, is today the boon companion of such reactionaries as Stanley Baldwin, Austen Chamberlain and Samuel Hoare. Politics does indeed make strange bedfellows.

Now as never before British labor must clean house both in the trade union and on the political field. It is indeed encouraging that the next Joint Meeting of the Trade Union Council, the National Executive of the Labor party and the consultative committee of the left wing Parliamentary Labor Party is planning to read both Mr. MacDonald and Mr. Snowden out of the party. But the process of house cleaning must be a thorough and a drastic one, so that labor may have a powerful industrial and political weapon for the great struggles which are to come.

Wall Street Al Wiggin in the meantime is the chosen emissary to save Germany. Germany it must be remembered is the vital link in the European economic chain. All other countries are deeply concerned with what happens to her.

The words of Professors Bass and Moulton in "America and the Balance Sheet of Europe", although written as far back as 1921, can be recalled today with profit. They stated at that time that "the insistence of Allied nations that Germany must pay to the limit of her capacity is the supreme inconsistency of the age." The Allies will continue to insist that Germany pay, whether in slower or faster stages, the inconsistency will remain, and Germany will remain the centre of Europe's and of the world's economic tangle.

Into the breach steps Sir Al with noble purposes openly declared. In weighing these purposes, it should not be overlooked that Wiggin, represents the Chase National Bank, which incidentally is the biggest American holder of German bonds, with a total investment of over $120,000,000 in Germany.

The Wiggin Commission worked out what the German delegates called a "Stillstand Consortium." The American delegates at first proposed that German foreign credits were to be left untouched for a period of six months. Under the pressure of the opposition of the French delegates, this period was reduced to three months. We are confident that at the end of this period the economic difficulties of Germany will still stand with more perplexities for Mr. Wiggin to solve than he faces today.

And now for a look at the picture closer at home. The Federal Farm Board has proposed to the embattled farmers of the South that they plow in every third row of cotton in order to counteract the effects of overproduction in this product. The Board points out that while 24,500,000 bales of cotton are being produced, world consumption is actually between 13 and 14 million bales. The proposal which was made to the Governors of 14 cotton states involves the destruction of five million bales of cotton at a loss of at least $150,000,000 to the cotton planters, at a time when every stalk of cotton is mortgaged to the root, and when at the same time the anomalous situation exists that millions are without the necessary clothing to wear.

The response to this proposal was a howl of indignation from the cotton states, with the suggestion that every third member of the Farm Board be duly plowed under. But that would only involve the risk of getting a more stupid dub in his place. We suggest plowing under the stupid system of capitalist production which makes such conditions possible.

Not to be outdone by the Federal Farm Board for stupidity, "Cockleburr" Bill Murray, Governor of Oklahoma, has ordered the National Guard of that state to shut all oil wells until the price of oil will have reached $1.00 per barrel. Following his example, Governor Ross Shaw Sterling of Texas has just sent 1,000 troops to the second largest oil field in the world on a similar errand. Every one of 1,600 oil wells within 2,815 square miles have been shut down. Nevertheless oil is still selling at 52 cents a barrel, which proves that martial law must bow before economic law.

Justt o cap the picture we find three big banks closed in Toledo. In Akron and Cuyahoga Falls twelve building and loan associations suspended payments. In Omaha several small banks failed to open their doors. In Nebraska six small banks shut down, while in Hopewell, Va. the local bank and trust company failed.

So we see on every hand both nationally and internationally, a picture of growing confusion and chaos as the present crisis takes on greater and greater proportions in spite of the glowing prophecies of the Great Engineer in the White House.

And how does Mr. Hoover propose to remedy the situation? On that great federal project called the Hoover Dam, in honor of America's foremost wage-maintainer, wages have recently been reduced from $5.00 to $4.00, with workers working under unspeakable conditions, in almost unbearable heat, compelled to drink river water and subjected to constant risk of accidents. Walter Young, construction engineer of the Federal Bureau of Reclamation has ordered the reservation cleared of all who do not have passes signed by him. And as far as President Hoover is concerned, he apparently does not give a damn as to what happens to these laborers.

From the facts given it is clear that no substantial improvement for the working population can come from any of the panaceas proposed by the wise men of big business. Labor will itself have to tackle the problem by abolishing the present unplanned, chaotic system of capitalist production and put in its place a system of planned economy, which will produce for the use of all humanity and not primarily for profit.

BENJAMIN MANDEL.

Flashes from the Labor World

"Labor Omnia Vincit." So the Latin motto of the American Federation of Labor has it. But if "Labor Always Wins", there are at least periods of temporary delay. Maybe Sam Gompers didn't know the Latin for "eventually."

The summer of 1931 must be marked as a period of defeats. In some cases they have been called "organized retreats," and in others they have been passed over without a name. But labor, struggling in the worst business crisis the nation has ever seen, has taken some stinging blows this summer.

The National Miners Union announced an "organized retreat" in the Pittsburgh district strike, announcing that 75 per cent of their strikers had been forced back to work by starvation. They adopted the tactic of putting local demands up to local groups and urging struggles on that basis.

Allentown silk workers did almost the same thing under A. F. of L. leadership. Faced by friction among the strikers—the Communists captured the strike at least twice for a period of a couple of days—and reaching an end of the possibilities of keeping up even the relief that had been given, the strikers voted to allow any mill to settle on terms satisfactory to the workers in that mill. They would have the approval of the union and would keep their union membership, it was announced.

The West Virginia Mine Workers Union, after a desperate fight against odds, announced that it would "continue its fight at certain mines and against discrimination. In other words, the hope of unionizing the Kanawha coal fields must be abandoned for this year. It was a bitter pill for leadership that had built a strong union years ago and had never known defeat. It left hopelessness and desperation in the hearts of thousands of workers, their wives and children. They must go back to wages which mean slow starvation, sickness and misery—or take to the hills in the old West Virginia style and shoot it out. The hungry miners later marched on Charleston in small numbers, were ordered to stay out of Charleston by the mayor, and kept out by 40 state police, posted at the Kanawha bridge. They promised they would come back, 5,000 strong, and pass that bridge, cops or no cops.

The whole country is on edge, awaiting some such spark as these West Virginia miners might well set off. Millions of hungry men are wondering how long the others like themselves will take their suffering in the midst of plenty, peacefully. They note that the farmers of England, Ark., were fed when they showed they meant to get food. When the capitalists and mayors of West Virginia put cops on the bridge to drive hungry miners back into their hills to starve they are playing with fire—big fire.

* * *

The American Federation of Full Fashioned Hosiery Workers put on a campaign at Reading characterized by their usual fire and dramatic tactics. They pitched camp outside the town and brought in 150 organizers to comb the city for possible strikers. Then they called a national convention for the day the strike was to take place. Two days later they announced the strike had failed, they called off their strike and then moved their convention to Philadelphia. Here's one cheer for a union that will say it is whipped in battle, when it is, without any talk of "great moral victory."

Another kind of desperate fight against odds is still going on at Harlan, Ky. Here 335 criminal cases have grown out of the fight against starvation wages started last spring by local unions of the U. M. W. A.—a strike without the approval of the Lewis regime. Every effort has been made to block relief and defense and to keep the facts of the frame-ups from getting to the outside world. While workers were being shot down the capitalist press paid no attention. A prominent southern newspaper editor was shot covering the story—and the newspapers, which usually spring to the defense of their own, did not discover it until the Scripps-Howard papers awoke three weeks after the event!

Then Federated Press, which usually serves as news-distributor rather than news-maker, made the bosses' press when a second newspaperman, Boris Israel, was taken from the courthouse by deputy sheriffs and shot. That was a bit too thick, and the newspapers of the country took it up. Federated Press sent Mrs. Harvey O'Connor to Harlan, having her stop en route to ask the governor whether she would also be shot. This took the fancy of the press, and of course the governor assured her she would be perfectly safe, if she "obeyed the law." Not being a gangster, despite her Chicago residence, she agreed to that. However, she had not spent a day in Harlan until she was warned by a letter signed "hundred per cent american"—in that hundred per cent spelling—that she must not let the sun set on her in Harlan. She cheerfully noted that the sun was down, and stayed! In 24 hours, the Associated Press, which had paid no attention when miners were murdered, carried five stories on the daring of a girl reporter who did not fear the Kluxers, who challenged the judge when he threatened jail for reporters who sent out "biased stories" by asking him wether he wanted to censor what the reporters sent, and who took the places of two men who had been shot.

What darkness is to a sneak thief, silence on the part of the press is to a judge and sheriff trying to frame workers and send them to the electric chair.

These facts must be stated over and over until everyone understands them: Judge D. C. Jones is brother-in-law to a coal operator who hired Bill Randolph. Randolph was out on $25,000 bail for a killing when this operator hired him. He told Sheriff Blair about killing a man friendly to the union miners. He was not arrested on this confession until the militia officer compelled the sheriff to arrest him. The men who took Boris Israel from the courthouse were deputy sheriffs under Blair—and Israeel stands ready to name the man who shot him and identify the two who helped in the attack.

There is crime and lawlessness in Harlan County, and the two men responsible are Judge D. C. Jones and Sheriff James Henry Blair.

* * *

Amid defeat and battles of desperation, the strike at Paterson sends one flash of agressive battling in which the bosses seem to make little headway. Despite the fact the labor army is split, one part being A. F. of L.-led and the other Communist-led, the picket lines are fighting their way to a powerful strike in the silk industry. Panic-bled as silk also is, the Paterson workers are making their power felt and are reported to be making steady headway toward an organized industry.

FRANK L. PALMER

In Other Lands

IRELAND

The Annual Trade Union Congress of the Irish workers of both the Free State and the Six County Ulster corner met at Waterford early last month. Its business was largely of the routine trade union kind. Unemployment was the chief topic of discussion, and it came up several times when other standing orders were being discussed. The president, Denis Cullen of the Bakers Union, in a carefully worded speech reviewed the situation and, altho' he touched upon some important phases of Irish Labor troubles, deplored armaments, blamed the war and reparations for the bad trade and its effects on the country, he did not suggest a strong remedy. He suggested no permanent way out of the jungle. Like the British, Cullen and those in control of the Irish labor movement, seemed to have lost their progressiveness and got themselves enmeshed in middle class opportunism. Several speakers said the workers should get all they create of the wealth, but no policy was formulated to put such progressive ideas into practice. One could not help regretting the power craft unions have in Ireland and wondering what has come over the movement which produced such men as James Connolly and others who fought and died for a progressive ideal. One hopeful sign was that there was no difference between north and south or Protestant and Catholic. All wanted to work together, which was fine, but they made no gesture against the government which they verbally condemned. Miss Moloney and some of the women delegates did now and then show signs of rebellion. They appeared to be trying to evolve a more united and co-ordinated program of tactics and conduct, but they were not able to put their views across.

SPAIN

Secure in its power, the new republican government of Spain is turning vigorously on the church malcontents. The government has demanded that the Pope disavow the tactics of Cardinal Sigura who is leading the ultra-montaines toward mischief and their own injury. Clergymen will not be allowed to move or sell church property. Seven Catholic papers were suspended last month and other strong anti-clerical measures were resorted to. The separatist movements in Catalonia and the Basque country, unless they fall into the hands of the clericals, will not be serious. So far their demands are no more radical than the political constitution of an American state or a British dominion. Of course there will be irritations. The cabinet is going slow with the suggestion of confiscating church property. The radicals and the Socialists are pointing out that it is inevitable. They say if the church is left all its vast properties it will be a state within the state and always capable of mischief. The church, they say, must be stripped of its holdings and the property or its money value turned over to the state. A republican Spanish delegate presides over the League of Nations conference in Geneva. The applause he was given was the final act of legal and international recognition of the Republic. The Syndicalists are battling in the cities and the cabinet is shooting them down. Seville had a strike but it did not extend far. New Republics are like the old ones —anti-labor when class interests are at stake.

U. S. S. R., CHINA AND INDIA

The Soviet continues, though frequently blundering and floundering, to forge ahead. It seems to have few or no political troubles. Stalin has proclaimed a new economic policy of his own. He seems to be recognizing facts and adjusting the policy of the Soviet according to the logic of the occasion. More and more skilled labor is being imported and the standard of living is rising. Rationing is abolished. The Soviet has concluded a treaty with France which means exchange of goods, equality, and peace between these late enemies. Some years ago it had a bad famine. Now it has good crops and is able to aid the Chinese who are suffering from every form of misfortune, floods, disease, famine and war. The revolutionists in China appear to be holding their own against the imperialists. Chiang's attempt to embroil the country in war with Japan did not succeed. No one can take seriously his claims to victory over the revolutionists. India is still boycotting British goods and, in a measure, is responsible for the present troubles in England. Gandhi will not go to the London round table conference. He evidently has heard of the old British proverb: Will you walk into the parlor said the spider to the fly? There is much irresponsible violence and also some calculated attacks on government officers.

FRANCE, GERMANY AND ITALY

With few labor troubles and scarcely no unemployment France, with its huge stacks of gold, its great army and compact navy, continues to boss Europe. It dictates German financial policies, assists England on its own terms, sends word to Czecko-Slovia and the Little Entente that it is keeping an eye out for any of their potential enemies. It tells Poland to behave. So we find as a result an anti-French sentiment cultivated in London and other capitals. It does not seem to be able to sink deep. Wall Street, ever admirer of success and of great wealth, is friendly to Paris, and between them are ruling the world. There is no sign of a social revolution though there are many signs of the capitalist system crashing and crubling. In South America, in Mexico, in the United States and in Australia as well as Europe one reads of hopelessness, of stagnation, of mental bankruptcy on the part of the leaders and of economic chaos all around. French papers, like the New York press, applaud the desertion of labor by MacDonald, Snowden and Thomas. The man who is happiest is Aristide Briand.

P. H. QUINLAN.

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Can Business Acquire Social Conscience?

(Continued from page 19)

point of absolute stoppage, with the security markets in a state closely akin to utter collapse, and recording prodigious declines, with farmers passing through a period of acute distress as a result of the tremendous shrinkage in the market values of wheat and cotton . . . with the railroads carrying interest suffering contraction in traffic and income, gross and net, to the point where their very solvency is threatened and with bank failures all over the country, large and small, so numerous as to be perfectly startling." They apparently don't realize that it is Big Business that is responsible for the continuance of this demoralization of industry and commerce.

"Say It With Books"

SOMETHING INTELLIGENT ABOUT MARX

Toward the Understanding of Karl Marx by Sidney Hook.

IN a pamphlet of 40 pages, Professor Sidney Hook of New York University, has given one of the most enlightening contributions to the understanding of Karl Marx and of the revolutionary labor movement that we have come across in many a moon. Since this pamphlet was originally written for a "learned periodical" it unfortunately contains a few difficult words and technical philosophic expressions.

In spite of this, we believe that most of it can be understood by the average intelligent, active, worker who is in the habit of keeping up with labor literature, and certainly advise all such workers, as well as students of the labor movement, to read it.

The essential contribution of Marx, according to Dr. Hook, is a method or philosphy of social revolution, a method that is to help the working class achieve the revolution necessary for its emancipation. The method consisted of regarding any culture or stage of human development, the feudal, for example, or the capitalist, as a developing whole. Interaction takes place within this whole between the fundamental economic conditions, method of production, etc., and the groups or classes who live under this culture. To this developing whole you apply criticism or analysis. You study on the one hand the utterances, and on the other hand the actual behavior of such classes, what they say and think about themselves and what they actually do. Thus you psycho-analyze the group or class so-to-speak. You see its ethics, religion, literature, etc., as a resultant of its economic position. Its ruling ideas are ways in which it justifies its position and its activities. "The poor we have always with us" justifies exploitation. When the working-class applies this method of criticism to the capitalist system, it becomes conscious of its mission and at the same time its leaders become equipped to act as "professional revolutionists". Thus with economic forces on the one hand and revolutionary organization on the other, the new order is achieved.

It is obviously possible on this interpretation to accept the validity and the permanent importance of Marx's method without fealing bound to use him as a Talmud and Bible, and to accept everyone of his conclusions. It becomes possible also to understand how there may be seeming contradictions in his work, since always he was essentiolly the revolutionist and not the academician, and was applying his methods to concrete problems in the labor movement as they arose. Thus he could emphasize one point in opposition to a particular mistake and place the emphasis at a very different point at another time in dealing with another concrete situation.

The "Orthodox" Marxists of the German Social Democracy were wrong, therefore, in holding that Marx had elaborated an objective science of society according to which it was absolutely certain that Socialism must come automatically as a result of evolution. Actually they wanted an excuse for not taking any militant steps in the direction of Socialism or the capture of power so that Socialism might be established, and found in their would-be scientific interpretation of Marx a convenient excuse for inactivity.

Bernstein and other revisionists were right in repudiating Marxism as a finished science and in calling upon the representatives of the Social Democracy to square their theories with their practise and admit that they were social reformers. Bernstein, however, thought that he had rid of Marx when he had thrown doubt on some of his conclusions not realizing or perhaps not wishing to realize that the important thing about Marx was his revolutionary method and that this remained perfectly valid.

The revolutionary syndicalists on their part were "instinctively correect" in their "appreciation of the central importance of the class struggle in Marx" but laid too much stress on intuition and revolutionary impulse and far too little on the scientific method of revolutionary analysis and action which Marx had provided.

Rosa Luxemburgh, Liebknecht and Lenin, according to Professor Hook, came nearest to a sound interpretation of Marx. Understanding Marxism as "a theory of social revolution," Luxemburg replied to Bernstein and the Orthordox Social Democrats that the goal of the proletarian movement "was not the organization of a Socialist commonwealth (whose problems could be only intelligently met when they arose) but by conquest of political power". On this basis an intelligent relation between practical reforms and ultimate aims could be worked out. If practical reforms are the essential thing, then, for example, you might vote credits for the Kaiser's army in exchange for an improvement in election laws—especially since Socialism must automatically come anyway! "If the state had to be captured it was sheer lunacy to begin by strengthening it. . . ." If the goal is the conquest of political power, "reforms are to be regarded as the by-products of the class struggle. Immediate demands are not thereby stricken from the program (this was the error of Daniel DeLeon, the most 'Orthodox' of American Marxists) but are made by springboards of political agitation. No issue then could be too small if it served to intensify the class struggle. But every class struggle must be regarded as potentially a political struggle. It is directed not only towards improving the condition of the masses, which is important enough, but toward wresting control of the State from the hands of the dominant class."

The error made by the bolshevists, according to Dr. Hook, is that while they have properly laid emphasis on Marxism as a theory of social action, they cling to the notion that Marx elaborates a complete "science of social change." Thus they confuse their own minds and feel that in order to be good Marxists they have to do and profess many things which on a sound interpretation of Marx could well be left to one side.

The present reviewer is not a sufficiently erudite student of Marx and the

literature of Marxism, to be able to pass final judgment as to whether Dr. Hook's interpretation of Marx is the only possible one. The author's analysis of the various trends in the Socialist and radical movement, however, is certainly sound and very illuminating; and if his interpretation of Marx is not the correct one then it should be. We do not need a cut-and-dried Bible of social science, much of which is bound to be out-worn the day after tomorrow, but a method of understanding the struggle of classes in a developing society and a theory of social action.

A Book For Workers

Labor Fact Book, by Labor Research Association. International Publishers. New York. 1931. 213 pages.

NO more opportune time than the present could be chosen for publishing a volume such as "Labor Fact Book."

This country's rapid advance and change in economic life during and since the last war, with the attendant loop-the-loop down swing within the last two years, has made it difficult for a great many to keep abreast of events. Studies setting forth these events, such as the "Report on Recent Economic Changes," are both too expensive to obtain and too detailed and technical to follow, especially for workers who are more or less active in the labor movement. A "Hand Book on Present Day America" was badly needed.

The Labor Research Association, apparently, realized this need and set out to furnish "data on the economic crisis, imperialism, the danger of war, the distribution of national wealth and income, lynchings, injunctions, union organizations, farm mortgages, state police, sedition laws, anti-labor legislation," etc. (from the Foreword). The undertaking is excellently fulfilled.

In the brief space of 10 pages the authors deal with all the important facts and figures about the material background of the United States and its possessions; the area, population, the kinds and extent of the natural resources, the total acreage of productive land and the percentage thereof under cultivation, the value of the natural products and the commodities manufactured from them; also the mileage of transportation by water, rail, highways and air, and the percentage the same constitutes of the world's total—showing at once the economic position of the United States in the world. The chapter is concluded by pointing out the swift change of the United States from a creditor nation in 1880 to being the world's banker today.

In Present Day Imperialism (Chapter 2) we learn about the area and population of the four great empires, the world's total exports and the share of the principal countries therein, and the relation of exports to imperialism. In this section we see how the "Changing Character of United States' Exports"—from agricultural products constituting 62 per cent in 1896 to 67 per cent of non-agricultural products in 1929, and the phenomenal 300 per cent rise in sales of finished manufactures over the average for the period of 1910-14 as compared with the rise in sales for the same period of only 60 per cent in raw materials—brings the United States in sharp conflict with the Old World powers. And the swift growth of foreign investments of American capital, continuously driving out from long-established positions the Old World banker, Great Britain, enhances this conflict between the capitalists of the two empires.

Space does not permit even to enumerate all the high spots of the book. But brief mention should be made of the chapter on "Finance Capitalism in U. S." Here we find that the workers, working farmers and small working shop keepers, constituting 87 per cent of the population, own barely 10 per cent of the national wealth of $360,000,000,000. And that of the national income of $89,400,000,000 in 1928 only 36 per cent went to wages, the balance going to salaries, bonuses, interest and profit.

It must be pointed out that the book, though primarily a study in economic and political conditions of the country, is not devoid of a tendency. For instance, describing the distribution of the national income for 1928 the authors say that "$3,400,000,000 went in taxes for the support of the government (with its courts, police, and army and navy—not to mention its grafting officials—operating in the interest of the capitalist class)." There are a few other similar expressions and statements, with which many will agree, and many others, no doubt, will disagree. But the latter, just as much as the former, will find the book of great aid as a ready source of reference.

The International Publishers have rendered a great service by making this book available at the depression-price of 85 cents for paper-bound copies. The prosperous ones can get cloth-bound copies for $2.

HYMAN BARUFKIN.

Legal "Ethics"

A Lawyer Tells the Truth, by Morris Gisnet, with an introduction by Norman Thomas. The Concord Press, 1482 Broadway, New York City, 1931. 160 pages, $2.00.

IN 160 pages a lawyer cannot possibly tell the whole truth about the law as it is practiced in our business civilization—besides it might be too dazzling and shocking—but he can present enough to convince even the most naive that the ethics of the profession have little meaning in actual practice. This the author has done quite effectively, while in his introduction Norman Thomas declares: "I do not know any profession, not excepting the Christian ministry, in which the gap between its ethical canons and the practice of its members is so wide and hypocrisy so great." As a result of 25 years practice, Mr. Gisnet asserts that business does not want honest lawyers, and that the most successful lawyer is the one who is cunning and astute and who knows the judge.

The familiar story of the magistrate racket is laid bare and we are enlightened about "ambulance chasing" and "contingent fees," and what is more interesting, we learn that title guaranty and trust companies and casualty companies are "huge law factories," competing with individual legal practitioners. So it seems that even the law business is not exempt from trustification. These companies hire able lawyers at $50 or $60 a week, and it is easy to understand why those who are lucky enough to be on hand when a title is "closed" accept a $5 tip with gratitude.

This truth-telling lawyer does not stop with an indictment of the profession and the courts. In a final chapter he proposes certain "Roads to Justice," which are based on the idea of socializing the practice of law. He favors (1) the abolition of all legal costs in the courts, including the expense of appeals to higher courts; (2) the creation of the office of Public Defender and (3) free legal aid offices in the civil courts. Norman Thomas agrees that the practice of law needs to be socialized, but he doubts if it can be done satisfactorily in a capitalist society.

Were these proposals to be put into effect Labor would have cause for rejoicing, indeed, but until Labor is strong enough to overhaul the courts from top to bottom they must remain mere suggestions that will not be taken seriously.

LEONARD BRIGHT.

The Miners Situation

(Continued from Page 13)

raged throughout the Spring and Summer in Kentucky, Ohio, West Virginia, etc., have temporarily subsided. In every instance something has been won from the operators. They have been taught that the miners will fight and that doom impends for them if they do not make some improvement in the district soon. Hence, all these recent trial balloons from the operators side proposing "government regulation" or "stabilization from within the industry" or the establishment of a "new central competitive field." In Ohio, Pennsylvania and northern West Virginia, a few mines have gone back to work under contracts from the Lewis organization. These contracts are of the most vicious nature, providing for an unsatisfactory wage scale, for the appointment of nine committees by Lewis controlled district officials instead of by the miners themselves, and for the payment of the check-off directly to Lewis controlled district officials instead of to local unions, as in the past. The general strike movement of the U. M. W. and also of the National Miners Union in all these sections has been abandoned. In Kentucky sporadic strikes are still on, and a state of terrorism, almost of civil war, exists, as various groups—I. W. W., Socialists, Communists, etc.—make an effort to gain a foothold there and give leadership to the miners.

The present state of the movement in the Kanawha fields section in West Virginia, is fully described and analyzed in Helen Norton's article and elsewhere in this issue of LABOR AGE.

Where the miners have been driven back to work, it has been at starvation wages and under shameful conditions. Operators, spies, thugs, injunction judges—minions of the law—and the militia, once again in countless instances "licked" the workers. In view of the immediate suffering—physical and spiritual—involved, this is sad and tragic. From another standpoint we need not mourn.

Once again the workers have been given to see that not only is there no prosperity for them under the capitalist system, but that they cannot expect the most elementary justice or security, often not even a bear pittance to keep themselves and their families alive. They have been given to see that in their own organized strength is there only hope. Let them press on, build industrial unions, organize a militant mass labor party, defend their organized strength in every direction until they are able and ready completely to abolish this predictory, profiteering and heartless system, and to set up a planned economy under workers control in which such an absurdity as the coal industry in the United States today will be absolutely impossible.

Paterson Builds a Union

(continued from page 6)

strike, While the N. T. W. U. has spent most of its energy in issuing leaflets denounsing the Amalgamated group, these unions have been busy in mass picket lines and other aggressive action against the anti-union employers. The net result has been that the N. T. W. U. has gradually diminished in strength as the strike has gone on. It has increasingly lost the confidence of such workers as rallied to it at the beginning of the walkout. The Paterson experience shows the bankruptcy of sectarian unionism.