

# Labor Age

**MAY, 1932 . . . . . 15 CENTS**

**For A United Labor Party**

A. J. MUSTE

**'New Lows' in the Depression**

ALFRED L. BERNHEIM

**Winning A Strike**

W. C. MONTROSS

**An Answer to Economists**

I. B. LONG

**We Went to Harlan**

LUCIEN KOCH

**Textile Workers' Conference**

**Trotsky's Book Reviewed**



**CONTENTS**

**EDITORIALS:**

AN AFFRONT TO DECENCY; MAY DAY AND THE WAR....  
DANGER; WILL GREEN FINALLY ACT? THE WAY TO CLEAN  
HOUSE; WHAT AL SMITH WILL FIGHT FOR; EFFECTIVE  
COLLECTIVE BARGAINING.

FOR A UNITED LABOR PARTY.....A. J. Muste 5  
"NEW LOWS" IN THE DEPRESSION.....Alfred L. Bernheim 5  
WINNING A STRIKE.....W. C. Montross 10  
RUGGED INDIVIDUALISM IN ARIZONA.....Martin Moran 11  
REVOLT IN SOUTH CAROLINA.....Larry Hogan 12  
AN ANSWER TO ECONOMISTS.....I. B. Long 13  
THE TEXTILE CONFERENCE,.....A Report 15  
STATEMENT OF TEXTILE CONFERENCE ON A. F. OF L. AND  
INDEPENDENT UNIONS..... 17  
THE OHIO MINER AFTER 40 YEARS.....William R. Truax 17  
WE WENT TO HARLAN.....Lucien Koch 19  
A STEEL WORKER SPEAKS OUT.....A Letter 20  
MILL SHADOWS ON THE ROAD.....Helen G. Norton 21  
THE BRITISH I. L. P. REMAINS INSIDE THE LABOR PARTY  
Mark Starr 22  
C.P.L.A. IN RELATION TO OTHER ORGANIZATIONS AND GROUPS 23  
PROGRAM OF THE PROGRESSIVE HOSIERY WORKERS..... 24  
SLING SHOTS.....Hal 25  
WORKERS CORRESPONDENCE..... 25  
NEW BOOKS..... 26

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The C. P. L. A. Convention will be held on Labor Day week-end, 1932, according to a recent decision of the N. E. C. A formal convention call will be issued and exact place and hour of meeting and other details announced in the near future. Between now and the date of the Convention the N. E. C. will place special emphasis upon holding industrial and regional conferences similar to the Textile Conference recently held in Paterson. Conferences for steel, coal, food industries, needle trades, the South and New England are under consideration. All members and branches are urged to work with redoubled energy to enroll members, establish new branches, and develop activities during the next four months.

ALL C. P. L. A. 'ers  
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Harry Kelly

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# · LABOR · AGE ·

VOL. XXI.

May, 1932

No. 5

**G**OVERNOR ROLPH'S unqualified statement that Tom Mooney is guilty and was justly convicted, in the face of the perjury proven against the witnesses in the case and of the testimony of jurors who now regret that they convicted Mooney on such perjured evidence, is an affront to reason and to every standard of decency. Yet we are not surprised. We were never among those who were hopeful of a pardon, even in the days when Jimmy Walker figured in the headlines of the Mooney case.

## An Affront To Decency

That workers cannot in any important case obtain justice in capitalist courts has been proven many times before. We shall continue to work with more determination than ever for Mooney's release and for the smashing of the system which perpetrates these outrages against the workers.

Probably, however, the most important thing for us to bear in mind just now is that the apathy and lack of militancy in the American labor movement must share with courts and officials under capitalist domination the blame for the decision which dooms Mooney to continued imprisonment. The A. F. of L. has given no leadership, no vigor to the fight for Mooney's release. Rolph and his like can commit their outrages against justice and against labor because they know the A. F. of L. will not properly resent such outrages, will continue to tolerate the system out of which they grow and to lick the boots of the vile politicians who commit them. Imagine such a verdict as Rolph's in such a case in an election year if the official labor movement were not dead from the neck up!

The fight for Mooney's release means the fight to clean up in our unions and to put fighting spirit into our whole labor movement.



**W**AR clouds hang thick on the horizon as the International Holiday of Labor dawns. Japan continues to fasten her military, political and economic grip on Manchuria in disregard to all protests. Until recently it seemed that her military party was trying to avoid a clash with

## May Day and The War Danger

Soviet Russia. Lately, however, dispatches about the actions of White Guard Russians (enemies of the Soviet) in Japanese controlled territory are very disturbing, and it looks as if Japan might be thinking of an attack on Soviet Russia in Siberia. She figures doubtless that other capitalist nations would not mind seeing Russia weakened. Some of them might even attack Russia from the west if they thought that she would be helpless because occupied with Japan in the East.

At the Disarmament Conference in Geneva little progress is being made. France and Italy are still in disagreement about naval affairs and there is a lot of talk in Great Britain that she will have to begin navy building again because France and Italy have refused to curtail. Hitler achieved a signal victory in the recent Prussian elections. In the United States there is a lot of talk about economy

in government expenses, but in the midst of it Congress seems ready to vote a huge appropriation for the navy.

It may be that war will for the present be averted. It is hard to see where nations would get the money for another war. On the other hand, when there is so much dynamite around, any spark may be the signal for a big explosion. Besides, if mass misery among the workers continues to grow, capitalists may resort to war in a last desperate attempt to rally the patriotism of the workers and so to save their system.

Let the workers everywhere make it clear on this May Day that they will not engage in another bloody war with their fellow-workers to save a decaying and unjust system which brings starvation to the masses in the very midst of plenty. Let them make it especially plain that they will not stand for any attack on Soviet Russia. Here in the United States this is the time to push the movement for recognition of Soviet Russia. Japan might stop to think if the United States were to recognize Russia just now. Above all, the workers in the United States must dedicate themselves on this May Day together with their fellow-workers throughout the world, to a renewed struggle to overthrow the capitalist system. The system which makes cannon fodder out of the workers in time of war is the same system that makes machine fodder out of them in time of peace. Abolish war! Abolish capitalism! This is our MAY DAY slogan!



**T**HE exposee of the agreement between the Edison interests and the officers of Local 3 of the Electrical Workers, in last month's LABOR AGE, has led to interesting developments.

## Will Green Finally Act?

The Brotherhood of Edison Employees demanded of President Green of the A. F. of L. that he act drastically in the matter. Trial and expulsion of officers of the Electrical Workers from the American Federation of Labor was urged in a letter sent to him. Green, in reply, admitted that the charge was a serious one but stated that the federation had no power to do anything. Action was up to the membership of the Electrical Workers, through their union channels.

The *New York World Telegram* of April 18 hotly challenged Green's policy of hands off. In a leading editorial, "Abdicated?" it asks the following pertinent questions:

"Does the American Federation of Labor confess that it has become weaker than its own affiliates, international, national and local?"

"Has this great federation surrendered its power to insist that all labor unions which hold its charters shall keep their practices and policies consistent with the high principles the federation professes?"

"Does 'home rule' now justify misrule, so far as labor's higher councils are concerned?"

"In view of the increasing number of minority protests,

court actions, criminal indictments, charges of official tyranny and coercion in important labor unions, we do not see how the heads of the big labor organizations can go on side-stepping their responsibility and dodging questions like the above."

It is a startling fact that it takes a liberal capitalist paper to challenge the A. F. of L. on abuses within its ranks. To a degree the challenge apparently went home. For, in an interview with a Scripps-Howard representative in Washington a few days later, Green announced that he would conduct an investigation of the abuses in New York and New Jersey. A personal representative of his will do this job, he stated.

The question being asked in labor circles is: Will Green finally act? Will he get down to brass tacks in the house-cleaning which so many unions need badly?

Over in New Jersey the bad odor connected with Brandeism is being used as an excuse by anti-union forces to defeat the proposed anti-injunction bill. An open campaign is being conducted in the public press along that line.

Organized labor is at a tremendous disadvantage, in securing decent legislation for the wage-workers, as long as it is burdened with racketeering and autocratic leadership in so many of its units.

If there were no other reason than that, the necessity for a thorough clean-up would be apparent.



**F**ROM its beginning the C.P.L.A. has taken a firm stand against autocracy, corruption and racketeering which have crept into so many of our trade unions. We have supported genuine rank and file efforts to rid the unions of these evils. Resentment against such conditions and determination to remove them have become much more widespread among rank and file unionists in recent months. Under stress of economic conditions union members have been suffering from unemployment and wage cuts and so have become much more interested in the possibility of revamping their unions and making them fit to cope with present conditions. Revolt within unions has consequently taken on considerable proportions, in some cases involving sensational court actions, charging officials with embezzlement of hundreds of thousands of dollars, etc. Thus the whole matter is now very much in the public eye.

**The Way To Clean House**

Employers and other enemies of labor naturally make use of these criticisms coming from within, in their attempts to break up the unions or to advance company unionism. It is even possible that in some instances such foes of labor secretly finance the actions of members who oppose the officialdom. This is regrettable, and all true friends of labor must carefully scrutinize any so-called clean-up movements in the unions in which they may be interested.

However, the trick employed by reactionary corrupt elements in the unions of denouncing every criticism coming from the membership as being inspired by nuts, reds or open shoppers, is just as cheap when employed by these trade unionists as when used by politicians who try to discredit the whole labor movement by similar methods. No institution or movement can survive if all criticism and opposition from within is to be silenced because enemies perchance make capital out of the same.

We believe on the other hand that great care must be exercised in carrying on movements to bring about better conditions in the unions. Taking union affairs into capital-

ist courts is always a risky business and we believe it ought not to be resorted to except in the most extreme cases. Nothing can come, furthermore, of any movement which is merely an attempt to replace one set of officials by another which is no more intelligent and honest. The one hope of re-energizing unions is in building honest rank and file oppositions composed of members who know the labor movement as a whole, who want to build and not destroy, and who wage battle on principles and policies and not on personalities.



**A**L SMITH has often been described as the greatest "friend of labor" in public life in this generation. He has been used to justify the policy of the A. F. of L. in banking on getting results from politicians in the old parties rather than by labor building a party of its own. Al announced sometime ago that he was a candidate for the Democratic nomination, but only a passive one. He would take the nomination if offered, he would let his friends work for him, but he would not exert himself.

### What Al Smith Will Fight For

Then at a Jefferson Day dinner in Washington last month Al let it be known in no uncertain tones that there was something he was ready to fight about. He would fight any "demagogue" who attempted to stir up class prejudice, "the bitterness of the rich against the poor and of the poor against the rich."

Listen carefully:  
"I protest against the endeavor to delude the poor people of this country to their ruin by trying to make them believe that they can get employment before the people who would ordinarily employ them are also again restored to conditions of normal prosperity."

"A factory worker cannot get his job back until business conditions enable the factory owner to open up again, and to promise the great masses of working people that they can secure renewed employment by class legislation, is treachery to those working people."

Further on he makes it known that he stands for "fair treatment to everybody, to capital, to labor, to the farmer, etc." In other words, Al Smith gives notice that he will fight to keep intact the present capitalist system, in which there are some who are rich and have all they want, and others who are poor and who have little or nothing. What is more, he thinks it is fundamental that you take care of the employing class first. Employers must first be restored "to conditions of normal prosperity" before there is any chance that workers can get jobs and food. Al Smith's playmates, the Raskobs, the Duponts, the Morgans, must be put on their feet first.

At that, Al is right in a way. If you are going to have a capitalist system, you must have capitalists, and the capitalists have to be doing nicely if the system is to run smoothly. But the workers are going to realize, Al, that that means that it is necessary to do away with a system under which there are some who take it out of the hides of others, in which some are rich and others poor, some eat cake while others have no bread and no security.

Al was attacking Franklin Roosevelt as a demagogue when Al put himself thus on record as being ready to fight for just one thing, namely, the big boys and their system. What did Franklin Roosevelt answer? He came right back in his St. Paul speech and said he was no demagogue, that he did not want any class line-up, that he was for a square deal for everybody too, the boss as well as the worker, the

slave-owner as well as the slave. Of course, he had some nice words about being especially anxious about "the forgotten man." Every candidate who goes before the voters on an old party ticket stands just where Al Smith stands. They are all ready to fight for just one thing, a fair deal for the rich, which keeps them rich, for employers which keeps them employers and therefore masters over the lives of the workers, for a system which in the midst of plenty plunges the workers into misery.



**I**N our April issue we published side by side two articles by workers. The first writer made some very severe criticisms of the provisions in the collective agreement made by her union, and might be interpreted to mean that the workers are against all collective agreements, the second expressed great joy at the fact that her union had just "won a signed agreement with the Manufacturers Association." This contrast is a good illustration of the different way in which terms are used by different people and also of the cross-currents on this whole question of collective bargaining which exist in the labor movement today. It gives a chance briefly to express the CPLA position on "collective agreements."

We do not hold the old Wobbly position of opposition in principle to all signed collective agreements. So long as there are employers and workers, there will also be some kind of understanding, more or less formal, as to the terms under which the first employs the second. It is a decided advance for workers when they succeed in organizing themselves and the terms under which they are employed are settled in a collective, rather than in individual fashion. It is an advantage if there is a certain stability about the terms of this agreement so that wages, for example, are not one thing this week and another thing next week. Workers do not want to be compelled to strike every other week. No workers, not even the most militant and revolutionary, will do so for any extended period. Under proper conditions it is therefore also some advantage to workers if some provision is made in the agreement for a machinery for mediation, so that every little grievance which arises under the agreement need not lead to a showdown fight. Finally, if there is to be an agreement, it is an advantage to have it down in black and white. That makes it harder for the boss to lie about what he said he would do, and besides, in many industries wage schedules, for example, are such a complicated matter that nobody could be expected to remember what was agreed upon unless it had been set down in writing.

On the other hand, militant workers are insisting on certain points with which we agree and which are important. First, collective contracts are often brought forward today, both by employers and by union officials, as agreements between friends, whose interests are the same, and who can therefore trust each other, etc. This is a false and dangerous notion. Under the slave system there were some slave-owners who were as just and kind as they could be under such a system, but today everybody laughs at the notion that the interests of the slave-owner and the slave were identical, or that the relation was a fundamentally right and human one. The same thing holds of the relation between employers and workers under a system of wage slavery. The employer is out for profits. He has got to make profit in order to keep in business under the system. He will try to keep his labor costs, what he pays his workers, down.

All employers are engaged in doing just that today, even though they also insist that under a system of mass production high wages have to be paid in order to keep industry going! The interest of the workers, on the other hand, is to get more pay. Collective agreements are dangerous, in other words, if regarded as part of a class collaboration system, and that is what many of them are today.

In the second place, an agreement is worth something, is more than a "scrap of paper," only if there is a strong union back of it to see that its provisions are kept. That has been proved too often to need any further discussion here. An agreement is not a substitute for a fighting union; it is, under the right conditions, one of the means through which a fighting union may function.

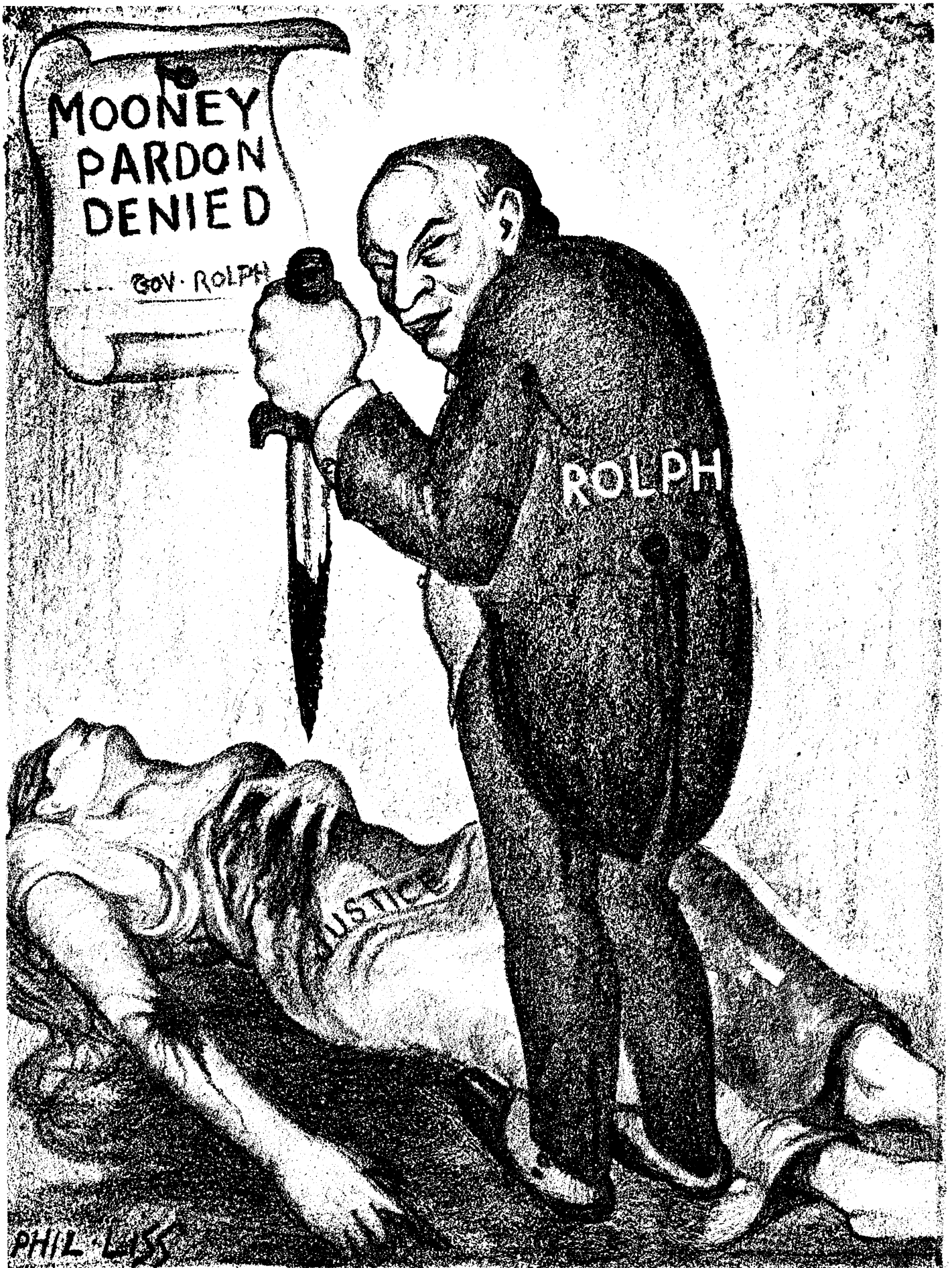
In the third place, agreements which bind a union over a long period of years are bad, especially under present conditions. Employers wriggle out of such agreements if conditions become worse from their point of view. Workers are likely to be bound by them.

In the fourth place, it has been demonstrated a good many times recently that various class-collaboration schemes which were hailed enthusiastically a few years ago have not benefitted the worker. By fostering the notion that the interests of employers and workers are the same, they break down the fighting spirit of the union which is the only real protection of the workers. We sympathize therefore with those workers who contend that the institution of an impartial chairman, when it means depriving the union absolutely of its right to strike for a definite period, is bad. The idea is created that the interests of the workers are really protected by friendly arguments before experts and an impartial chairman in a swell hotel-room, rather than on the picket line. There ought to be a provision for mediation of grievances so that unnecessary and wasteful petty struggles may be avoided. However, employers do not abdicate their right to strike, that is, to close down their shops, and since that is the case, workers should not be required to abdicate their right to strike in an emergency either.

Finally, we are emphatically opposed to the way in which at present agreements are often made. Sometimes members know practically nothing at all about the contract written for them. Sometimes an agreement involving the most important matters is put over by a very small majority, secured by union officials in dubious fashion. Quite often they result from a fake strike, when the workers are called out for a couple of days but the terms of the agreement were all settled before-hand between the manufacturers and union officials. There can be no real spirit in such a fight. Furthermore, since there has been no time for educating the workers and developing a union attitude among them in that kind of a struggle, the agreement often means nothing. It is not kept when the workers go back to the shop. Such "monkey business" causes workers still further to lose faith in unionism, and that faith is already at much too low an ebb in these United States. Only an honest, intelligent fighting policy on the part of the union will protect the workers in the long run, hold them, and make them into an effective fighting force for a better world.

### **MOONEY MUST BE FREED!**

**Workers, Unions, all labor organizations demonstrate against Governor Rolph's inhuman and lying decision! Boycott California Products! Fight to free Tom Mooney!**



**California Justice Is Dead**

# For A United Labor Party

by A. J. Muste

**W**E suggest that the time has come for organized labor in this country to think very seriously about the possibility of building a united political party of workers and farmers. By organized labor we mean the unions (A. F. of L. and others), cooperatives, workers' educational organizations and existing political groups and parties professing to serve the workers.

A good many people are thinking and talking about such a Labor party. Paul Hutchinson, a distinguished editor, writing in the May issue of the *Forum*, says: "To open the way of independent political action to the American public, there is an overwhelming need of an aggressive Labor party defiantly committed to the substitution of the paramount rights of the worker for the present supremacy of the rights of capital and profit." Nobody doubts that he speaks the mind of many so-called liberals and of many intellectuals who are radical or progressive in their point of view.

We hear workers talking about the need of a Labor party. It still seems likely that millions of them will vote for some fake progressive like Al Smith or Franklin D. Roosevelt, or even for Herbert Hoover, but we may be sure that even so, deep down in their hearts they haven't the faith in old party politics that they used to have. The more alert workers are saying: "Labor ought to vote the way it strikes; the old parties are boss parties; we must have our own political party, just as we have our own unions. But it is no use if labor won't stand together. We don't believe that we can get anywhere with all the small political parties in the field today. Why can't we have a united labor party?"

## Sentiment Growing

Within the labor organizations also a certain amount of interest is being shown in the subject. Labor and Farmer-Labor parties are in existence in a number of places, or are in process of coming into being. There is, of course, the Farmer-Labor Party of Minnesota. Trade unionists and Socialists have combined efforts in establishing a Farmer-Labor Party in Illinois. There is the beginning of an independent labor party among the textile workers in Northeast Philadel-

phia. Lawrence Hogan reports the beginnings of a Labor party among workers and farmers in Western North Carolina, and William R. Truax sends a similar story from the mining sections of Ohio. The West Virginia Mine Workers Union has established the flourishing and promising Independent Labor Party of West Virginia. Certain powerful unions such as the Railway Clerks, the Hosiery Workers, the Lithographers, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, are on record in favor of independent political action. Numerous local unions, central labor unions, state federations, are interested in building up a labor political organization. Both the Railroad Brotherhoods and the A. F. of L. have been turning more and more to legislation as a way to solve their troubles, which inevitably increases the interest in the problem of how to make labor more effective on the political field by one means or another.

On the whole, however, the trade union movement is still cold and indifferent. It clings to the policy of trying to gain its ends through favors from the old political parties, rather than through a political organization of its own. The existing political parties and groups, for the most part, are at the moment intent in building up their own strength rather than working for a single unified political expression of labor.

Consider what this means for the workers of this country. They have been plunged into misery by a system which has proved unable to prevent starvation in the very midst of plenty. Wages are being slashed right and left. Hard-won conditions are being taken away. Twelve million or more are unemployed. Instead of adequate relief being provided out of taxation to the victims of capitalist stupidity, greed and brutality, the rich are permitted to escape taxation. Those workers lucky enough to hold some kind of a job are being cajoled or clubbed into contributing out of their meager wages to relief funds. Thus their living standards are forced still lower, while the unemployed are herded into breadlines, soup kitchens and the corridors of charity societies that they may receive a dole.

Something must be done and done soon. The income of the workers must be sustained; hours must be cut; insurance must be provided for workers who are thrown on the street; adequate relief must be provided where that is needed; industry must be organized in such a way that it will give a decent and steady living to those who do the work of the world. The Czars and Kaisers of industry and finance, the speculators, the idlers who live in luxury, must be fired from their "jobs" just as the kings and lords who rode on the backs of the people in earlier periods were sent down the road.

Who is to do it? Long ago the workers learned that if they want to get their rights on the job they must have unions of their own. With all their faults these unions have gotten immense gains for the workers, because even a measure of united action means lots of power. Now the workers have larger issues to face. Something must be done on the political field. Labor will have to do it. What it needs today is not going to be handed to it free on a silver platter. The only way labor can do the job on the political field is by solidarity, by a united labor party, just as it is only by sticking together that it can get anywhere on the economic field. To stand together in the shop or on the picket line and then to scatter in a dozen different directions on election day will not get us anywhere.

Yes, there are all kinds of difficulties about launching a new party in this country. At the present stage those difficulties do not need to be dealt with in detail. Nobody seriously doubts that if the workers were to stick together they could build a new political party. Objections are raised from various sources. Let us consider some of them.

## Objections

Some A. F. of L. spokesmen say that labor will only reveal its weakness if it tries to organize a party of its own. Under the non-partisan policy, they say, it is never known just how many votes labor can swing. It can therefore hold a threat of unknown magnitude over its enemies in any election. Such a dodge as this might work occasionally here or there, but it is plain, on the face of it, that if labor

is afraid to organize its own political party because that would expose its weakness, its enemies are not likely to be blissfully ignorant of that weakness. In fact, the way the Democratic and Republican politicians are continually calling labor's bluff and ignoring its demands and threats is evidence enough that they do realize its weakness.

It is said that the non-partisan policy gets results for labor. It is true that occasionally certain temporary gains are won. Even these are frequently taken away again. The Clayton Act back in 1913 was supposed to protect the trade unions from the abuses of injunctions. Courts emasculated that legislation. A federal anti-injunction law has recently been passed. Anti-labor judges can emasculate that legislation also if they wish. At best the time and energy spent on campaigns under the non-partisan policy leave labor in city councils, state legislatures and the national Congress without a distinct labor group with a fighting labor policy, without a group of which labor can say, "We put them there. They are subject to our instructions. They have got to report to us and to no other agency." In a very short while the same time and energy put into building a labor party would give labor its own political instrument. Such a gain would be a permanent one.

Even while a labor party was small, it would gain more results than can be gotten from the policy of begging favors from the old parties, or putting "friends of labor," who belong to the old parties, into Congress. Instance after instance could be reported in support of the contention that the threat of independent political action will bring old-line politicians to time more quickly than anything else. Legislation protecting funds of the unions was quickly secured in Great Britain when the labor movement organized its own political party in 1906 and put some labor men in Parliament, although it was only 19 out of more than 400. The Workingmen's Parties of the 1820's and 1830's in this country were largely influential in getting the public school system established, even though they were weak and presently went out of existence altogether. It is notorious that the threat of independent political action in the LaFollette campaign in 1924 brought the politicians of the United States Senate and the managers of the railroads to time, and led them to placate the railroad workers by putting the Railroad Labor Board out of business.

Sometimes spokesmen for the non-

partisan policy have urged that the workers can be kept united in unions only if politics are kept out of the unions and members are permitted to vote as they please. But in all other important industrial countries unions flourish side by side with labor parties. Americans must be strange animals if here only the combination would not work. There is no evidence that the A. F. of L. with its non-partisan policy is any less subject to internal dissensions than the trade union movement of other lands. Is it not just barely possible that many other countries have three or four times as many workers organized into trade unions, precisely because they bring workers together in a solid organization on the political as well as the trade union field?

### **Non-Partisan Policy Betrays Labor**

Besides, the contention that A. F. of L. unions keep out of politics is ridiculous on the face of it. The non-partisan policy in practice becomes the most corrupt, debasing and ridiculous partisanship in many cities and states. In New York City, for example, most of the unions, under the leadership of the Central Trades and Labor Council, have been for years a tail to the Tammany Democratic machine kite. In Philadelphia and many other places in Pennsylvania, unions are a tail to the kite of the Republican machine, and they have the privilege occasionally of choosing to support a candidate of the Grundy-Mellon wing or of the Vare wing of that machine!

The fact of the matter is that under the non-partisan policy politics are not kept out of the unions, but labor is kept from having its interests effectively represented in politics. Effectiveness and unity will come into the labor movement when labor has its own political arm. By what logic can it be proved that you unite workers, you prevent them from falling apart, when in the shop you tell them to stand together against their exploiters, but at the ballot box you tell them to fall apart and vote for a man put up by the Republican bosses or for a man put up by the Democratic bosses, both of whom are financed by big business and the banks?

The Socialist spokesman says: "In principle we believe in a labor party, if it is the right kind. We will support any really promising movement in this direction. At present we do not see any serious substantial movement of this kind; therefore, we are requiring our members to concentrate on building up the Socialist party, and we call upon

all voters not satisfied with the old parties to vote for our candidates this fall." It may be that this speaker is right. If he is, is it not a confession of labor weakness? No intelligent Socialist believes that an effective labor political movement (under whatever name) can be built up in the United States by the simple process of getting more and more individuals voting the Socialist ticket. They recognize that the workers in mass must move. Economic organizations must support, or at least not oppose the movement for independent political action. Very many Socialists agree that when the mass movement comes it will not be simply a growth of the Socialist party as such. The mass movement will build a Labor party and the Socialist party will be a part of it. The Socialist party, they agree, is in this respect a means and not an end in itself. If this is true, then is not the present crisis a time for seeking to get action on the broadest possible front rather than proceeding in what may seem to be a sectarian manner? If in a situation where there are so many obstacles and objectors, those who do believe in a labor party take a negative and passive attitude, how shall we ever get any results?

An entirely different objection is raised by some left-wing Socialists and Communists. "Look at the record of Labor and Socialist parties in Europe," they say. "They have betrayed the workers. They are busy trying to keep the capitalist business system on its feet rather than establishing a workers' republic. When it comes to a show-down they do not have the nerve to act for the workers and so let Fascism get under way. The only thing to do is to build up a really revolutionary party. Granted that it will be small. It will be clean. It will not fool the workers into thinking that they can vote a new social order into existence without a real struggle. When the moment comes this disciplined party, however small, can lead the revolution." As an automobile worker put it to me some months ago, when I was discussing industrial unionism and a labor party with him, "There is no use bothering with these things any more. The employers are not going to let us build unions or a labor party in this country. One of these days the whole damn system will go to smash and then we will all turn Bolshevik."

We believe that this attitude is a very dangerous one for labor in the United States. It is worth while to take some space to analyze and answer it.



## The Russian Example

The Communists especially who take this position are probably, consciously or unconsciously, very much influenced by the example of Russia. "Here," they say, "was a country with no great labor unions, no large and impressive labor party, only a small group of disciplined Bolsheviks. Yet when the time came that party was able to take hold of the situation and start building a real workers' republic. On the other hand," they go on to say, "the unions and the Labor and Socialist parties in such countries as England and Germany seem to act as a brake on the militancy of the workers. In the very lands where the organizations are most powerful they seem to have compromised the most."

Those who argue thus fail to take careful account of certain facts in the Russian situation. In Russia no powerful, wealthy, intelligent and organized capitalist class had grown up. Consequently, when the old Czarist bureaucracy fell of its own rottenness, there was nothing to take its place, no group to take hold of the situation and rebuild Russia except the determined, compact, and, as the event proved, intelligent Bolshevik group. The job of any revolutionary group will be ever so much harder in an advanced industrial country where the capitalists are strong and will fight in order to protect their system. We have as yet no example of a successful revolution in an advanced industrial country to go by.

The Russian industrial working-class was relatively small, the country being still mainly agricultural. However, that industrial working-class dominated the situation in certain centers such as Petrograd and Moscow, and it was pretty well permeated by working-class philosophy and teaching. Certainly it had not been soaked in a capitalist and individualist point of view as the American workers have. When, therefore, the Bolsheviks offered them leadership in the crisis they were ready to follow. Again, the job is not so simple in a country where masses of workers have been imbued with a non-labor or even an anti-labor psychology, and must break away from that before they can be expected to act in their own interests.

The peasants in Russia wanted the land. Any party that told them they could take the land and get rid of the landlords was sure of their passive, and when necessary their active, support. Again the situation is not nearly so simple in America or other countries that might be named. The American farmer has the land. What

he wants to know is how to get rid of it! Besides, he, too, has been brought up in a tradition of individualism and has passed through periods when he was a budding capitalist, which makes him a very different individual from the Russian peasant.

## Danger of Fascism

What happens in countries like Italy and Germany, for example, when the labor movement is split up, when the militants and revolutionists break away from the main masses in the unions, on the political field, in the cooperatives, and form separate organizations? The answer is Fascism. In a period of disturbance, Fascism, which is also militant, which repudiates the sham of "democracy," which rejects many elements in the present set-up (repudiates the reparations in Germany, for example, and promises to overthrow the rule of the international bankers) has certain advantages over the labor movement, certainly over a divided labor movement. In the first place, farmers in these more advanced countries are not in the habit of working with the labor movement; they have a more individualistic point of view. When they are in distress and feel that there must be a change, they do not naturally turn to labor leadership. Fascism is likely to appeal to them. In the second place, Fascism can usually count on the support of the Church, which will probably fight for "democracy" up to a certain point as the Centrists are doing in Germany today, and as the Popular Party under the lead of Dom Sturzo did in Italy some years ago, but when it comes to a show-down the Church will throw its support to Fascism rather than Communism. There are even certain elements among the workers, those, for example, under the domination of reactionary elements in the churches, who, if the labor movement is divided, are likely to take that as an excuse for going Fascist.

Many white-collar workers, clerical, technical and professional, are likely to feel that joining labor is joining an inferior group, and they, therefore, form an easy prey to an ultra-nationalistic Fascism.

In the next place, capitalists in a showdown will also choose Fascism rather than Communism, which means that Fascism can count on access to the money-bags. Finally, capitalist powers will, as has been abundantly demonstrated, look with a mild eye sometimes on a Fascist regime, when they will maintain an attitude of implacable hostility toward the effort of any people to build a genuine workers' republic.

Against such mighty forces as these a united labor movement might be able to make a stand. If labor were united, for example, the farmers would be much more likely to be attracted to what would then be a very powerful organization, in a position to be of great service to them. When labor is divided, the Church can widen the breach by disowning the left-wing elements as irreligious. Reactionary elements in the Church are much less likely to be successful in this effort if labor stands together. It is very difficult to raise the religious issue against a united working class.

"Yes, but unions and labor parties," the left-winger answers, "get in the habit of compromising, of trying to get results by parliamentary methods, electing candidates to office under the capitalist system. Then, when the need for drastic action, for taking some actual step toward the establishment of a working-class regime comes, they draw back. They fail. The only thing we can rely on is a disciplined revolutionary party. And such a force can keep itself truly revolutionary only if it keeps itself separate politically and builds up its own unions, cooperatives and cultural organizations." This may be true. If those who advance this argument, however, are realistic, if they face the facts, they must also confess that in making this argument they pass sentence of death on the labor movement in all such countries as the United States, Great Britain, France and Germany. If it is ever safe to prophesy, it is safe to predict that a divided labor movement in such countries means the triumph of Fascism.

Even if we believe that Fascism cannot endure forever, that it carries the seeds of its own destruction, still the triumph of Fascism even for a few decades, would be a tremendous setback for the workers and would entail terrible sufferings. Anyone who did not do everything in his power to prevent such a disaster would be a deep-dyed traitor to the working class. Suppose, furthermore, that Fascism got itself established in a number of powerful industrial countries such as Germany, France, Japan, would that not almost certainly involve the destruction of the workers' republic in Russia?

We cannot be so certain either that once the labor movement is completely destroyed by Fascism, it could revive again. There have been regimes like Fascism before in history, for example, the dictatorship of the Roman bankers which expressed itself in the political dictatorship of the Roman

(Continued on page 29)

# "New Lows" in the Depression

by Alfred Bernheim

WE have at last reached the point in the depression where even Charles M. Schwab, optimist extraordinary, is becoming a little discouraged. He still voices undying faith in the ultimate future of America, but he has "hinted" that "the depression might be of five or six years' duration."

We are told that the darkest hour is just before the dawn, and who knows but that when Mr. Schwab turns pessimist it is the signal that the darkest hour is at hand and that the sun is about to rise above the distant horizon. I for one do not know, and I refuse to guess. I have been wrong too often. I prefer to surrender my right some day to shout, "I told you so," in return for the more comfortable, albeit the less exciting, berth of a mere interpreter of present facts. In this capacity I have no hesitation in saying that the darkest hour of the present depression—to date—is at hand. It may grow even darker, or it may brighten up. That is outside of my field.

No one who even casually follows the trade and financial reports that appear from day to day can seriously challenge the assertion that the business cycle has not yet started on an upswing. I do not propose to bore the readers of *Labor Age* with a lengthy array of statistical evidence which could be easily expanded to fill almost this entire issue. But just to put the depression on record, let me cite a few outstanding figures.

The *New York Times* publishes a business index each week. This index again made "a new low" on April 24, the latest date available. Making allowance for seasonal variations and the long-time trend, it touched a level 40.2 per cent below the estimated normal. On the corresponding date in 1931 it was only 19.4 per cent below this assumed normal, indicating a decline of 26.7 per cent during the past twelve months alone, roughly the third year since what was then called a recession but has since turned into a depression, set in.

From the statistical point of view, several objections may be raised to the *Times* index. For example, it cannot properly be termed a business index at all, since it is composed almost entirely of production series, and of only five at that: automobile production, freight car loadings, steel mill activity, carded cotton cloth production and electric

power production. Nevertheless, it may be relied upon as giving us an acceptable indicator of the trend in five important basic industries which, in turn, reflect, at least in a general way, the status of our business situation as a whole.

## No Change for Better

Other significant series all confirm the conclusion that this spring has witnessed no change for the better. The employment index of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, covering eighty-nine industries, reached a new low of 64.5 (1926-100) in March. So did the Bureau's payroll index, which stands at 48.2. The decline in the payroll index from March, 1931, amounts to 30.7 per cent; from March, 1929, it amounts to 53.6 per cent. From the same source we learn that the wholesale price series touched a new bottom in March with an index number of 66 (1926-100)—a decline of 22.5 per cent from the previous March and of 32 per cent from the 1929 peak.

The volume of building contracts awarded, expressed in index numbers adjusted for seasonal variations, declined from a 1923-1925 average of 100 to 26 in March—another new low. The decline within twelve months amounted to 66.2 per cent; and from the 1929 peak, to 79.4 per cent. The figures have been computed by the Federal Reserve Board from the numerical data compiled by the F. W. Dodge Corporation.

Unfilled orders of the United States Steel Corporation, reported for March, are lower than at any time since the compilation commenced in 1907.

Retail trade, as evidenced by department store sales, also made a low record for the depression during March. According to the Federal Reserve Board's seasonally adjusted index, the shrinkage from the previous March was 23.7 per cent; and from the 1929 peak, 35.1 per cent. The Board's adjusted index for total industrial production stood at 68 in March (1923-25 equals 100). This, too, is a new low and represents a falling off of 21.8 per cent from March, 1931, and of 45.6 per cent from the 1929 high point.

I do not want to give the impression that every measure of economic activity reached an absolute bottom in

March or April. Here and there, there has been a slight rise from the low, but no series is up far enough from the depths to give any assurance that it will not again assume a downward trend.

To summarize, the spring pick-up has come and gone without an appreciable effect on business activity. The revival has been in every respect of smaller than expected seasonal proportions. Indeed, if we allow for normal seasonal fluctuations, the spring merely heralded a further ebb of the economic tide. It is interesting to note that, according to the American Federation of Labor, 100,000 men lost their jobs during April. "Never before in the five years of our reports," said President Green, "has unemployment increased in April, not even in the two depression years just past." We must now look forward to a summer of unparalleled dullness and hope that the autumn, with its attendant crop movements, will mark the beginning of the flow. There is, however, nothing in the present situation which warrants more than a pious hope that it will take place.

The stock market has lost caste as an accurate barometer of the future of business. For instance, stock prices reached their high in 1929 several months after business activity had already commenced to recede. Again, the rebound of security prices in the spring of 1930 from the low level of the October-November, 1929, break seemed to indicate that President Hoover was right in proclaiming that we were experiencing merely a slight and temporary business recession and not a depression. Though we know that it would be foolhardy to trust the stock market blindly as a prognosticator of the business future, it does seem to me that its action, during the past eight weeks or so, indicates a complete lack of confidence in the business outlook on the part of investors and speculators. A turn of the business tide in the fall would mean a golden harvest to the purchasers of stock today, but there is no evidence that any accumulation "for the long pull" is going on. The occasional rallies that take place are clearly nothing more than technical movements to correct temporarily "oversold" conditions in the market itself.

Of course, the army of speculators and potential investors may be wrong in their judgment. They did not an-

anticipate the decline; they may very well fail to anticipate the rise. Right or wrong, however, this almost unanimous "bearishness" of millions of people is itself a deterrent to business recovery. Furthermore, the gloom of the stock market pervades the entire business situation of the nation.

Remember that I am still playing safe. I am not predicting that there will not be a revival in the fall—or that there will be. I am merely pointing out that neither in business nor in finance is there as yet any sign of a favorable trend in the near future.

### Relief Funds Exhausted

However, without assuming the robe of the prophet, I venture the opinion that if an appreciable revival should fail to materialize next autumn, and if we go into the fourth winter with unemployment not lessened and perhaps even increased, the hardship and misery which we have seen so far will be slight compared to what we shall witness. Public and private relief funds, at no time adequate, are admittedly today fast approaching exhaustion. Wages for those employed are steadily falling. Earnings are being further attacked by the continued reduction of work schedules. Savings are rapidly disappearing. The only hope for relief rests with the Federal Government. Direct aid, coupled with a mighty construction program, would do a great deal to mitigate the condition that stares us in the face. Can the Federal Government finance a vast program of relief and construction? In my opinion, yes. In the first place, it can borrow. Its credit is far from exhausted. Its securities still have the highest rating in the world. Our national debt is some nine billions below its peak. A Treasury issue of \$450,000,000 of certificates and notes has only recently been placed on a basis to yield the investor about two and one-half per cent, on the average. That does not look as though the borrowing capacity of the United States was approaching its limit. Suppose the Treasury had to pay 4 per cent, or even 5 per cent, for a large relief and construction loan. The price would be cheap, not alone from the point of view of the human equation but also from that of hard-boiled economics. The United States Government will not insure its solvency by a policy of retrenchment, which means only a further contraction of consumer purchasing power, but only by stimulating business and thereby increasing its tax returns. Relief for the unemployed will inject money directly into

the arteries of commerce and production. Outlays for construction will have a like effect.

I am not arguing for governmental waste and extravagance, but for wise and courageous spending. I am not arguing for inflation by printing paper dollars or paper bonds. For this reason I favor an adequate taxation program to accompany the relief and construction measures. Taxes are the other source from which our Government can draw the funds it needs. Borrowing and taxation must go hand in hand. They are not separate but complementary aspects of a single fiscal program. While it is probably not feasible fully to "pay as you go" in times like these, while the public debt must and can be increased for some years to come, nevertheless taxes must meet as large a proportion of current outlays as possible and must be so constructed that, with the revival of business, they will automatically yield enough to make up for the deficit accumulated in the meantime. The present tax bill will not do.

Unfortunately, so it seems to me, the administration in Washington, supported in the main by both parties in Congress, gives no sign of approaching the policy of spending and taxing which I have briefly outlined above. It still holds to the theory that the states and municipalities, aided by private charity, should assume the full burden of relief, although it well knows that these sources of aid are greatly depleted and in many sections of the country are virtually exhausted. It is bent on lowering wages, shortening hours and reducing personnel. It is limiting instead of expanding construction work. And in respect to taxes, it is shielding the rich as much as possible and soaking the poor as hard as it dares.

When earlier in this article I presented a few figures on "new lows" in the present depression, I forgot to mention one very conspicuous new low—the capacity of leadership in affairs. It is not subject to statistical measurement but it is none the less clearly established. Never before, at least in my memory, has there been such a dearth of informed, intelligent, courageous, far-sighted leadership—and never before has this type of leadership been more urgently needed. Those charged with guiding the destinies of the Republic through these parlous times seem still unable to see, or if able to see, unwilling to face realities. They concern themselves with devising palliatives which do no more than temporarily relieve the symptoms and fail

to attack the disturbances at their roots.

It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss this subject. Perhaps, however, I may be forgiven if, in closing, I list what in my mind are some of the outstanding steps that should be taken to raise the United States out of the present depression—in addition to the relief and construction program to which I have already referred.

1. Reparation payments and inter-governmental debts should be cancelled, or, at least, scaled down to a point where debtor nations can pay without undue hardship on the populations of the indebted nations.

2. An international tariff conference should be called for the purpose of re-adjusting tariffs to permit a freer movement of world trade.

Prompt recognition should be granted to Soviet Russia and every effort made to encourage and facilitate trade between her and the United States.

4. There should be a genuine move in the direction of disarmament evidenced by a drastic reduction in the appropriations for "national defense" in all nations—the savings to be applied to relief and to constructive, peace-time activities of governments.

5. There should be a constitutional amendment permitting Congress to regulate the hours of labor.

6. The eighteenth amendment should be repealed or, if that is not immediately possible, then the enabling acts should be amended at least to the extent of permitting the manufacture, sale and transportation of real beer.

Though I have assiduously refrained from prophesying, readers of *Labor Age* may glean that I am not particularly optimistic about the immediate future—say the remaining months of 1932. The United States has been immersed in depressions many times before and it has always succeeded, in a happy-go-lucky way, in blundering out of them successfully. Most people feel, it seems to me, that history will repeat itself and that in due course we will once more rise from the ashes. It may be—but let me remind the proponents of this fatalistic school that never before has the social mechanism been so complex and never before has it been so badly damaged in so many of its parts. The processes of self-correction aided by a little superficial tinkering may not suffice in this instance to put the machine in good running order again. Perhaps it is so badly damaged that it never again will be serviceable. Then we will soon be looking about for a new and different machine to take its place. Who knows?

# Winning A Strike

by W. C. Montross

SEVERAL months ago the Butchers' Local at Paterson, following with interest the leadership of the Paterson silk strike by the C.P.L.A. applied to the C.P.L.A. for help in the organization of workers in the meat industry. The campaign as outlined was one of the most ambitious that has ever been projected in times of depression; calling, as it did, for the organization of all workers in the state of New Jersey in the industry. The assignment of the present writer resulted from conferences between the two organizations.

Local No. 454 is composed of workers in the independent packing houses of Paterson; the first step in the building of the new organization was to be organizing the retail meat-cutters of the cities of Paterson and Passaic. A retail organization, because of its contacts with the packing house workers and because of the possibilities of help in the event of a strike against a packing house, was the first aim of the movement.

## The Cleaver

The first step was the issuing of a paper, *The Cleaver*, edited for the retail industry and dealing with the grievances of long hours prevailing in the market-sections of the two cities. In Paterson hours of eighty-five and more a week prevailed and in Passaic more than a hundred hours a week including Sunday mornings. For the first month of *The Cleaver's* life absolutely no response was obtained. Then, in one week, fifteen new members enrolled in the new Union. By the end of another month fifteen more had been added. A mass meeting resulted in twelve more and then the campaign began in earnest.

Street meetings in the market-section, appeals to the public through publicity and through talks before other labor organizations figured in the campaign. The labor press, especially the *Passaic County Labor Record*, a progressive weekly with over six thousand circulation in Passaic County, helped in the preliminary campaign. A request to the Mayor's Committee for Labor Conciliation, followed by charges of "boycott" made by the Union when the bosses failed to appear, let the public know the drift of the fight.

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*Any worker who looks ahead feels sure that the best kind of organization that Labor can have is a strong food workers organization. The neglect that this branch of the Labor movement has suffered by "business Unions," because of the comparatively low pay prevailing throughout the various lines of the industry, has not been warranted by the will of the workers to be organized. Trustification, horizontal and vertical mergers have moved faster and have borne heavier on the workers in this industry than in most any other that can be named. Alongside of the increasing concentration of control has grown also a retail business which has been a standing example of destructive competition. The organization of the workers in such an industry, with its contrasts between the greatest of trusts and the smallest of units, offers problems in organization that have yet to be solved in their entirety. The campaign of the Butchers' Local No. 454 of the Amalgamated Food Workers to extend its organization to all parts of the meat industry offers several lessons that may aid in future campaigns along this line.—EDITOR.*

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Events came to a head when the workers of a five shop chain in Paterson, Passaic and Hackensack appealed to the Union to help them resist a wage-cut threatened. When the wage-cut was ordered and two men who had been active in the Union were discharged for talking against the cut, the shops were declared on strike and the first strike of the new union took place. Picketing and appeals to the working public resulted in the dropping of business in one shop from three men behind the counters to where one strike-breaker was able to handle the trade comfortably. After the second day of the strike it was found that several more workers were ready to join the strike and these were pulled at various times during the day when trade would otherwise have been at its peak. Incoming deliveries of meat were also held up because members

of the Teamsters Union refused to deliver past the pickets. A request from the owner to settle the strike resulted in a complete victory, including a retroactive cancellation of the wage-cut, reinstatement of the men on strike on their old jobs, recognition of the union and a shop committee and a reduction of the working week by twenty hours. Strike-breakers were, of course, discharged, and the working force signed into the Union.

Immediately following the victory of this one chain a concerted drive was made on the other shops and a vote for a general strike was made to force acceptance of the union agreement. The strike was to be called on Friday afternoon; frantic appeals from a hastily thrown together bosses committee resulted in a set of counter proposals which were rejected by the Union on Friday night. After several hours, the agreement was signed without change by all the bosses present.

## Lessons of Solidarity

The lesson of solidarity had been taught to the newly organized workers in the first strike, and the complete tie-up was an object lesson to the bosses. Going into the conference with a strike vote gave the negotiators for the Union the confidence in their backing that made a victory possible.

On the Saturday on which the early closing was to start (April 30th), a committee of the Union was on hand in the market-section to observe all shops. The men came out of their shops at the time set and moved on, as a visiting committee, to the few shops which were not yet under agreements. Picketing will be resorted to if necessary to force acceptance of the agreement.

Here, as elsewhere, when the workers are sufficiently determined to cure a rotten situation by united action the thing can be done. Threats by the bosses to "get along with one less man" were shown for what they were. Courageous action by Local No. 454 of the Amalgamated Food Workers when there is all too little courage in the Labor movement may point the way to more action on the part of others. What has been done can be done again.

# Rugged Individualism in Arizona

by Martin Moran

**C**ONDITIONS here are terrible. Nearly all of the copper, silver, and gold mines are closed, with hundreds of miners unemployed. They and their families either take to the road in the old Lizzie or camp on the desert in the broiling sun with the rattlesnakes and Gila Monsters for company, or occasionally a centipede or scorpion to play with.

Phoenix is in what is known as the Salt River Valley and the land here about has irrigation, *but* don't conclude that the irrigation means prosperity. In reality it means just the reverse. The acreage is all bonded and an animal tax has to be paid on each acre. That, in addition to water rates of from \$2.50 to \$4.00 per acre, makes it impossible for a farmer to make profit even in good times.

The other day the Superior mine in Globe, the last big mine in Arizona, closed. The miners paraded the streets carrying banners and placards announcing the end of their employment in favor of African negroes who receive from the Anaconda Copper Company, the big wages of \$6.00 per month in the South African Mines. The Anaconda owns the Superior Mines in Globe as well as nearly all other mines in Arizona and Nevada.

These mining towns fold up just like an Arab folds his tent. Farmers of all kinds have to move along with the miners. A man I know had a dairy near Globe with a herd of 50 cows. When the mines closed and the miners had to leave he still had to feed his cows and throw the milk away. Now this man has moved just next door to me on Camel Back Road where he is just as badly off. A dairy farmer here has to sell either to the Borden Company or one of its subsidiary companies. He takes 10 to 12 gallons of milk to the creamery where it is processed for butter fat, and is lucky to get 50 to 60 cents for the 10 or 12 gallons.

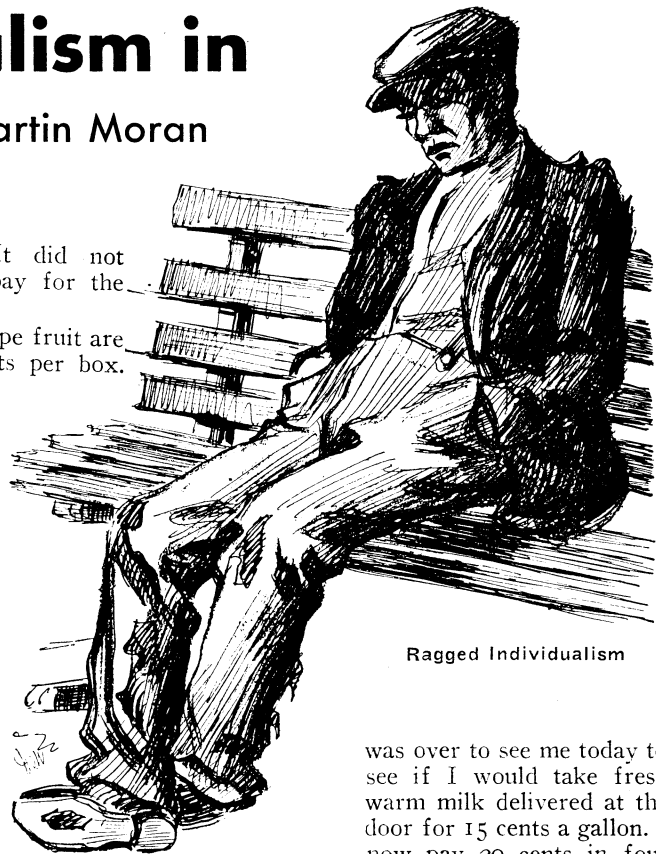
Alfalfa hay can't be produced under \$12 per ton, but just now the farmer must sell it for \$2.50 in the field or bale it at an expense of at least \$2.50 per ton, then haul it to a feed plant to receive from \$.50 to \$5 per ton. A great percentage of high priced cotton (in normal times) was left in the

fields unpicked. It did not bring enough to pay for the picking and baling.

Oranges and grape fruit are selling for 65 cents per box. They can't be produced under \$2.50 per box. Three years ago they brought \$3.50 to \$4.00 in the fields for good fruit. Eggs are sold in the pay - and - take stores for 10 cents per dozen, the farmers get 6 cents. There is no discrimination here in cuts of steak, all steaks sell from 16 cents per pound up to 25 cents for either round, sirloin or T bone, as it is called (we call it porter house steak). Another neighbor of mine just sold his herd of milk cows at auction because he did not get enough from the creamery to pay for feed, to say nothing about any return on his investment in 35 cows or his labor of milking twice a day. He said he only worked about 19 hours each of 7 days a week.

There is not a farmer or fruit grower in Arizona that can hold on. Half of the people are engaged in mining and the other half live off of them. Now they are both flat. National concerns with big branches here are closing their plants and warehouses, then vanish. There is a lot of Mexican and Indian labor here. Fifteen cents per hour is paid in the lettuce fields and even less in the cotton fields. One dollar per day is big wages for common labor.

I have a neighbor by the name of Aukner with a wife and two children. The family is scattered about among four farmers for their board. The husband is milking in a dairy; the wife cooking and doing washing and house work; a boy of 15 years is in another place tending horses; and the girl, 17, is going to high school and gets her board and room from still another family for nursing their kids. Aukner



Ragged Individualism

was over to see me today to see if I would take fresh warm milk delivered at the door for 15 cents a gallon. I now pay 20 cents in four quart bottles next door.

We have big church drives here to keep the people in line. More churches, missions, etc., are here than you can count. Just a little frameshack over in a field some place is this, that or the other mission and Sunday school. The great big Red Indians here are mostly house servants. The Mexicans are going back to Mexico, so that gives the Indians a chance to work around as servants, housemen, gardeners, and auto drivers.

There are more second hand things sold in Phoenix than in New York City. Coming into Phoenix over route 80 up Van Buren Avenue one thinks he is in the Jersey Dumps. But it is just the second hand stores which sell at big prices such truck as is hauled to the dump every day in New York. The first thing that strikes one is the old pots, pans, broken dishes, dirty mattresses, quilts, comforters, etc. Then gasoline and woodburning stoves, harnesses, saddles, cowboy regalia, boots, chaps, shirts all in a sad state of decay. Yet they all make some kind of a living.

Four banks closed in the state yesterday, the Globe, Superior, Miami and Apache. There are no reactions from the people. They are just dumb, hoping for deliverance in some miraculous way.

# The Strikes at Langley, Bath and Clearwater

by Larry Hogan

**T**HE three mills located, one at Langley, S. C., one at Bath, S. C., and one at Clearwater, S. C., all belong to the Loring interests, with home office in New York. As local units they go by the names of Langley Mills, Langley, S. C.; the Aiken Mill, Bath, S. C.; and the Seminole Mill, Clearwater, S. C. All three mills, located in the Horse Creek Valley district, six miles north of Augusta, Ga., have weave rooms and make print cloth, broad cloth and some silk. They are about two miles from each other, have their own villages, company stores, etc. Prices at the company stores run about like they do at all company-owned stores. They have the check-off system, using script (metal) as medium of exchange, with \$1 issuing value and 75 cents redeeming value. However, the Merchants Association issued an injunction against this about three weeks ago.

Paul Fuller, who is located in Augusta, Ga., and has been for some time, is doing educational work for the American Federation of Labor. He started a local of the United Textile Workers at Langley, about fifteen months ago, and everything seemed to go along smoothly for some time. The workers had three 10 per cent wage reductions but nothing was said or done about it by the union. Fuller seemed to be pleased that everything was so quiet. While he didn't do much towards helping the workers, he preached every Sunday in the villages.

Monday, March 28, the broad cloth weavers, about 16, noticed on the cut board, which is posted each day telling the piece weavers how much they weave, that they had been cut. The piece workers had not been affected but were stretched out in such a way that it would make it impossible for them to make as much as they had been making. One of the weavers went to call on George A. Franklin, General Manager, who told him that he was powerless to adjust the grievance. The worker then notified the rest of the weavers and they all walked out. When the other workers saw this they also came out, and the night workers refused to go to work. This was all done with no union representative on the job. After they had walked out they notified Fuller. It was about four days before the U.T.W. endorsed the strike.

The next day after the strike, the management moved all perishable goods from the Langley store to the others, called all the workers in and told them that they were out of work, that it would be a long time before they started the mill and when they did they would start up with new hands. The workers had a committee to go to the management; this committee was appointed by Fuller, but didn't have any success. They all walked out and went home.

Fuller told them that they would have no picket lines and would have about two meetings each week, and, except when attending the meetings, they were all to stay at home. While he began advising them, he also told them that he could not be a strike-leader for the mill workers. He would be glad to advise them as to how to carry on but they must look to Frank Ernest for leadership. Frank is one of the church workers where Fuller preaches. The Langley mill employed about 550 workers.

On Friday morning, April 2, the workers of the Clearwater and Bath Mills came out. They came out in sympathy with the Langley strikers. These two strikes were spontaneous and Fuller didn't know they planned coming out until they were out. He wired the U. T. W. again, since he had not heard from them regarding the Monday strike. The U. T. W. then endorsed the strike; the strikers from these mills included about 1,000 workers, bringing the number up to about 1550. This involves about 4,000 people who will soon be depending on the U. T. W. for relief. Following this strike, the company closed all its stores and the independent merchants also closed many of their stores. The company gave them all their time and put the following statement in their pay envelopes:

"The management deeply regrets the action taken by a small group of mill employees in forcing suspension of operations at the Langley Mill.

"This mill unit has been a financial burden to the company as it has been operating at a loss for a long time. Consequently, from a purely business standpoint, this mill should have been closed long ago.

"In spite of adverse conditions, however, the management has kept this

mill in operation for the sole purpose of providing a means of livelihood to the employees, thereby preventing hardships. The company has refrained from reducing wages to the lower rates prevailing in other sections of the South on directly competitive fabrics, has reduced rentals to further assist their people and has provided steady employment.

"The company has done its utmost to cooperate with its employees in a time of stress but cooperation cannot be considered a one-sided affair.

"The Langley mill, having been closed by the action of its employees, the management advises those of its operatives who are able to do so to find employment elsewhere as promptly as possible."

The workers have made several attempts to meet the company but have failed; to me, it seems to be more of a game of wait than it does a strike.

## What I Found

When I arrived on the scene I had some trouble getting in touch with anyone. One wouldn't think that a strike was on, everybody was at home and things were so quiet. Fuller had been advising the people not to talk to anyone without his consent. He told them that all kinds of agitators would be coming in and criticising the strike and the way it was carried on.

Fuller isn't keeping in touch with the situation as he should. He is making one speech at each place each day which gives each group one meeting every three days or two meetings each week. He is continually advising them against violence, which in itself is good, but he is curbing the spirit too much. When I suggested that the workers should have some strike songs to sing at meetings, he said that that would be too dangerous! They had so many hot heads in the strike and songs would call for parades, etc., which wouldn't do. He isn't keeping the workers well enough informed about what is going on. His steering committee of three at each place, composed for the most part of deacons in the church, do all the work in secret, and the rank and file never know what they are doing or what is happening to them; the fine spirit they had in the beginning can't last very long under these conditions.

# An Answer to "Economists"

by I. B. Long

THESE are trying times for society; so are they for social theories. Recently prices have undergone an unprecedented deflation; so have the pretenses of many economists. Many bankers' assets in the last year or two have become frozen; so have the assets of many professors. Some have questioned whether capitalism will survive this depression. One might well question whether traditional economic theory will either.

Those sound economic principles, which used to serve as an opiate for undergrads, no longer do such good service. Nor do they now seem quite so sound. It is, of course, still considered good pedagogy to give students sound principles first so that they don't need to bother with any others afterwards. But the difficulty is to find theories which are sound; theories which the march of events has not made obsolete. The author of the widest-used economics textbook in this country recently wrote: "Helpless we now are and I have to confess that all of us are much in the dark as regards prevention or remedy. Perhaps the disease is ineradicable in a society of free enterprise."

One must at least admire him for admitting that they "are much in the dark" which is more than some economics professors and bulgy business men do. These other professors still act as though they "know their stuff cold," (cold, of course, referring to the savoriness of the "stuff"). They keep right on professing just as though this world were the "stationary state" so dear to their hearts and so necessary for their theories.

Of course, professors, despite popular opinion to the contrary, are quite human. They present all the paradoxes and inconsistencies of us more common people. Their human quality is especially apparent in the case of economic theorists, those drawers of demand curves and hewers of "scientific laws." Though they talk of fundamental economic laws, though they italicise these laws in their textbooks, one notices that these same textbooks are revised every few years.

And it now looks as though their inexorable economic laws will have to be revised much oftener. Either that or economic textbooks will soon take on the appearance of German grammars in which a rule is stated in two lines and the next ten pages are taken up in explaining the exceptions. Even

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*The author of this article (I. B. Long is a pseudonym) has been a student or teacher of economics in five different universities both here and abroad, "two of which," he writes, "upon receipt of \$20, added initials to the end of my name." At first, he says, he was rather proud of the added initials, but now he is beginning to wonder whether they are worth the price he was charged for them.*

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the good old law of supply and demand has its exceptions nowadays. It is no longer true that a fall in price increases the demand, for people hold back their purchases in expectation that prices will fall still further. Either that or, if I dare say so, they haven't the wherewithal to buy.

## Marginal Bullability

Any one who has taken sophomore or sophomore economics in college remembers those fundamental principles of marginal productivity, marginal utility and marginal bullability, by which professors prove to their satisfaction that wage-earners are being paid just what they are worth, and that they, the wage-earners, can't get any more wages no matter how hard they try. Of course, these principles don't apply to professors. They have always kicked about their pay and still do. And yet when professors ask for a raise, do they point out any increase in their discounted marginal productivity, which and which alone, according to the principles they have "discovered," justifies an increase in pay? I hardly think so. No, it would seem that their principles apply only to non-professionals. I doubt that any economist would say that a doctor's fee in a confinement case, for instance, was based on the doctor's marginal productivity. No economist, as far as I know, has even decided whether the doctor's charge for delivering a baby is based on the cost of production or is just one of the costs of reproduction.

Yet, these were the very theories by which, all through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, from Adam Smith to William Graham Sumner, profs were busy proving that trade unions were useless, that they couldn't raise the pay of laborers because, as

the professors said, wages were determined by these iron laws of economics italicised in their textbooks and economic laws, unlike legislated laws, could not be broken. What difference did it make that trade unions were springing up by the thousands—even Russia has them today? They, the trade unions, didn't know what they were doing. At least they didn't do what the professors and the professors' economic laws told them to do. That's the way with labor. If it isn't undermining your government, it goes and destroys your theories.

## Pretentious Order of Professors

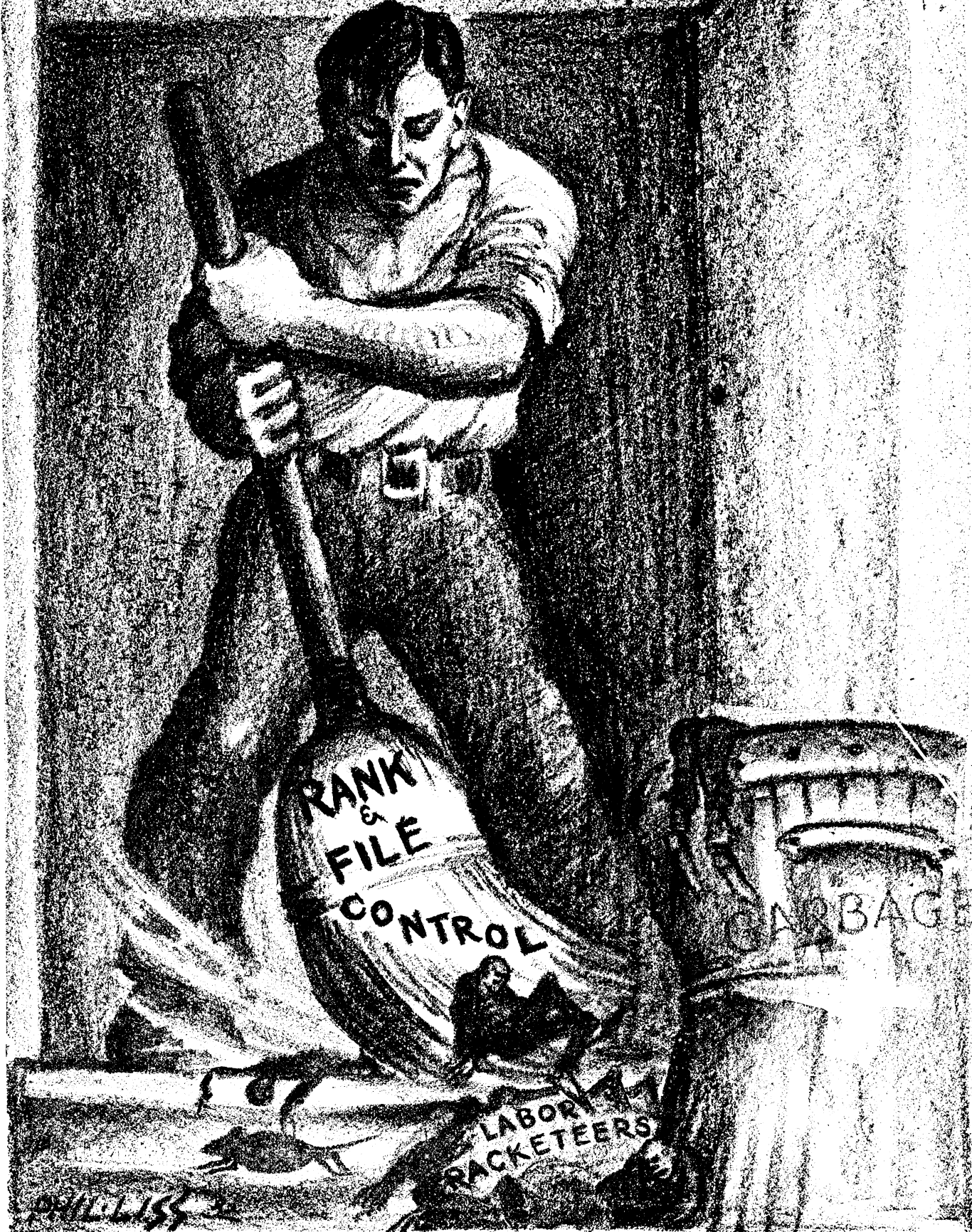
Some professors continually "kick" about the apprenticeship rules of trade unions, that bricklayers won't let every one lay brick. Yet the Ph.D. degree has become, to all intents and purposes, the trade union card of the Pretentious Order of Professors, the admission card required for entrance to the academic racket. The Ph.D. requirement for members of the professorial profession is one of the strongest apprenticeship systems known today.

Those who studied their textbooks intensely in order to pass the exams know that profits are paid to big business men because the business men bear the risks of business, because they are "specialists in risk bearing." Yet, for some seemingly unknown reason, those same texts neglect to mention the risks of the workers. How much extra, one wonders, does a worker get for the risk of losing his job, a risk which, according to an investigation by the National Bureau of Economic Research, has been increasing in recent years because large concerns have tried to stabilize their prices, thereby eliminating inventory losses and stabilizing profits, by allowing production and employment to fluctuate? Very little one suspects. It seems that payments for risk are restricted to one class. The workers' risk don't count.

Of late we have heard many economists advocating wage cuts for workers. Here again economics professors demonstrate their extreme humanness, in that they don't advise their own medicine for themselves. They say to the workers: "You are unemployed because wage rates are too high. If wage rates were cut low enough, it would become profitable to hire more

(Continued on page 28)

# AMERICAN LABOR MOVEMENT.



**Cleaning House**



# The Textile Conference

## A Report

IN accordance with the decision of the textile workers at the CPLA Active Workers Conference in March, a textile conference was held at Oakley Hall in Paterson on Sunday, April 24. Active workers were present from North Carolina and from such Northern centers as Allentown, Philadelphia, (hosiery and upholstery workers) Connecticut woolen centers, Woonsocket, Providence, New Bedford and Springfield. Delegates from Lawrence, Holyoke and from additional Southern centers were unable to attend for financial reasons but sent greetings and reports.

The Conference was opened by Chairman A. J. Muste who briefly explained the aims of the CPLA and the desire to stimulate organization efforts in the basic industries. Thereupon Joseph Brooks, chairman of the Paterson branch of the CPLA, was elected chairman of the Conference; Eddie Ryan, Jr., chairman of the Philadelphia branch, secretary.

Chairman Brooks called upon Louis F. Budenz, CPLA Executive Secretary, to explain in detail the objects of the Conference and to submit an agenda for discussion. Secretary Budenz stressed particularly the unemployment situation and the CPLA policy of linking up work for the unemployed with union activity. It is dangerous to create a division between employed and unemployed workers. Budenz made specific suggestions for carrying on the campaign on unemployment, such as holding open air meetings; organizing councils of unemployed (wherever possible in direct connection with the union of the industry to which the unemployed belong); sending committees to government officials; picketing city halls and state capitals and thus dramatizing the need for action on specific measures; attacking the rates charged by public utilities' corporations, which are making money and which discriminate in their rates against the small consumer; pressing for specific legislative proposals, such as laws against eviction during periods of depression; legislation for the 40 hour week and wherever possible for the 6 hour day and 5 day week; demand for direct federal aid for the unemployed, and for a nation-wide system of social insurance.

In conclusion, Secretary Budenz presented an agenda which was adopted by the Conference.

### Distress and Desperation

The reports made by delegates from various centers before action was taken on the concrete proposals submitted by the Secretary, indicate that in all textile centers a condition of unexampled misery prevails. Unemployment is at the peak; wages are being slashed right and left; working conditions are being worsened; hours are lengthened; relief funds are exhausted.

For example, in Allentown, out of 32 silk mills only 7 are working. Since the strike of last summer wages have been cut from 15 to 25 per cent. Recently one of the big mills, the Majestic, persuaded the workers to change from the 4 to the 6 loom system, cutting the piece-rate but assuring the workers that even with the reduced piece-rate they could make more running 6 looms than they had previously made on 4 looms. After the system was in effect a short time the firm announced that it could not sell the quality of cloth being turned out under the 6 loom system, put the workers back on 4 looms but kept the reduced piece-rate in effect!

In Rockville, Connecticut, the woolen industry is in the worst condition in its history. The mills are practically at a complete stand-still. The two-shift system is a cause for intense jealousy among the workers. When the CPLA group recently proposed an equalization of work between the day shift and the night shifts, the workers themselves objected and created a terrific turmoil.

The 4 loom system is in effect in the silk mills, and workers going at top speed can make not more than \$7 to \$10 per week. For the first time in years the 54 hour system is being introduced by the silk mills in that section of Connecticut.

In the big Cheney mill in Manchester, Connecticut, the payroll has been cut from \$200,000 per month to less than \$30,000. There are rumors that the company may be thrown into the hands of a receiver. The town of Manchester is bankrupt. It was unable to obtain funds recently from Boston bankers, finally obtaining a loan from New York bankers at an exorbitant rate of interest according to reports.

In Providence there is practically no union organization except a small

N.T.W. group. Employment in cotton, woolen and silk alike is down to a minimum.

In New Bedford, out of 54 mills only about 7 or 8 are working to amount to anything. In the silk mills there have recently been three cuts. Today workers operating 8 looms for a 46 hour week do well to make from \$7 to \$10 per week. In pocket-books, pajamas, shirts, etc., sweat shops have been introduced into the city, where girls make from \$2 to \$2.50 for a 48 hour week. When they get to the point where they can earn as much as \$4 per week on piece work they are fired and their places given to girls who work at the lower wages.

### Misery in the South

Larry Hogan's report on the Southern situation stated that practically all the print cloth mills are curtailing to three weeks each month. This means that the average monthly wage for the most fortunately situated workers will not be above \$21 and hundreds will be earning from \$10 to \$15 per month. Nearly all the mills in North Carolina are running two shifts, 12 hours per shift. Spinners, weavers and card-hands are called in at 4 o'clock in the morning to clean machines on their own time. Weavers on wide-sheeting are operating 62 to 72 looms and the highest wage now paid for this type of weaving is \$12.30 per week. Loom-fixers are keeping up 125 looms to the section, doing their own warping and oiling. Their wage is \$13 as compared with \$21.60 per week in 1929.

On narrow-sheeting weavers often operate as many as 100 looms. Weavers on cotton warp with rayon filling are now taking care of 36 looms, where formerly they ran 4. Wages on this work are from \$10 to \$16 per week, as compared to \$25 to \$35 three years ago.

"The workers are all being speeded up in such a way that would make the 1929 stretch-out look like play. Many of the print-cloth looms that were making 90 revolutions per minute are making from 100 to 125. This makes it harder on the weaver. Because of the short staple cotton used the threads break more often. It also keeps the loom-fixers busy putting in new crank shafts. Spinners are now being put on as many as 20 sides, compared to 10 prior to 1929, and 14 since that time.

## Paterson

The report on Patterson indicated similarly depressed conditions in the industry but introduced a bright note as the Paterson CPLA members pointed out that during the 1927 depression it was almost impossible to get 10 or a dozen people to come out to a union meeting, whereas now, thanks to the activities of the CPLA branch, there is considerable activity in the union, and further steps are being taken toward forming the National Federation of Silk Workers, for which the CPLA has been working for many years.

Results were obtained from the picketing of the State Capitol by Paterson C.P.L.A. members on April 5. The Labor Department called an immediate conference at Trenton with Joseph Brooks and Garret Nauta. Out of that conference came recommendations from Commissioner of Labor Charles R. Blunt for "liberal unemployment relief," passage of the pending 48-hour law for women and additional legislation for the enforcement of the law against night work for women.

While the Paterson C.P.L.A. branch considered these recommendations inadequate, they also thought them to be steps in the right direction. The points won have encouraged the branch and the Paterson silk workers in general to fight further for the entire "emergency program" submitted to the Legislature: 1. The 40-hour work week by legislation, for both men and women workers, with complete abolition of night shifts; 2. A minimum of \$50,000,000 for unemployment relief; 3. Enforcement of the labor laws; and 4. Reduction of gas and electricity rates for the small consumer.

Already two further things have happened out of the C.P.L.A. campaign in Paterson. On the one hand, silk bosses are being arrested for violation of the labor laws and are being found guilty and fined. There have been several of such cases within the past two weeks. On the other hand, Chester I. Barnard, State director of unemployment relief, has predicted "insurrection" in one county of the State if relief is not forthcoming (the "one county" being Passaic, in which Paterson is located). He has further expressed himself as "ashamed" of the allotment of 70 cents per person per week for food which the State can grant to the needy under the \$20,000,000 appropriation which he requests of the Legislature. Mr. Barnard's statements are noteworthy because of his being president of the New Jersey Bell Telephone Co.

## Practical Suggestions

After reports had been submitted, considerable time was spent in making practical suggestions on organizing CPLA groups, carrying on unemployment meetings and demonstrations, getting out mimeographed shop or industry papers, methods of getting these papers into the hands of the workers, organization of educational clubs where workers are not ready for other definite action. Special emphasis was placed by the Conference on the wide distribution of LABOR AGE and other CPLA literature. All of the members pledged themselves to enroll LABOR AGE subscribers and to sell bundles, as is being done so successfully already in the Philadelphia branch and elsewhere.

From every center and every branch of the industry, without exception, came criticisms of the apathy and inefficiency frequently characterizing the United Textile Workers. These criticisms did not come from outside the union or the industry. On the contrary, they were voiced by members of the union, actual workers in the industry who had had a great deal of direct experience with the conditions on which they were reporting. On this important subject a resolution was drawn up which is given in full in this issue of LABOR AGE. The Conference took cognizance of the fact that Governor Winant of New Hampshire has proposed a conference of the governors of textile states with the Secretary of Commerce of the United States, to consider the disorganization in the industry and the unexampled distress among the textile workers. The Conference voted to communicate with Governor Winant and with the Secretary of Commerce, urging that such a conference be held, that states like Pennsylvania and New Jersey should be included, and particularly that in connection with the conference open hearings should be held at which workers from textile centers and labor organizations and groups could testify directly as to the conditions from which they were suffering, and could present their own programs to meet the situation. This proposal has already gained wide publicity in the press throughout textile centers, and will be vigorously pushed.

The splendid campaign for unemployment relief in New Jersey inaugurated by the Patterson branch of the CPLA was heartily endorsed.

## Textile Department of the CPLA

Most significant of all is the fact that the textile workers gathered in this

Conference were so deeply impressed by the soundness of the CPLA program that they decided unanimously and enthusiastically that concrete and vigorous efforts to put this program into effect must be made. It was decided therefore to organize a Textile Department of the CPLA.

This department will operate on the basis of the general principles and policies of the CPLA. Its special purpose will be to promote the organization of CPLA groups in textile centers, to promote the organization of a militant and effective union for all textile workers, to coordinate the activities of CPLA members and groups in various textile centers, and to gather information on textile conditions which will be made available to all affiliated members and groups. This information will be obtained partly from workers themselves, who will send in clippings to the CPLA office and reports on conditions and developments in their own communities, and partly by research in trends in the industry and other matters carried on by students and economists in sympathy with this work.

The following were appointed members of a provisional Executive Committee for the Textile Department: Hogan of North Carolina; Eddie Ryan, Jr., of Philadelphia; Brooks of Paterson (with Nauta serving as alternate when Brooks is absent); Shearer of Lawrence; Richards of Connecticut; and Heimbach of Allentown. Provision was made for adding representatives from New Bedford, Providence, Woonsocket and other centers to the committee.

As one of the delegates to the Conference put it: "The Active Workers Conference recently held in New York sponsored by the CPLA was the first real step that has been taken for some time toward doing something concrete for the textile workers. This Conference is the second step which has been taken toward accomplishing something." Not only, according to universal testimony, did the individuals in attendance at the conference get new inspiration for going to work in their own localities, but with a permanent organization set up, the work throughout the whole textile industry will be coordinated effectively. What is already being done toward building a National Federation of Silk Workers as an autonomous organization within the United Textile Workers is an illustration of what may be done in other branches of the industry.

## Statement of Textile Workers Conference on A. F. of L. and Independent Unions

**T**HE Conference for Progressive Labor Action is opposed to any general policy of dual unionism and sectarianism. It stands always for unity of the workers on the industrial field. Where workers are organized in substantial numbers in a union, even though that union be reactionary and in many respects unsatisfactory, C. P. L. A. holds that militants must work within the organization, building a rank and file opposition which will promote progressive policies and clean out autocracy, graft and gangsterism. Militants must not pursue a policy of destruction and splitting and must not go off into sectarian organizations which are unions in name only.

On the other hand where A. F. of L. or other old unions have utterly failed to meet their responsibilities and try to exercise a mere paper jurisdiction, and where the workers, turning away from them in disgust, try to organize and strike independently, the C. P. L. A. will not take the position of giving no help to these workers in their struggles against the boss simply because they do not fear the A. F. of L. name. It will not dictate to such workers or try to tell them that they may not organize save in a particular way. The A. F. of L. and its affiliated unions, the C. P. L. A. re-

gards as a means to an end, not as an end in themselves. If they fail to discharge their duty and the workers turn from them, it is such weak and corrupt would-be unions and not the workers who are to be condemned. The C. P. L. A. is for the workers. It will support every genuine attempt of workers to build bonafide, non-sectarian industrial unions and to unite these unions into a powerful, progressive militant movement.

On this fundamental policy of the C. P. L. A. this Textile Workers Conference takes its stand.

Reports have been made to this conference by members of the United Textile Workers in every section of the textile industry, stating that this union has for the most part failed to organize the workers over whom it claims jurisdiction. Many complaints have been made of inefficiency and laziness on the part of organizers. It appears that the union's policy has been utterly lacking in militancy. It has tried and keeps on trying, in spite of repeated failures, the suicidal policy of trying to build itself up by seeking to persuade employers that it will help them make more profits, if they encourage their employes to organize!

We condemn these policies. We urge

all members of the U. T. W. to struggle against such policies, and to work with renewed vigor for the adoption and execution of a progressive and militant program. Especially we call for more rapid progress in building the American Federation of Silk Workers as an autonomous body within the U. T. W. and for a real campaign of organization on a national scale among silk workers.

It is our opinion that per capita tax paid to the U. T. W. is often too large in view of the services given, and that local unions and other bodies may justly ask that a part of such per capita be returned to them for organization work under their own control.

This conference furthermore pledges support to any genuine effort of textile workers to build bonafide, progressive and militant industrial unions. We will work to unite all textile workers in a great union having such policies. If the U. T. W. does not furnish a satisfactory leadership, textile workers will repudiate it. A union can live only by serving the workers. But a union, enabling them to play their part in the labor movement of the United States, textile workers must have. They will work and struggle, despite the opposition of employers and of enemies from within, until this goal is reached.

## The Ohio Miner After 40 Years

by William R. Truax

**T**HE condition of the Ohio miner today is as bad, if not worse, than before 1890 when the United Mine Workers of America was born. After more than 30 years of bitter strife and sacrifice, his life, and the lives of his wife and children, are still as insecure and as hard as they were back in 1873 when a few miners, gathered in convention, seeking to better the intolerable conditions of their lives, asked that they be given true weight for the coal they mined; that they be given shorter hours; and that all men in mines be eligible to citizenship in the United States.

The purpose of this article is to give a brief history of the struggle of the miners to better their conditions; to tell of the great victories won for them by the U. M. W. of A. when it was headed by honest and courageous

leaders and of how those victories are now lost largely because of the corrupt and cowardly officials who today head this once great Union.

In 1891 there were about 250,000 miners in the coal industry. Of these nearly 32,000 paid dues into the U. M. W. of A. In 1892, although it was a year of great depression in the industry and the union membership had dropped to 20,000, the miners were granted the right to place a check-weighman on the tippie to see that they were not robbed of the weight of the coal they mined.

Yet conditions kept getting worse and on April 10, 1894, a convention was called by the remaining union miners who now numbered only about

13,000. These few sturdy members, however, decided to call a strike of all the miners of the country. About 125,000 answered the call, and in the course of the fight to establish the miners union throughout the country more than 180,000 became idle.

In Ohio the operators succeeded in bringing the injunction law into use and many miners in the state were thrown into jail. The cases of these miners were fought and won in the courts by Major William McKinley who was later to become President of the United States.

During the year 1896 the average yearly wages for miners in Ohio were from \$213.20 to \$319.20. To a large extent this low wage was brought about by the operators getting the miners to leave the union by promises of steady work and threats of black-

listing. Thus by the beginning of 1897 the membership of the U. M. W. of A. had dwindled to 9,731.

But in 1898, after the 8-hour day had been established, the union, under the leadership of such men in the International as Mitchell, White and Hayes, and the state leadership of Haskins, Green, Sullivan and Moore, the union grew with great strides. All of these men had the interest of the organization at heart and had the complete confidence of the members. This is why, when Frank Hayes left the office of International President in 1919, we had a membership of more than 600,000 dues paying members with 31 districts organized including every coal producing state and part of Canada.

Notwithstanding the small membership of 1897, and the depression in the industry because of overdevelopment, a convention was called in June. Many of the local unions were unable to pay the expenses of their delegates to this convention and they had to bear their own expenses as best they could. Many stole their way on freight trains.

A strike call was issued for July 4. It was this strike that paved the way for the wonderful achievements of 1898 when the miners were granted the 8-hour day, an increase in wages, a closed shop agreement and the Inter-State Joint Conference, which, with the exception of the years 1906, 1910 and 1914 when the conference failed and the settlements were made by the different districts, up until 1927, has made each agreement.

In 1914, after a long and bitter struggle, the miners in Ohio succeeded in establishing the Mine Run Law whereby they were paid for all coal mined and loaded. From this time on the industry grew in the state and the conditions of the miners and their families became better. Through the united efforts of the miners, mining laws were placed upon the statute books of Ohio and the Ohio Industrial Commission was created which provided that the workingman should be compensated for the time lost because of accident, and in the case of fatal accident, his dependents were provided with funds to maintain and educate his children.

By 1924 the union in the state had grown to 44,333 members who produced 30,096,983 net tons of coal working only 143 days and were paid \$22,539,841. Through the three years of the Jacksonville agreement the average membership of the union was 41,205 who produced an average of

28,566,920 tons of coal for which they were paid \$20,822,964. To such an extent had the conditions of the miners improved in the state by April 1, 1927, when the miners union in Ohio met with its first reverse in the 29 years of its existence.

The operators now claimed that they could no longer meet the competition of the southern coal fields if they continued to pay union wages. After many attempts to have the scale of wages adjusted by agreement the miners failed and the operators decided to run the mines of the state under the open shop plan. They at once began a fight-to-the-death on the union in the state. They pooled vast sums of money and began operation at the Webb Mine of the Cambria Colliers company in Belmont County. They imported unskilled workers from the south and started to mine coal at great cost.

### Traitorous Leadership

This is when the weakness and faithlessness of our unintelligent leadership was first demonstrated. Men who were kept at the top of the union in Ohio at great cost to the miners, men who were paid great salaries, men who were maintained in office for just such emergencies failed the members whose confidence they held. Certain of the members and a few of the officials in the sub-districts submitted plans of compromise which had they been accepted would have saved the union. But again stupidity, or worse, had its way and orders were issued that there was to be no backward step at any cost. Any member, local or official, objecting to this action was expelled. In the eastern Ohio sub-district 25 the largest locals had their charters revoked for accepting a call to the convention called by the Save-the-Union group, relief was cut off to the members unless they would sign and agree to support the action of the International.

Here was the leadership fighting with the membership over control of the state organization while the actions of the operators were forgotten entirely. The result was that in a short time men who had built their homes and reared their families in these hills saw their all slipping away; strangers were filling their places in the mines, moving into the villages occupying their homes, driving them to despair.

Then, when the operators made their age-old promise of steady work with good wages the local miners made a real backward step. By promise of future rewards the operators

enticed many of the former machine men back to cut coal. True, most of these were not real union men. They had belonged to the union only because they could not help themselves and not because they understood or believed in the union. When they went back, they were at first paid the 1917 scale with the promise of steady work. But these rates continued only a short time.

Once they had got most of the mines in operation again the operators began slashing wages, breaking down the working conditions that had been won by all the years of struggle. They refused to pay yardage, or to pay for all dead work; they reestablished company stores and all the evils of open shop labor. Today the miners of Ohio are working for less pay per ton than in many of the non-union fields of West Virginia and Kentucky. All conditions have been entirely done away with. Two men are now forced to work in space for one—even in 8 foot entries this prevails. The miners of Ohio must now work the old standard of hours. Drivers are paid at some mines at the rate of 5 cents per car of coal pulled to the pass-way until he has pulled 60 cars; all cars over 60 he must handle without pay. At many mines the state laws are being evaded. Loaders are paid not by the ton for weighed coal as according to the law he should be but he must load his coal at the rate of 80 cents per car of three tons. At other mines the custom of pulling the coal by beast has been discontinued and the men must push or pull their coal to the passageway. Some must unload stone cars to get cars to load coal. In some of the mines the miners must use coke forks in the place of shovels to load coal. In addition most of the companies cheat the men of their weight. At every mine men are checked off for the doctor; in some places this is as much as \$3.00 per month. Powder sells higher now than it did when we were making good wages. Men who ask to be paid for coal that is loaded and lost on the roadway in the mine are discharged at once.

Such is the condition in which we find the Ohio miner on April 1, 1932. He has been called out on strike. But he is being led by the same leadership that led him down to defeat in 1927, and the outlook is not bright.

*This is an excellent statement of the background of the miners' situation in Ohio as well as of the general situation in the bituminous coal fields..*

EDITORS.

# We Went To Harlan

by Lucien Koch

*Director Commonwealth College,  
Mena, Ark.*

**W**E went to Harlan. The Commonwealth College Delegation of two teachers and three students went to Harlan to carry on the work begun by preceding groups of students, writers and relief-bringers. We belonged to a workers' school; so we could not stand by while our sympathies and class-conscious intelligence drove us to make common cause with the miners of southeastern Kentucky in their struggle with the mine operators for a mere existence and some retention of their constitutional rights to organize, meet together, talk, receive outside aid and bargain collectively with their millionaire bosses.

On a Tuesday morning toward the last of March, after hearing of the insolent rebuff of the eastern students, the Commonwealth student body and faculty decided to send a delegation to Harlan. Within twenty-four hours, preparations were made, plans completed and the delegation sent speeding on its way to the Blue Grass State in a Dodge coupe, strung with banners and made over to increase its seating capacity and enlarge its storage space.

We drove long hours, stopping in Little Rock, Memphis, St. Louis, Indianapolis and Cincinnati to arrange meetings and collect relief in exchange for souvenir copies of the national Bill of Rights that was being so openly and flagrantly violated by the employed political and judicial agents of the coal companies.

We knew what we wanted to do. We wanted to "bring food to starving miners and the Bill of Rights to sheriffs." We wanted to investigate conditions at first hand and to turn the eye of the nation upon the misery, lawlessness and ruthless mistreatment of miners and their families which characterized the troubled zone. We went as a non-partisan group with the backing of the American Civil Liberties Union to test our far-sung constitutional rights.

## The Governor Is Sick

Once in Kentucky, we went first to Frankfort, headquarters of Governor Ruby Laffoon. We wanted to assure him of our lawful and peaceful intentions and ask for his co-operation in the execution of our humanitarian work. We phoned ahead for an appointment, but, behold, as we approached the state building, the gover-

nor and his cane were seen limping in the direction of the gubernatorial mansion. A little later the governor's secretary affably hit upon ill health as the cause of the governor's retreat.

Walter B. (Little Hitler) Smith, the simple, diminutive Bell County attorney, eyed us in the governor's office, remained silent and shortly hurried himself across the capital lawn to confer with the sick governor. We, unable to get an appointment, moved on to Pineville, trailed by newspapermen and watched by officers of the law.

We heard reports of a Harlan mob that awaited us at Barbourville to prevent our entrance into Pineville. But no mob appeared as we drove through early Sunday morning before the mist had lifted. In fact, no interference showed its head until we had entered the Pineville city limits. There it became increasingly apparent that we had taken them by surprise by arriving earlier than they expected. Chief of Police Pearl Osborne rushed up in a roadster from behind, cut across in front of our car and forced us to halt at the curb. His burly attendant shifted his miniature weapon from his pants pocket to his coat.

"What are you doing here?" queried the red-faced Osborne vigorously. "We're going to Pineville," I answered as spokesman for the group.

"You are not stopping in Pineville," he countered.

His attention was attracted by newspapermen who were unfolding cameras.

"Put those cameras up and get back into your car," he ordered.

The chief offered to show us the way to Harlan, but we announced we would stay in Pineville for a while. He ordered us to follow him.

## Get Out of Town!

We drove into the heart of Pineville and parked across from the county courthouse, insisting on our right to remain in the town. The chief lost no time. Again he ordered us to leave. We protested. Then started a series of hasty conferences. Several times Osborne moved himself to the other side of the street, where

he went into a huddle with Herndon J. Evans (editor of the Pineville Sun and former Associated Press correspondent, dropped after repeated complaints against his biased reports), Mayor Brooks and other dignitaries who were in the crowd that was fast growing in numbers.

Chief Osborne was fertile in ideas. He carried a number of tricks in his bag. The presence of the mob and the frequent display of arms gave him a feeling of security. He issued his proposals seriatim, taking counsel with the dignitaries between moves:

First proposal: "Get out of town!"

Reply: "Why?"

Second proposal: "You came here to make a speech. All right, there's the courthouse steps. You can make a speech there."

Reply: "We don't care to now. We will ask permission when we do."

Third proposal: "You'll have to put up a peace bond or go to jail. Which will it be?"

Reply: "Why should we put up a peace bond. We are peaceful and do not intend to create any disturbance."

Fourth proposal: "You are breaking traffic rules. You can't park here any longer."

Our reply took the form of driving to another position and stopping, slamming on the brakes when we were pushed from behind by another car.

Mayor Brooks, apparently the chosen pinch hitter of the dignitaries came forward. His proposal came with directness and force.

"I'm mayor of this town. We don't want you here. If you don't drive out of the city, we will drive your car out for you."

Reply: "This car is private property. Why should you take possession of it?"

Chief Osborne, ever resourceful, limbered himself and started to climb into the window of our car to occupy the driver's seat. He misjudged the diameter of his person. His well-fed form lodged itself securely in the opening, but not for long. By a vigorous scissor action of his legs he unloosed himself. He slashed the ropes that bound the box of provisions that held shut the door that led to the driver's seat. He helped jerk me from the seat and ordered Dignitary Dr. Stacy to drive our machine out of town. I was hustled roughly into Herndon J. Evans' car which joined

in the procession, but was later placed back into the rear seat of our car.

We were soon met by a Harlan mob, headed by Deputy Lee Fleenor, noted outlaw and professional killer who is under indictment for murder of miners. Fleenor drew his gun on the driver of our car and shouted:

"You're under arrest for reckless driving. You nearly killed me back there."

He didn't realize that "everything was all right." His dull wits finally got the point and the motorcade proceeded.

After crossing Bell County and entering Harlan County, Fleenor succeeded Dr. Stacy at the wheel. In the meantime, Dr. Stacy had lightened the load by distributing part of our relief along the highway.

In Harlan County, the newspapermen were ordered to "stay back and don't follow for half an hour." The three cars remaining, a Harlan car in front, ours in the middle and a Pineville care following were driven steadily toward the summit of Big Black Mountain. There, within a few feet of the Virginia line, in the rarefied air of the Cumberland Mountains at an elevation of approximately 4,000 feet, we were taken out in turn and flogged with limbs from nearby trees. For each man there was a new flogger

and a new limb. The number of lashes were proportionate to the rank of the delegate—the teachers faring somewhat worse.

### "Do You Believe in God Almighty?"

Ordered back into the car, some of us were beaten again about the head and face as our inimitable friends in their own Harlan way cursed and sung out such questions as:

"What do you think of the American flag?"

"Do you believe in God Almighty?"

We were ejected into Virginia amid promises of death if we returned. Our gentle companions then went their way, perhaps to divine services, as church was beginning.

Our experience was not unique. We got off easy. It is merely another incident in the labor struggle. Nor are such incidents localized in southeastern Kentucky. It is easy for the reader to draw his own conclusions, but I may suggest a few of them.

Fascism is a reality in Kentucky. It is a ruthless, racketeering Fascism to be sure, but it is an ironclad dictatorship of the coal operators through their chosen thugs and political and judicial agents. This Fascism in Ken-

tucky is only indicative of what promises to be the next step in the social development of our nation. As the labor movement raises its shoulders and becomes a stronger competitor for the profits of business it will be openly suppressed, beaten, starved by the combined forces of capitalism.

What will be the answer of the working class? Persistent organization along class-conscious lines, the development of a philosophy that does not waver and that takes in the cultural as well as the economic side of life. As repression becomes more severe the different factions of the movement will be brought together, not only within the nation but between nations. The labor movement will push out on all fronts with solid ranks. The activities and expressions of the labor movement will encompass the whole life of the worker. Needless to say, workers' education and student groups throughout the country will play a vital part in the natural development of such a movement.

There are two other questions raised by our trip to Kentucky. In view of our typical experience, where does the liberal stand with his philosophy? What does democracy offer when the machinery of government is in Fascist hands? These are serious questions indeed.

## A Steel Worker Speaks Out

I AM a steel mill worker who wants to be a union man. Some of my friends, members of your organization, with whom I have had many talks about the union, have given me your name. They suggested that I write this letter in the hope that when the next convention of the Amalgamated Association meets at Follansbee, W. Va., you will try to find some answer to the questions I want to lay before you.

There are hundreds of thousands of steel workers today who are looking for some way out of the mess they're in. Installation of new machinery has taken away all hope of security and the depression has cut their wages and put them on short time. More and more of them are realizing that organization is the only way out and they are wondering where to turn to get the fighting leadership that will do the job. What do they see when they look at your organization?

They see a union that has lost two thousand members in the last year and

### A Letter

*A friend in the steel industry, a member of the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers, has sent us a copy of the letter which appears below. He reports that some unorganized steel worker sent copies of this letter to all delegates to the AA convention which was held recently at Follansbee, W. Va., and that it has provoked a very healthy discussion of principles and tactics.*

*LABOR AGE publishes this letter because it is an interesting and significant document coming, as it does, from an unknown and unorganized steel worker.*

that now has only 5,300 members in an industry employing 400,000. A new process of wrought iron puddling and the continuous and semi-continuous sheet and tin mills are being rapidly introduced to hurry up the job. While

your base rate has been maintained, the actual rates of the sheet and tin men have been cut over 12 per cent in the last two years. Is it putting it too strong to say that the future of the A. A. will be determined by the way its membership, delegates and officers meet the above facts during the next few months.

Yet just at the present time when the organization's fighting spirit should be at its height, everything is quiet. The union hasn't a single organizer in the field because the officials feel that nothing can be done. The membership is indifferent and many have lost faith entirely and hang on only because of the insurance benefits.

In a way the officials are right when they say that it is hard to organize the unorganized under the banner of the A. A. Many non-union men think that it is interested only in the more highly skilled and better paid men. They know that for the last 30 years it has bothered only with the aristocrats of the industry. The results

have been that the members began to consider themselves in a higher class than the ordinary worker. Even today, when machinery is fast making button pushers of us all, many union members laugh at new processes and kid themselves into believing that they won't work.

What can the Amalgamated do about it? Some people say that there is nothing that can be done. They claim that something new will have to come before the steel mills are organized. But it seems to me that if a real fighting program were mapped out and carried to the workers, the old A. A. could put itself at the head and lead the steel slaves to freedom.

Let us take a look at what some of the points in such a program might do.

1. The Amalgamated Association must be a fighting industrial union. Today, when a few large corporations control the entire industry, no union can succeed unless it takes in all the workers in the steel mills. You won't have the chance of a snowball in hell if you confine yourselves to the puddlers and the sheet and tin mill men. This means that the A. A. must throw open its charter and take in all groups, no matter how small they may be, carrying these members as secret members for a while. Nor can a union expect to organize by asking the bosses' permission. They will never welcome or allow organization until they are forced to. Go to the men! Build on their fighting strength and combined power!

2. The Amalgamated Association must stand firm on wage cutting. In some departments in non-union mills, wages have been cut in half without any action by the union. The A. A., if it hopes to gain the confidence of the men, must help them fight their battles. In addition the organization must stand firm on its own wage standards. Business conditions today demand that the worker's purchasing power be increased. The old-fashioned sliding scale does just the reverse and the union ought to do some heavy thinking on this point.

3. The Amalgamated Association should push its shorter hours, shorter work week campaign. We can't be ostriches any longer. Thousands have been and thousands will be displaced by machines. The union should insist on the six-hour day and the five day week. A live, aggressive campaign to put this program into effect throughout the entire industry, would be one

of the best ways in which the A. A. could prove to the unorganized that the union was the way out for them.

4. The Amalgamated Association must work for a national system of social insurance. As long as the industrialists can hold the jobless man as a club over the heads of the employed workers, a union has damn little chance. Unemployment Insurance, paid for by industry, would keep out-of-work men from scabbing to keep from starving. Old Age pensions and child labor laws will also be a big help and the A. A. should put its shoulder to the wheel for their enactment.

5. The Amalgamated Association must build an organizing and educational department. Doped by years of prosperity, most workers still expect that everything will be brought to them on a silver platter. They must be educated to realize that victory can come only through their own efforts. At the same time, the A. A. has no research division to keep in touch with what is happening in the industry and in our economic system as a whole.

6. The Amalgamated Association should work for the formation of an Independent Labor Party. Time after time, a "friendly" Republican or Democrat has been elected by the workers and has repaid their support with strike injunctions, evictions and shots in the back. Only when labor builds its own party, and elects representatives responsible to labor can we be sure that the workers' rights will be upheld in the legislative chambers of our land.

## MILL SHADOWS . . . On The Road

Workers' education went "on the road" in April when 25 students and staff members of Brookwood Labor College took "Mill Shadows," Tom Tippet's 4-act drama of the Marion, N. C. textile strike, to Hartford, Conn., Philadelphia, Washington, Baltimore, Allentown, Pa., and New Brunswick, N. J.

To undertake such a venture in these times of unemployment, low wages, and labor apathy seemed a little like fools venturing in where angels fear to tread, but the fact that some 2,800 people came to see the play and that financially it more than covered the expenses of an 800-mile, 9-day trip, testifies both to the value of labor drama as a means of propaganda and to the energy of the local committees who sponsored the performances.

In Allentown and the Kensington district of Philadelphia where textile workers had recently been involved in strikes

The Amalgamated Association will have to make some provision for temporary settlements. We know that we can't always get everything we want at the first crack. This means that the A. A. will have to make some provision for temporary settlements below the union scale. There have been many cases in the past where the union has lost everything by refusing to accept anything less than the full union rate.

Do you men want to buckle down and do the job? The A. A. is still the only organization with any machinery for reaching the workers. It has a printing plant, money, and all the other things needed in order to carry a campaign to the men. And most important of all, it has many members who have been through the mill, who know how a union works, and who know how to carry on the fight.

Let me end with a warning. The time to start is *now*. Six months, a year from now, may be too late. For fifty-seven years the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel & Tin Workers has been the organization of the men who work in America's rolling mills. For your own sake and for the sake of the thousands who toil today in the non-union mills, I plead with you to take steps to put your union again in its rightful place. I hope that you will take action soon to put the old A. A. once more at the head of all the steel mill men so that victory, solidarity and liberty will come to the workers of these United States.

of their own, the audience's response was so enthusiastic as to hold up the action of the play at several points. In places like Washington and Baltimore and the swanky section of Philadelphia where the audiences were largely liberals and labor sympathizers, the applause was more restrained at first but enthusiasm rose steadily as the play progressed. "Can this all be true?" asked the liberals. "It's as true as life itself," said the workers.

Senator Costigan, who with Senator Wheeler attended the Washington performance, called Tom Tippet early the next morning to ask if it was really so about the 12-hour working day. "Twelve hours and 20 minutes! Read 'When Southern Labor Stirs,'" Tippet replied, refusing an invitation to a senatorial conference because his cast was starting for Baltimore.

The dramatic critic of the Baltimore  
(Continued on Page 28)

# Foreign News Notes

## *The British I. L. P. Remains Inside The Labor Party*

Much interest has been centered upon the relations between the Labor Party and the Independent Labor Party and the question whether the latter would decide at its Easter Conference to disaffiliate.

Fenner Brockway who is now in charge of the I. L. P. weekly *New Leader* (which, by the way has recently been much improved and has added 10,000 new readers) was for a break because "continued association is now a handicap." Maxton, the Parliamentary leader of the I. L. P. group, after the first session of the new Parliament, insisted that the Labor Party chiefs had not learned the lesson of their mistakes, and he, with Buchanan and McGovern, was credited by the *Daily Herald* with the intention of refusing to work with the Labor Party whatever the decision of the I. L. P. Conference might be. Six out of the nine divisional councils of the I. L. P. were against disaffiliation and therefore it looked likely that the I. L. P. would split itself and not the Labor Party by its decision. Those who wanted disaffiliation said that the Labor Party cannot live down its past, and that parliamentary reformism still predominates instead of the desire for revolutionary change. The enforcement of the standing order that while a Labor M. P. may abstain from voting that he may not vote against the Party was taken to be an indication that the Labor Party wished to suppress its left wing critics.

The defenders of affiliation stressed the difficulty of building up a rival political organization to the Labor Party and the confusion which would arise from rival labor candidates. They insisted that the I. L. P. would be deprived of exercising influence upon the mass of the organized workers; that the reformist tendencies of the Labor Party are exaggerated; that the Labor Party has learned from its experience; and that there must be unity of action in parliamentary voting, when a policy has been previously discussed and accepted. If this discussion was avoided or the decision over-ruled by the Labor Cabinet then the procedure should be improved rather than making a break.

Several things might have happened. Maxton and his colleagues could have founded a new Socialist body stressing the necessity of the rapid attainment of Socialism. The Labor Party could have

adapted its procedure and the I. L. P. unitedly remain affiliated. In accord with the vote of the divisional councils, the Conference at Easter decided not to disaffiliate. But this decision was qualified by the demand that the Labor Party should modify its procedure to give freedom on matters of principle to the I. L. P. members. Negotiations have been begun to secure this. By this decision the I. L. P. may lose the left fringe of its membership to the Communist Party. The mixed composition of the I. L. P. makes its future somewhat uncertain but the swing to the left of Labor under the pressure of low wages and higher food taxes will lessen the gap between the Labor Party and the I. L. P.

The spirit in which the I. L. P. decided to remain affiliated to the Labor Party can be seen in the basis suggested by the National Administrative Council of the I. L. P. as the basis for negotiations:

That the I. L. P. affirms its right as an autonomous organization within the federal structure of the Labor Party to advocate and to act in Parliament and in the country in favor of a policy aiming at a speedy and decisive transition from Capitalism to Socialism.

Other suggested clauses give an excluded M. P. the right of appeal to the Annual Conference of the Labor Party. Instead of leaving the decision to form a government to an individual, the N. A. C. suggests that it be made by the National Executive, and that the Cabinet, instead of as in the past being selected by the premier, should be selected by a joint committee of the National Labor Party Executive and the Parliamentary Labor Party.

These latter suggestions arise from the fatal use made by the now hopelessly pathetic MacDonald of the traditional powers enjoyed by a British premier. Incidentally, despite all the efforts of MacDonald's friends, the Labor Party has rejected with indignation all his overtures. The Labor Party people endorse what Laski wrote for the *May Harper's* although some of them remember the time when Laski showered liberal if qualified praise upon this most tragic figure in political history. In his article Laski said:

"Most of the policy he espouses is a direct contradiction of the essential ends to which he has devoted the major portion of his life. The man who explained with passion the right of India to free-

dom imprisons by the thousands those who took him at his word. The man who denounced the war of 1914 (after some pussyfooting and because of the secrecy of its hatching) stands unprotesting in the face of an imperialism as menacing as any in modern history. The internationalist accepts without difficulty one more and vast economic barrier in the way of the world unity. The appointed leader of the working class movement leads its hereditary foe to the battle." From the militant declarations of Fenner Brockway as chairman of the I.L.P. Conference such MacDonaldism and gradualism as may linger in the Labor Party will have short shrift and it is to be hoped that a working agreement between the I.L.P. and the L.P. will be successfully adopted.

MARK STARR.

## *Split in the Dutch Socialist Party*

As a protest against the opportunistic policies of the leadership of the Dutch Social Democratic Party, over 400 left delegates seceded out of a total of 2,000 at the 37th Congress held in Haarlem. The insurgents proceeded to hold their own convention and established the Independent Social Democratic Party of Holland. Among the leaders of the new party are: Frank van der Goes, the "intellectual father of the Dutch Social Democratic Workers Party"; Edo Fimmen, secretary of the International Transport Workers Federation and former secretary of the International Trade Union Federation (Amsterdam); P. J. Schmidt and A. Stenhuis, former head of the Dutch Federation of Labor.

In concluding his farewell address to the party congress, van der Goes declared: "I wish therefore to close now with one word to my close theoretical associates, which should at the same time be a word of warning to the right-wing leadership. In the "Chronicles" by H. Polak in "Het Volk" of January 6, he reminds us how the mighty Social Democratic Workers Party of Holland grew out of a small group founded in 1894. Let not one lose courage, because of the thought that he is in the minority. Let us believe in the power of the idea. Let us at no time think, that in numbers, in money, in a huge apparatus, lies the sum total of power."



# The C. P. L. A. In Relation to Other Organizations and Groups

*(The following statement was unanimously adopted at a recent N.E.C. meeting. The vote of out-of-town N.E.C. members is now being taken. Meanwhile the statement is tentatively submitted for the consideration of members and others interested.)*

**T**HE C.P.L.A. is an organization of militants. We stand for the abolition of the capitalist social system, for a workers' republic and a planned economic system operated in the interest of the masses and not of the few.

We believe that the job of building a new economic order must be done by the workers. We are concerned, therefore, with building up the organized power of the working class in order that it may take control of industry and government.

We hold that the labor movement in America must grow up out of the American soil; it must face the realities of American life; it must be built and controlled by the workers of America. No one else can do the job for us, any more than we can do the job of the workers in some other country.

We hold, furthermore, that certain specific jobs must be emphasized by militants in the United States today. First, our chief emphasis is on the economic struggle and on the organization of the workers in the basic industries into militant industrial unions. To neglect the job of organization on the economic field, to under-estimate the importance of the economic struggle on the part of both employed and unemployed workers, to suppose that any political party not based upon the industrial organizations and not closely linked up with the economic struggle can be of real use to the workers, seem to us fundamental errors.

Second, we deem it of the utmost importance to stimulate and support rank and file efforts for cleaning out bureaucracy, corruption and gangsterism where these evils have been permitted to develop in unions and other working class organizations.

Third, we strive to commit unions to militant and progressive policies.

Fourth, we must win American workers away from allegiance to the old political parties and build a mass party of workers and farmers, based upon or closely related to the economic organizations.

Fifth, emphasis must be placed on genuine workers' education both for the masses and for the active minority, since in the main American workers are ignorant of fundamental political, social and economic problems and have been psychologized by the powers that be and often by their own leaders into a capitalistic and individualist, rather than a social and labor point of view.

Sixth, we urge the development of genuine cooperative enterprises, labor fraternal and sports organizations, etc., provided that these organizations function as part of an integrated labor movement and promote the fundamental aim of a new social order.

Seventh, we stand for the greatest possible unity of effort on the part of all sincerely militant elements. The present hopelessly divided state of the American movement if allowed to continue can only mean the eventual destruction of that movement by Fascism.

Militants standing for these principles and for such a program of immediate action must band together for inspiration and training, and in order that through united action larger results may be won. Because no other organization or group, at any rate as now constituted, seems to us to be a satisfactory left-wing vanguard of American labor, we have formed the C.P.L.A.

We have our own theoretical convictions which we aim to spread, our own unified approach to the problems of labor in the United States. From this standpoint we criticize the policies of other groups, believing that vigorous criticism and discussion of issues in the labor movement are necessary and valuable, provided that these are aimed at principles and policies and carried out according to decent working-class standards, and not by vituperation and vilification.

While we maintain our own identity and viewpoint, criticize other groups at times, and have formed an organization of active workers who do not find in any other organization a satisfactory channel to carry on realistic, militant activities on the economic field and elsewhere, we emphatically wish to avoid being divisive and sectarian in our turn. We gladly recognize that there are healthy and militant elements in other groups and parties, and hail with satisfaction any contributions that any of them make to the struggle against the common enemy. In accordance with our basic purposes of building up a devoted and effective left-wing movement in the United States and of uniting rather than further dividing the forces of labor, *we resolve*:

1. That C.P.L.A., in order to be effective, must have a membership heartily committed to its principles and prepared to work energetically to build up the organization and carry out its program, and that it is the duty of the local branches and the national organization to build up such a membership. This implies that members must not subordinate C.P.L.A. attitudes and principles to those of other propagandist or theoretical groups. Local branches and in the last analysis the N.E.C. must judge the qualifications of members and applicants for membership. They must be guided by the principle that morale cannot be built up by mechanical discipline and theoretical hair-splitting. We shall build an effective organization as our work expands and calls forth devotion and enthusiasm.

2. That we are at all times ready to confer and cooperate with responsible individuals and organizations on the building up of a more united and effective left-wing organization in the United States.

3. That since our immediate object on the political field is winning the workers away from allegiance to the old political parties and organizing them into a mass working-class party, the national organization of the C.P.L.A. shall devote its energies to educational and propaganda work for mass labor political action and to rallying groups and individuals, as they may be ready, to take steps for the formation of a labor party.

4. That in promoting the formation of a mass working-class party we cooperate with any and all parties, groups, unions, organizations and individuals genuinely interested in this object.

5. That in the absence of a mass labor political organization, C.P.L.A. members and branches in any city or state

shall consult with the N.E.C. as to how the ballot may be most effectively used and election campaigns utilized to advance the principles and aims of the C.P.L.A. In any instance where there is doubt as to whether a party in any city or state is a mass party of labor, the branch or branches involved shall first act on the matter and then refer the question for final action to the N.E.C.

6. That it is not the intention of the C.P.L.A. to hamper or destroy other groups or parties operating in the interest of the workers within the general labor movement.

Our aim is to fight the capitalist system. It is our firm conviction that all militant elements must be much more firmly united in that struggle than is now the case, if the American workers are not to be betrayed into the control of a cruel Fascist dictatorship of big business and finance. We emphasize our positive program and want to win members on the basis of that.

7. That we reaffirm our conviction of the importance of united effort of all labor elements, regardless of political differences, in industrial campaigns and struggles.

## Program of the Progressive Hosiery Workers

### *We emphasize again that*

The sole purpose of the Progressive Hosiery workers is to help make the American Federation of Full Fashioned Hosiery Workers the fighting, powerful union it needs to be in order to protect its members and advance their interests under the terrible conditions which now confront the workers everywhere. We warn in advance against anybody, whether reactionary or a so-called radical, whose purpose is division and destruction. We disassociate ourselves from any policy of "smashing the union." Our purpose is unity and solidarity in the union and among all workers in the industry.

1. We condemn the present national agreement and demand that under the sixty-day clause in Article J, Section 2, of the agreement, the union shall, not later than June 30, 1932, give notice of the termination of the agreement at the end of the fiscal year, namely, on August 31, 1932.

2. We propose that negotiations for the next agreement begin on the basis of wiping out the wage cut imposed on the workers in the present agreement.

3. We propose that a national agreement on such subjects as wages, hours and guarantee of 100 percent union shops be negotiated but that there be a mediation board and not an impartial chairman, to try to iron out grievances, which arise under the agreement, and that the right of the union to strike if grievances are not satisfactorily disposed of be retained.

4. We are opposed to the two machine system and all double jobs.

5. We propose that in negotiating the next agreement the union demand a reduction of hours of work to not more than an 8-hour day and a 5-day week.

6. We propose that the 5 and 10 system be immediately restored. Under this plan, until recently, night workers received 10 per cent above the basic rate and the day worker whose machine was operated at night received an additional 5 per cent. This system should be immediately restored, because it would give a much needed, even though small, increase in wages to impoverished workers. Furthermore, imposing some penalty on the double shift system will be more effective by far in combating the evil, "over production," than wage cutting.

In order that these or similar improvements may be won on the expiration of our present agreement, it is necessary, first of all, that the spirit of the rank and file of the union hosiery workers throughout the country be revived. There is too much apathy among the workers. If we begin by believing that conditions are hopeless and nothing can be done about them, that makes it absolutely certain that there will be no improvement. In fact, if this is our spirit, it is certain that the employers will take advantage of it and demand still further wage-slashing. Determination and fighting spirit are bound to get results. If we do not

have sense enough to fight for ourselves, we shall deserve all the kicks we get.

Second, only by united efforts of progressives in all branches of the organization can we hope to combat the employers on the one hand and the apathetic and reactionary tendencies in our own organization on the other hand. We urge progressives in all branches of the Federation, therefore, to get together to work vigorously and constructively for the above program and for such other measures as may be to the interests of the hosiery workers, and will serve to develop fighting spirit and strength in the American Federation of Full Fashioned Hosiery Workers.

Third, if we are to improve our conditions we must, in the national organization and all the branches, have officials who look at things from the standpoint of the workers and not of the employers, who have fighting spirit and who will seek to build up the organization in the interest of the workers. All branches must begin work immediately to get such officers.

Finally, we demand that the Federation immediately begin vigorous efforts to carry the message of unionism to the unorganized hosiery workers. Only if the union workers and those who are at present non-union stand together when our fight comes up on the expiration of the agreement, can we hope to get real big results. Organizing the unorganized is still the only hope of the hosiery workers' union. We must appeal to the interest, the solidarity and the fighting spirit of the non-union workers as the only way to bring them into the union. Anyone who hopes to get the bosses to bring the workers into the union is building a house on sand. Injunctions or other oppressive legalistic attacks should not halt us, as these can be successfully evaded or defied. Why has there not been more organizing work in recent months?

**HOSIERY WORKERS, JOIN HANDS TO PUT AN END TO OUR PRESENT MISERY, WIPE OUT THE PRESENT AGREEMENT, SECURE A NEW AGREEMENT WITH IMPROVED CONDITIONS, AND ORGANIZE THE UNORGANIZED!**

### **Workers!**

**Help defend the three Marine workers, Bunker, Trajer and Soderberg, who have been sentenced to long prison terms on the framed evidence of stool pigeons, by sending contributions to**

**The Marine Workers Defense Committee  
82 East 10th St., N. Y. C.**

# Sling Shots

By Hal

## High Finance and the A. F. of L.

The current issue of the American Federationist reminds one more of the Wall Street Journal than a labor magazine. Among these who are asked to contribute their advice to the ranks of labor are: J. Ogden Mills, millionaire Secretary of the U. S. Treasury; Arthur J. Morris, Chairman of the Morris Plan Corporation of America; John W. Pole, Comptroller of the Currency; and Henry Bruere, President of the Bowery Savings Bank. In deference to these lords of high finance, it would be highly impolite to mention matters dealing with the lowly toiler.

## A Bright Idea

The placing of Hoover's picture on the coming three-cent stamps, will do much to remind us of what we owe our great benefactor in the White House.

## Pluck

Banker to audience: "Pluck, my friends, is the one essential to success."  
Voice from the audience: "That depends upon how good the plucking is."

## Point of Information

The Plenum Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the United States speaks of the "open bourgeoisie." When it comes to parting with any of their ill-gotten gains, the workers have always found them pretty close.

## Respect for Law and Order

According to Congressman LaGuardia, unnamed brokers in Wall Street threatened to create a panic throughout the country if Congress attempted to investigate the stock market. And these who do not hesitate to bludgeon the government into line are the very ones who exhort us daily about the sacredness of American de—"mock"—racy.

## Counting His Chickens

A farmer, who carted a load of tobacco to the market, sold it and found the total proceeds insufficient to pay warehouse charges. Having no money, he told the warehouseman he would bring him a nice fat hen the next time he came to market to make up the deficit, to which arrangement the warehouseman readily agreed.

About two weeks later, the farmer arrived at the warehouse carrying two fat hens, one under each arm.

"Why, hello, Jim," the warehouseman

greeted. "What's this? You only owe me one chicken."

"Yes, I know," Farmer Jim replied with a dry smile, "but I've got another load of tobacco."

## William J.— Burns

Another capitalist hero has passed to a hotter clime, none other than William J. Burns himself. The ruling class can well mourn the loss of this arch-striker, red-baiter, boss provocateur, stool pigeon and bosom friend of Harry Daugherty and Ralph Easley.

## The Reward of Honest Toil

After two weeks of steady work, a coal miner of the Hocking Valley Mining Co. of Nelsonville, Ohio, has received a check for one cent. Here's hoping he doesn't hoard.

## For Dogs Only

Baltimore is opening a new Municipal Dog Shelter, which will be steam-heated and will contain semi-private kennels, equipped with running water. A dog's life is not so bad after all.

## Believe It Or Not

"We are to cultivate the virtue of thrift, and spend more.

"We are to work harder, and curtail production.

"We are to cut down the cost of production, and pay higher wages.

"The Federal Government is to reduce its budget, and spend five billion dollars on public works.

"We are to cherish rugged individualism, and, as a patriotic duty, stop hoarding.

"We are to increase our tariffs, and collect the War Debts to the last dollar.

"We are to stiffen our immigration restrictions so as to prevent overproduction, and to liberalize our immigration laws in order to increase the number of consumers.

"We are to have less government in business, and Federal aid to the banks, Federal loans to railroads, and a Federal curb on short selling."

—HENRY PRATT FAIRCHILD

in Harpers Magazine.

# Workers' Correspondence

## A Need for Real Leadership

The miners of Ohio have been on strike since the first of April under the leadership of Lee Hall who has been kept on the Lewis pay roll ever since the miners were ordered back to work by the national office in 1927.

The events leading up to the present strike make a long story, so I will deal with only a few of the most important points.

All the real active workers in the 1927 strike were blacklisted and never got back to work in the mines. In addition the coal companies began to short weigh the men so much that the miners began to demand a check weighman on the scales. This was denied by most of the companies, despite the fact that the law of Ohio gives the miners that right. As a result many strikes occurred, the most important being at the Sunday Creek Company mines.

This company tried to tell the miners whom they should hire and the miners were kept out until the company cited Mr. Hall (who had crowded into the move as the miners president) for violation of an injunction granted the com-

pany in 1927. Mr. Hall went to the state capitol and agreed with the governor of the state to settle on the company's terms and he was never asked to appear in court to answer for violation of the court order. The miners were so disgusted with the manner in which the union was being conducted by the officers that only about 800 out of nearly 25,000 kept paying dues.

Then the coal company, in true non-union fashion, began to cut wages. The first resistance to these wage cuts in the Hocking Valley occurred at the Hocking Mine in the summer of 1930. After a strike which lasted four months the company agreed to give them the same wages they were getting when they came out. This agreement was accepted by the men and continued in effect until the present strike, which began in the Hocking Valley on February 1. In January the various companies called two miners from each mine in the valley to meet them at Nelsonville. The men were told that a uniform wage would be put into effect on February 1. This meant a reduction of 25 per cent

(Continued on Page 28)

# New Books . . .

## BROOKWOOD PAMPHLETS

**How a Trade Union Is Run; Important Union Methods; What a Union Did For the Coal Miners; Why Bother About the Government; Our Labor Movement Today.** Brookwood Labor Pamphlets, by Katherine H. Pollak, edited by David J. Saposs.

A couple of years ago, Tom Tippet and Katherine Pollak of the Brookwood staff collaborated in writing an introduction to economics and labor problems entitled "Your Job and Your Pay." It was written in the kind of language that workers understand. It was the result of careful study of the subject, broad experience in the labor movement and much practice in teaching workers' classes under a great variety of circumstances. Hundreds of copies of the book have been sold, which is remarkable in view of the small amount of workers' education going on in this country. "Your Job and Your Pay" has indeed become the foremost text in the American workers' education movement.

Now Katherine Pollak, aided by consultation with other members of the Brookwood staff such as David J. Saposs, A. J. Muste, Tom Tippet, Helen Norton, who have had practical experience in labor organization activities as well as in teaching workers, has written a series of pamphlets which deal in similar fashion with the activities and structure of labor organizations and trends in the labor movement. We predict that these pamphlets will in time prove even more useful than "Your Job and Your Pay."

"How a Trade Union Is Run" tells how a typical local union operates and what functions it performs and then goes on to do the same for national (or international) unions, using the Amalgamated Lithographers and the Railway Clerks as illustrations. This pamphlet is directly supplemented by the one on "Important Union Methods" which describes strike activities, boycotts, use of the union label and white list and the processes of collective bargaining.

In connection with future editions of this pamphlet, we have a suggestion to make. Its opening paragraph refers to striking West Virginia miners, to arbitration under an impartial chairman in the men's clothing industry, and to union men "suggesting ways of increasing the amount of work turned out" in railroad shops working under a union management cooperation plan. It then states "These are but a few examples of the ways in which trade unions are trying to

win higher wages and etc." While the pamphlet simply indicates these as methods by which unions are attempting, wisely or unwisely, to advance their aims and in a later section presents forcibly the arguments against many phases of union management cooperation, the unsophisticated reader, for whom these pamphlets are chiefly intended, might easily gather from the opening paragraph that the author thinks of a strike by West Virginia miners and union management cooperation as equally and valid labor activities. This is not the case and it will be worthwhile making that very clear in a future edition.

The third pamphlet is entitled "What a Union Did For the Coal Miners." It describes conditions among the miners before the United Mine Workers was brought into being and the gains in wages, hours, safety on the job, more decent treatment by foremen, the sense of belonging to a great movement, which came to the miners in the golden days of the U. M. W. It then goes on to suggest briefly the tragic losses suffered by the miners when their union failed to adopt new methods to meet new conditions and the leadership became inefficient, autocratic and corrupt.

"Why Bother About the Government?" tells of the various ways in which the actions of government, federal, state, municipal, etc., affect the worker—his wages, whether he has a job or not, his rent, his health, his educational and recreational opportunities, the security of his savings if he has any, whether he will be called upon to throw away his life in a war, and so on. This will be followed by another pamphlet which describes the results labor achieves when it organizes its political power independently and effectively.

The pamphlets so far mentioned do not devote much attention, if any, to the internal divisions, weaknesses and evils of the labor movement. Their object is to tell workers who do not yet belong to unions, or if they belong have as yet little insight into what it is all about, how organized labor under fairly favorable conditions function. Their aim is to win these workers to the labor movement and active participation in it and, therefore, not to discourage and confuse them at the very start of their studies. However, in "Our Labor Movement Today" the various important divisions of the labor movement, A. F. of L., C. P. L. A., Socialist, Communist, etc., are dealt with in simple, direct and thorough fashion. The progressive criticisms of the

A. F. of L. and other groups in the labor movement are set forth in detail.

To quote the foreword of this pamphlet "As each division is taken up, the plan has been first to describe its theories and activities and to present criticisms afterwards. No one section of the labor movement can be understood by itself—one must know at what points others disagree. For more information about any group, especially as it views itself, one should read its own publications."

This pamphlet, the latest in the series to date, closes with a note of challenge and hope. It points out, on the one hand, that "the most striking thing about the American labor movement in 1932 was not its different shades of belief but its very small place in the American scene." But points on the other hand, to the awakening among American workers as a result of "the terrible suffering of the 1930's" and to "Communist Russia's success in building a new industrial system" as presenting "a glowing picture of the possibilities of a workers' republic."

Though these pamphlets are primarily designed to present the important ideas and facts about the labor movement in a clear and simple manner and in terms of the workers' experience, they include material rarely found in the usual books on labor and should prove very valuable also to non-workers, students, high-school and university classes, etc. We recommend these pamphlets to all students of the labor movement and especially to individuals and groups of workers who want to know about the labor movement in order that they may become useful in it. (Information as to price for single pamphlets and lots may be obtained from Brookwood Labor College, Katonah, New York.)

## TROTSKY TELLS THE STORY

**The History of the Russian Revolution, Volume One. The Overthrow of Czarism,** by Leon Trotsky. Translated by Max Eastman. Published by Simon and Schuster. Price \$4.00.

THE "History of the Russian Revolution" arrives at a most opportune time in the midst of the present acute crisis, when social dissatisfaction is deep and widespread. It is therefore bound to exercise a profound and stimulating influence upon the development of current revolutionary thought in the United States.

As one of the two outstanding leaders of that struggle, having had the added

advantage of fifteen years of further study and revolutionary activity to estimate, check and re-evaluate his conclusions, Trotsky writes with undisputed authority.

We have here not an ordinary history of names, dates and events but a history in the Marxian sense, a history of class struggles, a distinctly class analysis of the stirring events from February to June, 1917. Trotsky states frankly, in his preface, that he does not write from a standpoint of "treacherous impartiality," but rather from a standpoint of "scientific conscientiousness . . . its sympathies and antipathies—open and undisguised." While maintaining an outspokenly and warmly partisan attitude, Trotsky warns against "pedantic schematism." He takes pains to show that the Russian Revolution followed "the law of uneven development" in accord with the peculiarities and requirements of Russian conditions.

In developing from feudalism to capitalism, for instance, Russia did not proceed by the long path of the older countries, but instead appropriated to itself rapidly the forms and methods of modern capitalism, thus making "an amalgam of archaic (feudal) with more contemporary forms" applying what Trotsky calls "the law of combined development."

Trotsky explains that four-fifths of the self-supporting population of Russia in 1914 was agricultural as compared with one person in agriculture for every two and a half in industry in the United States. Nevertheless, while the United States had 17.8 per cent of its workers in giant enterprises employing 1,000 workers or over, Russia had 41.4 per cent. "The reservoir from which the Russian working class formed itself was not the craft-guild, but agriculture, not the city, but the country. Moreover, in Russia the proletariat did not arise gradually through the ages . . . but in leaps involving sharp changes of environment, ties, relations, and a sharp break with the past. It is just this fact—combined with the concentrated oppressions of czarism—that made the Russian workers hospitable to the boldest conclusions of revolutionary thought."

One is forcibly struck in this description by its similarity to conditions in the South, the development of large scale industry, the migration of the hill billy to the industrial town, and the brutal terror of the Southern employing class. One is left to ponder whether the newly-born Southern proletariat will show itself equally hospitable to revolutionary ideas.

The tremendous movement of 1917 did not arise as the inspiration of any indi-

vidual or group of individuals, but it was the climax of a long chain of revolutionary struggles stretching over a century.

Fifteen years before the French Revolution, occurred the Pugachev Rebellion of the Cossacks, peasants and worker serfs. In 1825 there was the Dekabrist uprising of the progressive nobility against the autocracy.

The rise and fall of the revolutionary wave is shown later in a summary of the numbers participating in political strikes: 1903—87,000 (political and economic); 1904—25,000 (political and economic); 1905 (Russo-Japanese War) 1,843,000; 1906—651,000; 1907—540,000; 1908—93,000; 1909—8,000; 1910—4,000; 1911—8,000; (1908 to 1911 were years of industrial depression); 1912 (a boom year)—550,000; 1913—502,000; 1914 (World War)—1,059,000 for first half year; 1915—156,000; 1916—310,000; 1917—575,000 (for January-February). It was in these struggles that the Russian workers received their revolutionary training.

In this situation, the Russian peasant, "choking in the narrowness of his land area, under the smarting whip of the treasury and the market . . . was inexorably forced to attempt to get rid of the landlord once for all." Equipped with organization experience and training through the army, and establishing there intimate contact with the revolutionary workers, he played an important role in Russia's gigantic struggle.

The World War helped to accelerate and crystallize the seething discontent. Dissatisfaction and distrust toward the rulers grew apace. Trotsky quotes liberally from the rich store of archives unearthed after the Revolution showing the incompetence of the Czarist ministers and generals. Minister Polivanov, for instance, declares, "I place my trust in the impenetrable spaces, impassable mud and the mercy of Saint Nicholas Mirlikisky, Protector of Holy Russia." Such stupidity made a debacle inevitable. The soldiers insisted upon peace at any cost and were determined to get it.

As the sweeping tide of events swirls about him, the pitiful czar remains, "Stubborn, but without will; nervous, but insensitive to everything." Under the mystic spell of Rasputin, the machinations of a "leprous court camarilla" and the adjurations of his wife to "Be Peter the Great, Ivan the Terrible, Emperor Paul—crush them all under your feet!", Nicholas displayed withal "the cowardly cruelty of the late born, frightened at his own doom."

"Give me a strong regiment," gallant colonels exclaim, "and in two seconds I will clean up all this mess!" but what happens, according to Khabalov: "The

regiment starts, starts under a brave officer, but . . . there are no results."

The revolt sweeps "the crowned black sheep" into the refuse pile of history. The "individually colorless" Kerensky takes the reins into his trembling hands. Back of him are Prince Ivov—"an illustrious but notoriously empty spot" and Miliukov, who "expressed more fully and elegantly than any other in the language of politics, the fate of the Russian bourgeoisie—the fact that it was caught in a blind alley"—between the revolutionary workers and the reactionary autocracy. Their policy was: "If the monarchy wins, we are with it; if the revolutionary wins, we will plunder it." Efforts were made to drive the soldiers back to the bloody trenches, but the workers, whose suspicions were mounting rapidly, balked.

In the words of Kayurov, the soldiers ask, "Has the workers' blood been flowing in the streets of Petrograd for three days merely to exchange one landlord for another?" Discipline in the army and navy is shattered. There occurs that "giant interference of the workers and soldiers in political events." A new power has arisen—the Soviet, which according to Deputy Shidlovsky, "seized all the post and telegraph bureaus, the wireless, all the Petrograd railroad stations, all the printing establishments so that without its permission it was impossible to send a telegram, to leave Petrograd, or to print an appeal."

While the moderate parties including the Social Revolutionaries, the Socialists and the Kadets lived in mortal fear of the revolution, and sought to crush it with the knout of monarchic reaction or drown it in the blood of the imperialist war, what was the character of the Bolshevik leadership at that time? Events moved at too rapid a pace for the leadership of the party, which early in 1917 included Shliapnikov, Zalutsky and Molotov (the present premier). Stalin and Kamenev arrived from Siberia early in March and took over the editorship of Pravda.

On March 14 there was issued a manifesto interpreting the victory of the February revolution in the interest of the Entente. This manifesto, according to Trotsky, was adopted unanimously by the Soviet of which Kamenev and Stalin were members. In the face of Lenin's teaching against the support of imperialist war, the Pravda on March 15 declared the "Russian soldier must stand firmly at his post answering bullet with bullet and shell with shell." Speaking at the April conference of the party, Stalin declares: "The Provisional Government has in fact taken the role of fortifier of the conquests of the revolutionary peo-

ple. . . . It is not to our advantage at present to force events, hastening the process of repelling the bourgeois layers." And then Lenin arrived!

Hardly had he seen Kamenev when he asked suddenly, "What's this you're writing in Pravda?" He declares: "I would choose an immediate split with no matter whom in our party rather than surrender to social patriotism." He presents in his name alone—no other would sign it—the thesis of April 4 calling for a break with the Provisional Government. He calls for a clean break with the moderate parties, saying, "We've got to take off the dirty shirt and put on clean." He mounts the armored cars and addresses great throngs of workers, who receive him with acclaim. A non-party socialist, Sukhanov, describes one of these scenes as follows: "I will never forget that thunderlike speech. . . . It seemed as if all the elements and the spirit of universal destruction had risen from their lairs, knowing neither barriers nor doubts nor personal difficulties nor personal considerations. . . . I came out on the street feeling as though . . . I had been flogged over the head with a flail." It was this invincible spirit that laid the groundwork for the coming October Revolution. To this spirit the Russian Police Department was compelled to pay a glowing but unwilling tribute, when it declared, "The most energetic and audacious element, ready for tireless struggle, for resistance and continual organization, is that element, those organizations, and those people who are concentrated around Lenin."

BENJAMIN MANDEL.

## On The Road

(Continued from page 21)

Sun, although he criticized the play because, forsooth, "the bosses were not given a chance to testify in their own behalf," characterized it as "a clear and vivid exposition of the psychology of the southern mill workers and as a statement of their side of the labor convulsions which have taken place in the South in recent years." "Mr. Tippet knows these people thoroughly," he went on, "He has caught in his dialogue not only their way of speaking but their way of thinking and feeling. The play is enacted with considerable earnestness and flashes of spirit by a cast themselves largely recruited from shop and mill."

But more important than the opinion of professional dramatic critics is the reaction of labor itself. "This ought to be made into a talkie and given before every labor group in the United States," said the president of one central labor union. One old-time laborite who had been rather wary of any connection with the perform-

ance in his city said afterward, "I wish I had known it would be like this—I'd have tried to pack the hall with our members." At least one local electrician became so enthralled with the action of the play that he forgot to manipulate his lights at the proper instant.

Lawrence Todd, Washington editor of Federated Press, says, "When the American stage is ready to move on from the allegory of 'R.U.R.' and 'Wings Over Europe' to the stark realism of 'Mill Shadows' and the new school of labor-struggle plays which it forecasts, we shall have taken a decisive step toward sound social thinking and social action in this machine age. One of the greatest weaknesses of the American labor movement has been its inability to view itself in the mirror held up by the stage, and to discover its own power and need through the discussion which labor plays would promote. 'Mill Shadows' is a challenge to the workers to tell their industrial story and make their social demands in the relatively neutral atmosphere of the theatre, and on the screen in the moving picture houses, as well as in the intensely hostile air of conference with employers on the eve of class battles.

"Every trade unionist in this country should see this play, and gain militancy from its spirit." HELEN G. NORTON

## Correspondence

(Continued from page 25)

for most of the men. The miners held a meeting at Chauncy and decided to reject the proposed reduction. As a result all of the mines in the local field were closed 100 per cent. The true union spirit of the men never was better. They stood and are still standing 100 per cent against the reduction.

After the John L. Lewis convention adjourned, the officers of the U. M. W. of A. asked for a conference with the operators but the offer was ignored. Not one reply to the invitation was received. But the Sunday Creek Coal Company, through the public press, offered to meet the miners in a body or a delegation of the miners elected by the miners. They and the miners would then select a committee of three miners and three business men of the valley to make a study of the competing coal fields and make a scale according to their findings, but would not recognize the officers of the U. M. W. of A. This offer was rejected by the miners and on April 1 Mr. Hall called the entire state out on strike. This order, along with another reduction in eastern Ohio, caused almost a solid strike of all mines in Ohio. But the conservative or rather inactive leadership which depends upon the political influence of leaders has begun to destroy

the spirit of the men and it takes no prophet to see the end.

The real need of good progressive leaders in the valley was never more indicated than now. If the right tactics were used a real militant union could be built in the old Hocking like there was under the leadership of John Moore and others who built the U. M. W. of A. The Plains, Ohio A COAL MINER.

## Answer to Economists

(Continued from Page 13)

labor and everyone would soon be employed." It so happens that in this country there is today an oversupply of professors, instructors and teachers. Many of them are without jobs. Yet one never hears professors advocating a cut in their pay as the remedy for the unemployment in their profession. Rare indeed is the professor who practices what he professes.

After all, I suppose it is rather cruel to point out these inconsistencies. Economics profs do have so much fun making their "scientific" laws—like small boys making their first New Years' resolutions. If they would only make them and then forget them as the small boys do their resolutions, one wouldn't care how often they indulged in the economic-law-making process. If they would only confine themselves to their make believe world of equilibrium, "long (not home) runs," and "other things being equal;" if they would only remain in that economist's heaven peopled by the "bodies of homogeneous labor" that they tell about in their textbooks one wouldn't mind. But when they attempt to apply their perfect systems to this imperfect world, when they talk to us about solving simultaneous equations as though this were a simultaneous world, when they try to tell us what to do as though we were one of their "bodies of homogeneous labor;" then, though it be a sad and unpleasant task, we are forced to be a bit abrupt with them, to either put a stop to their day-dreams or to chase them back again to their classrooms, back to the academic world of make believe, where undistinguished men confer distinctions upon each other.

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## Labor Party

(Continued from page 7)

Caesars at the beginning of the Christian era. That regime was followed by disintegration and chaos, not by a more advanced economic and cultural system. About the only reason we have for thinking that a more advanced civilization than the capitalist can really be built is the modern labor movement, but what if that is once destroyed?

Must we still resign ourselves to complete despair on the ground that if a divided labor movement will be an easy prey for Fascism, a united labor movement will be too slow, too cautious, too lacking in militancy and vision, to take power and to build a new social order in which there will be bread, security and peace for all the workers, and no place whatever for any shirkers?

### Dangerous Day Dreaming

We do not believe that the truth of this last proposition has yet been proved. Of course, a movement including all elements in the working class will not want to proceed as rapidly as the most extreme elements, if left to themselves, would wish to do. On the other hand, to suppose that a handful of red-hot revolutionists, off in their own sectarian unions, etc., who in addition to opposition from all the capitalist elements, have also to face determined opposition from certain workers, can accomplish a great social change in a country like the United States, is the most dangerous kind of day-dreaming. As left-wingers, in the past at any rate, have often pointed out, if the militant elements among the workers go off in a corner by themselves, the result is to leave the masses in the hands of the reactionaries. When the militants organize by themselves, the other organizations will move further to the right than they otherwise would, because they will feel that they have to fight the lefts and be as different from them as possible. If a really revolutionary crisis arises and the militant elements are in touch with the mass of labor and have the confidence of the workers, because they have led them intelligently in their daily struggles, we may have some hope. Otherwise, we have none.

Militants who argue, as some of them do, that you cannot build industrial unions in this country, cannot get the workers into a labor party, but that these workers who are not advanced enough to fight for organizations to

deal with the problems right under their noses in the shop, to quit voting the Republican or the Democratic ticket, will follow a handful of revolutionists to the barricades if a crisis arises, are either hopeless, idiotic children or otherwise are provocateurs deliberately working on behalf of capitalists to keep the labor movement as weak as possible and to insure the triumph of Fascism.

We say to the workers of all shades of opinion—red, pink, yellow, green or what not—workers who have been kicked out on the street; who are working at starvation wages if they have jobs at all; who were good Americans and bought little homes only to have them taken away; who have no security left; who are suffering in the very midst of abundance because they have turned out goods so efficiently; industrial workers, agricultural, clerical, technical, professional—the time has come to build a united fighting party for all who toil, in which no exploiters of labor will have any part, which will set about to organize industry in such a way as to make America a land of abundance and joy.

Already workers in a number of places and in different industries have taken steps toward the building of

such a party. What are the chances in your city? Have you brought the subject up in your union, workers' education class, cooperative society or political group? Write to us if you are interested in the subject and want to be put in touch with others who are also interested.

There is no hope in the old parties of the elephant and the jackass. Divided on the political field we are helpless. United, the American masses have the intelligence, the vision, the power to build a world according to their heart's desire.

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# Workers!

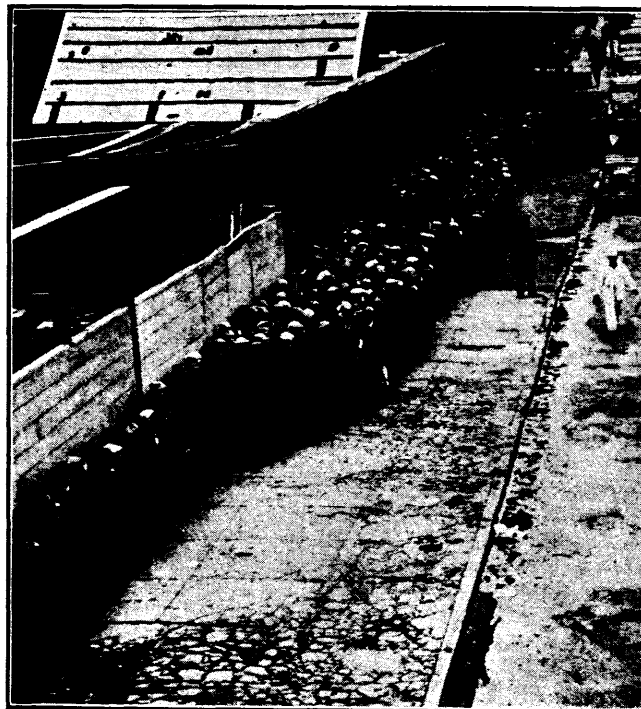
You are the ones who have created the great wealth of America. It is you who have built the cities, the factories and the power stations, laid the railroads and dug the coal. Yet more than 10,000,000 of you are walking the streets of the cities you have built, hopelessly looking for work; compelled to accept handouts from soup kitchens and the insults of those whom, by your toil, you have made rich.

These rich ones and their henchmen, the politicians—those whom from childhood, by the schools, the newspapers and the churches, you have been taught to respect and emulate—do not know what to do. But they do know how to exploit you, to keep you poor and make you work for them.

When they orate about patriotism and Americanism they are speaking for themselves and not for you. What they mean by Americanism is that you, the workers, remain their willing slaves. If you object, if you dare to rebel against their rule which brings starvation and misery to you and your children, then they call you “reds” and send you to jail and order their gunmen to shoot you.

Workers, how much longer are you going to willingly submit to such treatment? How much longer are you going to believe the lies your exploiters feed you in the schools, the churches and the press?

Workers, wake up! Read *Labor Age*! Subscribe to it! Get your friends and fellow workers to subscribe to it! It is fighting for you! Fight for it!



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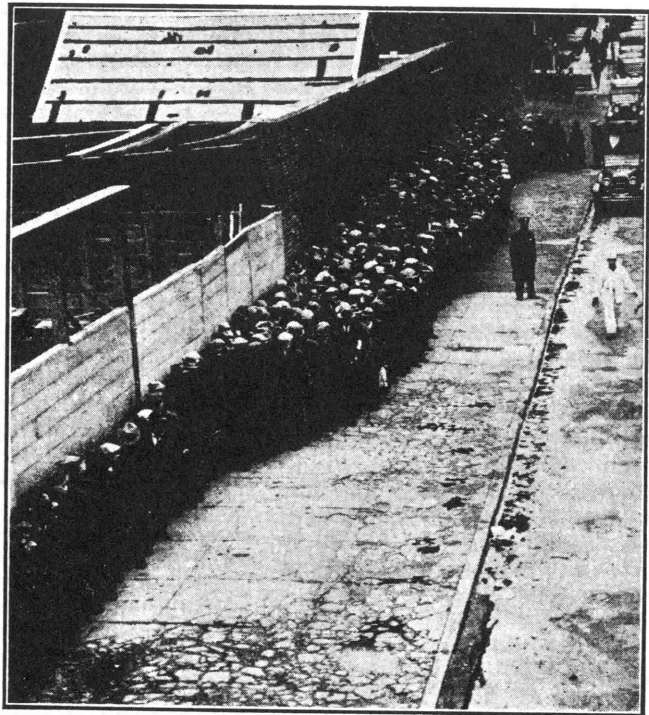
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