

Workers Age

A PAPER DEFENDING THE INTERESTS OF WORKERS AND FARMERS

Vol. 6, No. 37.

NEW YORK, N. Y. SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 1937.

5 Cents a Copy

Shoe Union Maps Drive

51,000 Are Already Under Closed Shop Pacts, Hapgood States

BOSTON (UNS)—Shoe Workers now under closed shop contracts number 51,000, Powers Hapgood, newly appointed executive director of the United Shoe Workers of America announced, as he revealed plans to extend the drive in the shoe industry into Pennsylvania and Missouri shoe centers and Chicago, Ill.

On March 16 of this year, when the United Shoe and Leather Workers Union and the Shoe Workers Protective Association merged to form the C.I.O. United Shoe Workers of America, the membership totaled 16,000. An additional 10,000 were brought into the fold early in August when employees of 79 New York shoe plants voted in a landslide election, to join the C.I.O. and leave the A. F. of L. Boot & Shoe Union.

The other 25,000 were brought into the union entirely by the activities of the C.I.O. Shoe Workers Organizing Committee. In addition to the 51,000 for whom contracts have been signed, 10,000 more are organized and contracts are being negotiated for them.

The United Shoe Workers signed no contract which did not include the closed shop. The union does all the hiring for the companies employing its 51,000 members. A general wage increase of 15 per cent was won for the shoe workers, while readjustments in piece work prices have resulted in increases as high as 45 per cent.

200,000 Shoe Workers in U. S. Hapgood has delegated John D. Nolan, who was jailed in Maine for union activities, along with Hapgood and others, to open the drive in Pennsylvania. Hapgood already has launched the campaign in Missouri towns and soon will open it in Chicago.

There are about 200,000 shoe workers in the country. Of these 16,000 are still in the Boot & Shoe Union.

The contracts written by the United Shoe Workers also include the provision that no work shall be done on material brought into the factory from a struck shop. It is no violation of agreement, therefore, Hapgood explained, if the workers refuse to handle materials from a shop where a strike or lock-out exists.

The strike at the Lenox Shoe Company in Freeport, Me., is still strong.

OLIVER PLANS TRIP TO BUILD L.N.-P.L.

Trips to all parts of the country to lay the groundwork for more intensive activity of Labor's Non-Partisan League and to establish relations with progressive unions and organized farmers are planned by E. L. Oliver, the League's Executive Vice-President, after the adjournment of Congress.

Carrying out the League's policy of securing membership of all bona-fide labor unions and organizations of farmers, the Executive Vice-President will talk with labor and farm union leaders seeking affiliation with Labor's Non-Partisan League in order to forward programs of independent political action.

Labor Day Greetings

from JOHN L. LEWIS

LABOR DAY belongs to the workers of the United States. This year we have more reason than ever before to celebrate it fittingly. The spirit of enthusiasm for organization which caused the establishment of this holiday has manifested itself more powerfully during the last year than it has ever done during all the long years of American labor history. The meaning of Labor Day is enhanced by the tremendous strides which labor has taken in its forward progress.

The Committee for Industrial Organization and its affiliated unions now have more than three million members. Almost two million of these members have enlisted in our ranks during the last twelve months. Inestimable progress has been made in the establishment of unions in the mass production industries and among white collar workers, such as government workers and office and professional workers. In addition, those already-established unions which formed part of the Committee for Industrial Organization at its inception have made substantial gains. The Committee for Industrial Organization has established regional offices in almost every state and it has also established a number of local industrial union councils.

During the year which will elapse before next Labor Day, the Committee for Industrial Organization will add more millions of members to its rolls. Nothing can stand against the desire of the workers of this nation to unite into strong, well-disciplined and articulate unions for the purpose of improving their environment and their conditions of life. Moreover, we shall consolidate our gains. We intend to render our unions impregnable against attack so far as it is humanly possible.

It is the duty of every American worker to join the legitimate union of his own choice. It is an obligation which he owes not only to himself but to his fellow workers and to his children. The union can not only protect him among the vicissitudes and hardships of his life but it can make him articulate, so that he may participate in the government of his nation. It is incumbent upon us to preserve for our children, the inheritors of our traditions, our democratic institutions which are beyond price.

from HOMER MARTIN

AMERICAN mass-production workers will celebrate Labor Day this year in a different mood from a year ago or any previous year. In other years, Labor Day was at most a day of far-off hope, of unrealized expectation, of dreams for the future.

This year they celebrate accomplishments that would seem miraculous had they not happened day by day before everybody's eyes. We, of the United Automobile Workers of America, see practically an entire major industry converted from the open shop to union organization. Only Ford remains to be conquered and part of his medieval feudal domain is already under union influence, while the rest will be modernized before many more months.

The mass-production workers of America, including the automobile workers, have seen their wages raised by more than a billion dollars a year. This means better economic balance for consumption versus production, greater purchasing power by the people, more income, more security, more life for more Americans. Working conditions have been improved, and the improvements have made industry more responsible for the life and limb of those who toil. American workers will live and toil more safely, more securely and more happily because of the presence and the power and the meaning of the United Automobile Workers of America and the Committee for Industrial Organization.

This new, powerful, vigorous labor movement, constituted by the Committee for Industrial Organization, recognizes the need for real industrial democracy as a force for the preservation and furtherance of democratic principles and procedures. This is the way out.

Labor must be organized, intelligent, articulate, to take its place as a primary force in the democratic solution of the economic, social and political problems of this country.

In the coming year, we will consolidate our gains; we will press on toward the complete organization of the workers of the nation; thus we will do our part to establish justice, promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.

Industrial Decentralization and the Menace of Fascism

By LYMAN FRASER

THE problem of runaway shops is an old one in the needle trades. But it has there never been rationalized into a nobly progressive act, the employers crudely admitting that it may mean more money in the bank. Not so with the magnates of the automobile industry, who have been threatening and are still threatening to "decentralize" their plants to escape from the labor unions. (When they must resort to "escapism," it means that labor is moving toward power.) Unlike the crude employers in the needle trades, the automobile magnates justify their escapism by the theory of decentralization, which, according to W. J. Cameron of the Ford Motor Company, is "just one of the steps in social advancement which industry has undertaken of its own initiative; the idea did not come from any labor leader, from any politician, from any reformer; it came from within industry itself—industry thinking up on its own problems."

But the regional decentralization of industry is an old story. Marx long ago urged decentralization, the combination of industry and agriculture and the abolition of distinctions between town and country. Reformers have since played with the idea, without understanding its social implications, without understanding that it can be realized only in the planned economy of a socialist society.

Nor is industry today decentralizing. When a shop in the needle trades runs away from the union, it is escapism and not decentralization. That is also largely true of the automobile industry. The decentralization of industry is a fruitful concept, but it is completely distorted by the petty profit motives of migrant employers.

One of the major social-economic disproportions of capitalism is the geographical centralization of industry and the consequent split between agriculture and industry. One result is the exploitation of

agriculture within the general exploiting relations of capitalist production; that finds its final expression in imperialism, which forces colonial countries to develop a lopsided economy producing a few agricultural products (or raw materials) for export. Another result is the uneven development of a country that creates a whole crop of evils, among them the unequal regional distribution of income and unequal standards of living, with many regions (e.g. the South) condemned to economic and social backwardness. A third result is the existence of monstrously overgrown cities, deprived of all vivifying contacts with nature, alongside of dreary industrial towns and rural areas deprived of vivifying contacts with city life.

The technical-economic reason for geographical centralization of industry was its dependence on steam power; which made it profitable to locate plants near the regions of coal supply. Dependence

(Continued on Page 3)

NLRB Bars AFL Pact

Overrules Court; Orders Plant Elections On CIO Complaint

A decision was handed down last week by the National Labor Relations Board that is likely to constitute an important landmark in the development of labor law in the United States. Passing on a case brought before it by the United Radio and Electrical Workers of America, a C.I.O. union, the board decided to order an election among the 1,600 workers at the National Electric Products Corporation plant at Ambridge, Pa., in order to determine collective bargaining representatives. This action was taken by the board despite the fact that the Federal District Court of Pittsburgh had not long before upheld a closed-shop agreement between the company and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, an A. F. of L. organization. In effect, therefore, the N.L.R.B. directly overruled the decree of the federal court.

Some time ago, the C.I.O. union began an organization campaign at the Ambridge plant which met with the bitter resistance of the management. The latter soon came into contact with the A. F. of L. brotherhood and concluded what amounted virtually to a company union agreement with it, altho it represented very few workers in the plant—obviously in order to head off the C.I.O. The United Electrical Workers denounced the agreement as a trick of the employers, whereupon the A. F. of L. union went into the district court and obtained an order upholding it, including the so-called "closed shop" feature. The C.I.O. then appealed to the N.L.R.B. which, after an inquiry of several weeks, handed down its ruling declaring invalid the alleged agreement and ordering an election. The company—the board concluded—had violated the Wagner Act "by encouraging membership in the . . . (A. F. of L.) brotherhood . . . and by recognizing it as the representative of the employees at a time when the company knew that the brotherhood did not represent a free choice of a majority of its employees." The plant elections are to take within place fifteen days.

The decision of the board is significant, in the first place, because it draws attention to the increasingly common practice of certain A. F. of L. organizations to offer their services to the employers as company unions in order to forestall the C.I.O. In ordering that the workers themselves decide who should represent them in such cases, the board has taken a welcome step in making impossible such trickery on the part of the employers and the A. F. of L. officials.

The decision is important from another angle, since it shows the determination of the N.L.R.B. not to allow its proper activities to be hampered and frustrated by the reactionary lower courts which are ready, upon every occasion, to issue arbitrary injunctions at the behest of the employers. In this connection, it should be noted that the N.L.R.B. recently came into conflict with the courts in another field when it certified the C.I.O. shoe union as the sole agency of

(Continued on Page 3)

WORKERS AGE

Organ of the National Council, Independent Communist Labor League, 131 West 33rd St., New York City. Published every Saturday by the Workers Age Publishing Association. Subscription Rates: \$1.00 per year; \$6.00 for six months; 5c a copy. Foreign Rates: \$2.00; Canada \$1.50 per year.

Entered as second class matter Nov. 5, 1934, at the Post Office New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879. Phone: BRyant 9-0127

Vol. 6, No. 37. Saturday, September 11, 1937.

THE AUTO WORKERS CONVENTION

The second convention of the United Automobile Workers Union, held recently at Milwaukee, was an event of vast significance for the American labor movement.

The U.A.W. came to the convention a gigantic organization of nearly 400,000 workers in the most mechanized of modern mass-production industries, an organization embracing the best and most representative elements of the American working class. It came to the convention in the full tide of power, with an unbroken record of victory, achieved under the leadership of President Martin, with collective agreements binding every concern engaged in automobile manufacturing in the United States except Ford. It came to the convention as the banner organization among the new C.I.O. unions, proud of its loyalty to the C.I.O. and keenly appreciative of what the C.I.O. had done for the automobile workers. It came to the convention as the embodiment of the new promise of the trade union movement.

But it came to the convention, also, with grave problems. The union had grown eight-fold in one year; in its ranks were scores of thousands of young men, eager, militant, loyal—but with little of the accumulated experience of decades of labor organization. The main task facing the assembled delegates was obviously stabilization—stabilization in union structure and functioning, stabilization in responsibility, stabilization in leadership. This program of stabilization became the watchword of the progressive forces in the U.A.W., headed by Martin and Frankenstein. In the path of union advance stood a clique dominated by a handful of members of the communist and socialist parties, who hoped to accomplish their narrow factional ends by playing upon the backwardness and prejudices inevitable in so new and rapidly growing an organization. Operating under the guise of a "unity" group, they sponsored a plan of decentralization and self-paralysis for the union that, significantly enough, won the warm editorial approval of the New York Herald-Tribune (August 26, 1937); they championed a "local autonomy" that meant little more than justification for irresponsibility and wild-cat strikes; they strove to overthrow the leadership under which the union had weathered its first storms and had made such remarkable headway. If the U.A.W. was to measure up to the vast problems facing it, it had to remove this obstacle from its path.

The convention acquitted itself splendidly of its tasks. The constructive program of the progressives—summed up in the words: organization, stability, responsibility—met with the overwhelming support of the delegates. The tested leadership of the union, from general officers to shop stewards, was immensely strengthened by the demonstration of confidence at Milwaukee. The fact that the progressive forces in the U.A.W., headed by Martin, Frankenstein and Thomas, emerged from the convention with a decisive two-to-one majority on the general board and with the control of seven of the eight regional districts is in itself a substantial guarantee of sound future development.

The whole labor movement owes a special vote of thanks to the C.I.O. leaders, John L. Lewis and David Dubinsky, for the close, personal cooperation they gave in assisting the U.A.W. to meet and solve the difficult problems that faced it at the convention. Nor can we pass over the commendable role that our own organization, the I.C.L.L., played, thru its members in the auto union, in helping to consolidate the progressive forces and strengthen their power for constructive achievement.

The victory of the U.A.W. in the great General Motors strike towards the beginning of the year unquestionably stimulated a great forward movement on the part of the C.I.O. on all fronts. We are confident that the United Automobile Workers, emerging from its second convention even more powerful and united behind its leadership, will now—thru the successful renewal of its agreement with G.M. and thru a militant, effective campaign against Ford—again give the signal for another powerful wave of C.I.O. organizational activity that will set a new high-water mark in American labor history.

THE CLASS STRUGGLE IN FRANCE AND SPAIN

(At the Summer School of the British Independent Labor Party, the sessions of which ended recently, the present situation in Spain and France was described by a number of special speakers. Juana Antonino of the P.O.U.M. and Mario Padrona of the C.N.T., spoke on Spain while the report on France was given by Weill-Curiel, the socialist who recently defeated Doriot in Saint Denis. Below we present a summary of their remarks taken from the New Leader (London) of August 20, 1937.—The Editor.)

IN SPAIN

JUANA ANTONINO gave a detailed lecture on Spain, massed with fact. To those who have not followed Spanish developments closely, the speech was a revelation. It is impossible to summarize it here, but her remarks on the military policy of P.O.U.M. are worth emphasizing. They utterly destroy the slander that the P.O.U.M. has been indifferent to the fight against fascism.

From the first, the P.O.U.M. wanted an efficient and unified command, but it wanted the military officers to be responsible to the workers' organizations. It saw the danger, otherwise, of an officer caste, who would make it an instrument of the bourgeoisie rather than of the working class. The P.O.U.M. principle was at first adopted. A Workers Military Council, representing all the workers organizations, was formed to coordinate the workers militia. It worked in close co-operation with the government. The P.O.U.M. are active in urging efficient unified control and hold and concentrated military action against the fascists. If this system had been maintained, there is no reason why it should not have been developed to a point of high efficiency, with the additional value of genuine revolutionary enthusiasm.

Another point which should be known is this: the P.O.U.M., together with the C.N.T., urged from the very beginning an offensive on the Aragon front. They realized that such an offensive would relieve Madrid and prevent a fascist advance on Bilbao. That offensive did not take place only because the Aragon army was starved of arms. In the early months arms were not available; when Russian arms arrived, they were deliberately withheld from the Aragon army because the communists did not want the C.N.T. and P.O.U.M. militia to have arms or to gain the prestige of military success. It was the communists who, for sectarian political reasons, sacrificed the whole war and opened the way for the fall of Bilbao.

Pedrona gave two lectures—one was on anarchist theory and the second was an actual description of collectivization in operation. He defined anarchism as libertarian socialism as against state socialism. That is to say: anarchists wish to see the workers take control of the factories and then coordinate the control of the different work places thru their unions rather than see the initiative taken by a bureaucratic state machine imposing nationalization from above.

A good many listeners had sympathy with the idea of direct workers control but saw in the actual development of things in Spain, a proof of the anarchist error in belittling the power of the state. Although the workers took control of industry in July, 1936, the state machine is now being used to destroy their rights.

Pedrona gave a detailed account of the collectivization of large industries like textile and engineering. The workers not only took charge of the mills and factories but of the central trusts and con-

verted them into workers trusts to coordinate the activities of the separate mills and factories, including the supplies of raw materials and the distribution of the finished articles.

Pedrona also drew a fascinating picture of the collectives run by the peasants and gave an absolute denial to the assertion that collectivization had been forced on unwilling peasants by the C.N.T. This might have occurred in one or two isolated places but it was contrary to the philosophy and policy of the C.N.T. and had been stopped by it. On the other hand the liberals and communists had joined together to obstruct collectivization and to defend the property rights of the richer peasants.

IN FRANCE

THE lecture by Weill-Curiel was an historical survey of the situation in France since 1934. He pointed out that the communists at first opposed a united front with the other working class organizations. Then, in accordance with the changed Moscow line, they came in. In July 1934, workers unity was moving towards a revolutionary front; the radical party was discredited and there was no thought of common action with it.

Then came Stalin's declaration justifying the armed forces of imperialist France, followed by the Franco-Soviet pact. This led to a complete change in Communist Party policy. The revolutionary front was destroyed and the communists deliberately aimed at the rehabilitation of the Radical party and its inclusion in an anti-fascist front. In July 1935, some of the Radical leaders attended a united anti-fascist demonstration. The Communist Party gave its members instructions to cheer them specially!

The Popular Front agreement with the Radical party followed. When the Socialist Party urged that the program should include the nationalization of banking, insurance and trusts, this was opposed by the Radicals and communists in collusion. A moderate non-socialist program was adopted. But Weill-Curiel emphasized that little attention was paid to the program by the workers. They were swept with enthusiasm for unity; most of them did not even know the content of the program. After the election victories, there was a mass hope and militancy and the general strike for improved conditions broke out spontaneously.

This was the critical point. Leadership could have carried on the strike wave to the stage of revolution. The workers were ready. But, instead, Leon Blum discouraged militancy, urged the workers to go back to their jobs and promised to realize their aims by constitutional methods.

Blum legalized the forty-hour week and holidays with pay and got the employers to agree to the appointment of shop stewards and to increases in pay. But these advantages are already proving temporary. The employers soon began an offensive and sabotaged the new social legislation. Shop stewards were not recognized and very often the forty-hour week was evaded and the promised increase in wages not given. Most important of all, the advantages the workers thought they had gained were destroyed by increases in prices.

The chief failure of the Blum Government was on the side of finance. Instead of taxing the rich, it asked for loans from the "little people." The bankers set out to sabotage the government. They refused a loan. The French government then had to go to London. (Continued on Page 4)

By Lambda

WORLD TODAY

The Plenum Of the French C. P. New Soviet Purges

London, August 21, 1937.

THE plenum of the Central Committee of the French Communist Party met in the middle of June. It declared its readiness to participate in the government. This was done in open contradiction to the decisions of the 7th World Congress, which allow participation of communists only in a so-called "united front government." Again, nobody took any notice of the willingness of the C.P. to join the present coalition government and to assist it in cutting wages, and carrying out its infamous Spanish policy. In the opinion of the Radical-Socialists, it is sufficient that the communists vote for the government without giving them any posts in the cabinet. The plenum discussed the answer of the S.P. to the proposals of the C.P. for organizational unity. The actual sense of the answer was that the S.P. would not commit itself with regard to unity. The plenum maintained that the answer was just what the C.P. had always demanded and said it was time to start joint meetings of the members. The answer of the S.P. to this was a cold shower to the C.P. There cannot be any question of joint meetings, the S.P. declared.

The political decay of the C.P. is proceeding rapidly. The annual affair called "Tour de France" and the display of the French air force at Villacoublay stirred more enthusiasm and interest at the Plenum than, for instance, such petty things as the fact that the socialist Minister of the Interior, Dormoy, was systematically using police and Mobile Guards against strikers. As we reported previously, the congress of the S.P. had demanded the extension of the People's Front program. This was done in order to dampen the discontent of the socialist workers and to prepare for the cantonal elections. Chautemps, however, rejected the demand, as he considers himself strong enough not to have to employ such demagogic tricks. He declared that the program of the government was the "pause"; the S.P. and the C.P. had consented to this "pause" and there could not be any question of any new programmatic demands!

L. O. Frossard recently gave a lecture at the conference of the Union Socialiste Republicaine in which he forecast the resignation of the Chautemps government next autumn and the formation of a cabinet of the Union Nationale. Many years ago, Frossard was general secretary of the French C.P. Later, he joined the S.P. Laval made him Minister of Labor in his cabinet. He is one of the shrewdest politicians in France. It can be assumed that, if Frossard now propagates the idea of a national government for France, then he does it only because he has information that discussions behind the scenes have reached a point where the return of Laval, or some similar figure, has been seriously taken into consideration. The leaders of the S.P. and C.P. continue to tell the masses to remain quiet and not to defend themselves against the attacks of the capitalists, in order to preserve the Popular Front, whereas any serious politician can see the day approaching when the Radical-Socialists will break from the Popular Front and extend their coalition to their friends on the right.

NEW VICTIMS OF THE SOVIET "PURGE"

The already previously announced arrest of Bela Kun receives new substantiation. It can hardly be doubted now. The arrest of Moskin, one of the leading delegates of the C.P.S.U. to the Communist International is also reported. In addition the arrest of Krylenko, former Minister of Justice, Admiral Orlov, one of the delegates of the Soviet Union to the coronation celebration in London, Admiral Viktorov, Commander-in-chief of the Pacific Fleet, as well as several leading co-workers of Litvinov in the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs.

It is quite clear that under these conditions, the present Soviet elections, in so far as they depend upon the intentions of the Stalin leadership, can be nothing but a miserable farce. V. I. at sense can the elections in the various Soviet organs have if Stalin and his clique, before the elections are run off, appoint to or discharge anybody from the Soviet apparatus, the C.P.S.U., the Comintern and crown it all by arrests and executions!

Decentralization And Fascism

(Continued from Page 1)

on coal deprived industry of much geographical mobility, precisely as it lessened flexibility within the plant itself. But electric power has destroyed that geographical immobility, permitting the location of plants in almost any region. At the same time, electricity has transformed the character of machines, making them more flexible, while small plants may now be as efficient as the larger. And industry is increasingly producing goods made from raw materials that exist almost everywhere—nitrates from air, plastics from soy-beans, scores of products from cornstalks, etc. All these developments allow industry to decentralize thruout the nation and the world.

But capitalist interests resist the change, for it would create huge losses. Agriculture must still be exploited within the nation, while imperialism must still maintain its stranglehold on agrarian colonial countries. Decentralization of industry, with its accompanying unity of industry and agriculture, would enormously increase the capacity to produce goods, a capacity that is already choking capitalism with an abundance that tends to make capitalist production unprofitable.

Rationalizing Anti-Unionism

Hence the capitalist talk of decentralization is a fraud, the rationalization of a sinister attack upon labor. "There is no evidence," according to E. M. Hoover, Jr., in The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science for March 1937, "of any general scattering of manufacturing to small cities and towns outside the industrial areas. Such movements in that direction as were observed seem to be due to an effort to cut wage costs, associated either with labor union situations peculiar to the individual industry (e.g. in shoe manufacturing) or with the intensification of price competition by severe business depression." The Cameron of the Ford Company admits this, in his own peculiar fashion, when he says that business moves "because a town has become infested with the peculiar form of social, political or unionistic philosophy which confuses progress with the persecution of industry." And the New York World-Telegram of April 3, 1937 put the whole thing neatly: "Industry wooing decentralization as check to militancy of labor." A handful of employers profit from more savage exploitation of labor; meanwhile the cities are still growing and becoming more monstrously congested.

Another distortion of the concept of decentralization, especially by Henry Ford, is to have a labor force that combines working on small farms with working in the plant. "And here we come," according to Catherine Bauer in Modern Housing "to one of the most ironic dilemmas that the present economic system can provide. Modern science and technology and the principles of regional planning point straight to the decentralization of industry, to

smaller plants, motor trucking and the wider network of electricity instead of coal and steam. And yet, under the wage-and-profit system, and without complete replanning and reconcentration, how is a small electric plant surrounded by home-steads different from an ordinary old-fashioned 'company town,' one of the abominations of the 19th century heritage? Only in this, that with the workers tied to their farms and committed to vegetable raising, wages are very likely to be even lower than heretofore. Indeed, lower wages are the principal bait in almost all present decentralization of industry."

The unity of industry and agriculture is possible only within a planful decentralization that balances up regional industrialization. It does not mean what Henry Ford means, isolating workers in out-of-the-way communities and making them work in a small vegetable garden as well as in an industrial plant. (Imagine what would happen to the farmers if millions of workers grew most of their food.) What it means is company houses, company "farms," company communities, company control. Workers are more fully enslaved. Capitalist industry gains these advantages:

1. Workers are tied more firmly to the plants of a particular company, reducing the costs of labor turnover.
2. Part-time work is regularized since the worker can spend spare time in his vegetable garden; this is particularly important in the automobile industry with its great seasonal lay-offs.
3. Lower wages can be paid if workers produce their food in vegetable gardens.
4. If strikes, according to Alfred Sloan of General Motors, should cut off operations at one plant, the company can look to other plants to fill requirements.
5. Money can be saved on relief if unemployed workers can subsist on food grown by themselves: the burdens of unemployment are thrust more fully upon the workers. Gardens and vegetables according to the Cameron of the Ford company, "will replace unemployment insurance."
6. A sort of industrial feudalism is created with workers bound to the plant and the soil and isolated from their fellow workers.

Hence capitalist decentralization is an aspect of the policy of enslaving labor expressed in company unions and welfare work. That policy assumes its most monstrous forms under fascism, which erects into a system, sustained by torture chambers, concentration camps and dungeons, the elements for enslaving labor already existing within capitalist democracy. Fascist unions are company unions become universal and imposed upon the workers by authority of the state. Welfare work is glorified into a state enterprise (Kraft durch Freude in Germany; Dopolavoro in Italy) which uses welfare to indoctrinate the workers to accept unquestioningly their depressed condition by control of minds, attitudes and habits. The combination of farming and industrial labor is used, especially in Germany, to strengthen the foundations of fascist hierarchy and caste, which is simply the tyranny of organized capital over unorganized labor.

Unions must fight the runaway shops of capitalist decentralization that are used to escape from unions, depress wages and enslave labor. But it must not be a piecemeal fight; it must be a fight on all fronts that recognizes the larger implications.

The reactionary implications of the runaway shops of capitalist de-

TALL TIMBER
LAKE MOHEGAN, N. Y.
Phone: Peekskill 3275

Features:
Concert, Juana Hall's 22-voice Negro Choir, other artists; movies, lake, good tennis, handball, horses, golf near.

Regular rates:
\$22 a week - \$4.50 a day

THE MARCH OF REACTION

A recent issue of the London Economist (No. 4902) publishes a report from Barcelona stating:

"The industrial plants seized during the first months of the civil war are considered only to be temporarily under state control. With regard to those the seizure of which had been called permanent on account of their proprietors having fled the country and having been declared fascists, a decision will be arrived at a later period. Several large plants belonging to aliens have been restored to their lawful owners. The decree expropriating lead and zinc mines has been rescinded. . . ."

THE SOCIALISTS AND THE AUTO UNION

In the Socialist Call of September 4, there is a report by Hy Fish on the recent auto workers convention at Milwaukee. For sheer indecent misrepresentation and impotent malice, this report tops anything that ever appeared in the Daily Worker. Indeed, the Daily Worker's account of the convention is, by comparison, quite a sober, straightforward recital of events.

The fact is that the socialists have hitherto played a role in the "unity" caucus menagerie of a red-jacketed monkey dancing upon the string of the Stalinist organizer who calls the tune. Now, it appears, the socialists are eager to play a more "active" role and the only way they know how to do it is by outdoing their Stalinist partners in factional virulence.

What we'd like to know is: Do Hy Fish's articles, in this anarcho-socialist issues of the Call, represent the socialist trade union policy? Or is it simply just one of the half-dozen trade union policies that the S.P. has on tap, just as it has three Spanish policies and four or five labor party policies?

centralization move toward fascism. To fight them is to fight fascism. The victory of fascism means their erection into an authoritarian state system. But the fight against fascism will fail unless it broadens finally into a struggle against capitalism, for socialism.

Socialism realizes all the progressive implications of decentralization. Capitalism itself thrusts objectively in that direction; this can be seen, to illustrate, in the increasing dependence of industry upon raw materials grown on the farm for production of the synthetic products that are acquiring constantly greater importance—a development that calls for the planful unity of industry and agriculture. Decentralization in the progressive socialist sense is necessary to create regional and social

ANNOUNCING the opening of the eighth year of the

NEW WORKERS SCHOOL

fall term
Catalogue now available with full description of courses

Write to:
New Workers School
131 West 33rd Street
New York City

On the "Letter Of An Old Bolshevik"

By JIM CORK

CENTRAL to an objective understanding of the crisis in the Soviet Union is the conflict existing between the heightened material and cultural aspirations of the Soviet masses and the stifling hand of a bureaucracy whose factional moves for self-perpetuation constitute a gigantic obstacle to their realization. No one denying the facts objectively can view that there has been a decided improvement in the economic and social situation in the U.S.S.R., that the socialist base of Soviet economy has been extended and substantially strengthened. On the basis of this development, the Soviet masses, ready to sacrifice themselves in times of stress and strain, have begun to demand the dropping of restraints, the cessation of sacrifices with the disappearance of the material base that had made them necessary. They have begun to demand some of the fruits made possible by their own sacrifices, higher material and cultural standards, more freedom and independence—all, of course, within the framework of the Soviet state and the dictatorship of the proletariat. The further development of the economic and cultural life of the masses that was opened up could proceed only on the basis of the extension of Soviet democracy.

These moods of the masses beat upon the walls of the party with increasing force. For years, as we now know, there has been a growing and, at times, openly expressed opposition within the C.P.S.U. to the stranglehold of the Stalin clique. Supported now by the broad non-party masses, this opposition has inevitably grown more vocal, extended, profound, and has reached up to the very top.

Stalin Yields—Then Smashes Back
At first Stalin reluctantly gave in to the pressure, trying to harness these moods for the purpose of strengthening his own leadership (the first faint attempts at allowing inner-party discussion). But when it became clear that the discontent in the party, if given full freedom of expression, would place

balance in a lopsided economy, to develop our productive forces to the utmost, to realize and evenly diffuse higher standards of living, to destroy the international centralization of industry which condemns "backward" nations to lower levels of economic activity and well-being. And, finally, one of the necessary means of assuring the functional socialist democracy of self-government in industry and the abolition of classes is the rational and planful decentralization of industry, with its accompanying unity of industry and agriculture, which destroys the distinctions between rural and urban labor and creates economic units capable of direct control by the workers within the larger social organization of production.

Two facts of especial importance emerge. One, that for years there has been differences amongst elements of the top bureaucracy itself as to the treatment of former oppositionists. This question quite naturally involves another, the question of the character of inner-party life. Some urged a "reconciliation period," an extension of party democracy, the reabsorption of former oppositionists for constructive party work. Others were for an irreconcilable attitude, for the maintenance of rigid bureaucratic control. Prominent amongst the former were elements like Kirov, Rudzutak, Yenukidze, etc. Leaders of the latter ilk were Yezhov and Kaganovitch. Stalin, according to the author, balanced himself for a long time like a tight-rope walker who waged " . . . a fight for influence over Stalin, a fight for his soul, so to speak . . ." Indeed, for a time, in the autumn of 1933, when economic conditions had greatly improved, Stalin allowed himself the luxury of a reconciliation. This was the time when Kamenev and Zinoviev were readmitted to the party, given responsible party work and even allowed to make their appearance on the platform at the 1934 conference of the party. Gorky, before he died, also attempted—in vain—to use his influence with Stalin in favor of the reconciliation policy. It is interesting.

(Continued on Page 4)

Shoe Union Plans Big Campaign
(Continued from Page 1)
collective bargaining for a dozen shoe factories in Auburn and Lewiston, Maine, after Judge Henry Manser, of the Superior Judicial Court of the state, had ruled the shoe strike conducted by the union "illegal."

The Ambridge decision is being appealed by the company and the A. F. of L. and will probably come before the Supreme Court for final decision.

the blame where it belonged, i.e., at the very top, would press for a complete overhauling of party methods and work—in other words, would endanger very existence of the bureaucracy itself—then Stalin shrank back. Once decided upon his path, he moved in characteristically brutal fashion to defend the life of his clique. Every possible focal point of "dissension" in the party had to be taken care of. Therefore, the cleanup of every actual or potential oppositionist—past, present and possible future.

The value of the "Letter of An Old Bolshevik," recently published in pamphlet form, consists in filling out the analysis indicated by a presentation of facts ordinarily not available to those of us outside Russia. It lets us in behind the scenes, shows us the life of the Party, the intrigues of the clique leaders, the character and problems of the opposition, the chief actors in the drama, etc. Written simply and with restraint, it gives one the unmistakable feeling of authenticity. It is not at all written from the viewpoint of a dyed-in-the-wool-against-Stalin-at-all-costs factionalist. On the contrary, the author notes the contributions made to the progress of the Soviet Union by the energy of Stalin, especially in times of stress. To this reader at least, this pamphlet rings true.

Two facts of especial importance emerge. One, that for years there has been differences amongst elements of the top bureaucracy itself as to the treatment of former oppositionists. This question quite naturally involves another, the question of the character of inner-party life. Some urged a "reconciliation period," an extension of party democracy, the reabsorption of former oppositionists for constructive party work. Others were for an irreconcilable attitude, for the maintenance of rigid bureaucratic control. Prominent amongst the former were elements like Kirov, Rudzutak, Yenukidze, etc. Leaders of the latter ilk were Yezhov and Kaganovitch. Stalin, according to the author, balanced himself for a long time like a tight-rope walker who waged " . . . a fight for influence over Stalin, a fight for his soul, so to speak . . ." Indeed, for a time, in the autumn of 1933, when economic conditions had greatly improved, Stalin allowed himself the luxury of a reconciliation. This was the time when Kamenev and Zinoviev were readmitted to the party, given responsible party work and even allowed to make their appearance on the platform at the 1934 conference of the party. Gorky, before he died, also attempted—in vain—to use his influence with Stalin in favor of the reconciliation policy. It is interesting.

(Continued on Page 4)

The International Class Struggle

Organ of the International Communist Opposition
A quarterly publication of labor political theory and practice.

SPRING NUMBER
25c
Annual subscription at \$1.00 write to
INDEPENDENT COMMUNIST LABOR LEAGUE
131 West 33rd Street
New York City

Fur Progressives Force Economy On Officials

On Tuesday, August 24th, there took place two very important meetings of the New York fur workers. Attendance was mandatory under penalty of a dollar fine for non-attendance.

The questions under discussion were:

- (1) A financial report for 1936;
- (2) The proposal of a tax in preparation for the expiration of the agreement; and also,
- (3) Charges of taking graft directed against a union member.

On the financial report, the Progressives, in both the operators' and cutters' locals, took a critical position, pointing out that the administration was too extravagant in its legal fees and organizational expenditures. They pointed out that since unity had been achieved, the union had two taxes amounting to a day's wage each, the total sums collected being about \$170,000—and that, in spite of a decision to put this money away for a strike fund, a great portion of it had already been spent.

The administration demanded a tax of which they did not dare to specify the amount at the local meetings, but which, at a special Council meeting was mentioned as a \$25 tax.

The Progressives fully realized that the union needed money in preparation for the coming agreement, but they pointed out that, considering the bad season the workers have had in the fur industry, a day's-wage tax plus the money already accumulated in the Treasury, plus the united strength of the fur workers, would be sufficient to meet the bosses.

President Gold was specially invited to defend the proposal of the administration. In spite of his fiery speech, Gold this time could not convince the fur workers. The workers listened to the proposals of the Progressives, Teitelman, Intrator, and Kass, and overwhelmingly voted for a one day's tax. Gold was even compelled to make this same proposal of the Progressives to the cutters' meeting. In the nailers' and finshers' meeting, the administration proposal for a high tax was forgotten and a day's tax was proposed and accepted.

After that the workers were informed that the individual on charges of graft was none other than the "famous" Manny Schwartz, who had been slated in 1936 by the "Left Wing Rank-and-File" (present administration) for business agent, in place of the Progressive B. Baraz. The same Manny Schwartz slugged a fur worker in the market during the election. This did not prevent the administration from issuing a special leaflet in the fur market defending Schwartz as an honest worker deserving the votes, trust, and confidence of the fur workers.

Manny Schwartz continued as a business agent a full term of one year in spite of his obvious lack of

capacity to attend to the workers' complaints. Various rumours were going around long before the recent (1937) elections about the dishonesty of this person. The workers in the street spoke about it openly. There was even a statement made by W. Greenberg that Potash had known about this before the elections. Yet this did not prevent the administration from endorsing M. Schwartz for a second term. The same administration which will not permit any unity with honest and trustworthy progressives endorsed M. Schwartz whose only ability lay in slugging workers and graft and corruption. The fact that the investigation alone took some time, and that the elections took place only four weeks ago throws some light on the administration's knowledge of the case before the elections.

There is every indication that these facts were uncovered now only after the defeat of Manny Schwartz.

Fight For Socialism

(Continued from Page 2)

The London loan was only forthcoming on conditions. Chief among them was that no help should be given to the Spanish revolution.

Still Blum had not enough money. He had to announce a "pause" in social legislation and had to go to the French bankers for advice. The final humiliation of Blum was defeat by the Senate and replacement by a Radical Prime Minister.

Estimating the results of the Popular Front, Weil-Curiel said that there had been an increase in trade union organization and, whilst the material standards of the workers have shown little improvement, they have a new moral standard—they speak to employers as equals. The fascist leagues have suffered a set-back—partly due to their own division; but the organization of the capitalist reaction is stronger. The position of the small shopkeepers has become worse and the danger is that their disillusionment will drive them to the fascists.

The Popular Front experiment in France has proved that a bourgeois state can only be governed on bourgeois lines and that there can be no real advance within capitalism. Socialists must face the necessity of a revolution.

"Neutrality" and the Maritime Union

An Associated Press dispatch, dated Washington, August 29, and published in the New York Times of August 30, informs us that "C.I.O. leaders of maritime labor threatened today to call sitdown strikes if necessary to prevent war implements from reaching China or Japan." "They thus undertook," the report continues, "unofficially to 'enforce' the American Neutrality Law . . . Ralph Emerson, legislative representative of the National Maritime Union, predicted that the freighter Wichita, which sailed from Baltimore Friday night with bombing planes and barbed wire for China, would 'never get past Manila'."

It is surely unnecessary, to emphasize how thoroughly false and dangerous is the policy thus embarked upon by the National Maritime Union. In the first place, it is obviously NOT the business of the trade union movement to act as a sort of unofficial agency for the State Department in carrying out its reactionary foreign policy and in "enforcing" an alleged "neutral-

Greetings!

We are encouraged and happy this year because there are all indications that the working masses are steadfastly becoming class-conscious.

Though we are celebrating our Workers' Holiday, we must not for one second forget that our comrades across the sea, in Spain, are bleeding to death so that Democracy may live.

We must continue doing everything with our means to support them in the war that they are waging against the forces of darkness and bigotry.

Wage-earners of America! In a spirit of Labor Solidarity, we greet you today on your own Workers' Holiday—Labor Day!

We have ample reason to feel cheerful and hopeful this year. The laboring men and women of our country have awakened from their state of passivity and have given battle to their oppressors—the economic overlords.

Workers in the millions have marched out on the robber-barons in the mass industries in a realization that their salvation lies in collective unionization and thoroughly planned militant action.

Long Live the International Labor Movement!

Long Live the Organized Labor Movement in America!

JOINT BOARD

DRESS & WAISTMAKERS UNION

I. L. G. W. U.

BEN EVRY, President

PHILLIP KAPP, Sec'y.-Treasurer

ON THE "LETTER OF AN OLD BOLSHEVIK"

(Continued from Page 3)

ing to note that Kirov was the leader of the reconciliationists. Ironic enough it is that his murder paved the way for the victory of the irreconcilables, his opponents. The author quite definitely implies that Kirov's murder could have been prevented but that those in charge of guarding party leaders at the time (Yezhov, etc.) were political opponents of Kirov and were therefore "negligent." In the light of what has happened subsequently, this is far from incredible.

The Vitality Of The C.P.S.U.

The second fact of importance stressed by the author is the conscious and widespread discontent existing for years inside the party ranks with the stifling bureaucratic regime of Stalin, many times openly expressed even to the point of open distribution of programs for a fight against him. Tho the open expression of criticism waxed and waned proportionately to the increase or decrease of strain in the economic fabric of Soviet life, it was never wiped out altogether. This fact, tho unpleasant for those who have interminably croaked about the death of the C.P.S.U., testifies to the vitality of the party as a potential basis for regeneration of Soviet life all along the line, in spite of the costly blows dealt to it by Stalin.

When it was clear after the Kirov murder that the line of the bureaucracy was to be one of brutal suppression, opposition inside the party increased, when, during the first Kamenev trial, it became known that Yezhov was demanding the death penalty:

"Many old Bolsheviks (author's emphasis) were unable to reconcile themselves to this idea. Petitions against the application of the death penalty were presented to Stalin by individual highly influential members of the party. The Society of Old Bolsheviks was openly collecting signatures to a declaration addressed to the Politburo in which attention was drawn to Lenin's chief testament 'Let not blood flow between you.'"

At that time Stalin yielded. But

he must have already realized the extent of the opposition to him. Yezhov, now occupying most of Kirov's former posts, was entrusted to proceed with the organizational cleanup of the old cadres as a starting point. The Society of Former Political Exiles was ordered closed. The Society of Old Bolsheviks was dissolved. The Communist Academy was liquidated. Then, with the dissatisfaction of the non-party masses beating an increasing tattoo against the walls of the party and with Stalin finally realizing that "... the mood of the majority of the old party workers was really one of bitterness and hostility toward him . . ." he decided at last upon the policy of "... physical extermination of all those whose party past might make them opponents of Stalin. . . ." And that's the story!

The Soviet Masses Will Decide

Remember that this pamphlet was written at the end of last year, before the Stalin terror had cut such a wide swathe. The tragic verification of the prediction testifies to the validity of its analysis. It is understandable that the pamphlet should end on a note of hopelessness. "All of us old Bolsheviks . . . are . . . under the present circumstances an undesirable element. . . . No one will defend us."

The case, however, will be decided by the Soviet masses. The reactionary terror of a frightened clique will inevitably have its boomerang logic. The wider the suppression, the narrower is the base of support remaining for Stalin and his clique. The wave of resentment of the Soviet masses at the attempt to block their legitimate aspiration by factional terror is bound, in time, to break the bonds of oppression. No more than King Canute can Stalin stop it!

SUBSCRIBE NOW
TO WORKERS AGE

SUBSCRIBE TO WORKERS AGE

weekly organ of the Independent Communist Labor League

\$1.00 for one year
.60 for six months

I enclose:

- \$1.00 for one year's subscription
 \$.60 for six months' subscription

Name

Address

City

State