

# Crisis in the C. I. O.

An Editorial

THE C.I.O. is facing a grave crisis today. In fact, it is already deep in the crisis.

At bottom, the crisis is due to the failure of the C.I.O., amidst its rapid growth and expansion, to develop responsible direction, democratic procedure and real collective leadership in what has become, virtually if not in fact, a new labor federation. In such a situation, it proved possible for the Stalinites, utilizing certain favorable points of vantage, to worm their way into a number of important C.I.O. unions and into the administrative machinery of the C.I.O. itself. Wherever it succeeded in penetrating, Stalinism brought with it its characteristic features: corruption, mismanagement, totalitarian bureaucratic rule, factional intrigue, sacrifice of the interests of the workers for the sake of a "party line" imposed from the outside. Wherever it got control or decisive influence, it soon threatened to bring the organization to the very brink of ruin. Look at the recent events in the National Maritime Union!

It did not take long for the responsible, progressive elements in the C.I.O. to realize the grave menace facing their unions. A widespread movement to clean house, to get rid of the Stalinist pest, soon got vigorously underway. This movement is a sound and natural reaction, an effort at internal sanitation in the interests of bona-fide trade unionism, in the interests of a better, healthier labor movement. This is the real significance of the energetic "house-cleaning" in the United Automobile Workers of America, of the successful rank-and-file revolt against Stalinist rule in the National Maritime Union, of the repudiation of Harry Bridges and his Stalinist clique by a number of important unions on the West Coast, of the growing opposition sentiment among the transport workers, among the New York shoe workers and the like. It is a movement pledged to that progressive, responsible, democratic unionism that is the hope of American labor.

In this situation, the course for the C.I.O. leadership to follow is surely clear: to take the lead in this effort for sound and constructive unionism, to encourage and aid the organizations involved to rid themselves of a sinister menace to their very existence. This is surely the least we could expect from those who are vested with the responsibility for the new industrial-union movement.

Unfortunately, however, things have turned out otherwise. Certain C.I.O. leaders in Washington, including John L. Lewis, are intervening—but are intervening in favor of the Stalinist intriguers. For the sake of saving the skin of a discredited and expelled clique of dual-unionist disrupters in the U. A. W., John L. Lewis has even gone to the point of grossly violating the autonomous and democratic rights of this great international union in a manner without precedent in the annals of American labor. On the West Coast, Harry Bridges is upheld and sustained by John Brophy despite the notorious fact that the Bridges regime has brought widespread discredit to the C.I.O. and grave damage to the labor movement as a whole. And the same shocking story is repeated in a number of other situations as well.

What are the logical consequences?  
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# Workers Age

A PAPER DEFENDING THE INTERESTS OF WORKERS AND FARMERS

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## Stalin Purge Sweeps Navy

### All High Officers Shot; Terror Undermines Soviet Defense

Every single officer who occupied a high post in the Soviet navy a year ago, has been shot in a widespread "purge" that swept the country a few months ago, according to a London Times dispatch reprinted in the New York Times last week. "For the first time, the Soviet Naval Commissariat has admitted that the chief Russian admirals and naval experts were shot in recent months," the dispatch reads. "Their exact fate was not explained precisely in all cases, but official announcements state that the G.P.U. shot Admiral Vladimir R. Orlov, former commander-in-chief of the Red navy, who represented the Soviet Union at the British coronation in May 1938; Admiral A. K. Sivkov, commander of the Baltic fleet; and Admiral Ludry, head of the naval academy." Among the others who are reported to have almost certainly shared their fate are: Admirals Ivanov, Victorov (who replaced Orlov as commander-in-chief), Muklewich, Kozhanov, Kireyev, Dishenov and Kadatsky as well as Professor Petrov of the Leningrad Naval Academy.

These and others were accused of being "fascist spies," "traitors" and "enemies of the people." It was also charged that they held "treacherous" views on naval doctrine, advocating a "defensive" rather than an "aggressive" navy. Of course, the charges of espionage and treason are not taken seriously by anyone; the slaughter of the entire leading staff of the Soviet

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## Auto Unionists Hit "Peace Plan"

### Proposal Seen As Aid to Expelled Clique

Detroit, Mich. The Committee for Industrial Organization announced last week that it was sending Vice-Presidents Philip Murray and Sidney Hillman to the meeting of the International Executive Board of the United Automobile Workers, to be held in Detroit on Wednesday, for the purpose of defending its so-called "peace" plan. The likelihood of any success along that line seems rather remote in the light of the overwhelming opposition to the "peace" plan recorded by the membership of the union.

Foremost in the fight against the alleged "peace" proposal were the district council of the U.A.W. in Cincinnati; the Wisconsin region, which almost unanimously lined up behind President Martin; and the eastern Michigan region (exclusive of Detroit), representing some 75,000 members. In this group is included such powerful organizations as the Flint local with a membership of 30,000, which voted 11 to 1 in its board meeting, thus putting an end to the fraudulent claims of the Stalinists to the support of this local, and the Pontiac local, which numbers 15,000 strong. In addition, numerous locals from all sections of the country have voiced their indignant protest against the Lewis plan. President Martin announced that a majority of the membership has already declared itself in opposition to any measure curtailing the autonomous rights of the international union.

Questioned while he was in New York on union business, President Martin indignantly denied that

there is anything to the rumours relative to the U.A.W.'s "swing to the A. F. of L." He characterized these stories as Stalinist-inspired lies intended to becloud the real issues. "We have fully cooperated with the C.I.O.," stated Martin, "and would consider it a tragedy for our union as well as for the entire C.I.O. if hostile forces now arrayed against us within our organization and within the C.I.O. should seriously interfere with the continuance of this cooperation."

President Martin and Vice-President R. J. Thomas also took the opportunity of conferring with President David Dubinsky of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union on the present situation in the U.A.W. In a press statement issued after this conference, President Dubinsky expressed his sympathy with President Martin in his fight to rid the union of Stalinist control and likened the present situation in the U.A.W. to the situation existing in his own organization in 1926. Dubinsky expressed his conviction that President Martin would be victorious in his struggle.

Mr. Dubinsky explained that Mr. Martin and Mr. Thomas had come to familiarize him with conditions in the U.A.W., "knowing the interest and close bond of sympathy our organization has had with the U.A.W. from the first day it began struggling for a union in its industry and also because the I.L.G. W.U., some years ago, had been confronted with a similar situation from which it emerged united and strengthened."

## Nazis in New War Threats

### Menace Czechs As Britain Exerts Pressure For Henlein Demands

The political situation in Europe grew extremely tense last week as a hostile move on the part of Hitler-Germany against Czechoslovakia was expected hourly. Inside Czechoslovakia, the Sudeten-German party suddenly adopted an even more menacing attitude than in previous weeks and virtually broke off all discussions with the government, either directly or thru Lord Runciman, the English "mediator." In Germany, a loud and threatening newspaper campaign got underway, while Hitler demonstratively made an inspection tour of the frontier defenses.

Actually, however, the really important events were taking place behind the scenes in the form of a diplomatic struggle between England and Germany. The British policy is to "persuade" Hitler to be "patient," with the assurance that in the end he would get all he wanted as far as Czechoslovakia is concerned. "The key men of the (British) cabinet," Webb Miller reported in a United Press dispatch of August 30, "admittedly would prefer to let Germany get the Sudeten region in Czechoslovakia, if it could be arranged without war." Hence, British efforts last week consisted primarily in exerting pressure in two directions—on Hitler to go easy for the time being and on the Czech government to yield "as far as possible" to the demands of the Henlein Nazis. The latter is the central task of Lord Runciman's mission to Prague.

## Why UAW Rejects Lewis "Plan"

By George F. Miles

THE United Automobile Workers of America holds the center of the stage in a controversy with Chairman John L. Lewis of the Committee for Industrial Organization, a controversy which may well determine the major course for American labor for the next period of time. It is a struggle not of the U.A.W.'s choosing, for the latter sought desperately, to the very last, to keep the C.I.O. from making the ghastly mistake it finally did make at the behest of, and after a prolonged period of conniving by, the Stalinists and their aids in the C.I.O. apparatus. But reason did not prevail and John L. Lewis finds himself today at the head of a discredited and increasingly more isolated minority of disrupters of the U.A.W. in an undeclared war against one of the most powerful affiliates of the C.I.O.

There appears to be no doubt whatever that the vast majority of the membership has been aroused to fighting fury by the arrogance of the ultimatum handed to President Martin in Washington. It was a demand for the unconditional surrender of the autonomous rights

of the United Automobile Workers and President Martin decided to make this the test among the membership of the union. That he estimated properly the moods and sentiments of his membership becomes ever more certain as resolutions keep piling in pledging support. Already more than 175,000 workers have placed themselves behind President Martin in the few days since Mr. Lewis sent his appeal to the locals over the head of the International Executive Board. Mr. Lewis's advisers could not possibly have chosen a worse issue with which to appeal to the auto workers against their elected officers headed by President Martin. Nor could they have chosen a worse moment for the C.I.O.

### As To Compromises

Naive people will be greatly perplexed over so hostile a reception given to a "peace" plan which Chairman Lewis declared to be a "compromise" proposition. Even the Daily Worker puts on a straight face, tho it can hardly contain itself for joy at having brought John L. Lewis into camp, and solemnly declares that Lewis's

plan is a compromise, that the Stalinists are not getting all they asked for.

Even a superficial examination of the plan proves it to be a rather transparent concoction. It can be summarized briefly as follows: It refuses to grant to the Stalinists that which the Stalinists had no power to secure because of their minority position in the membership—the removal of President Martin and the International Board; it orders the International Board to undo that which it had already done—to reinstate all the expelled and suspended officers; it asks the union to hand over its rights and powers, guaranteed in the constitution adopted at the Milwaukee convention, to a C.I.O. "adviser."

To the membership of the union this proposal appears biased, unfair and unacceptable on all counts.

Lewis's rejection of the demand of the Stalinists for the removal of President Martin and the entire leadership is hardly a concession to the union leadership. It does represent a recognition of fact by Mr. Lewis that, during their entire

existence as a faction, the Stalinists have sought and failed to win the membership to their side, and therefore could not possibly remove the leadership.

The mandatory and sweeping ukase for the reinstatement of the one suspended and four expelled officers not only violates the most elementary concepts of union autonomy but seeks to overturn a decision of the International Board on a matter which the constitution of the union specifically gives it full power to act.

Mr. Lewis never claimed that the action of the Board was unconstitutional and even were he to make such a claim, the ultimate court of appeal on such matters would be not Mr. Lewis, not even the C.I.O. itself but the convention of the U.A.W., to which appeals are to be taken. On such matters, the U.A.W. has full and unrestricted autonomy.

The attempted violation of the autonomous rights of the U.A.W. was all the more disturbing since the C.I.O. is on the verge of calling its own convention to organize itself for the first time as a federal

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# "WE DEFEND OUR AUTONOMY AND DEMOCRACY!"

By HOMER MARTIN

(The following paragraphs are from a radio address delivered by Homer Martin, president of the United Automobile Workers, on August 30.)

THE entire membership of the United Automobile Workers of America was shocked last week when John L. Lewis, chairman of the Committee for Industrial Organization, made a so-called "peace" proposal and told the International officers that they would either accept this so-called "peace" plan—or else. But the shock was turned to anger when John L. Lewis, going over the heads of the elected officers of the International Union, pushing aside the constitution of the U.A.W., which he himself helped to write, communicated directly with local unions, urging them to put "pressure" upon the International Executive Board to adopt the so-called "peace" plan. The executive boards of the local unions in Region No. 6, one of the most powerful regions in the whole International Union, representing more than 75,000 members of the U.A.W., unanimously adopted a resolution condemning this action by John L. Lewis. The Joint Board of Greater Cincinnati Auto Council unanimously adopted the same sort of resolution; while the executive officers of Region No. 9, made up of unions in Illinois, Minnesota and Wisconsin, unanimously adopted a similar resolution.

### Auto Workers Give Answer

Thus, the first day after John L. Lewis' unprecedented action, he had the unequivocal and unhesitating answer of the local unions in these regions, comprising almost half the membership of the U.A.W.

One may logically inquire: Why this spontaneous and unanimous resentment against the proposals contained in the so-called "peace" plan? The answer is not hard to find when one examines the so-called "peace" plan itself. The first proposition was that all of the expelled and suspended officers be immediately reinstated as they were following the Milwaukee convention. According to Mr. Lewis' plan, I, as president of the United Automobile Workers of America, was to take this action without consultation with the International Executive Board and in direct violation of the action of that body. This would mean that I, as president, would be throwing overboard the whole constitution of the U.A.W. and appropriating unto myself at the same time all of the authority of the International Executive Board. This would constitute a dictatorship

which cannot be tolerated in any democratic union and certainly not in any progressive union. It is interesting to note that the expelled and suspended officers gave immediate and unqualified sanction to this undemocratic and dictatorial procedure, thus giving the lie to all of their pleas and all of their statements relative to their faith in democracy and democratic procedure.

To add insult to injury, the so-called "peace" plan went further and proposed that all matters of dispute within the U.A.W. should be decided by John L. Lewis. The constitution adopted by the automobile workers in convention was to mean nothing. The officers elected in convention and having the support of the majority of the membership of the U.A.W. were to be put aside and a dictatorship substituted. Thus the autonomy of the U.A.W., which had been established only by the courage and determination of the members of the U.A.W., would be wiped out with one stroke of the pen, one wave of the hand, one utterance of the voice of John L. Lewis. I need not remind the membership of the U.A.W. that we fought the American Federation of Labor against just such dictatorship, in order to establish the autonomy which has meant the building of our International Union into one of the most powerful, progressive and democratic unions in America.

Another very important consideration in this so-called "peace" proposal is that its acceptance would condone an action which might well mean the destruction of the autonomy of all unions associated with the C.I.O. For instance, the constitution of the United Mine Workers of America, of which Mr. Lewis is president, provides: "The International Union shall have supreme legislative, executive and judicial authority over all members and subordinate branches, and shall be the ultimate tribunal to which all matters of importance to the welfare of the membership and subordinate branches shall be referred for adjustment. Between International conventions, the supreme executive and judicial powers of the International Union shall be vested in its executive officers and executive board in accordance with and subject to the provisions of this constitution."

### Danger To Every C.I.O. Union

I therefore ask Mr. Lewis if he would tolerate such interference from any group or any body in America. Would he allow or could he, consistent with the best interests of the United Mine Workers of America, permit the setting aside of his own constitution, his own executive board, his own

presidency? If this procedure is followed and this precedent is established, then every C.I.O. union is herewith given to understand that its autonomy means nothing, that its constitution is not worth the paper it is written on, that its executive board is a farce, and that the will of the membership means nothing in the determination of their own affairs.

Furthermore, we want to remind Mr. Lewis that the constitution of the United Mine Workers of America provides: "Any member accepting membership in the . . . Ku Klux K'an or the Communist Party shall be expelled from the United Mine Workers of America, and its permanently disbanded from holding office in the United Mine Workers of America . . ." And, in reminding Mr. Lewis of the provisions of his own constitution, I want to remind him also that these very people that he bars from membership in his union, he is asking us to take back into our organization, in violation of the elementary principles of democracy. For Mr. Lewis knows, as well as I know, that these people are either members of the Communist Party or are so-called "fellow-travelers," and have for months consistently worked to place the Communist Party in charge of the International Union, United Automobile Workers of America. Yet Mr. Lewis asks us to swallow these people that have been proven guilty of the charges of which they have been accused.

Again, we would like to remind Mr. Lewis that this whole procedure is in violation of the announced principles of the C.I.O. itself, which were stated in a telegram from the C.I.O. to the American Federation of Labor convention last Fall. The telegram read in part: "The program of the C.I.O. as originally announced has been consistently maintained—to organize the unorganized workers. To accomplish this end, it was necessary to initiate an extensive organizing campaign throughout the country on an industrial basis. To obtain response from the heretofore unorganized workers, it was also essential to assure them democratic control and administration of their organization. Both of these measures had been traditionally opposed by the A.F. of L."

This statement of the policy and program of the Committee for Industrial Organization was made less than a year ago and was given by John L. Lewis as the reason for the launching of the C.I.O. We are, therefore, today in disagreement with this dangerous and undemocratic departure from the fundamental principles and policies of the C.I.O. itself.

### "We Accept The Challenge!"

It is most interesting to note at this juncture that the expelled and suspended officers have lost all their enthusiasm for a special convention. One can but conclude that they have become convinced that the overwhelming majority of the membership of the U.A.W. is not supporting them and that their only hope of carrying on their destructive activities inside the union lies in machination outside the U.A.W.

We are, therefore, determined to defend the autonomy and the democracy of the United Automobile Workers of America, and we accept this challenge. We assert unhesitatingly that these most sacred rights of the American labor movement shall stand unshaken and shall prevail in the face of all efforts to destroy them.

### PUT THE DRIVE OVER THE TOP!

# Why Auto Union Bars Lewis Plan

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tion of labor. Are such violations to be taken as an indication of the desire of the C.I.O. leadership to establish a super-centralized and dictatorial central leadership in the C.I.O. to dominate and dictate to the international unions? If so, then what becomes of the autonomy and democratic rights of these international unions, which are traditional in the American labor movement?

These considerations were most disturbing to the leadership and membership of the auto union for they recalled the long-drawn out battles for democracy, for the right to elect their own officials, and for full autonomous powers as an international union, while they were still part of the American Federation of Labor. Once these rights had been won, the auto workers were determined to resist every attempt from any direction to curtail these rights.

Especially disturbing was the membership over the full and categorical endorsement of the Stalinists by John L. Lewis, which is implied in his demand for unconditional reinstatement. For almost two years, the membership had fought off every offensive, had defeated every resort to trickery and chicanery, every attempt at a coup whereby the Stalinists might come to leadership. Chairman Lewis knew of all these struggles, how could he now place himself back of the Stalinists without a word of criticism? Had Lewis forgotten that he had himself scored the Stalinists' attitude on union responsibility and their resort to wild-cat strikes designed to embarrass the union? Had he forgotten their sabotage tactics during the negotiations with General Motors and Chrysler, when they fought against his admonition to settle up and "bring the boys in out of the rain?"

### What An "Adviser" Would Mean

The violent reaction of the membership against a C.I.O. receiver (for it would become that regardless of what the title might be) must be considered in the light of the foregoing reactions on the question of autonomy and relations with the Stalinists. That Lewis should at all propose a C.I.O. "adviser" was surprising, since the union had considered proposals to that effect submitted to it on several occasions and had rejected them. It became worse when, in the person of a C.I.O. "adviser," the auto workers saw someone whose intentions appeared to be to curtail their autonomous and democratic rights and to place himself in the service of Stalinist machination and intrigue against the vast majority of the membership.

It is for these reasons that the membership of the union was quickly fused into a solid front of opposition against the proposal of Chairman Lewis. So powerful has been the tide of support for President Martin that it has carried with it organizations hitherto supporting the "unity" caucus. Amazed as the membership was at Chairman Lewis' plunge, they recalled that the C.I.O. apparatus was not devoid of people who espoused the Stalinist cause. The Len de Cauxs, John Brophy and Lee Pressmans had poisoned the very air of the C.I.O. against the U.A.W. and President Martin.

Of their own knowledge the auto workers knew that Brophy had backed the Stalinists in every dispute that had arisen; yet the mere mention of such relationship was enough to send Mr. Brophy into tantrums. The cry of "red-baiting" was the mildest term in the lexicon of these defenders of Stalinism. Yet this was not entirely unsuspected in the labor movement. In his book, "Sit Down With John L. Lewis," C. L. Sulzberger has the following to say about John Brophy:

"Also in the offing is the moderately remote possibility of a new Brophy-Lewis fight. Some C.I.O. leaders have recently felt that Brophy is 'building his fences' in preparation for a bid for more power at a C.I.O. convention. In the West, among the timber, agricultural and littoral workers, Brophy has secured strong friendships. Harry Bridges, another potential source of trouble on the West Coast, might conceivably work with Brophy . . ."

"Lewis' closest friends have been regarding Brophy carefully. They have followed his work building up C.I.O. west of the Mississippi and attracting a personal following. At the 1937 convention of the United Automobile Workers, they remarked that the groenic Irishman spent much of his time closeted in a hotel room with left-wing leaders."

And the magazine Ken for August 25, 1938, has the following to say on the same topic:

"Dynamite keg under C.I.O. is slowly widening breach between John L. Lewis and John Brophy, titular C.I.O. director. Lewis once denounced Brophy from his mine union, patched up quarrel when C.I.O. started. Root of new trouble is Brophy politicking with ex-remnants in left-wing C.I.O. branches."

That the breach has been bridged for the time being by Lewis' conversion to Brophy's views on the automobile situation is the misfortune of the C.I.O. and its affiliated unions.

### Links In The Chain

However, close observers point out that the intervention of Chairman Lewis was not precisely a bolt from the blue. There had been any number of occurrences which might be considered as forms of overt intervention.

When Mr. Lewis accepted as accurate the claim of the thirteen presidents speaking for the expelled officers that they represented about 250,000 members, he was really intervening in U.A.W. affairs. His failure to challenge the figure, on the very surface fraudulent, tended to give credibility to Stalinist claims.

When Mr. Lewis' office challenged the membership figures submitted by a delegation of 155 pro-union local presidents and gave to the press the ridiculously low figure of 55,000 members, he was intervening in U.A.W. affairs. The intention was obviously to create the impression that the majority stood behind the expelled Stalinists.

When Mr. Lewis utilized the presence of the 155 presidents to criticize President Martin and the union for alleged laxity in payment of per-capita taxes, he was attempting to prejudice the delegation, he was intervening in U.A.W. affairs.

When Mr. Lewis repudiated a statement relative to his promise not to intervene in U.A.W. affairs but flatly refused all requests to (Continued on Page 4)

# Recovery and the Housing Question

By LYMAN FRASER

WHILE economic recovery seems definitely moving upward and will probably continue thru the Winter and Spring, there are as yet no indications of any real upsurge of prosperity. The end of this recovery movement will be exactly like the last, which ended in the incomplete revival of 1936-1937, with about eight million workers still unemployed.

There are many economic factors which justify this conclusion. In this article, only one factor will be discussed, the factor of building construction.

### Decline Of Construction

A large volume of building construction is indispensable for prosperity—in addition to being indispensable for decently rehoused the American people. Construction of all kinds was a vital factor in the pre-1929 prosperity, and it was the decline of construction in 1928 that gave warning of the coming depression. (Construction of new homes began to decline in 1926.)

During the depression of the 1930's, construction declined almost to nothing. An enormous shortage piled up. But the recovery years from 1933 to 1937 did not bring any substantial revival of construction, for two reasons:

1. There was no substantial economic revival or expansion of production; hence, no substantial increasing demand for new business construction.

2. Low incomes multiplied because of the low level of economic activity and high level of unemployment; hence, no substantial increasing demand for new homes.

Now it is being declared that a housing boom is on the way. But this is not true.

First of all, while it is true that, during the recession, building construction did not decline as much as general economic activity, it did, for the first six months of 1938, fall below the same period of 1937—\$1,295 million as compared with \$1,493 million.

Secondly, there are predictions that, for the last six months of this year, building construction will move beyond the 1937 levels. For the coming months, building construction will undoubtedly increase, but the year's total may not surpass 1937. But, even if it does, it won't amount to much comparatively. That total was around \$3,000 million, which is still nearly one-half below the pre-1929 levels.

### Two False Claims

In this connection, it must be pointed out that the government is putting forward two false claims in connection with housing. The first is the federal appropriation, under the Steagall-Wagner Act, of \$500 million for low-cost housing—a sum utterly incapable of giving any real stimulus to recovery or of providing homes for the ill-housed masses of the people.

The second is connected with the exaggerated claims being made for the Federal Housing Administration (F.H.A.) contribution to new housing. Only 55% of the F.H.A. mortgages are for new construction, and under new construction are often included homes that were built within the past year and not homes scheduled to go up.

All the indications are that building construction will increase, but in a very limited fashion; it will not and cannot increase sufficiently to implement a complete recovery.

The reasons for this are simple. Private enterprise has never built

homes for the masses of the people. Before the depression, nearly one-half of American families were unable to buy or rent new homes, because their incomes were too low; now, more than two-thirds of American families cannot rent or buy new homes because the proportion of low incomes has enormously increased.

Hence, new housing will be limited to the more prosperous upper third, who offer a very restricted market. Government is doing scarcely anything to provide housing for the lower two-thirds of the income groups.

How impossible it is for the majority of American families to rent or buy new homes appears from a very simple calculation of incomes and of rents and prices of new homes.

It has been estimated that families with a total yearly income of \$2,000 or less—more than two-thirds of all American families—cannot afford to pay more than from \$2,500 to \$4,000 for a home; and only a very small proportion can afford even that. But the average lowest cost of a home in eight-five American cities is about \$4,500. Hence, this large group of families is almost completely excluded from buying homes.

The rent situation is just as bad. In the larger cities, the lowest rental at which private enterprise can supply apartments is \$9 per room, and very few apartments are built to rent for that amount. But, at that rental, a four-room apartment would take from 25% to 57% of the total family income of families with incomes from \$750 to \$1,750 a year. And these low-income families constitute about one-half of all urban families.

### Only One Way Out

With such a limited market for new building construction, it is clear that construction cannot become the sustaining factor in prosperity that it should. It is unprofitable to build homes for the masses of workers and lower-salaried employees. The shortage of homes will pile up; the homes now occupied by two-thirds of the families will continue to become more uninhabitable; recovery will continue to lag, with unemployment tormenting millions upon millions of people.

There is only one immediate answer to this problem: a government-subsidized program of low-cost housing, spending from one to two billion dollars yearly for the next ten years. Such a program would rehouse the American people and sustain a more vigorous upward movement of recovery.

Organized labor can make a real contribution to recovery by organizing a wide, aggressive campaign for a low-cost housing program.

But that has not yet been done, despite some efforts here and there. It must be done. Homes and jobs for the workers!

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# Religion or Economics?

By A. E.

A MAJORITY of the men in the United States think that the world is more in need of greater economic security than of more religion, according to the latest survey made by the magazine, Fortune. Only a little more than a quarter of the men believed that good old religion is what the world needs. The women of this country are still far behind the men in their social thinking, for almost half of them considered more religion as the necessity for these evil days. A mere quarter of them agreed with the men that economic security is what the world needs most. About 41% of the folk over forty likewise reckoned that more religion would be the salvation for the ills of the world. But of the more active and wideawake section of the population between the ages of 20 and 40, almost half found the more abundant life on earth more sustaining than heavenly promises.

It is well worth noting that almost 50% of the Catholic men and women, as compared with only 39% of all Protestants, were of the opinion that the world was more in need of greater economic security than of more religion. This difference is not to be explained by the nature of the religious beliefs held by Catholics and Protestants but is to be accounted for by the nature of their residence and employment—urban or rural. It is well known that the Catholic population is concentrated in the large cities while the farm and rural population is predominantly Protestant. Despite transportation and communication, the country districts are still far behind the cities in their social thinking. The effect of city life upon the social outlook of people is also illustrated clearly by the attitude of the Jews, who are almost all city dwellers. Seven out of ten Jews reasoned that economic security is what the world needs most and only 10% figured that more religion would set the world aright. Among those who professed no religion, a little over half concluded that economic security was the need of the hour and only a quarter chose religion. It will be noted that about the same proportion of Catholics as of non-religious placed their hope in economic security. Can there be any doubt that the masses of workers—even Catholic workers—will more readily respond to an appeal that speaks of greater economic security than of more religion. This difference is not to be explained by the nature of the religious beliefs

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# Cardenas and the Mexican Masses

By ELLEN WARD

(This is the second article in Ellen Ward's series on Mexico. The first appeared in the last issue of this paper.—Editor.)

WHEN Calles took power he proclaimed himself a labor man, and under him the power of Luis Morones, head of the C.R.O.M. (Confederacion Regional Obrera Mexicana), grew by leaps and bounds. He became a member of the Calles cabinet—Minister of Industry, Commerce and Labor—and soon began to discourage strikes as "wasteful to the national economy." But, if there was no perceptible gain for the workers under this regime, the labor leader proceeded to enrich himself. During the few brief years of the Calles regime, Morones became the owner of several commercial enterprises, a hotel, a textile factory, a number of realty developments and a group of villas in the suburbs of Mexico City. The story is commonly told that he paid 50,000 pesos for the construction of a sunken bath—estilo romano—for one of his capricious mistresses.

### "Men Of The Revolution"

Altho the tastes of the remaining friends of Calles were somewhat less ostentatious and more sober, they nonetheless enriched themselves, just as Morones had. These Callistas were called the "Men of the Revolution." From the revolution, they came to acquire governorships, generalships, cabinet posts, power and great wealth.

As generals in the field, they confiscated "enemy" properties, made forced levies on stocks of gold and currency, "purchased" supplies with paper pesos they printed over their signatures, and acquired estates by "agrarian expropriation."

Oregon had begun life as a petty rancher; he ended it as one of Mexico's large landowners.

Calles began as a rural schoolmaster and today he still owns the haciendas of Trinidad, Soledad de

la Mota, Santa Barbara and El Tambor. These men and their friends are the new capitalist-minded landowning class, and their rapid rise to power and wealth help to explain their growing conservatism. By the time Cardenas came to the presidency in 1934, they were all ready to call quits. They were eager to consolidate their gains and to put a stop to the onward march of labor and the peasantry.

Calles counted upon Cardenas as a prop in his new plans, but the temper of the world had changed in a few brief years—and, as the storm clouds of a new world war began to gather and as the importance of Latin America covered the horizon once more, Cardenas felt the time was ripe for a break with the old policies of close collaboration with foreign imperialism. At this point, it is interesting to trace the early career of Cardenas.

He began life as a printer in a small Mexican village and, before he was 20, he joined the revolution against Carranza. He was only 38 when he occupied the presidency. No sooner was he nominated than he began an endless tour of the land. He omitted no village of any importance. Wherever he went, he asked what the people wanted

"Land," "a dam," "a school," "a street," the replies kept coming. "You shall have it. I will attend to it personally," was the answer. And it was not long before the legend grew up about his extraordinary popularity.

### Calles And Cardenas

Calles and his group, alarmed by this Frankenstein monster, began to create difficulties for the new incumbent, but Cardenas had built his defenses with such meticulous care that, when he decided that the moment for the deportation of Calles had arrived, there was no opposition to speak of. Along with Calles, Cardenas threw out his Minister Plenipotentiary, Morones. Then he set about creating a new leadership

(Continued on Page 5)

# Rich Grow Richer . . .

By CHARLES EDWARD RUSSELL

(The following paragraphs are taken from the July 30 issue of the New York New Leader, where Charles Edward Russell has a regular column.—Editor.)

WHAT was for America the most profoundly significant news of these times appeared ten days ago and has passed without comment from the daily press.

The Income Tax Bureau of the National Treasury had just completed its survey of the income-tax returns for the year 1936 and recorded the astounding and pregnant fact that, between the years 1935 and 1936, the number of persons in the United States whose annual personal income was a million or more had increased by 20.

In 1935, there were in this country 41 persons with this overwhelming and overawing annual income; but, by 1936, the number had increased to 61.

In 1935, there was but one personal income of more than \$4,000,000 a year; by 1936, the number had increased to four.

In 1935, there were two personal incomes of between \$2,000,000 and \$3,000,000; by 1936, this number had increased to 14.

More than \$86,000,000 was the total net personal income of 61 persons that had more than \$1,000,000 a year each.

This in a time of great and widespread distress, with 12,000,000 of workers unemployed and about 25,000,000 persons living on public charity.

These staggering facts are the natural sequence of conditions revealed four years ago and then likewise scrupulously ignored.

At that time, the analyses of Prof. Rautenstrauch showed that, in the fifteen years from 1917 to 1932, the per-capita income of property owners in the United States had increased 128%; of bankers and financiers had increased 60%; of the professional classes had increased 25%; while the per-capita income of the workers had decreased 45% and of farmers had decreased 60%.

In these fifteen years, \$9,000,000,000 of annual income had been taken from the workers and farmers and added to the speculative, propertied and professional classes. Which meant \$9,000,000,000 of purchasing power taken from the population and added to a minority already well supplied.

And still, in the face of these flinty actualities, we go mooning and muddling around, wondering why we have hard times.

Also, why, after nine years of tinkering and pump-priming, fold-erol and mumbo-jumbo, the hard times continue.

Eighteen billion dollars we have spent thus far in the lunatic priming of an old pump that brings up nothing from a well which the incessant segregation of wealth has made as dry as a bone.

Want any more of that kind of mad house?

And observe that, while we are wasting time and money on the futile pump handle, the system goes on day and night, without ceasing. Today, the masses of the people are poorer than they were yesterday, and tomorrow they will be poorer than they are today. The One Per Cent of the population that today owns 60% of the nation's wealth, will next year own 61% of it, and the next 62% until they own it all and the rest become their servitors and dependants. You think this extravagant or incredible? These are the grim facts of the Income Tax Bureau and the unescapable record of the last nine years.



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GREEN GOES WILD!

WILLIAM GREEN'S wild outburst against the agreement just signed by the United Mine Workers with some of the Harlan coal-mine operators, is characteristic of the state into which the leaders of the A. F. of L. have gotten themselves in their absolutely unreasoning hatred of the C.I.O. Because the N.L.R.B. does not bar C. I.O. unions as collective-bargaining agencies, Mr. Green and his colleagues bitterly denounce it and launch a campaign to "revise" the Wagner Act; because the U.M.W. has succeeded in signing up the Harlan mines, Mr. Green and his colleagues let loose their wrath against the closed shop and the check-off—all without regard to the fact that, in doing so, they are really cutting off their nose to spite their face. It is plainly suicidal folly of the worst sort.

How come? How can such insensate conduct be explained? It is the poison of dual unionism working its destructive way thru the body of organized labor. The earlier efforts of the reactionary craft-union chiefs to stem the rising tide of industrial unionism were bad enough. But, when the Executive Council took it upon itself to "vacate the jurisdiction" of the United Mine Workers and to issue a dual charter to the notorious Progressive Miners of America, it took a step which showed it had lost all sense of reality; it embarked on a path that was bound to bring it into sharp conflict not only with the interests of labor as a whole but even with the narrower interests of the A. F. of L. itself.

Dual unionism involves an attempt to "rule" out of existence bona-fide labor organizations and therefore, as a practical conclusion, to destroy them without regard to consequences. It is because the A.F. of L. Executive Council officially does not "recognize" the U.M.W., pretending it does not exist despite its more than half-a-million members, that Mr. Green can find it possible to denounce the Harlan agreement the way he does. The spirit of dual unionism is, in its very essence, hostile to every sentiment of genuine labor solidarity.

It would be well for us to recognize clearly that, in the last analysis, there will be no real cessation of such shameful and demoralizing practices until the unity of the labor movement is reestablished or until at least some sort of truce, preliminary to complete unity, is achieved. This is the direction in which all those who have the best interests of the labor movement at heart should strive today.

The Hines Trial

THE dramatic trial of Jimmy Hines, on which the attention of the whole country seems to be fixed, is the latest of a long series of "reform trials" that have become almost a routine in the history of American municipal politics. There is no reason to expect anything more serious to result from this trial than from any of its predecessors.

We will not insult the intelligence of our readers with an attempt to prove what is obvious on the face of it—that there has long existed the closest and most intimate tie-up between racketeering and old-line machine politics, whether of Tammany or any other variety. Jimmy Hines may be found guilty of "conspiring to operate a lottery" or he may not; the fact of this tie-up remains indisputable. It is hard to see how Mr. Dewey's efforts are going to abolish this situation, any more than did the reform movements of the past, quite as virtuous and energetic, in their way, as Mr. Dewey's current crusade. Or does Mr. Dewey expect to abolish gambling?

The truth of the matter is that racketeering is the natural if unacknowledged offspring of the system of business enterprise under American conditions. As long as politics remains business-class politics, animated by the ideals and ethics of the profiteer, there will remain this tie-up between racketeering and the political machines. Only labor, organized as an independent political force and free from the entanglements of business and plunder politics, can clean house in a thorough and effective manner. To the degree that the Hines trial helps further discredit the machine politics of the old-line employing-class parties, Democratic and Republican alike, and thus ease the way for the labor-party movement, to that degree will it serve a useful purpose.

Lenin and the "Old Bolshevik" Group

By CHARLES RAPPAPORT

(Charles Rappaport is a distinguished Marxist scholar, a veteran of the French and Russian labor movements. His article on Lenin appeared in a recent issue of this paper. Other articles dealing with similar subjects will appear in subsequent issues.)

LENIN occupied a position of intellectual and moral pre-eminence in the Soviet Union and abroad. With superhuman patience, he built over a period of years a party in his own image—a party with discipline and centralized authority, with a revolutionary Marxist program, a party waging constant war on opportunism whether from the right or from the left. His years of exile abroad spent in discussions and polemics, he succeeded ultimately in creating a homogenous Bolshevik party and ridding it of all heterogeneous elements. The Bolshevik party was formed thru a selection of the most active revolutionary elements not thru persuasion and threats but as a result of conviction and voluntary discipline.

Stalin, on the other hand, unknown to the working masses of Russia and abroad, enjoyed a purely local authority in the Tiflis region and even that was rather doubtful. His authority was based not on his intelligence or his knowledge but on his daring exploits and adventures in procuring money for the party. Lenin became the intellectual master first of a chosen circle and then of the great masses; he finally emerged as political dictator as a result of circumstances—the Russian revolution of 1917—and of his own keen political insight and mature decisions in October of that year. Stalin's character was and is marked primarily by unlimited audacity, lack of scruple and the shrewdness of a bandit chief who is in the habit of ambushing and destroying his enemies. He has made use of these peculiar abilities of his in order to rid himself of Lenin's co-workers and friends who had helped to make the Russian revolution.

Of Lenin's co-workers I met two abroad—namely, Kamenev and Zinoviev. Kamenev was a good-natured person, fairly well-informed and possessed of a keen political sense. To a certain extent, he was independent of Lenin. He often found Lenin too exacting and too intolerant of those who were not of one mind with him. And Lenin, in his turn, complained to me that Kamenev was too "literary," that is, not an organiza-

tion man. To some extent, this explains why Kamenev and Zinoviev vacillated in those decisive days of October. Lenin was forced to fight them and treat them as "deserters" but this incident lasted only a few days and Lenin never reproached them afterwards for having doubted the wisdom of his moves. The situation then was so difficult, so infinitely complicated, that such vacillations were to be expected.

But during all those years of preparation for the revolution and during the years of the revolution itself, these men contributed greatly to the cause of the revolutionary movement. Both Kamenev and Zinoviev were excellent agitators and very good writers, Zinoviev particularly could talk for hours without boring his hearers, always finding a ready ear amongst the working masses. Both literally devoted their lives to the revolution.

The assassination of these men by Stalin was surely a dreadful counter-revolutionary crime. I am convinced that, whatever their disagreements with Stalin may have been, Kamenev and Zinoviev were determined to serve the revolution even under the leadership of Stalin—tho, of course, they may have desired in their hearts the latter's fall or a change in party policy. Such was their right, for had not Lenin himself, just before his death, denounced Stalin as a man whose character was marked by disloyalty and brutality and as unfit to be general secretary of the party?

Lenin would never have succeeded in building the Bolshevik party without the aid of Zinoviev, Kamenev and men like them. Despite their hesitation in October 1917, Lenin placed both of them in the highest positions in the party and the Soviet government. Zinoviev became the first president of the Communist (Third) International formed by Lenin in the Spring of 1917. Kamenev was head of the Moscow Soviet and Zinoviev of the Leningrad Soviet; both were members of the Politburo of the party.

I am well aware that Zinoviev, in particular, had many grave personal faults and that he often employed objectionable methods in factional struggle. But Stalin should be the last one to set himself up as a judge of these faults and to destroy his victims for them.

By assassinating these two Bolsheviks and dishonoring their memories thru "confessions" wrung from them by I know not what means, Stalin has delivered a smashing blow to the prestige of the Russian revolution.

U.A.W. and Lewis Plan

(Continued from Page 2)

repudiate the numerous statements issued in his name by the expelled officers and their attorney, Maurice Sugar, Mr. Lewis was taking sides, he was intervening in the affairs of the U.A.W.

When Mr. Lewis accepted unchallenged the figure of 244,000 as the number represented at the rump Toledo conference and permitted spokesmen to state that the conference was called upon his advice, he was intervening in the affairs of the U.A.W.

When he accepted dues directly from Murray Body local of the U.A.W. (as reported) at the Toledo rump conference) without returning it to the local with the information that dues must be sent to the International Union, United Automobile Workers, he was

intervening in the affairs of the U.A.W.

When he broke his promise to President Martin not to meet with the suspended officers, he was intervening. When he took pictures with the expelled officers and permitted these pictures to be published in the press, he was intervening in U.A.W. affairs, for he knew that every sane person would interpret such an act as one of confidence in the expelled.

These were the little links from which was forged the chain of intervention which has aroused and enraged the membership of the U.A.W.

3,000 NEW READERS FOR WORKERS AGE

WORLD TODAY

By Lambda

London, August 3, 1938.

WHILE Lord Runciman plays the role of "mediator" in Prague, Hitler-Germany fortifies its position on the Czechish border. Nothing could be more false than to assume that Czechoslovakia has been saved from a German attack by British "intervention." British action has actually weakened Czechish resistance and is enabling Germany to complete its preparations for a military coup.

THE SOVIET-JAPANESE CONFLICT

THE present military conflict between the Soviet Union and Japan on the Manchukuan-Korean border threatens to assume serious proportions. The Soviet Union first sent G.P.U. troops, but soon threw into battle contingents of the Red Army stationed in the Far East. Fear is general that war between the two powers may precipitate a general military catastrophe. Taking advantage of the situation in the Far East, Hitler-Germany might, with the aid of Poland, attack the Soviet Union and overrun Czechoslovakia.

Will the present conflict between the U.S.S.R. and Japan develop into a real war?

It may seem that the serious difficulties Japan has run up against in China would prevent it from starting a new war. We must, however, also consider the fact that a military clique has, for quite some time, carried on propaganda for war against the Soviet Union in the belief that it would serve them as an excuse for terminating the struggle in China and enable Tokyo to reach an understanding with the Chinese government. How strong the influence of this clique is we have not yet been able to ascertain.

The Soviet Union has good reason for avoiding any such conflict: Japan is—even if it continues to wage war in China—a formidable foe, all statements in the Stalinist press to the contrary notwithstanding. Economic conditions in the Soviet Union are far from favorable and the influence of Soviet diplomacy has rarely weighed as little as it does now.

If war should break out, it is of course obvious that the working masses all over the world should side with the Soviet Union against imperialist Japan in spite of all opposition to the Stalin regime.

LA PASSIONARIA IN PARIS

AT a public meeting in Paris recently, the Spanish Stalinist, La Passionaria, took occasion to cast the vilest slanders against the P.O.U.M. and against the French P.S.O.P., of which Marceau Pivert is the head. Referring to the latter, she said: "The Piverts destroy the unity of the socialist movement by founding a so-called Workers and Peasants Socialist Party, which will become a stronghold of all traitors and saboteurs." In the same speech, the lady came out in support of the Negrin 13-point program of capitulation. Quite naturally! Defamation of the most militant sections of the French and Spanish working classes and a program calling for a "compromise" with Franco: these two things certainly go very well together.

NEW SOVIET PURGES

ACCORDING to latest reports from the Soviet Union, Rosenberger, the president of the German Volga Republic, has been removed from the office which he had entered only last October. Three weeks earlier, the president of the Council of People's Commissars in the same republic had been demoted.

Petrovsky, the president of the Ukrainian Republic, who was said to be "out and done for," reappeared at the opening session of the Supreme Soviet of the Great Russian Republic. Chubar and Kossov, members of the Politburo, remained "absent."

What trend of development the Soviet state takes under the influence of the Stalin regime is clearly illustrated by the fact that the heads of five People's Commissariats are G.P.U. functionaries. The G.P.U. now also controls the film industry.

NEHRU IN ENGLAND

ON the occasion of Nehru's visit to England, the Communist Party of Great Britain and other advocates of the People's Front did everything in their power to induce him to adopt a policy that would make the Indian National Congress an instrument of British imperialism in the event of war. Nehru not only rejected the proposition but categorically declared that it would be the duty of the Indian people in time of war to do everything in their power to throw off the fetters of British rule.

The Soviet "Purge"

by August Thalheimer

(concluded from last issue)

IF, in recent years, Stalin and his circle have used ever more severe methods of terror against certain sections of the party and of the administration, we must conclude from this that the opposition elements against this system built up by Stalin have increased, that they threatened the system, and that the people, who have been sacrificed to this terror, were giving expression to this opposition or were considered as possible leaders of it. The contradiction between, on the one hand, the economic and social development of the Soviet Union and, on the other, the political superstructure (as it had definitely become under Stalin's leadership), must have become evident and have grown greatly.

Source Of Contradiction

Why this contradiction? From the very successes in socialist reconstruction themselves! The material conditions of the working masses in the Soviet Union still leave much indeed to be desired, but, in the course of the Second Five-Year Plan, the coarsest and crudest need disappeared. The feeding of the great masses was assured. At the same time, however, these masses developed culturally. In the school of big industry, of industrialized agriculture, and directly in the schools themselves, they acquired all kinds of knowledge, abilities, capacities, and, therewith of course, other requirements too. These masses no longer want just bread and games. They want a mitigation of political oppression; they want democratic self-determination and control; and today they have the ability for that in a far higher measure than some ten or fifteen years ago. They want this democracy and this control on a socialist basis in the frame of the Soviet state.

And here they came up against and still come up against the Stalinist system of oriental satrapies. They had suffered this system for a long time, as long as it seemed to them to be still an unavoidable evil. Now, however, it appears in an ever-growing measure as a hindrance. Inside the party and in the state administration, this contradiction has found expression in one way or another. The Stalinist terror suppresses it. The increased severity of the terror, as seen in the "trial of the twenty-one," gives a clear indication of the fact that this contradiction and this opposition are becoming more acute.

The quite natural question arises: Are there facts, and what facts, which indicate that the opposition to the Stalinist regime has increased?

It is here that, thru the hermetic isolation of the Soviet Union, we are most in the dark.

It was always difficult even for members of the C.P. in the Soviet Union to get acquainted with the real mood and movement of the masses in that country. Today, it is ten or a hundred times more difficult. For foreigners and non-party members it is almost impossible. How can it be otherwise where the most fearsome terror suppresses the slightest word of criticism—yes, even the merest grumble or expression of dissatisfaction? Terror is intimidation. The masses are still silent. A leaden silence is entrenched thruout the Soviet Union. For any person who knows the Soviet Union, the mass resolutions which "enthusiastically" agree with the terror sentences signify nothing at all. They are extorted by the pressure of hunger, just as the Byzantine hymns of praise to the

great and small leaders are extorted.

The Mood Of The Masses

The condition of the masses, as is plain from the reports which we have at our disposal, is one of an ever-growing bitterness, at the same time, however, one of great perplexity. To all appearances, there is no organized opposition; the Trotskyists, Bukharinists, etc., no longer have real organizations and there remains only a loose, social connection. The opposition against the regime is, for the present, still formless, both organizationally and politically.

Precisely because the opposition is formless, the Stalinist terror is, after all, like a blow into water. The real enemy of Stalinism is invisible and intangible—but omnipresent. The "conspiracies" that Stalin has "discovered" thru the G.P.U., and has extirpated partly by it and partly by his courts of justice, are crude police inventions.

But, behind these clumsy and cynical inventions, there exists a reality which escapes police methods: "sabotage," etc., are not acts of individuals or of organized groups—they are mass phenomena. Passive opposition is the instinctive answer of the broad masses to the Stalinist regime. And the fury of Stalin points to the conclusion that this mass opinion in some form or other must have found supporters in both the party and the administration, as far up as in the highest party and Soviet courts, in the Politburo, in the Central Committee, among military leaders, economists, and so on.

Stalin cannot put his finger on the particular force which is concerned here. Hence, there are always new and ever wilder blows, new and ever more absurd inventions. Stalin is the organizational monomaniac, who dashes to pieces "organizers" of "organizations" which are non-existent and which have been invented by his police.

Yet there is something there which is much more dangerous and which, perhaps because of these blows against the old oppositional names and leaders, against the old revolutionary cadres of the party, grows all the stronger—the drive of the broad masses towards independent activity and their capacity for such activity. That is the real thing against which the terror is directed, that is the only power which can really conquer the present system.

The Asiatic satrap class at the key points of the party and Soviet administration, like the incompleteness of the independence of the masses, which has allowed this system to evolve, is, however, not merely the product of the development since the October Revolution. Its roots spread deeper into the peculiar circumstances of Russian history in the last eight centuries, but it is not possible here to go further into this particular aspect.

The Questions Answered

In the light of what has been said, the answers to the editorial questions present themselves as follows:

1. The explanation of the crisis in the Soviet Union is as much social as political and personal.
2. The causes of the terror are within the Stalinist regime and are not temporary; they have become lasting. The terror will therefore end only with the fall of this regime. This system of power no longer depends only on the person of Stalin. After creating the system, Stalin has become the mere tool of it. The system is no longer merely personal. Stalin cannot go back now. For it is

Cardenas Regime and Needs of Mexican Masses

(Continued from Page 3)

for Mexico's labor movement, a leadership which would tie the labor movement more closely to him. Simultaneously he began in earnest to tackle some of the problems created for him by Calles and his court of intriguers.

First claim on his concern was the hostility of the Church. Cardenas prevented the execution of the harshest laws against the Church and arranged for the courts to "revise" the legal seizures of Church lands—and the Church censure grew immediately less.

To consolidate his peasant following, Cardenas speeded up the land-distribution program. In the first two years of his administration, he awarded close to 5 million hectares of land to over 3,000 villages. Thus, he alone distributed over half as much land as all the administrations before him put together. Yet, tho his land distribution has continued steadily, it would be mistaken to believe that the Mexican agrarian problem is approaching solution. It is not. In the first place, only the larger villages have received land thus far; but over two-thirds of rural life in Mexico does not fall under the classification of village and therefore is not entitled to land grants at all. In the second place, in order to make these land grants yield an adequate livelihood to the peasant, funds and machinery are necessary for the proper irrigation and the development of the land. This, due to the essential poverty of the central government, has in the main been lacking. One or two show-places, like the Laguna region, do not alter this fact. And, in those strategic regions where funds were made available thru hastily formed agrarian banks, the bureaucrats put in charge of these institutions have robbed right and left, have enriched themselves, while the peasant remains in the same distressed economic condition as before. At this very moment, the whole system of corruption and abuse in the agrarian banking setup is under investigation.

In the third place, Cardenas has not really planned to expropriate the large landed estates to satisfy the land hunger of Mexico's

peasant masses. All that he has done is to carve off and trim the great estates and generally he has chosen only the poorest lands.

In the fourth place, the land is not being confiscated except in such instances where original robbery can be proved with legal documents. And, of some 2,000 distributions, less than 100 cases have been "restitution" of stolen land.

Landowners Retain Power

In the fifth place, as long as the economic power of the landowners is not being seriously disturbed, they can continue to rule and control politics. As recently as last year, for example, over 40 peasants in the State of Yucatan were strung up on lamp-posts and two more or more in the State of Vera Cruz. The "crime" of both of these groups was active agitation for land or for a higher living wage, which even today often reaches the munificent level of from 25 to 30 cents (Mexican) a day. Almost overnight, a photograph of this gruesome lynching appeared simultaneously on every wall and kiosk of the capital. The names of those guilty were passed by word of mouth so that, in one day, the entire population knew who they were. But was any investigation ordered or any prosecution undertaken? No! The political power of the hacendados is still too strong to permit the criminal assassins to be punished!

And these same hacendados, when pieces of their lands have been carved off, are still powerful enough to collect payment, often in cold cash, sometimes from the recipients of the land and sometimes in agrarian bonds which the government accepts in payment of taxes. It is obvious from these facts that the Mexican agrarian problem, despite progress within narrow and carefully marked-off limits, is still a long way from a satisfactory solution. All claims to the contrary are conscious deception.

(Another article, dealing with the labor policy of the Cardenas regime, will appear in the next issue of this paper.—Editor.)

the more, therefore, must the oppression of the central administrative power be strengthened—and all the less powerful does it become. The over-centralization above corresponds to anarchy below. Both increase simultaneously. Finally this regime, engaged in self-destruction, turns against its own organization of force. That, too, has begun already, as is shown in the "trial of the twenty-one," which, from the point of view of the technique of the police and of the tribunal, is just a deplorable piece of bungling.

The longer this regime lasts, and the longer it rages, the more it threatens the existence of the Soviet power itself and the more destructively does it operate in the international working-class movement.

"THREE CITIES"

by SHOLEM ASCH

Produced by the Yiddish Art Theatre

Special performance for the benefit of

THE WORKERS AGE

Friday Evening, October 28, 1938

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BOOKS

ON THE ECONOMIC THEORY OF SOCIALISM, by Oskar Lange and Fred M. Taylor. With an introduction by Benjamin E. Lippincott. The University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, Minn. 1938. \$1.75.

THERE was a time when "orthodox" economics prided itself on its ability to demolish the pretensions of socialism. But times have changed. Today, an increasing number of "orthodox" economists are perhaps even more proud of the ability of their theory to prove the economic soundness and practicability of the socialist system. And it must be admitted that they are meeting with far greater success in the latter effort than they ever did in the former.

Professor Taylor's noteworthy essay on "The Guidance of Production in the Socialist State" is an attempt to prove that the rational allocation of resources and the rational organization of production generally are quite possible under socialism despite the absence of the free competitive market that (supposedly) prevails under capitalism. Very ingeniously he shows that, by extending somewhat the ordinary meaning of "price," there is no difficulty whatever under socialism in setting up "accounting prices" or provisional valuations for the purpose of allocating resources and then bringing about a stable adjustment thru a process of trial and error very similar to that which operates in a competitive economy. This important idea is more fully developed by Oskar Lange in his essay which gives the title to the book. Dr. Lange also examines the nature of a socialist economy somewhat more generally and, in so doing, necessarily passes beyond the static, unhistorical approach of "orthodox" economics of the marginal-analysis type and its essentially fictitious conception of the capitalist system. His discussion of the economic advantages of socialism is especially interesting. Two main features "distinguish a socialist economy from an economic system based on private ownership of the means of production and on private enterprise," Lange insists, in spite of the fact that the formal principles of the allocation of resources appear to be so similar. "One feature is the distribution of incomes . . . Only a socialist economy can distribute incomes so as to attain the maximum social welfare." (Here there follows a very suggestive discussion of the income-system under socialism.) And, secondly, "a socialist economy would not be subject to the fluctuations of the business cycle." In the same connection, the problem of the rate of accumulation is briefly considered.

The economic soundness of socialism from every angle and its immense advantages over capitalism, are thus hardly open to question. The real problem, Lange stresses quite correctly, is the "danger of . . . a bureaucratization of economic life. Unfortunately, we do not see how the same, or even greater, danger can be averted under monopolistic capitalism." But this problem is primarily sociological and political and beyond the scope of the present study.

At this point, Dr. Lange turns to an examination of the dynamic tendencies of capitalism in decay. He shows quite thoroly that "the further maintenance of the capitalist system" is no longer "compatible with economic pro-

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# The Teachers Convention

## A. F. T. Gathering Reveals Conflict of Forces

By ROBERT PAINE

**T**he American Federation of Teachers convention closed at noon, August 19, at Cedar Point, Ohio, with all its business completed for the first time in the past several conventions. Few delegates were as interested in the actual decisions and business of the convention as they were in the elections. The issue which dominated the convention was the control of the offices and the organizational apparatus.

### Lineup Of Forces

The largest single block of delegates centered around the Chicago local and the Ohio State Federation of Teachers. The leadership of this block consisted of experienced and aggressive trade unionists who have been doing a good job of organizing their areas. The markedly progressive on "teacher issues," this block was generally reluctant to take a stand on broad questions facing the labor movement as a whole.

This mid-western block showed a profound distrust of the opposing block—with the latter's main strength in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, the college locals, and the W.P.A. teachers locals. This eastern block was known to every intelligent delegate to be under the control of the Communist Party. The C.P. was making its bid for control and permitted no considerations of principle to stand in its way. To gain votes, it ran on its ticket such persons as Allie Mann (Atlanta local), one of the most conservative elements in a leading position in the A.F.T., with a bad record on the Negro question and John Woodruff (Goose Creek, Texas), a blustering Democratic politician and secretary of the Education Committee of the Chambers of Commerce of his locality. For president, it supported the incumbent Prof. Jerome Davis, as against the colorful veteran trade

unionist, Lillian Herstein, of Chicago.

The election results showed a fairly close balance of power. The prestige of Jerome Davis guaranteed his election. Among the regional vice-presidents making up the executive council, however, the C.P. was left in a minority.

### Issues Before Convention

The first important test of strength came with the question of backing the Fred Beals defense. The mid-western delegates supported the Beals defense, the original resolution having been introduced by the Ohio State Federation of Teachers. The C.P. on the other hand tried to create a lynch spirit against Beals and was able to defeat the resolution by getting the votes of the extremely conservative delegates who opposed the A.F.T. taking a stand on the question at all. This decision stands as a blot on the A.F.T., which has had an excellent record in support of victimized labor organizers. It is interesting to note that the convention rejected the resolution supporting Beals immediately after devoting an entire morning to the discussion of academic freedom and the support of teachers victimized for their union activity!

The only other resolution that had a considerable discussion was the war resolution. Thru round-about phrases, the C.P. tried to introduce a position for "collective security." The other war resolution before the convention called for the support of the principles enunciated in the program of the Keep America Out of War Committee. The opposition to the "collective-security" stand showed great strength and so the C.P. voted for a motion to table all resolutions on war! The A.F.T. convention closed without taking a stand on the war question!

A resolution asking labor to help elect "progressive" candidates in political campaigns was rushed thru with no opportunity for discussion.

The convention was faced by a demand from the A.F. of L. to pay the special per-capita assessment for its "war chest." Mr. Green had unofficially promised that, if payment were made, the money would be returned to the A.F.T. for organizational purposes. The convention authorized the executive council to negotiate for such a definite arrangement. A resolution for industrial unionism and for the resumption of unity negotiations between the A.F.L. and the C.I.O. was passed concurrently.

The convention reaffirmed its stand on academic freedom, tenure, improved classroom conditions, democracy in the schools, organizing the unorganized teachers, etc. Much vitality and determination to work on these questions were manifested.

### Growth Of Organization

The most encouraging feature of the convention was the report on organization. The organization's growth showed a continued acceleration. During the past year the membership grew from about 23,000 to almost 31,000 with the outlook very encouraging in many areas.

The hope for the A.F.T. lies in organizing a good portion of almost a million eligible members. Then, with proper leadership, it could take its place as a major factor in the trade-union movement.

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# Our Program of Action

(The paragraphs below constitute part of the Program of Action adopted by the recent convention of the Independent Labor League of America. Other sections have appeared in previous issues of this paper and publication will continue in subsequent issues. The whole will soon appear in pamphlet form.—Editor.)

## WAGE-HOUR AND SIMILAR LEGISLATION

**T**he continuation of the crisis has forced the enactment of legislation establishing a rock-bottom minimum for wages and a top maximum for the work-week. Altho it is very defective in the standards it sets as well as in other important respects, the wage-hour law passed in June 1938 must be taken as the starting-point in labor's efforts to achieve satisfactory legislation in this field. The forces of the employing class are here, too, doing everything in their power to obstruct the course of progress. The Administration, on the other hand, seems to desire to extend such legislation to make possible government wage-fixing above minimum levels, a practise dangerous to the labor movement since it would mean usurping the proper functions of trade unionism and collective bargaining. So far from making unionism "superfluous," as many Administration spokesmen imply, wage-hour legislation actually enhances the importance of militant, vigilant labor organization as regards both the enforcement of the law and the preservation of the differentials of higher-paid workers above the minimum levels.

Vigorous action of labor on behalf of wage-hour and similar legislation requires:

1. Support of wage-hour legislation putting a definite floor to wage rates and a definite ceiling to weekly hours.
2. Efforts to improve the present wage-hour law in the following directions:
  - a. to raise minimum-wage and lower maximum-hour standards at least to the 40-40 level, that is, 40 cents an hour and 40 hours a week to start with and a minimum wage of \$16 a week should hours be further reduced.
  - b. to assure speedy and effective enforcement.
  - c. to eliminate any possibility of geographical differentials thru exemptions or other devices.
  - d. to include under its scope categories of workers now barred from its benefits.
3. Concerted trade-union action to assure effective enforcement and to preserve higher wage differentials. An active campaign of the trade-union movement to take advantage of the application of the new standards for the organization of the masses of the workers into unions.
4. Opposition to any tendency towards general governmental wage-fixing above minimum levels.

5. Support of the annual-wage idea and its application wherever possible.

6. Support of state minimum-wage laws with the recognition that the problem can be adequately met only thru federal legislation. Support of legislation protecting women and children in industry.

7. Support of the Child Labor Amendment and of every other measure for the abolition of child labor.

## CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM AND GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE

**I**N recent years, there has been a marked tendency in the direction of modernizing and rationalizing the structure and functioning of the federal government to keep pace with the new complexities of present-day economic and social conditions. From certain sections of big business has come resistance to these efforts, largely for political reasons but also because obsolete institutions and forms often provide protection for reactionary interests and constitute sources of power and profit for the employing class.

Labor's concern with these questions is primarily to effect a more democratic governmental set-up, more responsive to the will and needs of the masses, and to speed the removal of all obstacles to social and labor legislation.

A progressive program of constitutional reform requires:

1. Support of the Workers Rights amendment to the federal Constitution giving Congress full power to enact federal social and labor legislation without danger of annulment by the Supreme Court.
2. Support of any move to limit or restrict the arbitrary power of the Supreme Court to annul social and labor legislation passed by Congress.
3. Reform of the undemocratic committee system in Congress, which makes it possible for a small clique to sabotage legislation manifestly desired by the great masses of the people.
4. Extension of proportional representation to all possible fields. Direct election of all public officials, including judges. Liberalization of the election laws to enfranchise large sections now deprived of their vote because of residential qualifications or other technicalities. Abolition of all poll taxes as a requirement for voting.
5. Support of an amendment to the Constitution to restrict the war-making powers of the President and Congress by an obligatory popular referendum on the declaration of war.

(Further sections of this Program of Action will appear in the next issue of this paper.—Editor.)

## LABOR SPY EXPOSED



The above is a picture of Joseph E. Cann, recently expelled from the I.L.L.A. Cann is a stool-pigeon operating in a number of labor organizations, industrial as well as political. His address is said to be 6056 Constance Street, New Orleans, La.

Mr. Cann has been operating as a spy for a government agency as well as for several so-called patriotic agencies, under a number of aliases. Among these are Robert A. Jackson, Thomas Parker and John Ratcliff. Cooperating with him in his activities is one Lillian Benson, also reported to be residing at the above address.

All labor organizations are here-with requested to be on guard against this dangerous stool-pigeon.

## Books

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gress" and that we are today at a stage where "the institutions of private property in the means of production and private enterprise... turn from being promoters into becoming shackles of further advance." It is significant that, in dealing with such questions, he must abandon the unrealistic textbook picture of capitalism presented by "orthodox" economics and fall back on the analysis of capitalism and its tendencies that the Marxists are accustomed to make.

Dr. Lange concludes his essay with an acute study of the problems of economic transition from capitalism to socialism. He makes a strong and closely-reasoned argument against "economic gradualism"—altho, under certain circumstances, he sees some good in the so-called "labor plan"—and urges a bold and vigorous policy of immediate socialization of those spheres of economic life that are economically ready for it. "Socialism is not an economic policy for the timid... For there exists only one economic policy which he (the

economist) can commend to a socialist government as likely to lead to success. This is a policy of revolutionary courage."

Professor Lippincott's introduction is an excellent piece of work, both as a summary and in its own right.

APEX.

## MOONLIGHT BOAT RIDE

to aid  
German and Austrian  
Victims of Nazism

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## New Navy Purge

(Continued from Page 1)

navy is part of Stalin's counter-revolutionary crusade of extermination directed towards preserving the power of his narrowing bureaucratic clique.

The Manchester Guardian of August 9 reports that, during the latest "purge" of the Red Army, "about two-thirds of its higher officers and three-quarters of its political commissars" were shot, imprisoned or "displaced." War industry has also been hard hit.

The whole defense machinery of the Soviet Union has been seriously disorganized and undermined by the Stalinist "blood-purge" that has long become a veritable murder rampage.

## UNITY AGAINST PICKET BAN

The C.I.O. and A. F. of L. unions of California have united to fight a proposal to outlaw picketing. The proposal which was made by the Committee for Peace in Employment Relations, will become a law unless it is defeated by the workers at the next election.