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LABOR MAGAZINE

THE VOICE OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR

1930-1931

A. J. MUSTE

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Unionism in Receivership

HORACE B. DAVIS

Practical Dilemmas Facing A Militant Union

ISADOR LADERMAN

Steel — A Challenge to Labor

JANUARY, 1931

25 CENTS

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LABOR AGE

Vol. XX—No. 1

January, 1931

CONTENTS

EDITORIALS:

SOCIALIST UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE PROPOSALS, STRENGTHENING COMPANY UNIONS, A FRAUDULENT "ANTI-RACKETEERING CRUSADE," MOTHER JONES AND "TACTICS," WHAT ABOUT IT, MR. HOOVER? CAN LABOR UNITE? HOW THE UNEMPLOYED ARE HELPED.....	1
UNIONISM IN RECEIVERSHIP.....	4
PRACTICAL DILEMMAS FACING A MILITANT UNION <i>Isador Laderman</i>	7
1930-1931	9
STEEL—A CHALLENGE TO LABOR.....	11
"A HUNDRED NEEDIEST CASES".....	13
THE MARCH OF THE MACHINE.....	15
FLASHES FROM THE LABOR WORLD.....	16
DOING AND GROWING.....	18
IN OTHER LANDS.....	24
SAY IT WITH BOOKS:	
UNCLE SAM'S ROLE IN WORLD ECONOMICS.....	25
A GIANT IN AGONY.....	26
MENTAL T N T.....	26
TRICKS TO SUCCESS.....	27
WHAT OUR READERS THINK.....	28

IN THIS ISSUE

FROM the earliest beginnings the trade union movement was a vigorous champion of the rights of the common people. Its faith in democratic procedure lay deep in the roots of organized labor for it wisely realized that without democracy, there can be no rights for the common people. With integration of capital and the rise of "gunman" tactics in practically all phases of national life, sections of the trade union movement itself succumbed to the strong arm policy of the machine age. How the old faith in democracy is being over-ridden by the newer faith in centralized, two-fisted control, is told in "Unionism in Receivership," by Horace B. Davis. The author of this article was formerly on the teaching staff of Columbia and Cornell Universities, is a member of the Federated Press staff and is engaged in preparing a book on leadership in the New York Building Trades Unions, involving a discussion of graft and racketeering.

THAT there is a better way out for trade unionism than to adopt the easier but suicidal methods of one man control is presented by Isador Laderman in "Practical Dilemmas Facing A Militant Union." In a discussion of the problems of his organization, Mr. Laderman, who at the time of writing this article was a rank and filer, but who was elected President of the International Pocketbook Workers' Union just before this issue went to press, presents a document that is a distinct contribution to trade union literature. Bureaucracy, craft jealousies, minority opinions and democratic control are all taken up in their turn as they are handled by one union not willing to swim with the tide towards receiverships. Mr. Laderman presented the views embodied in this article in a speech at the Eastern Regional Conference held in New York by the Conference for Progressive Labor Action on December 6 and 7, 1930.

BEFORE embarking on a coast to coast speaking tour on behalf of the Conference for Progressive Labor Action, A. J. Muste, its Chairman, reflects on the happenings of the year gone by and then turns towards the possibilities in the future in, "1930-1931."

OFF and on we made mention in LABOR AGE of things that are happening in the steel industry and of the spade work which some progressives are now doing there. Any real Labor Movement will have to start with the successful organization of steel workers for modern life has its feet in steel, no matter where its head may be. One of the C. P. L. A. boys whose name is not Lem Strong, brings forth with graphic pen a short survey of conditions there and writes about it in "Steel—A Challenge to Labor."

JUST to bring in a light touch of comedy in a serious magazine, we are including in this issue a sample of capitalist flapdoodle under the title "A Hundred Neediest Cases." The sense of humor may be somewhat perverted but the seriousness of institutionalized humbuggery must be brought to ridicule somehow. Mark Hunger, the author, takes no special pride in his handiwork. But it isn't his in the first place, he opines.

DOING AND GROWING, the title under which are related the activities of the Conference for Progressive Labor Action during the past month, is happily chosen. For by our acts can you measure our growth. Every one is urged to turn to this series of articles, (there are actually more than one story included under this one title), and become fully informed of the work of the C. P. L. A. It still needs many more volunteers to help carry on the program. There is a place for everyone.

CONTINUING, Justus Ebert, Editor of the LITHOGRAPHERS JOURNAL, proceeds to check the milestones on the road towards a workerless industry in his monthly column of observations, "The March of the Machine." Every day more and more apple sellers appear on the streets.

THIS month will be the last when "Flashes From the Labor World" will appear over the signature of Harvey O'Connor, eastern manager of Federated Press. Mr. O'Connor has resigned his position with Federated Press and is leaving for a tour of Mexico and points south. We hope that this review of labor happenings will continue as contributions from the new manager, Frank L. Palmer. Mr. Palmer is excellently equipped for the job, having edited the COLORADO LABOR ADVOCATE for many years. While wishing Mr. and Mrs. O'Connor a pleasant trip south and a safe return to the labor front at some point or other we take this occasion to express our best wishes to the new manager of Federated Press in the work he has now undertaken.

WHAT'S all the shooting for in Spain is explained by Patrick L. Quinlan, organizer for the Associated Silk Workers, and regular contributor on foreign news in "In Other Lands."

SAY IT WITH BOOKS and "What Our Readers Think," complete this issue.

LABOR AGE

January, 1931

EDITORIALS

JUST as we go to press the Committee appointed by the Socialist Party to draft an unemployment insurance plan makes its report. The main provisions of their bill

Socialist Unemployment Insurance Proposals

are in accord with the program which has for some time been promoted by the C. P. L. A., including state unemployment schemes, to which the worker does not make any contribution, and a federal subsidy for state funds. The proposal to work for an amendment to the Federal Constitution so that a direct national unemployment insurance scheme may later be launched is one with which progressives are of course also in the fullest accord.

The S. P. bill provides for contributions to the State Fund by employers and by the state (the latter out of income and inheritance taxes), whereas the C. P. L. A. bill provides for contributions from employers alone. There are arguments for and against either plan; but so long as the principle of no contributions from workers is adhered to, there will be no difficulty in coming to an agreement for practical action.

In proposing payments of 50 to 70 per cent of the weekly wage and placing no limit upon the period for which payments are to be made, the S. P. has made advances upon the C. P. L. A. bill. The C. P. L. A. has no fundamental quarrel with such advances; on the contrary, it is out to get all it can for the workers. It stands, as we have frequently asserted, for the principle that an adequate wage for all workers for 52 weeks in the year is the first legitimate charge on industry.

We heartily congratulate the S. P. Committee on the splendid results of its labors.



THE American Association for Labor Legislation has done valiant work in agitating for protective labor laws. Through its persistent efforts labor conditions in this country have been advanced

Strengthening Company Unions

and health-safeguards introduced. Every one must give this organization leading credit for the great good it has accomplished in making the life of the worker easier and safer.

Because of this past record we are very loathe to see it misled on the question of unemployment insurance. While the bill it sponsors is in most respects similar to the one backed by the Conference for Progressive Labor Action, it contains one clause, which if embodied in any law will inevitably help spread the company union and employer welfare plans. This clause, exempting employers who have plant unemployment schemes or relief plans from con-

tributing to a general state unemployment insurance fund, makes the bill a reactionary measure and against sound social policy. The clause reads:

Section 17. Exemption. 1. The commissioner may exempt from duty of paying contributions to the fund, an employer:

(a) who furnishes satisfactory proof of financial ability to pay the benefits fixed for unemployed persons in his industry, or the most similar industry as determined by the commissioner; or

(b) who submits a plan for unemployment relief which in the opinion of the commissioner will give benefits at least equal to the benefit as estimated in subsection (a) of this section.

There are several ideas behind the agitation for unemployment insurance which are of equal importance to that of the positive relief afforded the workers by such a measure. One of them is to create, in this era of mergers, a sense of mutual interest among all workers to replace the individual attitude now prevalent. Another is to transfer the workers' sense of allegiance from the boss, since such a tie is feudal and antagonistic to the idea of free citizenship in a democracy, to the state, or the union. By permitting individual employers to organize their own private unemployment insurance schemes, none of these necessary socially useful attitudes is advanced, labor will remain disunited as ever and many workers will still have to look to their employers for security at the cost of their integrity as workers and as citizens.

Just as harmful would such an unemployment insurance plan be to the advance of unionism. It matters not that up to the present only a very few employers have organized their own plans covering a handful of workers. Rather than face the consequences of compulsory state unemployment insurance, this loop hole would encourage others to remain independent of the state law. The American Association for Labor Legislation's unemployment insurance bill places a premium on the growth of company unions and employer welfare schemes. It is another obstacle placed in the path of union organization.

More could be said on this clause which permits exemptions. What happens to the non-contributory feature for the workers, since every private unemployment insurance scheme must rely upon contributions from workers to build up its funds?

Let it suffice. There is no reason why we cannot adopt unemployment insurance legislation that will permit useful social attitudes to develop, help instead of hinder the growth of unionism, eliminate divisions among workers and prevent discriminations. We suggest to the Association that it eliminate Section 17 and modifying clauses arising out of that section.

JAN 7 11 07 AM BENDRAY

WHEN District Attorney Thomas Crain of New York, Tammany henchman, announced to the world that he would henceforth crusade against racketeers and racketeering, the gods surely smiled. Subsequent events indicate that they would have had good reason to do so. The District Attorney has shown that he has

A Fraudulent "Anti-Racketeering Crusade"

no intention of disturbing racketeers. On the contrary, he has sought and secured indictments against the very union men who have fought racketeering in their organizations. No more colossal misuse of the machinery of justice has been attempted for a long while. Coming at a time when the magistrates' courts of New York are found to be reeking with corruption, such action lends color to the belief that racketeering is inevitably linked up with Tammany Hall.

We agree with President Max Zaritsky of the Cap and Millinery Workers' International Union in his accusations against the District Attorney's office as "insincere" and "inefficient" in its anti-racketeering campaign. We also agree with him that the attack on reputable union organizations and officials has been made in order "to still public clamor" by false indications that there was activity in Crain's office.

The first act of Crain's much heralded anti-racketeering grand jury was the indictment of Barnett Wolff, manager, and Sam Laderman, business agent, of the International Pocketbook Workers for "conspiracy." This was an outstanding indictment of the fraudulent character of the Crain "crusade." These officers have striven to keep their union free from gangsters and gangsterism, and have succeeded in a striking degree in doing so. Only within the past month a meeting of 1,400 members, under their leadership, took steps again to safeguard the union against racketeering influences. The action of the grand jury tends, if it does anything, to give aid and comfort to gangsters and racketeers.

The next act of the District Attorney's office was to call in Nathaniel Spector, manager of Millinery Workers Union, No. 24. He was advised that he was to appear before the grand jury. But when he got down to the District Attorney's office, he was accused of "racketeering" by four assistant district attorneys, who made an effort to browbeat and intimidate him. It was the tactics of these men which occasioned President Zaritzky's protest to the District Attorney. Again, in Spector's case, it is an enemy of racketeering and of gangsterism who is put on the griddle by the office of alleged law enforcement.

It looks very much as though the District Attorney plans to harass those unions which refuse to kiss the big toe of Tammany. He knows very well where the racketeering is and who carries it on. But the real racketeers might be too near the Wigwam for comfort.

THE death of Mother Jones recalls those labor tactics which made her famous and which were particularly identified with A. F. of L. strategy in her day. Is there something symbolic in the fact that it was not the A. F. of L. union in the mining industry which bore her to the grave? Does it mean that those methods which built up A. F. of L. unionism in so many cases are now definitely discarded?

Mother Jones And "Tactics"

In almost every A. F. of L. union a set refrain is heard today, when militant and spectacular methods are suggested. It runs, over and over again: "Those are Com-

munist tactics." Certainly, when the life of Mother Jones and the efforts of other pioneers are considered, this is unduly complimentary to the Communists. The early A. F. of L. tactics, at almost every step, were militant and spectacular. That is what made it grow. It was A. F. of L. unions, not Communists, which originated such measures.

Mother Jones in particular personified such methods. Has her defiance of the State police with the broomsticks of her "woman's army" been so soon forgotten? Has the trip which she arranged of the crippled children from the mining regions to New York City been so quickly embalmed as something purely historical?

That which Mother Jones did was repeated on a smaller and local scale in many a conflict. Injunctions were defied and made useless, mass picket lines were conducted gloriously, arrest followed arrest for militant activity. Samuel Gompers himself, confronted with the Buck Stove and Range Co. injunction, uttered that famous defi: "Go to - - - with your injunction."

Later he was to explain that he had only used the expression in the Shakespearean sense, making the court look ridiculous.

Those were the days in which A. F. of L. unionism thrived and fought and conquered. Those were the times when there appeared on the front page of the AMERICAN FEDERATIONIST the slogan: "Educate! Agitate! Organize!" There was a clarion ring to the A. F. of L. battle-cries then that indicated fights to the finish.

We hope that the death of Mother Jones will not end the tactics which were her contribution to the Labor Movement. Her memory should be kept afresh by the revival of those heroic and spectacular acts which she made famous and successful, and which made of the American Federation of Labor a living force in American life.



LIKE chaff before the wind fall the promises of Employers not to cut wages made to President Hoover more than a year ago. Patriotism of this gentry has in

What About It, Mr. Hoover?

this crisis, as in all others, meant the patriotism to their pocketbooks and no more nor less. Like hungry vultures awaiting the opportunity to pick clean the bones of the dead and the dying, employers gleefully pounce upon workers' wage standards, now that labor is too weak to struggle, and unmercifully slash their income. If resistance is put up by any group with still enough energy left to fight, as in Danville, all the forces of government are placed at the disposal of the promise-breakers without a peep from the Great Engineer, who still issues pronouncements that high wage standards must be maintained.

Recently there came to light an instance of wage slashing that should interest the President at once, for it involves a national carrier under government regulation. The Railway Express Agency, which virtually has a monopoly over express shipments, has since 1927 embarked upon a practice of union smashing and wage-cutting that has not only in many places eliminated union forces, but in so doing has reduced wage rates from 7 to 15 cents an hour. In addition thereto, this agency, in order to make possible the employment of short time workers at reduced pay, seriously impaired the efficiency of its service to such an extent that even trucking companies, a much slower means of transportation, are now able to compete with express delivery.

In attempting to get from under its agreement with the

Brotherhood of Railway Clerks, the union having jurisdiction over that industry, the Express Agency has been abolishing regular positions usually filled by union men and hiring short time workers in their places at lower wages. Furthermore, as an added proof of the reckless disregard of Business towards the suffering of the workers, and of the fact that its expressed sympathy is so much lip service without reality, this Agency, in hiring these part time workers, employ men who in thousands of cases are holding down regular jobs in other industries during the day and report in the evening at the express depots for extra work. Even marines in uniform, it is charged by the Railway Clerks, are employed in Philadelphia at this kind of work. Many others are city and federal employees. Some of them come from railroad offices.

While these two-job men are adding to their wages, with the complete knowledge of the officials of the Agency, thousands of Railway Clerks' members are literally starving. They, in many instances, cannot obtain the few hours of work a day which is readily granted to non-union workers who already have good paying positions.

Mr. Louis R. Gwynn, Vice President of the Railway Express Agency, in charge of personnel, practically boasted that no worker over 45 years of age can obtain employment with his company. Even employes whose jobs have been abolished and who have had any number of years of service with the Agency, cannot get part time work at the express depots.

Here is a case of ruthless wage cutting, Mr. Hoover, which should be of particular concern to you. The Railway Express Agency is a quasi-public service operating under a national law, as far as the relationship between management and workers is concerned. One word from you and the wrongs complained of would be immediately rectified. Furthermore, as head of the national defense forces, you certainly have the power to prevent federal and navy yard employes, as well as marines, from taking jobs away from men who have no other means of livelihood.

The public, which is amazed at this utter disregard on the part of employers to their promise they made to you, is waiting your answer with keen interest.



AMERICAN capitalists are powerful and, where seriously threatened, united. American labor is weak and divided into many factions, some of which give more time and energy to fighting each other than to any other work.

Can Labor Unite?

The REVOLUTIONARY AGE, organ of the so-called Communist Party, U. S. A. (Majority Group), otherwise described as the Lovestone faction, has been devoting much space lately to denouncing the official Communist Party for factionalism and splitting tactics in the unions. It quotes Communist pronouncements of an earlier day when that Party's slogan was a United Front, as for example: "The Party must learn how to influence the unions without keeping them in leading strings," and "Leninism on the field of the trade union movement is the struggle against splitting in any form," as setting forth the correct line for radicals to follow.

The REVOLUTIONARY AGE also now asserts that left-wingers must work on a basis of frankness and decency with all honest and militant elements in the Labor Movement. Its present program includes items familiar to progressives such as industrial unionism, elimination of gangsterism, democracy in the unions, a labor party, social insurance.

Progressives have always asserted that in the unions all honest and militant members and groups must work together for immediate ends and present a united front against employers. Progressives still maintain that position. There seems to be a tendency in some unions at this moment to get back to such a condition. It will be a great day for the American workers when that occurs.

Unfortunately, when crimes have been committed human beings are prone to doubt the sincerity of the sinner's repentance. Even when those who have been injured are convinced that it was an honest mistake and not really a crime, they cannot so easily forget the suffering which the mistake has caused them. If the policy of the Communist Party when they were in it, was half as wrong, stupid and destructive as the Lovestonites now, when they are out of it, say it was, they will have no difficulty in understanding that there are thousands of workers in this country who shy away from anything that bears the name Communist as if it were a devil.

The chief practical test as to how much unity is possible will come in concrete union situations where any one who genuinely desires to do so can soon demonstrate whether he is for solidarity in facing the bosses.



FROM one day's experience of one unemployed worker comes a tale something like this:

I went to the city relief station and they asked me whether I was married and had children. On my negative answer they told me to get out.

Then I went to the city emergency lodging pier and I was told I was welcome to sleep on the bare, concrete floor. All the available cots were occupied. I went to the Salvation Army and they kindly offered me a couple of meals and a flop if I did nine hours of work in the kitchen. I went to every relief agency in the city and nowhere could I get help because, they said, I didn't have a wife and children.

So I asked them, the unemployed worker continued, "Do you expect a man without a job to pick a widow and three children off the street and get married in order to get a meal?"

There is humor in the way we handle our unemployment problem, but there were tears in the eyes of our informant as he told his story.

On Times Square a devout and thoughtful city administration erected a community Christmas tree, all aglitter with hundreds of varied colored electric bulbs. Hoarse loud speakers rasp out a medley of Christmas Carols and sacred hymns. Right behind it, if one looks closer, are huddled together, forming a human triangle of misery, hundreds of unemployed, waiting for a cup of coffee that is handed out at a certain hour. Long before coffee time the triangle is choked with shivering-out-of-works, their lines being kept trim by a special police detail to see that they do not spread beyond the preserves and mayhap bump into the gorgeously clad ladies and gentlemen, who mince past on the way to theaters and night clubs.

They wait, these ill clad hungry, in the sweeping winds of Times Square, for their cup of coffee. And as they wait the loud speakers roar defiance, "Holy night, silent night."

There is humor in the way we handle the unemployment problem. But the unemployed for some reason wouldn't laugh.

Unionism in Receivership

By HORACE B. DAVIS

PROFESSOR SELIG PERLMAN recently wrote a book to prove that trade-unionists always and everywhere are chiefly interested in job control. But job control by the union may mean simply control by the union officials, who keep themselves in office by awarding jobs to a favored clique and by employing gunmen and gangsters at union elections. The unionist who is dependent on his own elected official for getting a job may have to pay for it just the same as if he got it through a gyp employment agency or a corrupt foreman or office clerk. Just as the miner in a non-union company town sometimes fears not to patronize the company store for fear of losing his job, so the union musician or building laborer may feel obliged to patronize a certain restaurant or hooch joint which is run by a relative of his union's business agent. Just as the "open shop" worker contributes to the community fund when requested by his foreman or employer, so the union boilermaker may "voluntarily" shell out to buy his beloved officer a diamond ring.

But whether the union official is collecting tribute from his members by organizing them into little social clubs dominated by himself, or running a fancy racket in conjunction with an employers' ring which he supports through his control over the men, it is difficult for him to get away with it for very long without having his hand called in union meeting. The criticism so received may prove very embarrassing to an officer. It is the purpose of this article to examine the tendency in certain unions to do away with democratic free discussion and thereby to give the officers free rein for any scheme to which they have a mind.

Democracy Under Fire

The chief advocate of union autocracy at the present time is Pres. H. H. Broach of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. In his inaugural speech on Jan. 24, 1930, he said:

I believe in democracy only when it works. Confused ideas of democracy and free speech have wrecked more unions than any other thing. If democracy interferes with good business methods then it is not likely good democracy.

Phrases, slogans, words, all mean little today. Only results count. There must be strict discipline all along the line. Discipline and team work never fail to get results.

The new constitution of the Electrical Workers embodies Broach's ideas on union control. He had the writing of it, and it was approved in advance by referendum vote of his membership. All important acts of the local are subject to confirmation by the international. That is according to "good business methods," you observe. All authority rests with the big boss. As for free speech, it has been weighed in the balance and found wanting.

Broach may fairly be described as the theoretician of the "new unionism." However he probably got a good many of his ideas from one who quotes him approvingly and who evidently admires his nerve, namely Pres. Arthur M. Huddell of the International Union of Engineers (formerly International Union of Operating Engineers).

Ten years ago when John G. Owens, secretary of the Cleveland Federation of Labor, was removed from office and expelled from the Cleveland engineers' organization, following a court trial in which it was shown he had received money from employers, John Possehl was brought up from Georgia and made "supervisor" of the stationary engineers' local. Aided by his membership in the Contractors' Association, Possehl has since run things to his own, and Huddell's, satisfaction.

Putting a local union in receivership is not a new idea, but Huddell seems to have been the first who got the brilliant idea of putting all the local unions of a good-sized international into receivership, one after the other. Since 1927, Huddell has made use of the rather broad powers conferred on him in the constitution and certain other powers derived from nowhere in particular to put all the local unions in Ohio and Texas and most of the other important locals—104 in all—under "supervision," although there was in the vast majority of cases no complaint of irregularity or inefficiency on the part of the local officers.

The "supervisor" is appointed by the international president, and his powers are in practice broader than

those of the regional vice-presidents of the electrical workers, who wield Mr. Broach's authority by proxy. The supervisors' rule has resulted, according to certain former members of the organization, in a receivership for the locals affected, but a receivership where there had been no bankruptcy. Charges drawn up by these former members, and to which the International has returned no satisfactory answer, are enumerated in the next paragraph.

The supervisor in meetings recommends that motions be ruled out of order, and that certain speakers be not recognized; and his still small voice is heeded by the union president. Elections of local officers have not taken place in the locals under supervision since the supervisors were appointed. When matters are submitted to the local on referendum—amendments to the constitution, for example, or the election of international vice-presidents—the supervisor votes the local en bloc without consulting the membership. Officers have been arbitrarily removed, locals amalgamated, new members admitted, old members suspended without being given a chance to defend themselves, the number of meetings changed from two to one per month, and new agreements with employers entered into, all without vote of the members and on instructions from the supervisor. Since the system of supervision began, it is charged, no less than 876 members have been expelled from a union of 33,000-34,000 membership; and men so expelled have been effectually prevented from working on jobs controlled by the union.

Gag Rule Permanent

Do such autocracies, when once established within a union, tend to disappear? Do the autocrats step down after a time, and make way for the free-for-all discussion, punctuated, it may be, by fist-fights, as the normal method of doing business? The experience of the New York City local of the American Federation of Musicians will help to answer this question. This local is one of the largest union locals in the country. It has 16,500 members, out of 100,000 claimed for the total membership of the International. Obviously in a unit of this size, composed as it is of several racial

groups, with varying interests and often indifferent command of English, rule by open meeting is all but an impossibility. The Federation's solution of this awkward problem has been to establish, or rather to continue, an autocracy in the local.

The present system began in 1921, when the New York local, after many months of friction with the International, seceded and called a strike. The International declared New York open territory, and on request of a considerable bloc of local members, appointed a governing board to administer the affairs of the new local, No. 802. General President Joseph N. Weber, when interviewed recently, insisted that the system had worked very well. The local now elects only 4 out of the 13 members of its own governing board, and Weber saw no reason for permitting it to elect a majority.

Certain members of the local tell a different story. They point to numerous banquets and testimonial functions given to the officers of the local, and particularly to Edward Canavan, its appointed manager. According to Frank Feinbloom, a member of the local, Canavan boasted on numerous occasions that he was giving special protection to the members of the Theatrical Musical Club, a Jewish organization of musicians operating on the lower east side of New York, and the membership gave Canavan banquets in recognition of this protection. It was in the Theatrical Musical Club that several officers were recently removed from office after trial by the United Hebrew Trades on charges of graft. Feinbloom charges that the members of the club received special privileges through Canavan, and that this was contrary to the constitution of Local 802.

Charges brought against Canavan were heard last month by the executive board of the International—the same body, by the way, which had appointed him manager. In the chair at the trial was President Weber, who was perfectly familiar with the whole substance of the charges, had himself received several testimonials from the Theatrical Musical Club, had acquiesced in the special treatment accorded the club, and was on the list of witnesses to be summoned by the group preferring the charges. Weber says that the testimonials had been a great surprise to both him and Canavan, and that the by-laws had been disregarded in the case of the club because conditions were better than in the rest of the local. The trial resulted in Canavan's acquittal.

The management usually manages

to get its way. Recently it decided that the relief of unemployed members could best be handled by a 5 per cent tax on the earnings of employed members. There was a great outcry from the membership and a general meeting was hastily called at which the executive board announced amid great applause that the action establishing the 5 per cent tax had been rescinded. A committee on unemployment was elected by the meeting; and this committee quietly adopted the proposal for the 5 per cent tax, effective January 4, 1931.

Certain local men are convinced that they are being discriminated against by the union in the awarding of jobs, and that out-of-town men are being given preference. A number of

fine and prohibition from playing within the jurisdiction of the local for a year. The fine was never paid; instead, he says, he paid \$1,000 to a third party (who he believes did not keep all the money for himself), and continued to play. He even continued to pay his men the same scale as before. His name is Mitchell Ettman, and he now runs a shoe shop at 1721 66th Street, Brooklyn.

It is evident that a local containing one-sixth of all the votes in the convention of an international has tremendous power in a convention; and by means of permanent receiverships such as those established by the international officers of the engineers and musicians these officers have made their own position very secure. In the

THE RESULT OF ONE MAN CONTROL

EMMA B. MEEK
SECRETARY-TREASURER
617 PULITZER BLDG.
NEW YORK CITY

Bindery Women's Union, Local No. 43
International Brotherhood of Bookbinders of Greater New York and Vicinity

MARY J. MURPHY
PRESIDENT
TELEPHONE
BEEKMAN 4110

HAGGERTY TOOL FOR OPEN SHOPPERS

Accepts Lowered Wage Scale—Sponsors Longer Work Hours—Breaks Down Union Working Conditions—Forms Dual Union of Women Bindery Workers

John Haggerty, President of the International Brotherhood of Bookbinders, has put into operation his signed "Yellow Dog" "Company Union" contract with the group of open shop employers in the bindery industry in New York City, which breaks down every forward step taken by the Bindery Unions for the last ten years. The

Reproduction of a circular issued by a local of the International Brotherhood of Bookbinders protesting against the "open shop" competition of their international president.

affidavits to that effect are on file in the office of Jacob L. Warkow, attorney, of 10 East 40th Street. One New York man who was forced off the job says he went to Washington to work and was forced off there too on orders from the International. In spite of a petition, which has been signed, it is claimed, by 2,000 members in good standing, local autonomy for Local 802 seems as far away as ever.

The writer recently talked with a former musical conductor whose story gives a remarkable insight into conditions in Local 802 if the story is true—and he claims to have documentary proof that it is. He had the hiring of several musicians to play in two small movie houses, in Brooklyn, and his employes were like himself, members of Local 802. He, as "contracting member" of the local, was responsible to the local for seeing that union conditions were observed in his orchestras. But he was also responsible to his own employer, and the second responsibility outweighed the first; he paid less than the union scale. He was reported to the union, tried, and found guilty by the trial board, which, as it happens, is wholly elected by the local. The penalty for his offense is \$1,000

case of those unions where the calling of a periodical convention is not mandatory under the constitution, but is decided by referendum, that position becomes almost unshakable. The engineers meet in national convention at the oftenest only once in four years, and even then the convention does not take place unless a majority votes for it in a referendum participated in by 55 per cent of the membership. When it is remembered that the supervisors control the voting on referenda, and that 100 locals of the engineers, disapproving of the Huddell rule, have withdrawn from his International, it will be seen that this rule is likely to extend for some years yet, unless the international splits. Still more perfect is the system of building laborers, who according to information and belief have had no national convention since 1909.

Working A Racket

Some have claimed that the establishment of open and direct autocracies in the unions was actuated merely by a love of power on the part of the officers. It is not only that; the motive for reorganization in each of the cases cited was excellent. The argu-

ment against autocracy is fundamentally that autocrats may and usually do abuse their power. A few illustrations of the form such abuse may take will be in place.

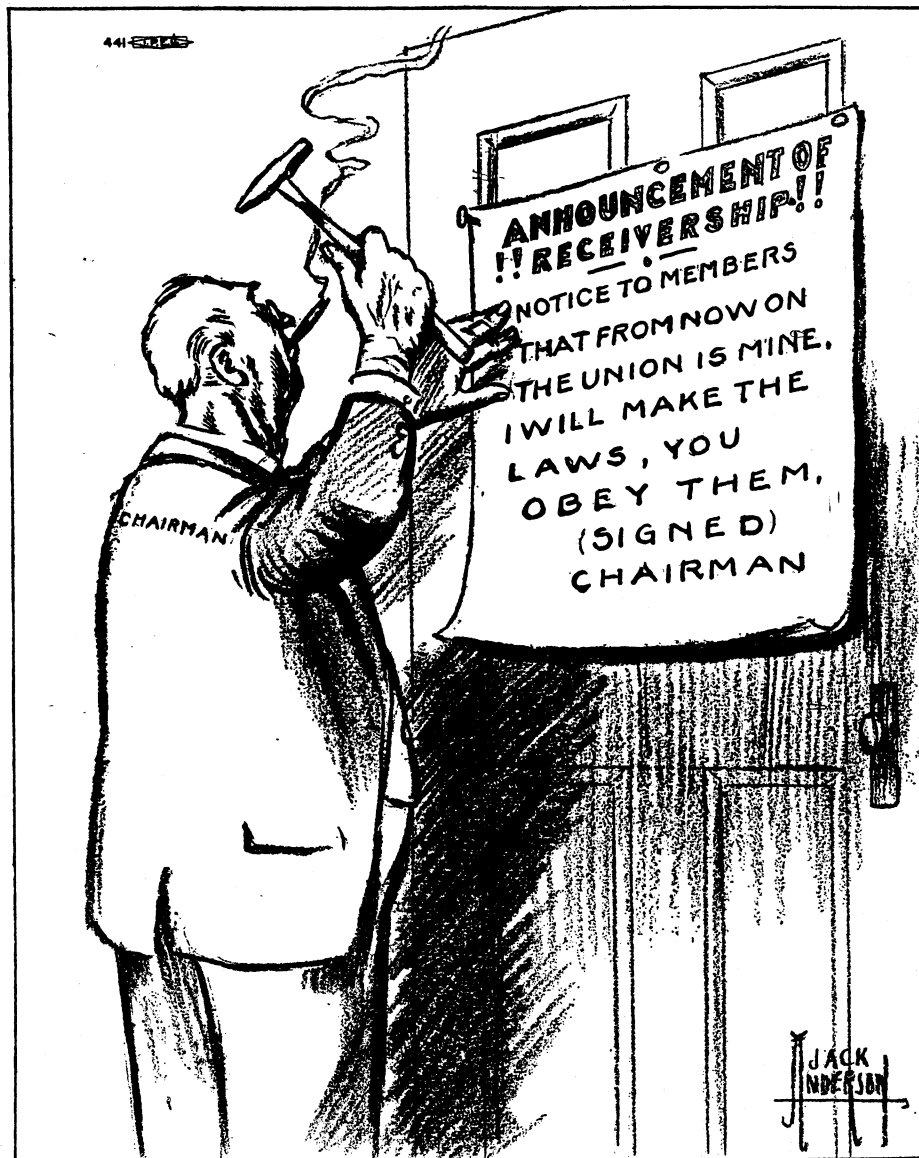
First and foremost, there was the Bronx arson ring, which involved more especially one local union of Wood, Wire & Metal Lathers' International.

Local 308, covering Manhattan and the Bronx, has always been run on strict business principles. In fact there was some suspicion that the union ran the whole show, contractors and workers both, since the union's business agent, Michael J. McCluskey, organized the first bosses' association and prescribed the bosses' actions within narrow limits. But it was not until about 1926 that the business of unionism in the wood lathing trade reached its full fruition.

Anthony Montforte, a friend and protege of McCluskey's, entered the business of contracting plasterer. He organized the Plasterers' Information Bureau, the purpose of which was ostensibly to cheapen the process of estimating on plaster contracting jobs. The bureau drew up estimates of the quantity of materials and labor needed on the big jobs, and the members would then use these estimates in bidding. The arrangement makes bidding so easy that it would normally be expected to increase competition, and in fact a similar bureau which was started in the ornamental iron trade of Manhattan was soon abandoned because competition got too hot. But competition in plaster work in the Bronx mysteriously diminished. In fact, at one time a builder was approached before he had even started letting contracts by a plaster contractor who informed him to whom the contract in his line was to go.

When builders had had their plaster work assigned to a member of the Plasterers' Information Bureau, and they nevertheless let it to some other contractor, their building would be liable to go up in smoke about the time it reached the plaster stage. The district attorney was finally persuaded in the summer of 1929 to start an inquiry, but the incendiary fires kept right on through the Fall. District Attorney McGeehan, since elevated to a judgeship by the Tammany machine, took occasion to say that the unions were definitely not involved, but he breathed defiance in the general direction of Montforte, who disbanded his bureau.

After election day a new district attorney appeared in charge, and Montforte was speedily convicted of extor-



Drawn for Labor Age by Jack Anderson

tion and sent to jail. With him to Sing Sing went Michael McCluskey, business agent of the Wood Lathers. It was shown that McCluskey had been calling strikes on the jobs of contractors who were fighting Montforte's bureau, and generally harassing their work. McCluskey had also protected an ex-convict who was found working without a union card on a union job. That job had soon after gone up in smoke, and a plasterer on the fifth floor had been burned to death. Through the intimate cooperation of McCluskey, Montforte, and certain plasterers' leaders, nearly all of the wood lathing and plastering in the Bronx had been collared by companies dominated by the ring, and prices had risen shockingly.

McCluskey was treasurer of his union as well as its business agent, and for six years had kept some thousands of dollars of the union's money in a

safe in his own house. For nine years no certified public accountant had been over McCluskey's books, and for eight years he had made no financial report to his union. During the investigation his books were finally audited and a shortage of \$20,000 discovered which he was unable to account for.

In justice to the members of McCluskey's union it should be said that not all of them were involved in the racketeering game. An association of lather and plasterer mechanics had been formed outside the union, and members of this group were apparently used to do the dirty work. Who actually set the incendiary fires has never been revealed.

Some of the reasons why the membership of such a union does not rise up and throw the grafters out on their ears will appear from a study of an-

(Continued on Page 29)

Practical Dilemmas Facing A Militant Union

An Answer, in Part,
to Union Receivership

By ISADOR LADERMAN

PRACTICAL problems facing militant unions are quite numerous, but here I want to outline a few of the more important ones concerning the International Pocketbook Workers Union.

1. *Unified Control and Craft Interests.*

The first problem that I want to touch upon is one having to do with the structure of our union. Our trade consists of five important crafts, namely, cutters, operators, pocketbook makers, helpers and framers. All of these crafts are employed in the same factories. The problem before the union therefore is how to have the organization function in a way that all the crafts should be under one unified control while at the same time each craft should have some way of considering its own special interests. Our union has answered it in the following way:

The workers of all the crafts belong to one local union under one management and have one treasury. The general officers of our union are elected by all the members of the various crafts without regard to the craft they come from. The highest body of our union is the Joint Council which consists of an equal number of representatives from each craft. This Joint Council, together with the general officers, conduct all the business of the union including negotiations with employers. At the same time the five crafts are organized into separate sections, each having a section committee whose function is, however, very, very limited. The sections cannot make any final decisions but whatever question they may take up then goes as a recommendation to the Joint Council and to the general membership and grievance committees of that particular section. But even on these questions their decisions are not final but are referred to the general membership committee and the general grievance committee as recommendations. In other words, through the Joint Council and the general officers of the union, the union has unified control over the trade and the mem-

bership while at the same time each craft has an opportunity through its section committees and section meetings to discuss its own problems and bring them up at the Joint Council and the general membership.

2. *Bureaucracy of Paid Officers.*

This problem, the bureaucracy of paid officers, is not peculiar to our union but is of course a general problem. It is a known fact that paid union officers, after being for several years in office, are affected with the disease of bureaucratism. They gradually forget that they came into office from the shop to be servants of the workers. Instead they assume the role of bosses over the workers. Besides, when a union officer stays away from actual work in the shop for a number of years he, as a rule, gets a different psychological attitude and the workers find it hard to make him understand their grievances. This problem was very serious in our union for the last few years. Most of our paid officers were in office for eight or ten years.

The progressive members of our union, therefore, who are organized in a group, propagated the idea that our union should limit the time of paid officers being allowed to stay in office. As a result of this agitation our last convention decided that all paid officers of our union, with the exception of the Manager, should hold office consecutively for two years only. After which time they must go back to the factory for one year before being permitted to run again for office. Some people think that this decision is an unwise one because, in order to become efficient, officers of a union must have a great deal of experience and special ability. In our opinion this is one of the bugaboos which machine officers are wont to put up before the rank and file. In reality, to be a good business agent of a union, it is not necessary to have exceptional abilities. What is needed is that he should know the trade and its conditions; should be acquainted with union problems and be fairly intelligent. But above all it is necessary that he should be sincere,

honest and devoted to the interests of the workers.

3. *Piece-work or Week-work*

As a rule, it is taken for granted that the workers want to work under a week-work system and the employers are striving wherever possible to introduce the piece-work system. In our trade there is a peculiar situation in this respect. At the present time we have both the week-work and the piece-work systems. Two sections, namely, the cutters and operators work exclusively week-work, while the other sections work partly week-work and partly piece-work. Most of the employers, however, would like to see also the piece-work sections changed to week-work. The workers who are working piece-work are strongly in favor of retaining that system. The reason for this is that there is a wide discrepancy between the earnings of the week workers and the piece workers.

However, the progressive members of our union think that some way ought to be found whereby we could change the piece workers of our trade to week-work while at the same time safeguard their interests. We find that the present condition of having both week workers and piece workers in our trade is harmful to the union. It divides the ranks of the workers. It creates disharmony and opposing interests among them. Therefore the progressives are propagating the idea of a unified week-work system in our trade to be made possible by increasing the minimum scales of week workers.

4. *Influx of Seasonal Help and Its Control.*

Our trade is a seasonal trade. Whereas there is very little work during the beginning of the year and during the summer months, there are several months when the employers need more help than is available. In the rush period the employers are clamoring for as many additional workers as they can possibly get. Our union, from whom the employers must obtain their workers, is obliged to supply to the employers the necessary ad-

ditional help during the busy season. The problem, therefore, with which we are confronted is how to supply the employers with the necessary additional help during the busy season while at the same time not overflow the market with too many workers who would make it impossible for our members to make a living in slower periods.

Our union has solved it in the following way: At the beginning of the busy season we take in workers from other trades who can easily adapt themselves to our trade. These workers are given temporary working cards for the season. When the season is over they are removed from our shops and go back to their other trades. This may seem unjust. But this cannot be helped and besides they have another trade to which to turn. It should be added that after a worker from another trade works in our trade for several seasons on a privileged working card he is, as a rule, taken in as a full fledged member of our union.

5. *Runaway Shops.*

An important problem confronting our union is how to deal with runaway shops. It should be stated that this problem faces only real militant unions. Unions which do not have a fighting policy and are easy-going with their employers do not face this difficulty because their employers do not have to run away in order to enjoy non-union conditions. It is the living and fighting unions which must meet this situation.

We are one of those who face the question of how to deal with them. Varying methods have been tried but they are all difficult and costly. I understand that our union, whose membership is between 5,000 and 6,000, has spent in the last few years about a half million dollars on organizing the workers of the runaway shops and other out-of-town workers. Yet the success has not been very great.

It seems to me that in this respect our union as well as other unions are under a great handicap. They have to fight single handed the runaway employers in the new localities while the employer has the backing and support of the Government and Chamber of Commerce in his small locality. Our union has to fight alone without any support. I think, therefore, that the trade union movement, particularly that of New York City, and of other large cities, is neglecting its duty when it does not bring about joint action in one form or another of these unions who are confronted with the problem of the runaway shops.

UNION MANAGER



BARNET WOLFF,
Reelected in December with support
of Progressives.

6. *Organized Groups in Our Union.*

It is a known fact that there are organized groups in many unions representing different opinions. Also in our union there are several such groups. Some people think that this should be prohibited, that organized groups are harmful to a union. I disagree with that. I find that in our union some groups have done a great deal of good. The fact is that before we had organized groups our union meetings were poorly attended. The members showed very little interest in the meetings because of their belief that they didn't amount to anything anyway. They felt that whatever the machine wanted would be adopted whether the members like it or not. So what was the use of going to the meeting? But since groups were organized our general membership meetings are usually attended by between 1,000 and 1,500 workers. The membership as a whole is wide awake, actively participating in union questions.

Besides, when there are no organized groups of the rank and file there is always one well organized group, however, which is the machine, running the affairs of the union. When there is no organized opposition group the machine is all powerful and can do anything it pleases without being afraid of the membership. The fact that there are opposition groups means

that the administration must be careful not to overstep its bounds, knowing that if it does wrong there is an organized group of members which will demand explanations.

Naturally these groups have different purposes. There are groups organized around certain individuals who want to become paid officers. These individuals gather to them members with promises of jobs or other favors. There are other groups who organize because they have principles and policies which they want to see carried out in the union. The first group is, of course, harmful and should be fought. The second kind is useful and should be encouraged.

The problem, however, is this: While permitting organized groups to exist in a union the administration of the union should not be hindered by the organized oppositions and should have the authority to speak in the name of the whole membership instead of only one group. Our progressive group has solved this problem in this way. In our opinion no single group should have the full control over the union but that all important groups should be represented in the administration by their best members so that they can fight out their differences in the administration and put up a solid front before the employers. We recently called conferences of the representatives of other groups in our unions and tried to bring about an administration which should represent all groups. Unfortunately we did not succeed with all the groups but did combine with one other group.

The principles for which the progressive group is fighting in our union are:

1. A clean union. That is, a union in which no suspicious characters should have anything to say.

2. An honest union. A union whose administration should honestly fight for the interests of all its members in the shops.

3. A democratic union. A union in which all members should be treated alike and which should be ruled and guided by the rank and file.

4. A progressive union. A union which should fight for the most progressive union conditions and at the same time combine with all other progressive forces in the Labor Movement for the larger struggles of the working class both politically and economically.

5. A strong united union. A union in which all members and groups should be united for the welfare of the entire organization.

1930 - 1931

By A. J. MUSTE

GOING around among friends and neighbors on January first and wishing them a happy new year is a very general custom. Among the Hollanders of Michigan, in whose midst I was brought up, the children had also a custom of going around to relatives and friends on December 31st and wishing them a happy old year. I have never been able to get exactly straight how the idea originated and what its significance might be, possibly just an excuse for children to call on two separate days instead of only one on people who had candy or cookies or even perhaps some mild raisin wine in their pantries. Seemingly, however, there was some such idea as this back of the custom, namely, that the new year could not well begin happily if the old year ended miserably, that life is continuous, one thing grows out of another—look at the old year and you get an idea of what is ahead of you in the new. If this be so, the custom seems to reflect a certain pessimism or perhaps just a genial and healthy cautiousness.

If, then, we ask ourselves what events and tendencies marking the closing days of 1930 give us a clue as to what is ahead in 1931, the first matter which forces itself upon our attention, of course, is the world-wide depression.

Capitalism's Crisis

There is, then, a real crisis in Capitalism right here in the United States, the richest and most advanced of all Capitalist countries. It seems that those who asserted even during the hectic boom of 1927 to 1929 that there was nothing fundamentally new about the New Capitalism, no assurance that it could give food, security, and peace to the peoples any more than the Old Capitalism had done, were in the right. Five millions unemployed, according to the most conservative estimates, a drop of nine billion dollars in a single year in the purchasing power of the people, is not something to be lightly argued away.

What is true in the United States is true in equal or greater degree in all other Capitalist countries. Over two million unemployed in Great Britain, nearly four million in Germany, revolutions in half a dozen countries, mutterings of war in Poland, the Balkans, Italy, France, continued warfare in

China, bitterness and revolt aflame in India, despite the fact that the Indian Conference in London seems likely to go much farther in the direction of granting Dominion Status than most observers thought likely a year ago—surely there is in all this no indication that our Capitalist economic and political society is secure; rather all the indications are that it is less secure at the moment than at any time since the close of the Great War and much less stable than in the years preceding the War.

Another thing that stands out in the history of the closing days of 1930 is the anxiety of the ruling and privileged classes, especially here in the United States, to relieve the immediate distress arising from the depression and thus keep down the unrest of the masses. Never have such huge sums been raised for relief, never such large scale efforts to find jobs nor such care to distribute the jobs available among the largest possible number of workers. It is possible that this reflects to some extent a growth in humanitarianism. It is certain that it reflects in very large degree the fear on the part of the rich and the mighty that the masses, if they are not placated, will rise in revolt. Great promises of unlimited and permanent prosperity were made to the American people; they have not been fulfilled; the disappointed must be fed or who knows what will happen.

While there seems an unprecedented anxiety to lessen the effect of the evils inherent in the Capitalist economy, there is no evidence of any serious disposition to correct or remove those evils. On the contrary, in this depression, as in the preceding period of boom, the New Capitalism is, as LABOR AGE has constantly set forth, the same animal as the old; the leopard has not changed its spots.

Our foreign trade has been very seriously reduced. Had that not occurred, thousands or millions of our workers might have kept their jobs. Right in the midst of this crisis, however, we pass the notorious Hawley-Smoot Tariff Bill, which puts up a wall against the products of other countries and, of course, makes it equally impossible for them to buy our products. The biggest potential market in the world today is the one hundred and fifty million people of

Soviet Russia; but we have a government which stubbornly refuses to recognize that country, which permits Ham Fishes and Matthew Wolls to engage in the romantic sport of chasing Reds, and, which in order to distract attention from its own failures, lends itself to lying campaigns of hate against Russia, such as the effort made this fall to make the public believe that Russian short selling on the Chicago Wheat Exchange was responsible for the low price of that commodity.

Another measure which would show that Capitalism was honestly bent on reforming itself and effecting a more equitable distribution of the national income would be the provision of compulsory governmental unemployment insurance. You will listen in vain, however, for any word in favor of such a measure from the White House.

U. T. W. Handled Like Communists

Turning in a somewhat different direction, we get another bit of evidence in support of our contention that the leopard of Capitalism has not changed its spots. As I write, there are four thousand textile workers in Danville, Virginia, on strike against a reduction in wages, among other things in this blessed era when employers are keeping their promise not to cut wages.

That Danville strike is a portent in more ways than one. It is an A. F. of L. strike. The organizing campaign in Danville has been conducted from the outset in the method which is now typical of the A. F. of L. To begin with, the A. F. of L. did not take the initiative in going to the workers. The workers came to it and asked help a year ago. The A. F. of L. Union, the United Textile Workers of America, responded by proceeding in the most cautious, peaceful, conservative fashion. The workers were advised to go easy, not to be unkind to the boss. An engineer was brought in to talk to the employer and assure him that this was a peaceful, responsible A. F. of L. Union which had no interest in cutting down his profits but rather would guarantee to increase his profits if he would only permit his people to organize.

What has been the result? Did the

A SORRY INHERITANCE



Drawn for Labor Age by Herbert Heasley

employer yield? He did not. He began to discharge active union people as soon as the organizing work got under way and kept on until in September he had more than half of his four thousand employes on the streets, meanwhile hiring workers from outside when he needed help, so that of course the union had no choice except to abandon the field or strike. When the strike came, after this very peaceful organizing campaign, it was a most peaceful, law-abiding strike. Did that make any difference in the attitude of the government? It did not. In a few days an injunction was gotten out which seriously hampered union activities. A little later, as people still held out even in the face of inadequate relief and the rigors of approaching winter and something drastic had consequently to be done to break their spirit, a trifling disturbance was seized upon as the occasion for sending in the militia. So, there we are, with all the measures that would be taken against a Communist or progressive strike taken also against

this strike conducted by the most conservative wing of the Labor Movement in the most conservative fashion. Capitalism is still Capitalism and will still fight to the bitter end any attempts made in this land of the free and home of the brave to organize the unorganized.

Hoover The Politician

As the closing days of the year furnish us these demonstrations that Capitalism is still Capitalism, so they furnish evidence that the Great Hoover is still the Great Hoover. Elected as an engineer, he continues working hard to prove that he is a politician, and that of a pretty low order. Recently compelled to fire Claudius Huston, with unsavory power trust connections, off the Republican National Committee, he now seems determined to back to the limit another of his boy friends on that Committee, one Lucas, who it appears sought by the cheapest underhand political methods to defeat Norris for the Senate last fall. We do not get greatly excited about Lucas

—what else would anyone expect from a Capitalist politician?—only our Great Engineer and Sainted Quaker was supposed to be far above these things.

We were saying that Hoover ran true to form in making the Doak appointment. It was not the worst appointment he could have made and he avoided incurring the ill will of one faction in the A. F. of L. by appointing the candidate of another faction. On the other hand, he failed to make a distinguished appointment marked by public service rather than politics. He passed by Grace Abbott; and we hope all the great engineers, economists, and liberals to whom Mr. Hoover has been something of an idol, noticed how cavalierly he treated their pleas on behalf of this lady.

“Indignation” Needed

There remains one other point which requires comment. The year 1930 has been on the whole somewhat disappointing to those who want to see manifestations of militancy, independence, courage and class consciousness on the part of the workers. Some of them presumably are still confident that prosperity will soon return. Many of them accept unemployment, want and insecurity because they are terrorized. The United States is none too healthy a place for dissenters. When to vote for a Socialist, not to mention a Communist candidate means to risk losing your job and when even the most conservative and peaceful attempt to form a union meets with the brutal opposition which the Danville workers are experiencing, workers must naturally be driven pretty far on the road to desperation before they break into complaints. Of great importance too is the fact that the workers have not been offered a militant leadership. The A. F. of L. has not made any pretense of doing so.

The Conference for Progressive Labor Action has made some attempts under Louis Budenz's leadership to rally the unemployed to protest and demonstrate on their own behalf. There is not yet much definite achievement to boast about. Nevertheless, thousands of the unemployed have heard our message on the streets. The year on which we now enter will see more militant efforts in connection with the work among the unemployed and for our whole program of militant, inclusive, clean, democratic industrial unionism, social insurance, a labor party, recognition of Soviet Russia, opposition to militarism and imperialism, and promotion of international solidarity of the workers.

Steel - A Challenge to Labor

An Organization Job That No One Wants

By LEM STRONG

IN the police headquarters of one of the largest steel plants in the country is a room that no one ever enters now. Around the walls, neatly assorted according to size, are piled box after box of revolver and rifle cartridges and shot gun shells, while on the floor, several metal chests of machine gun belts block the door.

For ten years this cargo has quietly gathered dust in the heart of the mill. The heavy furnace smoke has drawn a smooth, black curtain over the brilliant red and yellow labels that shone so brightly years ago, and the entire room wears an air of gentle and eternal slumber. That it was a Rip Van Winkle nap I learned one day from a garrulous company cop.

"Yep," he said in answer to my question. "Ever since 1919 when they had the big strike that stuff's been in there. Will they use it if there's another?" He laughed at my ignorance. "And what do you think they're keeping the pretty toys for? To use on the Fourth of July?"

It might be well to keep that little story in mind through the rest of this article. It may make unnecessary any discussion of steel organization by the "glad hand and back slap of the employer" method. It is only a little while since Fanny Sellins died at the wish of the steel kings, and although they have seen the handwriting on the wall and dabbled in industrial democracy and old age pensions, the industry still finds the efficient use of "knock-down-and-drag-out" the easiest way to cut the knot of employee-employer relations.

Steel Scatters

Ten years ago the American Federation of Labor evolved the plan of organizing steel by the joint action of 24 International Unions whose jurisdictions covered workers in the mills. Over 365,000 men came out on strike and for months fought bitterly for freedom. The strike failed and the ground was abandoned. Many things have happened in the last decade. Labor has practically given up the fight while the employers have made good use of their time. Natural economic forces have worked against the interests of organization and have done their bit to create a situation in which any type of organization will be very difficult of achievement while the wrong type will be utterly impossible.

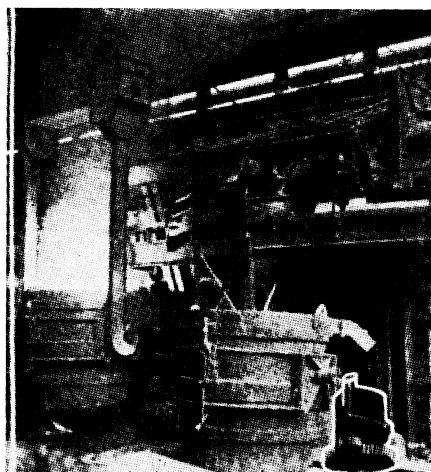
When in 1919, the organizing committee of the A. F. of L. surveyed the field, they saw an industry centralized in a few large sections of the country. Organizers were sent into the Chicago area, the Pittsburgh district and the Mahoning Valley, and the organization of the mills in these large producing centers was made the primary aim. But the geography of the mills has changed since then. For a number of reasons, chiefly because of the spur of high freight rates on steel products and the increasing use of scrap iron, they have been moving away from the established centers to locations nearer their customers. Detroit, through the working of these forces, is rapidly becoming an important producer while other smaller centers are growing up on the Pacific

Coast, in Texas, New York and along the Mason-Dixon Line.

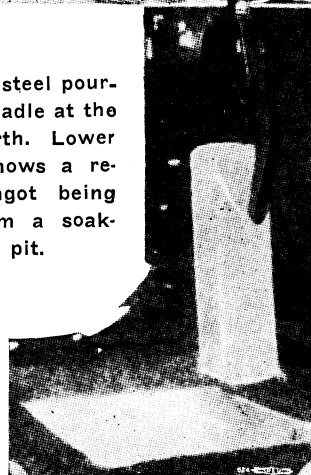
Let's go ahead and organize on the 1919 style now. Even at that time the harrassed strike committee had its hands so full that it was forced to refuse a plea for organizers from the employees of the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company. The job today would take no less than a mint of money and an army of organizers. There was a time when a knockout blow could be delivered at the head in Chicago or the heart in Pittsburgh. But that day is past. Labor is going to have to learn jiu-jitsu and be all over the place at once.

A Merging Mistress

Had ownership only been obliging enough to follow the same course of decentralization, there might still be some cause to sit up and cheer. Even in an era of mergers however, the bewildering speed with which this industry has succumbed to the mating urge has been a sight for those simple souls who still believe in the anti-trust laws. Nor have the mills, in spite of the pious Presbyterians who run them, been properly monogamous. More and more the Steel Trust is emerging from the legal clouds that concealed the connecting links in the mighty chain. In 1929, 41 per cent of the total output of steel ingots was produced by the United States Steel Corporation, Bethlehem Steel coming next with 13 per cent to its credit. The beginning of that year also saw the formation of the Republic Iron and Steel Company, which by an amalgamation of five existing firms threatened the second place position of Bethlehem. The latter, not to be outdone, quickly snapped up the Youngstown Sheet & Tube Company to add to its other 53 subsidiaries. The deal was immediately tied up in the courts by the Republic who had hoped to get Sheet and Tube into its own line up, but it is certain that no matter which way the case is decided, the days of the Youngstown firm and of other great independents like it are numbered. Today, five corporations dominate 84 per cent of the steel industry. That far greater concentration may



A heat of steel poured into a ladle at the open hearth. Lower picture shows a reheated ingot being lifted from a soaking pit.



be expected in the near future is revealed by reported efforts by the Bethlehem Company to reach agreements with both Inland Steel and Jones & Laughlin Company, two large, and until now unapproachable spinsters.

One would expect that the United States Steel Corporation would eye these stirrings of a formidable rival with caution and disapproval. But such has not been the case. Some people, in fact, have been low enough to claim that the presence of a director of that corporation upon the committee which sought stockholders' proxies for the approval of the Sheet & Tube-Bethlehem merger, shows a complete and touching understanding between these two big brothers of the industry.

It was hard enough to fight individual firms before but these multi-armed and headed monsters reared by the merger magic, are equipped with up-to-date and efficient labor trouble saving devices. It is one case in which the right hand does most emphatically know what the left hand doeth. It is a universally accepted fact in the Mahoning Valley for instance that no man fired by any of the steel companies for radicalism can hope to get work, even with that firm's bitterest business competitor.

Senile Unionism

These things have all had their share in stifling unionism in steel, but they cannot be accepted as the whole answer. The Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel & Tin Workers which once boasted 31,000 members now confesses to a trifle over 5,000. Led by a typical A. F. of L. leadership, it has been content to hold on to a constantly smaller group of the skilled workers in the sheet mills and on the wrought iron furnaces. It has seen technological changes and economic revolutions slash one group after another from its banner without realizing the consequences or learning the lesson. For the past ten years its membership has been com-

posed almost entirely of sheet mill men and wrought iron puddlers. Four years ago intensive research was begun on continuous sheet mill operation and machinery was developed which, with future expansion, will displace a large number of the skilled men in this branch of the industry. Experimental mills of this type are being built in every large plant in the country but the union's only reaction has been to complain about the unfairness of the employer.

Even more tragic has been the fate of the wrought iron puddlers. They were the aristocrats of the industry in the olden days and the honorable Mr. Davis who so recently graced the post of Secretary of Labor, claimed to want no prouder name than "Puddler Jim." But to those who found it impossible to live off a name or the memory of a proud past, the last year has been one of terrifying change. Through all the centuries that wrought iron has been made, it has always been worked on the end of a long rod by a man who knew all the tricks of the trade from years of patient apprenticeship. Overnight has come the change. Today, in the new \$12,000,000 mill of the A. M. Byers Company a man pushes a button or pulls a switch and the ladle of molten iron undergoes a chemical change that does all the work that the puddler used to do in the red glare and the heat of the furnace mouth. Does it more quickly and cheaply even though the sweat and blood and the fierce labor of a skilled man is not mixed into the spongy mass. What chance has a man against a process that turns out 6,000 pounds of iron every 20 minutes against his ton and a half a day?

The Amalgamated Association is on the skids and the water is coming close. If its existence has served for nothing else it may teach that the organization of one or two branches of steel, even though these seem to be rooted in the heart of the industry itself, is not enough. There is a progressive element within the organiza-

Follow

A. J. Muste

ACROSS THE
CONTINENT

In

Labor Age

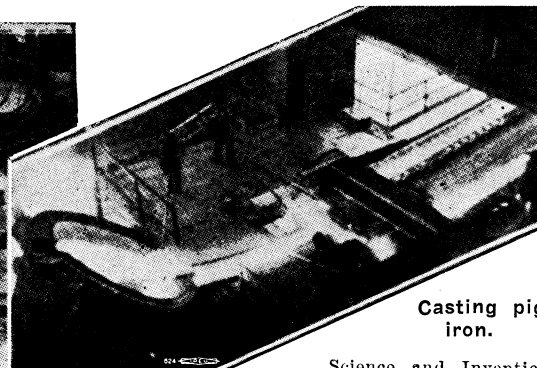
tion which is meeting with some headway in driving home the lessons of the last decade. But unless such artificial respiration is aided in the near future by some signs of real life, the American Federation of Labor will have no root, no hand and no union in the industry which is the keynote of our modern age.

Crying for Organization

It is a job that nobody wants—this organization of the steel mills. And yet it is a piece of work which is of vital importance to the whole movement of the workers. From the open pit mines of the Mesaba range, down the Great Lakes to the blast furnaces of Pittsburgh, Youngstown and Birmingham, the tap roots of steel strike deep into the heart of our land. It is in truth a key industry.

And steel wants to be organized. It is an amazing and a hopeful thing to see the almost childlike faith of the worker of the mills in the ideal of union. For many years he has observed the unions of the skilled in the building trades and the printing trades. "But I guess we're too ignerent fer them to bother with us," an old Welshman concludes wistfully.

Steel can be organized. But it can be done only by a group that is not afraid, that will answer blow for blow the attacks that it is sure to meet. It must be prepared to wander its long years in the desert before coming in sight of the promised land. And above all, it must be prepared to take in every worker, skilled or unskilled, black or white, Dago, Hunkie, Svenska, and all the others in the great army who serve this newest of our Gods.



Casting pig
iron.

Science and Invention

"A Hundred Neediest Cases"

By MARK HUNGER

TO determine which are the one hundred "neediest cases" in any city in this era of unbounded misery is like trying to isolate the one hundred most mutilated drops of water in a raging sea. Especially does it require the hardihood and self-delusion of a Don Quixote to attempt this task in New York City with its 800,000 workers idle and suffering. Nevertheless, the NEW YORK TIMES, lacking more in a sense of humor than any of its journalistic contemporaries, goes about this business in as serious a mein as in foregone years and publishes for the world to see, and therefore to respond, what it considers the one hundred most economically and spiritually mutilated humans to be found in the metropolis.

This year, even the humorless TIMES realizes how impossible is the job before it in attempting to pick its 100 cases, so in the main it has concentrated on indigent women only. Since wives with husbands are supposed to be well protected, only families where no male is present to mess up the problem are considered. Men of course, can sell apples, stand on the bread lines, find rest in the flop houses, or if all these are exhausted, go to hell! Happy New Year, folks.

It is difficult to make light of even such an asinine hocus-pocus as this bit of nonsense in which the TIMES engages annually. Behind its pompous and meaningless seriousness is human misery of a kind that is almost unbelievable. And misery is misery no matter how hypocrites handle it. So here are some of the details of "cases" that rankle like a gnawing toothache to imprint with their vividness the meaning of American civilization. Next time the NEW YORK TIMES raves about the poor Russian suffering workers, think of the broken lives which this news-

paper, in a moment of heart searching, exposes to the eye of "rich and humane America." Millions more who suffer find no ready social urge to come to their relief. Clinch Calkins, in "Some Folks Won't Work," unearthed a few more "neediest" cases.

A DROP IN THE BUCKET



Drawn for Labor Age by Fred Jerger

But there are probably more than eight million families today whose plight is not much better than those reported below.

* * *

CASE 155

A Rhapsody in C Minor

Three years ago Mrs. R., a neighbor, undertook the care of William, who was then 8, Eliza 6, Pauline 5, and George 1, when their mother died of tuberculosis and their father was killed in an accident a few months

later. She felt that she must watch over these four children left alone in the world, because she had been befriended by their parents only a short while before when her husband deserted and her own baby died. Besides, she said, she remembered how she felt when she became an orphan at the age of 5, and was separated forever from her brothers and sisters. She wanted to keep these four children together so that their childhood would be happy. Mrs. R.'s sole earnings were from house work, but she was only 32 and did not mind working as long as necessary to provide a good home, carefully chosen so that her four orphans might have plenty of sunshine.

We wonder what kind of a "good" home Mrs. R. could provide on earnings from house work.

Nevertheless, even a strong 32 year old body couldn't stand the strain and "her health had begun to break." She can't go out to work every day now and her "good" home is jeopardized.

* * *

CASE 20

Suffer Little Children

This girl had ambitions. At high school her teacher said she showed great talent and advised her to go to art school. Then her father lost a leg in an accident and because of inadequate food developed serious stomach trouble which invalidated him further. Her mother is sick with diabetes. Mary was only 17 when this crisis developed but she had to leave school and got a job in a factory painting candy boxes, the only breadwinner of the family. Then three years later, at 20, which brings the story up-to-date, Mary was taken to the hospital with "acute diabetes."

CASE 17

Any Day May Be Their Last

Having been fired by an employer

for whom he had worked for 24 years, because of advancing age, Mark, who is a wood carver, lived on his savings for the past three years, and now all he and his Ellen B. have in the world is \$6.41, and, appropriately enough—a carving of the unknown soldier. They want to remain together now, for any year may be their last.

* * *

CASE 7

A Week's Work for \$8

These are bead stringers. Mrs. P. and her aged mother sit in their unheated rooms and "working as long and as fast as possible" earn eight dollars between them. Mrs. P. doesn't even take time out to attend to her year old baby who lies whimpering, cold and hungry. A fourteen year old daughter earns another \$8, and on the \$16 Mrs. P., her mother and her six children try to exist.

"Blessed are the poor for they shall inherit the earth."

* * *

CASE 27

The Burden Was Too Heavy

Four children, the oldest 7, were found in a back alley all by themselves without father and mother. After the father died, the mother tried to take care of them, but finding the burden too heavy, went off and left them as they were. Cruel, cruel mother.

And four hundred million dollars were paid in extra dividends this year.

* * *

CASE 171

Page Margaret Sanger

In twenty years Tom did two things: worked so hard that he worked himself into a physical wreck. He will have to remain idle for the rest of his life. And he became the father of seven children. Now the oldest born,

18 years of age, earns fifteen dollars a week and is the sole support of the family.

"If you work hard you will become boss some day, and may be President."

* * *

Rugged Individualism Gone Awry

Mr. S. is a carpenter but can't find work. His wife and himself staved off appeals to charity organizations until at supper time there "was nothing on the table but an old kerosene lamp that flickered feebly at the bottom of the last filling of oil." An eviction notice had arrived and their insurance agent cancelled their policies. Four children were huddled in one rocker for warmth while another one was curled up in a box.

It's a happy phrase that President Hoover coined.

* * *

CASE 30

A Man-Sized Job

To be broken down physically at the age of 16 is the lot of Marjorie. It wasn't because of assiduous attention to night clubs that her health failed. She is only a janitress's daughter, who took her mother's job of shoveling coal, lifting heavy ash cans and scrubbing floors, when her mother became ill from overwork. Now Marjorie has followed in the footsteps of her mother.

Good girls eventually get their reward.

* * *

CASE 178

A Presser's Dilemma

At the age of 51 Mr. A. finds himself unfit for further work after years at his task as presser in a clothng factory. Asthma in the advanced stage,

is the trouble. Now his wife and three children have to shift for themselves.

* * *

CASE 140

Fond of Work

At the age of 68 and with a never-completely mended broken leg, Fanny F. is still very happy when she has work to do as janitor in the old tumble shack in which she lives. Fanny was the maid de luxe in her younger and more luxurient days, having as mistresses actresses, wealthy wives and so on. She finds her greatest pleasure in parading the O. K. of her many former mistresses, still a willing slave but unfortunately lacking in vigor. Such is the result of good early training.

* * *

CASE 9

Ditto

Mrs. F. is a companion piece to Fanny F. She also is 68 and she also is clamoring for work. But having worn her eyes out at handsewing after her husband, "who had worked long and loyally" in a bank "earning just enough for the two of them" had died, she is of no further value to employers.

Be loyal and obedient and some day you shall die in poverty.

* * *

CASE 97

Elsie Diets

Since the silhouette figure came into style, it is easy enough for Elsie, 18 years of age, to be fashionable. She earns all of \$12 a week in a dress factory and supports a family of six on that princely income. So Elsie cuts out lunches and grows thin. Elsie is on the breaking point, the report states. But that's fashionable, too.

Silhouette figures can be enjoyed by the poor as well as the rich.

A. J. MUSTE'S COAST TO COAST TOUR

TIME TABLE	
January	
2-4	..... Detroit
7-14	..... Chicago
15-16	..... Milwaukee
17-19	..... Minneapolis
	..... St. Paul
22-26	..... Seattle
	..... Tacoma
28-29	..... Sacramento
30	..... San Francisco
February	
1	..... San Francisco
3-10	..... Los Angeles
12-13	..... Denver

Further details on page 22

The March of the Machine

By JUSTUS EBERT

IT would require 12 billion slaves to do the work that machinery performs easily and efficiently each day in the United States, according to a recent survey by Joseph W. Roe, Professor of Industrial Engineering at New York University. It is estimated that for every man, woman and child in this country there is generated power equal to that of 100 slaves.

Nevertheless, there is now more slavery of man to the machine than the creation of slaves for man by easy and proficiently operated machinery. The benefits of machinery are perverted by the private capitalist ownership of the machine.

* * *

Prof. Roe declares: "The modern age is usually regarded as having started with the invention of the steam engine by Watt in 1765." More interesting it would be to know not only how the modern age started but also how it is likely to end. The outlook is not very favorable, if the present chaotic system of machine ownership continues as heretofore.

* * *

According to the Federated Press fifty men for every job is the prospect that the unemployed steel worker faces in Youngstown at present. Improved technology, speedup and drastic curtailment in production have cut down the working forces of the mills tremendously. Men who stood in line at the employment offices of the Republic Steel Co. and Youngstown Sheet and Tube told of their idleness since last September, of indirect wage cuts and one-third and one-quarter time work.

* * *

This is a great age—the machine age. It is also known as the merger age and the limited age. Between the three ages the workers are wondering if it isn't better to dispense with age altogether and operate the factories, mills, mines and banks as disembodied spirits, never born and ever immortal. Think of the wages the employers would save and the toil corporeal workers would avoid. Impossible? It's nearer than ever dreamt of though, in experimental radio power transmission and radio direction of dis-

tant mechanisms. A spiritual hoax is in danger of becoming a capitalist fact, nowadays; so watch out lest the machine age gets you, if the other two don't.

* * *

Machinery has made possible increased industrial production every year since 1921, while every single year, without exception, has witnessed a decrease in the number of wage earners employed. Thus figures the Federal Reserve Board. Says Ralph F. Couch, statistician and analyst.

"Employment reached a peak in 1920 which according to the index of the Federal Reserve Board, has not yet been equaled despite the multiplication of production. One hundred and one persons were on factory payrolls in 1920 for each 93 at work in 1929 and for each 97 at work in 1923. These are the years of greatest manufactory activity.

"Industrial activity rose to its highest peak in 1929 when output was 42 per cent greater than in 1919, according to the Federal Reserve index. The 1923 production rate was 22 per cent above that of 1919.

"Since 1919, industrial activity (output) has been increasing, but with the exception of 1920 employment shows a decline. Greater output is and has been accomplished with a diminishing number of workers."

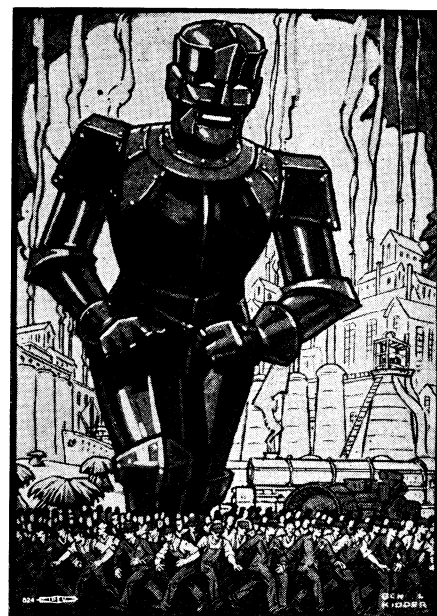
* * *

"New uses for machinery are continually being discovered, and so provide more employment," says machine age defenders. Here is sure a new use, as reported from Winchester, Va.

Under threat of displacement by new automatic labor saving machinery the 325 workers of the Virginia Woolen Co. here have accepted a wage reduction, coupled with a promise of continuous work all winter. It is asserted that they will make "as much working full time at the new scale as they did on part time before." The company has just booked enough orders to supply continuous operation for the entire season.

* * *

Grace Hutchins of Federated Press wrote an interesting sketch of the industrial doings in the plants of the Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing



New York Times

Company near Pittsburgh. This is the second largest electrical manufacturing company in the United States. The Mellon family is well represented on its board of directors. Machines are continually being introduced, writes Miss Hutchins:

"New machines have displaced many workers in Westinghouse plants. One such machine in six parts, called the Aut-au-Mat, recently installed in the Westinghouse Airbrake Co. at Wilmerding, Pa., does the work of 30 men. 'Very costly, it's true,' explains the young engineer, 'but the initial cost, you understand, is made up many times over wages.'

"In one great room of electrical machinery, high-powered automatic switch boxes, one young boy alone tends the entire equipment. 'But what's up-to-date today is obsolete tomorrow,' continues the engineer and quotes the example of Inland Steel and Dupont Co. of Indiana Harbor, Ind., where blast furnaces which produced a maximum of 600 tons a day in 1927 now produce 1,000 and more tons a day."

* * *

The following affords a contrast to all of the above. It looks like a futile attempt to turn back the tide.

The city fathers of Waukesha, Wis., confronted with serious unemployment of workers, have ordered all machinery used in construction of sewers, roads and streets be discarded, and the work be done by human toil. This has added many extra men on the jobs.

Flashes From The Labor World

If Edward McGrady is right, the long fight for unemployment insurance in the American Federation of Labor is nearing its end. According to McGrady, A. F. of L. legislative representative, the Federation at its Miami meeting in January is to announce its support for "unemployment reserves," a plan which he told reporters can be termed unemployment insurance.

Before progressives throw their greasy caps into the air, hollaing victory, they had better pause however for a few weeks to find out just what is proposed. According to McGrady, it will be like John Andrews' scheme, outlined by the American Association for Labor Legislation. This is an employers' scheme, under state guidance, with employers in charge of the funds and administration although labor is to be represented on appeal boards. Firms such as General Electric now sponsoring schemes of their own, will be exempt.

Many may eye this proposal suspiciously. But at any rate it is evident that the fight for the principle of unemployment insurance is just about won. Even the Industrial Relations Counselors, the Rockefeller organization, admits that union, union-employer and employer funds won't do because they can cover too few, cover those inadequately and cannot be extended to the vast majority in the near future. Legislation will be needed, said their study, which has the approval of Owen D. Young, Cyrus McCormick, Jr., John D. Rockefeller III and other acute defenders of the existing order.

Perhaps the most significant angle to the news that the A. F. of L. will not defer any longer its announcement on the study of insurance ordered by the Boston convention is the implication of defeat for Matthew Woll, whose reactionary bosom companions in the National Civic Federation are going to be pained to see the A. F. of L. proclaim any kind of a favorable decision. Rumors of a split between President Green and Vice President Woll have been current recently, and perhaps this is the issue which gave rise to the quarrel. Nevertheless, progressives will no doubt see Woll's influence in any sort of a plan backed by the A. F. of L. Instead of a straightout plan financed by industry and surtaxes, we expect to see Woll's sinister influence in a proposal that will exempt the rich taxpayer and make employers support the fund as a 1½ per cent wage reduction, which they will set

aside for unemployment insurance. Of all the obnoxious features of the Andrews' plan, that for its administration by employers is the worst.

Nevertheless, progress has been made, due to the sharp fight carried on by dissenting forces within and without the federation. Further progress, to get the right kind of insurance, can only be made by the same sort of fight.

* * *

Jessie Lloyd, the Federated Press expert on the south, comes back from Danville filled with enthusiasm for the strikers and their strike. Desertions from strike ranks she estimates at only 5 per cent. Morale is excellent, food is coming in better, and union consciousness has been developed by militant strike tactics. Winning the Battle of Danville is undoubtedly the one big immediate concrete task of the Labor Movement. What are you doing?

* * *

Not so cheerful was her report on Greensboro, N. C., where, you will remember, the United Textile Workers were on the verge of a strike last fall. Came the Danville crisis and the U. T. W. shifted its Greensboro organizers and funds to the Virginia mill town—undoubtedly correct strategy when your forces are limited. But the pity of it is that the resources should be limited. A 10c a month assessment on the A. F. of L.'s 2,000,000 working members would have netted \$200,000 a month, sufficient for a partial effort to wage a successful struggle on a limited front. Instead of that there is not enough for Danville, Greensboro has been deserted and a splendid bunch of unionists, now jobless and victimized, have to be abandoned. American labor will get nowhere in its fight with the most powerful capitalist system in the world until it agrees to give till it hurts. One dollar a month from every unionist would provide such a fund.

* * *

Another splendid chance to wage a militant, spectacular strike was lost when union experts refused to touch the strike of 500 airplane mechanics at the Wright shop in Paterson, N. J. This was a tragedy, for here was the ideal case for an aggressive fight, no matter from what angle viewed. The immediate cause of the walkout was a 10 per cent wage cut, imposed by a corporation engaged almost wholly in government contract work, directly under Mr. Hoover's thumb. Here was an instance where the

great stationary engineer, by a mere whisper, could have rescinded the reduction. Of course the bosses' representative in the White House dared not even whisper. And if the country is really air-minded, this was a strike which was also air-minded. Pickets forcing the issue on the wage cut right up to the gates of the White House would have focused national attention on their struggle. Can there be any doubt that the machinists would have won? Instead, the Machinists Union left a minor official in charge and the best efforts of the labor press could hardly make headlines of a dull, uninspired strike.

* * *

Well, Christmas came and went, the 800,000 unemployed in New York, and the 8,000,000 elsewhere in the country had a Christmas dinner, nursed along the hash and the bones a few days longer, and then settled down for the long wait until spring—a spring which they hope will bring jobs but which the economic experts say won't. Fat bourgeois pigs gave a dollar or so to charity for Christmas dinners for the "poor" and settled back to another year of easy conscience. The whole problem of breadlines, soup kitchens and handouts gave rise to melancholy reflections on the lack of imagination among workers. While this is easily understandable, it nonetheless leaves a poignant ache in the heart. What if a thousand unemployed in New York were to break into the best restaurants, haberdasheries and hotels to equip themselves for the decent life? Of course that requires courage, and the only leadership willing to defy the law is in Communist ranks.

* * *

Mr. Doak is now successfully launched into the chair of secretary of labor, Pres. Whitney of the Railroad Trainmen is undoubtedly vastly relieved to be rid of such a troglodyte and Mr. Green is nursing his wounded feelings over the appointment of a non-A. F. of L. reactionary but progressives can afford to snicker at the whole business, if the theory holds that the worse it is the better it is. Certainly most of the country knows of the U. S. labor department only as that fearsome engine of government which seizes luckless radical workers unfortunate enough to have been born outside the boundaries of God's country and sends 'em back where they came from. Among workers there might be what the Communists call a dangerous illusion that the U. S. labor department means that

the government is concerned about workers. The long Jim Davis-W. N. Doak regime should set aside any such idea. Mr. Doak himself brags to the chambers of commerce that he agrees with them that the open shop is the last word in industrial virtue.

* * *

While we object to scientists who see spooks in the dark and unknown, probably the better elements object just as vehemently to Einstein, peer of them all, who says that the only way to end war is to refuse to fight. This of course is one of those simple innocent truths, self-evident, that hardly any of us ever sees. Some hardy souls tried the recipe in the late slaughter fest—some 400 perhaps in this land—and they created a furore which caused patriotic editors to splash red ink all over their front pages. Please imagine what a rumpus 4,000 such objectors would have aroused. And now—everybody use his imagination please—picture for yourself what would have happened if 2 per cent of the 3,000,000 boys would have thrown the rifles back at the sergeants and simply refused to be drawn into the mass murder.

* * *

One of the biggest labor fights of the immediate future is the railroaders' demand for the 6-hour day. If the four brotherhoods can ever get together on a common program of action, they can undoubtedly force some kind of compromise from the railroads, which are not nearly so far on the road to the poorhouse as they protest. In the meantime an important by-product of the campaign is the willingness of the Railroad Trainmen to join the A. F. of L. If this happens, the A. F. of L. will be able to report the United Mine Workers membership honestly and still suffer not too big a loss in claimed membership. The Locomotive Firemen, who also nurse a hefty grudge against the Engineers, may follow the Trainmen into the A. F. of L. The Engineers and Conductors, in the terrific unemployment of the past 12 months which has cut off 261,000 railroad jobs, have been able to seize firemen's and trainmen's jobs, due to their

seniority, thus piling up the unemployed in the two junior organizations.

* * *

If the city of Erie, Pa. would spend the increase asked by the police department on the unemployed there probably would be no need for increasing the police appropriation for 1931. But lead instead of bread is Erie's idea of coping with the crime wave intensified by starvation among the destitute.

HARVEY O'CONNOR.

NEGRO LABOR CONFERENCE

A conference on Negro Labor and Workers Education was held over the Christmas week-end at Brookwood Labor College under the auspices of the Conference for Progressive Labor Action. The presiding officer at the sessions of the conference was Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois, editor of the Crisis, distinguished Negro scholar and champion. Miss Louise Thompson of the American Interracial Seminar acted as secretary.

Others who took part in the discussions included Professors Abram Harris and Emmett Dorsey of Howard University; Bertram C. Taylor, organizer and business manager of the Mechanics Association of Harlem, an association of Negro building trade unionists to combat discrimination by employers and unionists; Frank Crosswaith, one of the founders of the Brotherhood of Pullman Porters; Miss Floria Pinkney of the International Ladies' Garment Workers; Langston Hughes, Negro Poet; Benjamin Stolberg, Publicist; members of the staff of Brookwood Labor College, including David Saposs, Tom Tippet and J. C. Kennedy, and Negro workers from New York, Ohio, Indiana, Alabama and Louisiana. Others interested in the purpose of the conference included Walter White, secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Elmer Carter, editor of Opportunity, and B. B. Lemus, head of the Brotherhood of Dining Car Employees.

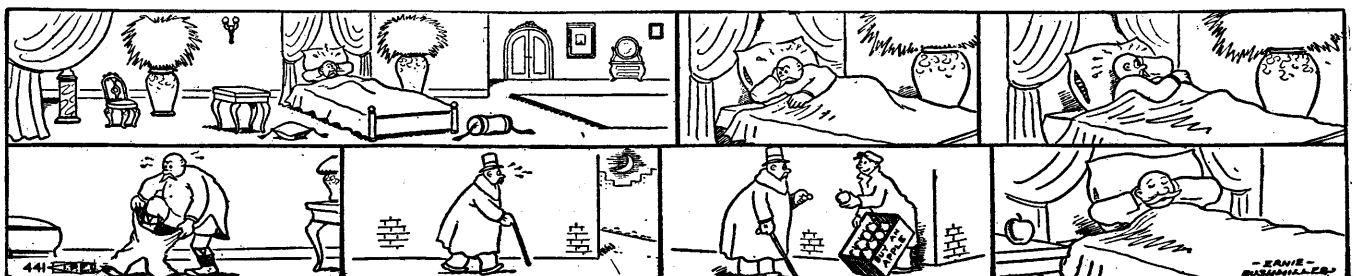
A statement drafted by a committee of which Henry Lee Moon of Alabama was chairman, pointed out that while 20

per cent of all workers in industry, mining and transportation are organized into unions only 4 per cent of Negro workers in U. S. are organized. This is due to a number of reasons but not least to the refusal of many unions to try to organize Negro workers or even to admit them to membership when they apply and to the bitter experiences of discrimination which thousands of Negroes who have at one time or another applied to unions have encountered. "Everywhere else the American Federation of Labor decries dual unionism as the enemy of working class solidarity but here it offers a bi-racial policy as a solution. In this field more than in any other dual unionism is likely to prove fatal to the interests of the working class."

The conference also adopted the report of the Committee on Plans and Activities of which Prof. Abram Harris of Howard was chairman. This report recommended that the C. P. L. A. set up a commission to be composed of both colored and white members for the purpose of promoting solidarity between the workers of both groups. The commission is to carry on educational work, on the one hand for the purpose of teaching white workers in unions and out of them the dangers of discrimination and the importance of working class solidarity, and on the other hand, for the purpose of teaching Negro workers the facts about our present economic, social and political system, their position within that system, and labor organization on the economic, political, cooperative and educational field as the only way to secure the material and spiritual goods to which they are entitled.

The commission is advised to appoint an organizer to form local C. P. L. A. groups, colored, white or mixed as circumstances may dictate, and also to encourage local groups to appoint organizers who in addition to educational work shall devise means for dealing with actual situations of discrimination against Negro workers and of misunderstanding and conflict between workers of the two groups.

TROUBLED CONSCIENCE



DOING and GROWING

... A Month Full of Action ...

The Eastern Regional Conference

Opening of an Unemployment Center

At Washington for Unemployment Demonstration

Appearing Before Mayor Walker

News from Outlying Sections

Chairman Muste Makes a Trip to Pacific Coast

—and other matters

BUSINESS is dull but never around the pivotal points of C. P. L. A. activity. "Doing and Growing" shall hereafter fly at our masthead for there never was a time when action was so sorely demanded and when action meant opportunity for greater endeavor. A complete recital of this month's work could easily fill this entire issue. But there are other matters to be included so we shall satisfy ourselves with a skeletonized report.

First let us mention the Eastern Regional Conference. That C. P. L. A. audiences can always be assured of a lively time was again demonstrated at this last conference held in New York City on Saturday and Sunday, December 6 and 7. Starting with the first speaker on Saturday afternoon, and ending the following afternoon, just as the sun made its final dip behind the Jersey hills, there never was a dull moment for any one to worry over. The subject itself was engrossing: "Labor in the New Economic Era (Era of Hard Times)." And the speakers did full justice to it.

Towards the end of the conference a little time was taken out for consideration of a resolution demanding the freeing of Mooney and Billings and the Centralia prisoners; a message of encouragement and hope to be telegraphed to the embattled textile workers at Danville, Va.; and a statement on Russia, demanding recognition of the Soviet Government by the United States. Thereafter every one considered the job well done and went home.

How a militant and progressive union, 1930 model, organizes for action, was portrayed in excellent fashion at the Saturday afternoon opening session by Isador Laderman, member of the Pocketbook Workers Union (since elected president of his organization). Speaking on the subject: "Practical Dilemmas Facing Militant Unions," Mr. Laderman outlined the steps taken by the "newer unionism" to overcome the obstacles it faces. He wanted to make clear that his views as expressed were those of a rank and filer and were not official. His speech in full is reported elsewhere in this issue.

Earl Steele, who followed, showed how his organization, the American Federation of Full Fashioned Hosiery Workers, definitely demonstrated that young American workers, large numbers of whom are women, can carry on a militant fight as well, if not better than other groups. The big problem, he emphasized, was leadership. Young workers can be turned into good union fighters if color and audacity are brought into the struggle. One of the serious obstacles to successful organization, the Hosiery leader maintained, himself a sample of militant youth, is the non-cooperation of other labor unions.

It was at the conference dinner on the same day, that straight from the shoulder truths about inner forces in American life were exposed. Walter White, Acting Executive Secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and Dr. George S. Counts, Teachers College, Columbia University, spoke on "The Negro Problem," and "American Education in the Machine Age," respectively. Oscar Ameringer, Editor of the AMERICAN MINER, who was present to "pronounce the benediction" as A. J. Muste, toastmaster on the occasion, happily put it, had the audience in hysterical laughter by the time adjournment arrived. Ameringer can put more straight economic truths in one joke than many College Professors can put between the covers of a five hundred page volume.

Mr. White told a gripping story of what is going on in this civilized United States, as far as the Negro is concerned. Author of several books on lynchings, he knows intimately of the

terrible sacrifices his race is called upon to make. But these times are even more terrible. Night-riding gangs are terrorizing the Negro workers in the south. Their shacks are being dynamited. Successors to the Ku Klux Klan are springing up under the fanciful names of White Band, Caucasian Crusaders, American Fascisti and Black Shirts, to harry Negroes out of their jobs in favor of whites. Even in the north in Pittsburgh, Cleveland and elsewhere, the speaker related, quiet movements are under way to deprive the Negro of his livelihood.

While the American Federation of Labor, in resolutions, has spoken fair words for the colored race most of the unions bar Negroes from membership, White said. He praised the efforts of the C. P. L. A. for the work it is doing for better understanding and equal treatment of the Negro. He feared, however, that all efforts may be too slow before something gives way.

"I believe it would be better if more Negroes were Communists," he concluded. "Then may be the colored race would be more feared and respected."

American education based on the child got off to a wrong start, George S. Counts told the audience. What the child will develop into depends upon the culture in which he is raised. If that culture is based on ignorance, narrow nationalism and self interest, then experimental education cannot help the child progress very much beyond his forefathers. Education, to prepare the child for life in the machine age, must be geared to that age by an intelligent appreciation of its problems, the speaker maintained, Russia was to him the

most challenging experiment of these times, striking at the roots of the evils of the modern world. "There we see the new society breaking up the old order," he said.

To make education fit the new world order Counts advised we must develop loyalties broader than national boundary lines, develop means of getting dependable knowledge, a job in which the press is sadly lacking, assure workers of economic security and develop some ideal worth living for. Selfish individualism does not fit the cooperative machine age, although it may have been sufficient for the pioneer farmers.

There is no possibility of freedom in America today, Dr. Counts continued. "Real freedom rises from economic security, from the ownership of your job and the assured satisfaction of elementary needs." He saw little hope that the educational machine in this country would integrate education with the new order and the job of real education would have to pass over to non-school agencies.

It was on the next day that the problems peculiar to the woman worker were considered by women themselves. Not a man was on the program and even during the discussion, women exclusively participated. Discussing, "As Women Look at Industry," Ruth Shallcross, industrial worker, Carmen Lucia, representative of the Neckwear Workers Union, Josephine Kazor, organizer for the Philadelphia Women's Trade Union League, and Lucy Carner, National Industrial Secretary of the Young Women's Christian Association, recounted their experiences and the general attitude of women towards organization.

There are five or six barriers to organization of women, said Ruth Shallcross. Lack of class consciousness, in-

security and fear, lack of leadership, racial and language difficulties, corrupt unionism and religion based on superstition, were in her opinion the obstacles on the road to progress. To Josephine Kazor lack of good leadership was the real problem. Young, peppy organizers, who can put up a good show and create a stir in the community, was one of her answers to the question on how to organize women. She felt keenly also the lack of interest in women the men have so far displayed, although when it came to a showdown, the women were always at the front lines fighting more courageously and persistently than the men. Education of the mass variety, at the factory gates and on the picket lines, was one remedy, she suggested. This was seconded by Carmen Lucia.

Many of the problems discussed by the speakers, said Lucy Carner, in a resume at the conclusion of the session, were problems that must be faced by men as well as women. Mechanization, while affecting women workers, involved adaptation by all of labor. Organizers should understand the racial groups making up the working force in a particular industry. There are many ways of arousing the interest of women in organization by methods that are not always direct. Because of the narrower experience of women they should be approached on the plane of their interest, Miss Carner suggested.

One effective method is to bring unorganized women workers into contact with union women, the speaker declared. Workers education projects are most effective for that purpose. The big task for American labor, was to transfer the idea of protection which today many women think resides in the employer, to the state, as a first step in finally transferring it to the union. Agitation for social legislation, like un-

employment insurance, is a step in that direction.

To young women especially, she said, we must appeal to the imagination, heroism and breadth of common interest in order to get them thinking for unionism.

The final session of the conference on Sunday afternoon was addressed by Nathaniel Spector of the Capmakers' Union and Louis F. Budenz, Executive Secretary of the C. P. L. A. Spector brought much humor to bear in parading the troubles that beset a business agent in modern times. Ingenuity, of course, persistency and hard work were the ingredients required in overcoming obstacles, was the impression gained from the speaker's recital of his union's affairs. In spite of the small size of his organization and almost insurmountable difficulties, the will to continue and to advance has placed the union in a stronger position today than ever.

The building of a Labor Party in the United States, declared Louis F. Budenz in the closing speech of the conference, awaits the organizing of the unorganized. To this end the real efforts of the C. P. L. A. are being directed. The new or expanded Labor Movement will have as its dominating purpose the overthrow of the capitalist system, for this depression must convince all former doubters that the present social system cannot bring security and happiness to the masses of people. On account of this purpose, sympathy with the Soviet Union, which is forging ahead in spite of the many mistakes and difficulties in its efforts to create a new social order, must be the feeling of every progressive.

The statement on Russia adopted at this conference is printed on page 29.

UNEMPLOYED DEMAND INSURANCE



Hundreds listen to C. P. L. A. speakers at open air meeting at Lafayette and Leonard Streets, New York. Norman Thomas is explaining to them how to get unemployment insurance.

P. & A.

C. P. L. A. Focuses Attention on Extent of Unemployment

UNEMPLOYMENT — unemployment — unemployment! Masses of men, worried, shuffling, perplexed and in despair. And most of them have not yet learned that until they decide to do something for themselves, nothing worth while will be done. So again it is the job of the progressives to get to these workers, idle now for months and months, and show them the way to their own salvation. With this view in mind a center for the unemployed was opened in New York City through the courtesy of Dr. Tippet of the Church of All Nations. Now on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons the unemployed who still have hope left in their own self-respect, are beginning to gather at the C. P. L. A. hall, to learn how to fight with the progressives for a better future; for greater security and for a world without hunger in the midst of plenty.

If you are a New Yorker, or if you happen to visit the Metropolis, drop around to 9 Second Ave., any afternoon on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday, between 2 and 5 o'clock and come in closer contact with C. P. L. A. work and with the unemployed.

Having found a place for the unemployed to meet, the next effort was directed towards focusing the attention of the citizens, first on the extent of unemployment, and secondly, on the need for more effective action towards those without jobs. For weeks the New York C. P. L. A. forces had negotiated with both Mayor Walker and the Police Department for a hearing from the one and a permit to parade from the other. At the open-air meetings held throughout New York City, a list of demands were drawn up by the out-of-works, which was to be presented to the Mayor when an interview would be granted. The parade was to emphasize the fact that thousands of unemployed were in back of these demands.

Finally the Mayor named Wednesday, December 17, at 3:30 in the afternoon as the hour at which he would meet with the unemployment committee. Negotiations with the police, however, were not so successful. After stalling around from day to day, and giving the representatives every assurance that a permit to parade would be granted, the police for some unknown reason changed its mind at the

last moment and refused the permit. Nevertheless, a stirring open-air meeting was held on the afternoon just before the interview with the Mayor and hundreds of unemployed, resenting the autocratic action of the police, were ready to defy the edict and parade, permit or not. In order to test the police authority, however, it was thought best to avoid disorder for the present and postpone the parade for a later date. A committee of the unemployed was chosen from among those present and with Louis F. Budenz, as chairman, appeared at the City Hall at the appointed time. As the committee entered the sacred precincts, a row of stalwart police were drawn up at the entrance to the Mayor's office to protect, evidently, the Mayor from any harm that might come to him from the six members comprising the committee.

The demands of this committee, presented to the Mayor in the form of a memorial, pointed to the fact that:

More Action Wanted

"The unemployment situation is increasing in seriousness in New York City. Starvation is actually facing a considerable portion of American citizens in this, the richest city in the world. Unemployment, according to all official reports, is on the increase.

"The situation calls for emergency action, similar to that taken during the war. We wish therefore emphatically and earnestly to call to the attention of the city administration steps that can be taken locally to remedy this criminal condition; which steps have not yet been taken by the City Government.

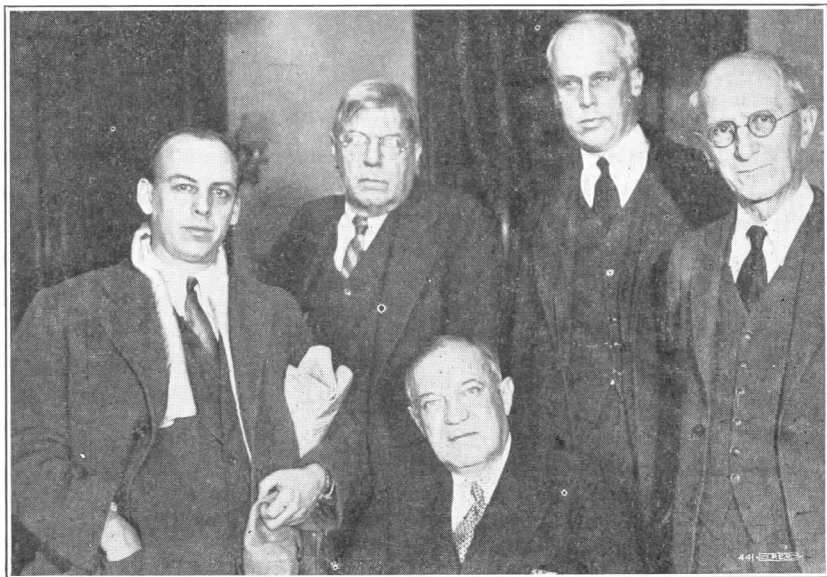
"The City administration can announce itself definitely and clearly in favor of compulsory unemployment insurance. This is the only systematic and sane way in which the business cycle with its train of suffering, can be met. It is a challenging economic fact that this year, 1930, which sees millions of men out of work because they have worked too well and produced too much, also records the greatest dividends paid by corporations in the entire financial history of the United States. These dividends have been built up in part out of continued displacement of working forces in the face of the depression. They have largely been secured through

AT WASHINGTON



Committee on jobless relief interviews Senator Robert F. Wagner of New York during demonstration. (Left to right) Louis F. Budenz, executive secretary, Conference for Progressive Labor Action; Charles W. Ervin of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America; Norman Thomas, director of the League for Industrial Democracy; Justus Ebert of the Amalgamated Lithographers International Union. (Seated) Senator Wagner.

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the hoarding up of great reserve funds by the corporations. If such reserve funds can be built up for payment of dividends, it is much more important that the Government compel industry to build up reserve funds for the human factor—the workers who will be thrown out of employment by depression.”

The memorial then continued to outline steps that the city government can take for immediate relief of the unemployed. It suggested that public works “can be increased in volume by building more subways, new schools and starting alterations on old ones to modernize them, and inaugurate the eight hour day for firemen by instituting the three platoon system.”

“The City has also power,” the memorial reads further, “which it has thus far failed to use to vote large sums for relief. Section 77 of Article 9 of the Public Welfare Code reads as follows: ‘CARE TO BE GIVEN. It shall be the duty of Public Welfare officials, insofar as funds are available for that purpose, to provide adequately for those unable to maintain themselves.’”

“The City of New York therefore can appropriate large sums of money for relief, to be met by short term bonds. For when the city is granted such specific powers as in these provisions it can raise money in any way that will provide funds needed. It is vitally important that such action be taken, in face of the fact that the combined work of the relief agencies will not take care at present of 10 per cent of the 800,000 whom Mr. E. C. Rybicki, Director of the Municipal Employment Agency, states are unemployed at the present time.”

As part of this memorial there was a demand on the Mayor to take immediate steps to discontinue the practice of many city employees who hold down two jobs, one with the city and another with industrial concerns, especially with the Railway Express Agency. This part of the presentation was made by Israel Mufson, Executive Secretary of the C. P. L. A., who appeared before the Mayor not only as a member of the unemployment committee, but also as a special representative of the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks to lay this specific matter before the Mayor.

Mufson told the Mayor that for the past two years it has become the common practice for the American Express Agency to abolish regular union jobs and hire in place of the regular workers, short time workers who do not come under the union agreement. Many of these short time workers are men employed in various city depart-

UP THE CITY HALL STEPS



International.

Committee appointed by New York unemployed workers to present to Mayor James J. Walker a memorial for measures to be taken by city authorities for wider assistance to jobless. Picture shows committee composed of (left to right) Israel Mufson, Louis F. Budenz, Leonard Bright, C. P. L. A. secretaries and Jennie D. Carliph, secretary, New York Branch, C. P. L. A. In addition were Cal Bellaver, Merton du Montier and Sam Rosenstein.

ments during the day and then turn in for a trick of four or more hours with the express agency in the evening. Thousands of jobs, he pointed out, which could go to totally unemployed persons, are now occupied by those who desire to augment their already comparatively adequate salaries of \$2,500 to over \$3,000 a year. He also urged the Mayor to bring pressure to bear on industrial concerns whose employees follow this practice. On behalf of his organization, he entered this protest.

The memorial finally concluded with a protest against the “consistent pressure brought to bear in this period of emergency upon workers to contribute whether they are able or not to charity funds. This process of transferring money out of the pockets of one worker whose income is already insufficient into the pockets of another does absolutely nothing to increase the purchasing power of the working class as a whole, which is the only means for putting an end to this depression. Let the funds for relief come out of the pockets of

the rich whose inordinate income in comparison to the masses of workers brings about these periodic depressions.

Mayor Walker, a stute politician that he is, met the unemployment committee with much show of sympathy, but there is every assurance that certainly he will not do anything to help the unemployed. The fact that the problem was laid at his door in this public way will demonstrate to the trusting unemployed how little they can expect from Democratic or Republican politicians.

Before terminating the audience, Louis Budenz emphatically protested against the arbitrary use of the police in preventing peaceful demonstrations for the presentation of grievances, and warned the Mayor, as well as the Police Commissioner who was present during the last minutes of the interview, that the Conference for Progressive Labor Action is determined to go ahead with its plans for a parade as it has the legal right to do. Any violence resulting therefrom because of a refusal of a permit, will be charged to the city administration.

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Unemployment Insurance

UNEMPLOYMENT insurance, as we have predicted when the issue came to the fore through C. P. L. A. agitation, is now no longer with few friends, but has gripped the imagination of the nation as few issues have in the last half century. It has reached the very citadels of national government. On Monday, December 15, representatives of 26 organizations, backers of the unemployment insurance idea, descended upon Washington to give the country's statesmen a physical demonstration of the strength of the forces working for it. Among the organizations represented were the Conference for Progressive Labor Action, with Louis Budenz and Jennie Carliph in the contingent, Justus Ebert of the Amalgamated Lithographers Union, Norman Thomas for the League for Industrial Democracy, The Amalgamated Clothing Workers, the National Association of Machinists, the Detroit Unemployment Committee, the Socialist Party, the Women's Trade Union League and others. They trailed across the Senate and House of Representative office buildings buttonholing Congressmen and Senators for their opinion on the Federal unemployment insurance bill which the C. P. L. A. is sponsoring. While Congress has voted relief for every conceivable object on earth; for millionaires through the reduction in income taxes which saved them \$160,000,000; for hogs and chickens; for the indigent industries like the steel trust through the ignobly high protective tariff, there were few statesmen ready to show their sympathy for the industrial workers by coming out in favor of the unemployment insurance measure.

There are a few Senators and Congressmen, however, who already see the handwriting on the wall and will work for such a measure. Senator Wagner of New York has introduced the Federal Bill in the Senate and the progressive bloc will do everything in its power to make the bill a living issue during the present session. Thus forges ahead the idea which but a few months ago had hardly any friends at all except those associated with the C. P. L. A.

A rousing meeting was held the same evening that brought together many hundreds of people to listen to the speakers on the subject. Executive Secretary Budenz told the audience that there can be no substitute for unemployment insurance as a relief measure; that the unemployed are not go-

ing to starve and freeze indefinitely and that sooner than we expect, through the force of circumstances that has created a permanent army of the unemployed, this scientific form of relief will find its way on the statute books.

The chairman of the meeting was Benjamin C. Marsh of the People's Lobby to whom must go the credit of organizing the whole demonstration. The other speakers, in addition to Budenz, were Norman Thomas, W. Jett Lauck, representing the American Association for Old Age Security, U. P. Alifas of the International Association of Machinists and Harry Slaven, Chairman of the Detroit Unemployment Committee.

Other Centers Active

Active on behalf of the C. P. L. A. program in general and of our campaign for unemployment insurance in particular is Ludwig Lore, editor of the NEW YORKER VOLKSZEITUNG, the oldest radical paper in New York City published in the German language. Editor Lore has given the C. P. L. A. cause columns of publicity, in addition to his personal service in committee and platform work. His support is of great importance in aiding the spread of the C. P. L. A. program as his newspaper enjoys a national circulation.

While this month we portray extensively the activities of the progressives in New York City, we should not overlook the good work that is being done by C. P. L. A. ers in many other centers. Out along the Pacific Coast, Carl Brannin is working valiantly on behalf of the C. P. L. A. program. Every issue of The VANGUARD, the official newspaper of his group, contains encouraging news on the advances made in extending the progressive idea. Petitions on the unemployment bill are rolling in from that sector in a steady stream. Our state compulsory unemployment insurance bill is being used as a model for a bill that is being introduced in the Washington State Legislature. Meetings are being held regularly where unemployment insurance and other points of our program are being discussed. Seattle and surrounding territory is alive with progressive labor activity.

Harry Slaven, Chairman of the Detroit Unemployment Committee, informs the C. P. L. A. that our bill is being introduced in the Michigan

legislature. In Pennsylvania, New York and Massachusetts, the C.P.L.A. model unemployment insurance measure, or ones based on it will be offered the respective State law-making bodies as soon as they convene. More states will be heard from before this issue reaches the readers.

In Chicago, hitherto rarely touched by C. P. L. A. agitation, activities are on foot to organize the progressives into a local C. P. L. A. branch. Mary Hillyer, having removed to the Windy City from New York for a change of scene, immediately began to make contacts with the result that a preliminary meeting was held the early part of the month which promises greater opportunities for the future. J. B. S. Hardman, Editor of the ADVANCE, and a member of the National Executive Committee, was the speaker at that meeting. More news later.

Buffalo is keeping up its traditional good work with the local staging a conference on unemployment. This conference, while under the care of a large committee with most of the members not being connected with the C.P.L.A., was the preliminary to a conference that will be held in the near future under C. P. L. A. auspices and where progressive measures for the relief of the unemployed will be discussed. Sara Fredgant and others are hard at work with plans for a busy season.

At the same time the militant forces in Philadelphia are carrying on a program of activities that include conferences, luncheons and open-air meetings on unemployment insurance. Joseph Schwartz, Andrew Biemiller, Maynard Kreuger and Josephine Kazor, to mention just a few of the active spirits, are working inside and outside the local labor organizations to advance the progressive cause and especially the idea of unemployment insurance.

Now a word about our unemployment insurance petitions. It was intended at first, to have these petitions ready by December 4, at the opening of Congress. Now, however, since the special session will not adjourn till March, it was decided to present these petitions at a later date when the need for unemployment insurance will be more urgent than it even is today. Therefore, those having petitions can continue to circulate them among the unemployed in their vicinity and obtain more if needed. Others who would want to distribute these petitions can write for them at the national office, 104 Fifth Avenue, and be assured of

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ample time in which to obtain signatures.

We desire to stress the importance of these petitions. Every C. P. L. A. er and friend of unemployment insurance should become active in this work.

Muste Tours Continent

The big news that we can broadcast of special interest to readers of LABOR AGE living distances from New York City, is that A. J. Muste, Chairman of the Conference for Progressive Labor Action, will make a trip across the continent on behalf of the organization. Mr. Muste is an excellent speaker, with a knowledge of economic and industrial facts that makes him one of the leading authorities of economic trends and trade union policies. He is very much worth hearing.

Starting on January 4, Mr. Muste will hit Detroit where he will stay until the sixth. From there he moves to Chicago where he is scheduled for many meetings during the 7th to 14th of the month. Milwaukee comes next on his itinerary, remaining there for the 15th and 16th of January. From the 17th to the 19th of the month Mr. Muste will speak in Minneapolis and St. Paul. He then makes a long skip to Seattle and Tacoma where from the 22nd to the 26th the citizens of that territory will have an opportunity of listening to his message. He is due in Sacramento on the 28th and 29th and in San Francisco on January 30 to February 1.

Chairman Muste will be in and around Los Angeles between the 3rd and 10th of February. His return trip will start soon thereafter and he will reach Denver on February 12. He will remain there till the 13th.

Readers desiring to arrange meetings for Mr. Muste during his open dates or after February 13 can communicate with this office for specific engagements. But they should watch the local announcements for his schedule in the cities enumerated and attempt to attend his meetings. Mr. Muste, in addition to being Chairman of the Conference for Progressive Labor Action, is also Dean of Brookwood Labor College and Vice President of The American Federation of Teachers. He is also contributing editor of the WORLD TOMORROW, and associated with many other liberal and progressive organizations.

From the Steel Front

Interesting is the news that comes from progressives in the steel industry. In one mill the management inaugu-

AN ILLUMINATING CONTRAST



Drawn for Labor Age by Jack Anderson

rated the six-hour day primarily to increase tonnage production. But not getting as much out of the men as they had hoped, the management is pushing the men to the limit of endurance carrying out production schedules which cut down the workers' wages. The organized workers are too weak to maintain decent standards and better wages.

The situation within the steel workers' union is described in vivid terms. Although an appropriation of \$50,000 was set aside for organization work nothing has been done about it.

One worker writes:

"The rank and file will be very leary of any organization move for fear that it will cost them something. The proposition that was defeated at the last convention, had as its very foundation the educating of the rank and file as to the

necessity for them to finance an organization drive. Until this is first sold to our rank and file all organization moves will end in failure.

"I have been giving the immediate future considerable thought. I am of the opinion that this is one year when wages should be taken up at the convention. It seems ridiculous to consider that such an impotent organization as we have might be able to do any thing about wages, yet I am convinced that this year we may. It seems that our whole membership has reached the limit of endurance and they are going to rebel whether or not the time is opportune. The Communist movement is making such headway that many manufacturers are badly frightened. Because of this fear on the part of our masters, coupled with the desperation of our members, a wage increase can be put over."

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From the Steel Front

Interesting is the news that comes from progressives in the steel industry. In one mill the management inaugu-

AN ILLUMINATING CONTRAST



Drawn for Labor Age by Jack Anderson

rated the six-hour day primarily to increase tonnage production. But not getting as much out of the men as they had hoped, the management is pushing the men to the limit of endurance carrying out production schedules which cut down the workers' wages. The organized workers are too weak to maintain decent standards and better wages.

The situation within the steel workers' union is described in vivid terms. Although an appropriation of \$50,000 was set aside for organization work nothing has been done about it.

One worker writes:

"The rank and file will be very leary of any organization move for fear that it will cost them something. The proposition that was defeated at the last convention, had as its very foundation the educating of the rank and file as to the

necessity for them to finance an organization drive. Until this is first sold to our rank and file all organization moves will end in failure.

"I have been giving the immediate future considerable thought. I am of the opinion that this is one year when wages should be taken up at the convention. It seems ridiculous to consider that such an impotent organization as we have might be able to do anything about wages, yet I am convinced that this year we may. It seems that our whole membership has reached the limit of endurance and they are going to rebel whether or not the time is opportune. The Communist movement is making such headway that many manufacturers are badly frightened. Because of this fear on the part of our masters, coupled with the desperation of our members, a wage increase can be put over."

In Other Lands

SPAIN

The last important country in Western Europe to experience the throes of a democratic-republican bourgeois revolution is the land of the Dons. Earlier attempts to overthrow the monarchy have been confined to Catalonia and one or two other provinces. The latest effort, though a failure like the previous ones, had at least one merit in that it was more general.

Briefly put, the basic causes were the monarchy (with its graft and corruption, both deep rooted and unparalleled in modern European politics; liberalism grouping for expression and responding to the needs of rising capitalism resenting the dictatorship; depression or unemployment.

As many of the liberals and anti-monarchists were in exile there was a certain lack of leadership among the middle classes and the intelligentsia, hence their failure in the towns to arouse the citizenry. In the country districts the agrarians because of church influence were indifferent, but where sympathetic, they were inert and incapable. The fiercest and strongest battalions of the revolution were found among the ranks of labor. True to Labor's historic mission, the workers were in the van, in the center and the rear, that is to say, every place in the fight—prompt in their support of the revolting garrison and last as social strikers to quit. The Socialists, the Syndicalists and the Communists played prominent and honorable parts in the struggle, and it is safe to say the Syndicalists played the most important social role, for Syndicalism as an industrial and political philosophy as a weapon is more virile in Spain than in any other country.

Here and there the soldiers joined in the revolt and though they fought bravely and had the cooperation of the workers in several important centers they were beaten by the superior resources and discipline of the loyal troops of the King. The leaders were treated in characteristic Spanish fashion—shot without mercy. Airman Franco and some civilian leaders fortunately escaped over the Portuguese and French borders. King Alfonso behaved in his usual cynical manner by going to San Sebastian and enjoying himself among the gilded parasites who frequent that resort, leaving the butchery of the republicans to the corrupt and profiteering military clique under the leadership of General Berenguer who proclaimed martial law

throughout the country. This was supplemented by the use of black troops and the Foreign Legion soldiers, always unsentimental, against the republicans.

It was stated by Paris experts, familiar with conditions in Spain, that the revolt would have succeeded had the three great elements of discontent been united into one force. The prophets are now trying to figure out how long the last and toughest of Hapsburg-Bourbons will last and when the next republican uprising will break out. Evolution and time favor the republicans in their dream to make Spain free. But a republic with the power of the Ultramontaines intact, as one can see in Ireland, would be largely a misnomer. The intelligentsia have their work cut out for them.

GREAT BRITAIN

A nine day's wonder was created by Sir Oswald Mosley in his manifesto calling for action on unemployment, Empire trade and a super-cabinet or dictatorship of five to rule Britain. It was treated as a sensation by the press because they had nothing else to talk about for a week or two. In other words the leading papers attributed to the Mosley manifesto an importance it did not deserve. The economic clauses of the manifesto are those which the I. L. P. men have been advocating for several years. On economics and industry Mosley said nothing new but what he did say on those disturbing questions was well and vigorously stated. As his emergency cabinet or dictatorship was anti-parliamentary it was not sympathetically received by the Socialists and radicals. The chief defect in the Mosley proposal was that it was an attempt to substitute a radical semi-capitalist program of reform for straight out socialism. Had it been accepted by the radicals and socialists it would have meant a reorientation of the I. L. P. program of action. No prominent union leader and no prominent socialist endorsed the program, though the executive of the party patiently discussed the Mosley manifesto before disapproving of it. Mosley had this one merit in that he was instrumental in putting the spotlight on the economic ills of his country and giving them extraordinary publicity for several days.

The coal mine revolt was sidetracked by Premier MacDonald and the leaders of the Labor Party. The Scottish miners, true to form, for a few days revolted while the sturdy Welsh were wheedled into inaction. The English colliers, always willing to compromise, accepted

the Government's suggestions. A study of MacDonald's coal mine program brings one verdict and one word—SURRENDER. The coal barons won and the legislation previously gained is sidetracked in that the magnates and operators will not be prosecuted for violating the law. They will also be allowed to carry the hated district agreement rule into effect, thus leaving the settlement far off and the coal situation more confused than ever.

ITALY, GERMANY, AUSTRIA

Mussolini confessed failure for the first time when he blamed the bad conditions now obtaining in Italy on Uncle Sam. The super-man has become a super-whiner and he bites the hand that fed him. Ever since he marched roaring into office Mussolini has been financed by Wall Street, in fact without the aid given him by American bankers and industrialists Mussolini and his Fascisti freebooters would have failed long before the general depression.

The German Social-Democratis are supporting Bruening in office and his financial reforms are guaranteed success. The Socialists having saved the Chancellor are now confronted with a blank cartridge in that they gave away their best ammunition but got nothing in exchange. Every one hoped the badly needed social reforms would be put over in return for saving the government. Instead of turning to internal matters Berlin is debating with Poland over the treatment of its nationals in the Corridor and Silesia.

Austria has not gone to reaction and the Fascisti, like its counterparts in Bavaria, are given a set back. Bulgaria is protesting against the intrigues of Mussolini in the Balkans while the Hungarians are finding it unpleasant to be compelled to live in a feudal pipe dream with a government that is neither, fish, flesh nor fowl. Bratiano of Roumania has died and with his passing has gone the last of the great families who ruled Roumania. Roumania's royal family can now play Gilbert and Sullivan roles unhampered by the magnates of the Bratiano group.

The political duel between Italy and France over naval matters and Mediterranean control has taken a new phase by Mussolini through his foreign minister having questioned France's right to the Iraq pipe line. Once more we have an illustration of the important part oil is playing in international politics.

PATRICK L. QUINLAN



"Say It With Books"



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The Giant of the Western World. By Francis Miller and Helen Hill. William Morrow & Co. \$3.00.

ALL the lands bordering on the North Atlantic, this book points out, have become a single unit for purposes of business, trade and finance. "The North-Atlantic"—the United States and Canada on one side, England and Continental Europe on the other—"has not only become a single market, but it is tending to become a single area of production." This new economic entity is the Giant of the Western World to which the title refers. The United States is, of course, the biggest part of this Giant, or at least is the more rapidly growing part.

Not only, however, has the economic coming of age of the United States had an effect on the economic life of the world and especially of Europe but it had great and disturbing political and social effects. The old European political system, which had dominated world politics for centuries, was broken up with the entry of America into the World War. As for social efforts, in 1928 Europe bought 110,635 American motor cars and paid sixty-five million dollars in royalties on American movies. The cocktail habit, "experimentalism in sex relations," free public libraries, social settlements, democratic educational systems, and the transplantation of Christian Science to European soil are among the other social effects of the "American invasion of Europe" which the authors mention.

Unfortunately, while the North Atlantic has become or tends rapidly to become an economic and social unit, a more intense nationalism has developed in the political realm and especially in the United States which practices a policy of holding aloof from direct participation in the political problems of Europe, and refuses to accept the responsibility which that would entail. With the development of an economic internationalism on one hand and a more intense political nationalism on the other, there arises serious danger that

Great Britain, the United States, and some Continental European combination may develop a deadly rivalry resulting in a world shattering war.

"The responsibility for this war," say the authors, "will be America's. She is proclaiming herself champion of peace



and releasing forces which make for war." By the same token America must assume responsibility for sponsoring a policy which will bring genuine international peace. Business men must take the initiative in directing the powerful economic forces at work in the North-Atlantic area into the channels of peaceful cooperation but government must help and guide. The foreign policy of the United States and other nations should be directed toward the establishment of an Inter-governmental Commerce Commission which would have for its task the solution of questions relating to the distribution of raw materials and the removal of restraints of trade, would serve as a board of eco-

omic strategy dealing with questions of rationalization and relations between competing industries, and would forecast depressions and advising governments regarding the means which might be taken to forestall their consequences. In the second place, the high seas must be internationalized, open at all times to "the ships of all nations and never closed except by international agreement for the purpose of preserving the world's peace." This is the main thesis of this book, which is carefully worked out with a wealth of material about our economic penetration of Europe on the one hand and the isolation policy of our State Department on the other. It is an important book for laborites.

Several serious questions must be raised, however. In the first place, the problem of world peace is presented solely with reference to the North-Atlantic nations. If the authors confine their attention to them in order to simplify their presentation and realize that they were leaving important factors such as the influence of Russia or upheavals in Oriental nations like India and China to one side, they should have made this clear.

In the second place, their idea seems to be that business men and diplomats must and perhaps can be relied upon to bring about political internationalism to match the economic internationalism which is so nearly realized. Next to nothing is said about the possible role of the Labor Movements of various nations in their conservative, Socialistic, or Communistic phases, in securing the maintenance of peace and establishing a genuine international economic regime. If the authors really think that labor is not going to play a significant role, in spite of Russia or the existence of a labor government in Great Britain or the fact that the present coalition government in Germany legislates for the most part by the grace of the Social Democratic Party, then they should have given reasons for this opinion. Can it be that being American and well acquainted with the American Labor Movement it did

not occur to them that organized labor could be interested in world problems or exercise any influence on their solution?

In the third place, the authors suggest that "in America the ultimate ideal of society is the creation of a consumer's communism, in which everyone has acquired the purchasing power to buy at least an inexpensive model of everything." This, they state, is one of the many points at which there is astonishing similarity between the tendency of capitalistic society in the United States and the aim of the communistic society in Russia. They go so far as to say, "What the Americans have achieved by slow social evolution over a period of generations the Russians are attempting to achieve through revolutionary methods by the pressure of brute force in a five-year programme."

Without entering here into any controversy as to what is or is not really happening in Russia, it needs surely be pointed out that though for the time being under special circumstances a large number of things in "inexpensive models" are at the disposal of Americans, the underlying structure and driving forces of American economic life are not those of a consumer's communism or a cooperative order. Furthermore, the tendency toward anything resembling a consumer's communism is constantly thwarted, as in the present crisis, for example, by the private-profit capitalistic mode of production which makes it utterly impossible to turn over to the mass of the people money to buy back what they have produced. In other words, utterly impossible to establish real consumer's communism.

Finally, toward the close of the book, the authors devote some space to the discussion of the quality of life which is being developed in this quantitative North-Atlantic civilization. They point out that economic considerations, "the necessities in industry" tend to govern in every sphere of life but that these considerations often do not harmonize with justice and that it is doubtful whether mankind will be permanently satisfied with the material and temporal values of such a civilization. This is an important line of inquiry and what the authors have to say about it is suggestive, but it seems somewhat out of line with the chief thesis of the book and satisfactory treatment would require much more space than is given it.

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A. J. MUSTE.

A GIANT IN AGONY

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by Nathaniel Peffer, The John Day
Company, New York, 306 pages, \$3.50.

THE dozen years after the World War will be remembered primarily for the changes they wrought within three of the most populous nations of the world, two of which also can lay claim to the most ancient civilizations. The weakening of empires because of the bleeding during 1914-1918 gave new impetus to the struggle for independence in India. The collapse of the ruling autocracy in Russia gave rise to an intense industrialization program under a communal social system in that country. To China the intervening years meant first a consciousness of its own power and a return of its national respect but with it also the ruin of its ancient civilization before its internal forces were capable of organizing themselves for the creation of a new order. What has been China of the past, what has happened to her during the long years of western penetration before the war, and the meaning of the chaos now existing, make up the burden of Nathaniel Peffer's tale.

After getting off to a poor start because of the author's desire to impress the reader with the complexity of the situation he describes, Mr. Peffer, through his sympathetic and intelligent handling of the subject, relates a logical, convincing and absorbing story of the disintegration that is now going on in China—a disintegration that started with the first missionary who set foot on China's soil and demanded superior rights in accordance with the laws of his native land. "The missionaries were the shock troops of cultural conquest." By demanding and obtaining extraterritorial rights for themselves the missionaries exposed the weakness of the Chinese government to the Chinese people. Native authority, which enjoyed prestige and power because of tradition rather than by its own ability and strength, was undermined and the country became a hunting ground not only for foreign imperialists, but also for any Chinaman who could feed and clothe enough soldiers to rule a given territory.

Essentially the chaos now reigning is the direct result of western machine economy with its unit, the individual, coming in conflict with a civilization based upon the family as the unit. While the ancient social structure with the family as its hub, required few laws for the regulation of individual and social behavior, the penetration of modern industrialism broke up family authority and

therefore all regulation. The author points out that in China the government reigned but did not rule. Family tradition took the place of social legislation. With the traditional authority of family dismembered there could be no other result but the dislocation of old moorings without any new landmarks to take their place.

"There is chaos indeed," says the author, "not as the word comes glib and hackneyed to the tongues of newspaper correspondents but in its true sense of formlessness."

Mr. Peffer goes into detail on the post-war attitude of the younger Chinese towards foreign governments who up to then took advantage of the country's weakness not only to exact physical tribute but cultural superiority.

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IF you take your poetry as a sedative, you won't like this second anthology of the rebel poets. You will find a good many things within the covers of this small book, quite appropriately red in color, but peace and rest are not among them. Well do the editors say that it should be suppressed, that it is full of mental TNT for blowing up Capitalism.

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give the impression that its philosophy is resignation. Quite the contrary.

There is not much gaiety but plenty of satirical humor. "Capital Joke" describes the dangers to which a structural worker is exposed and neatly sums up the story in the picture presented of him with the newspaper in which his lunch has been wrapped reading on his airy perch five hundred feet high that "Capital is better paid, indeed,

Than Labour, for a certain risk
Attends investment, and the sturdy
breed
Of financiers must always stand the
gaff
The chance of falling on a certain
street."

Many a hint one finds also of good psychology as in "A Ballad for the Bowery Mission Line":

"But none of us know how shrewd it is
To keep us in single file."

Or a telling phrase as in "Crowded Streets":

"The Streets, that syphon forth
the crowds."

Parody is seldom effective, but I confess to a sympathetic understanding of "Man in a Tree," which begins

"I know that I shall never see
As dark a sight as this tall tree,

To whose rough bark a man oppressed
Hangs with bowed head and silent
breast."

and ends
"Justice is sung by fools like me
But man hangs man upon a tree!"

Though it may not be outstandingly original in conception, the beauty of thought and excellence of technique of "Brotherhood" warrants its quotation in full.

"My brothers, lend your mind to the
unity
Of wild geese beating up a dusty sky;
Their potent wings in marvelous sym-
metry

Cleaving the air as one must signify
To you the force that lies in brother-
hood;

They are assurance that the hearts
which beat
As one with zeal for universal good
Shall never know the aloes of defeat.

What matter that the sky is vague and
wide?

United force bears on the compact
wedge;

What matter which grey breast shall
be the guide?

Each is a part and shares the privi-
lege:

Wild hearts in search of freedom, raise
your eyes,

And find your answer written on the
skies."

NAN MARTIN.

TRICKS TO SUCCESS

Strategy in Handling People, by E. T. Webb and John J. B. Morgan, Ph. D., Boulton, Pierce and Co., Chicago, \$3.

THIS is one of those success books. Profusely illustrated with pictures of men who have succeeded in a Rotarian sense, it urges the reader to emulate their example by learning a few principles of psychology, the inference being that a grasp of psychological laws, conscious or otherwise, brought these eminent persons to pinnacles of fame.

The authors secured the endorsements of the American Psychological Association for the basic plan of the book, and so we are presented with many "incidents from the careers of successful men" to show how they influenced other people to do as they wished.

Such chapters as "The Secret of Making People Like You," "An Easy Way to Make New Friends," "How to Make People Say Yes," and "Making People Glad to Work" are intriguing to one who wishes to become another Ford, Schwab, Hoover or Rockefeller. That shrewdness, cunning and even unscrupulousness have played a great part in the activities of the overlords of business will have to be admitted. As proof, in accordance with the authors' basic plan, there is the bit of strategy used by Andrew Carnegie as a boy when he was engaged in the business of raising rabbits.

"My first business venture," he said, "was securing my companions' services for a season as an employer, the compensation being that the young rabbits, when such came, should be named after them. . . . Many . . . were content to gather dandelions and clover for a whole season with me, conditioned upon this unique reward—the poorest return ever made to labor. . . ."

And the old rascal added, "I treasure the remembrance of this plan as the earliest evidence of organizing power upon the development of which my material success in life has hung."

Here is how James H. Foster, founder of the Hydraulic Pressed Steel Corporation of Cleveland, introduced welfare plans in his plant. He "took pains at the start to have the 'germ of the idea' implanted in the minds of a few workmen so that all of them started discussing it and considered it their own project by the time he was ready to act." Rather a neat way to fool his employees!

From the foregoing one would gather that this book has little value for those active in the Labor Movement, and yet the astute reader can obtain quite a number of valuable ideas. A labor organizer must know how to get along with people or he will fail. When, therefore, we are advised to approach people through their own personal experience and needs and to speak to them in their own language, we can endorse this unequivocally as sound, equally as effective in the world of labor as in the field of commerce. This also applies to suggestions for dealing with people who have a feeling of inferiority. But as a guide to the kind of success achieved by our captains of industry . . . thanks, we would rather not.

LEONARD BRIGHT.

The Case for India, by Will Durant, Simon and Schuster, New York, 228 pages, \$2.00.

HAVING visited India and having become aroused by what he saw, Will Durant discards the calm pose of the philosopher and historian and assumes the more militant role of a partisan on behalf of Indian independence. . . . "I am poorly qualified to write of India," he asserts in explanation of the philosopher turning agitator. . . . "If I write at all it is not only because I feel deeply about India, but because life cannot wait till knowledge is complete."

"The Case for India," is more of a bibliography on India than an original contribution to the literature on the subject. It is important as a summary of events since British subjects first planted themselves in India for organized exploitation.

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WHAT OUR READERS THINK

AN EX-SOLDIER SPEAKS

Dear Editor:

It was 12 years ago that the American soldiers emptied their rifles, a million soldiers laid down their arms. The cause for which they fought was won.

Thousands of guns ceased their belching horror and death. The red maelstrom of war was over. Under the emotional stress of this great war the great government of the United States found the ways and means to provide shoes and clothing for this great army. These are the men who gladly forsake their homes and loved ones to protect them from a foreign invasion. They went without fear or protest knowing that they and their loved ones would be well cared for by this land of plenty.

On Tuesday, Nov. 11, 1930, we had another armistice day. And what do we find? Another large army, but what an army—an army made up of men, women and children. In the pale ranks of this army are they who look with hopeless eyes upon their arch enemy, Poverty, Want and Misery. Is there no relief? Has not the government a reserve fund in back of it now? Surely this great government with all its resources will find work and relief.

But no, capital is deaf, dumb and blind. This army has no commissary department. There is no food, no clothing, no one to turn to except the grafting charities where eighty per cent of the money goes for overhead and 20 per cent goes for relief.

This is a beaten army. Where is the grateful government which made such lavish promises to the men who gave their all? And then, where are the men who remained at home and made millions while others fought for them? They can well afford to sit back in their easy chairs and reap the benefit of the blood and hardships of those who fought.

Are you men going to let these conditions exist or are you going to organize and fight for better conditions? There is only one way and that is through unemployment insurance. You owe it to your wives and children as well as yourselves to fight for this bill and see that it is passed.

MERTON DU MONTIER,
Brooklyn, N. Y.

ALL QUIET ON THE LABOR FRONT

Dear Editor:

I have been forced out of my union activities on behalf of those who are compelled to toil in this autocratic open-shop city. A few weeks ago I was re-

quested by Miami Lodge No. 20 of the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers, which, as you perhaps know, is out on strike and has been for 15 long months against the open shop edict put forth by the American Rolling Mill Co., to do something to get assistance from labor. Though this strike received the endorsement of the A. F. of L. in the Toronto Convention last year, this is to inform you that Labor, both state and national, has miserably failed to lend us any aid as officially sanctioned, although we have appealed and begged to send us at least speakers and organizers.

Our organization was the only organized group in the employ of the American Rolling Mill Company, a company which has branches in Zanesville, Columbus and Elyria, Ohio; Ashland, Ky., Butler, Pa., and also acquired the Sheffield Steel Co. of Kansas City, Mo., all open shop. It owns a fleet of ships on the Great Lakes, has ore holdings and coal mines.

What we need here is a stirring up all along the line for a general campaign for the organizing of all branches of industry. Since the steel companies were successful in destroying all union organization they put into effect a drastic reduction in force and also cuts in wages in all departments. The situation is dead ripe for a general organization movement, for the workers in other industries fare as badly as we in steel.

A. STEEL,
Middletown, O.

ACTION NEEDED

Dear Editor:

While unable to attend the Eastern Regional Conference held the first week of December, I nevertheless hope that from this conference progressives may gain more understanding of the present world wide dilemma, and gain a clear view and need of militant action.

Speeches alone, however, will not make our present reactionary trade union leaders change their position. Only by challenging their power, their control over the militant but misguided unionist can we hope for solidarity, justice and economic emancipation.

JOSEPH HUTTER,
Philadelphia, Pa.

SUFFERING PROVOKES THOUGHT

Dear Editor:

Living in the industrial section of "Middletown" and keeping very busy, I am able to learn many things about the psychological aspects of an industrial de-

pression that I did not know before.

The suffering about here is in some cases acute and we face a hard winter. On the whole, though, I think the depression will be beneficial. After all, a man is human by virtue of what he thinks rather than by virtue of what he eats. The mind of the wage earners are being gradually directed toward fundamental questions and whatever brings this about is beneficial, whatever the cost.

Among the things to be noted are:

(1) A lessening of the awe with which "captains of industry" are regarded. These gentry cannot escape being judged, that is, "can they make good?" The utter bewilderment, the deception, and the carelessness of the "captains of industry" is coming to be recognized by the workers about here to a most surprising extent.

(2) The apologies that are being offered for the depression on the ground that it is "world-wide" is serving to direct the attention of people here to the fact that economic questions are international in their scope. It has been our fashion out here in the Middletowns of the Middle West to forget that there is anything to the world other than the United States.

(3) A recognition of the importance of labor organizations as at present constituted. At present the molders employed by the local Lawn Mower Co. are on strike against a 26.5% cut in wages. I visit their pickets and am allowed in their meetings. They recognize that they are powerless without the support of the other workers in the plant. They are taking no steps to organize the other workers but at least they are thinking.

LLOYD M. COSGRAVE,
Muncie, Ind.

A GOOD WAY TO SPEND MONEY

Dear Editor:

I haven't got much money but I do not know of any better way of spending some of it than by renewing my subscription to Labor Age.

I like the way Labor Age handles the labor situation. It suits me just fine.

AUSTIN BOUDREAU,
Attleboro, Mass.

CORRECTION

In reviewing "Justice for Organized Workers" in last month's issue the publisher's address was erroneously stated. Louis Kirshbaum's address is Box 200, Station A, Brooklyn, N. Y.

Unionism in ● Receivership

(Continued from Page 6)

other union, also in New York City: Local 30 (Brooklyn) of the Operative Plasterers. This union is interesting especially because the officers made a fat living off the union membership itself; indeed, the opposition never charged that they took graft from the employers at all. They did it by jacking up their own emoluments and padding the union payroll with their friends and relatives.

Lucrative Pickings

A delegate from this union to the 1929 state conference of plasterers received from the union \$800 for his expenses. He spent \$21 on train fare to and from Syracuse, and his expenses for the week or so that the conference lasted amounted to about \$5.50 a day. He won \$200 playing poker and put the \$800 in the bank. At the same conference there were two other delegates from his local and three alternates, each of them receiving \$800 from the union. Four of the six got \$800 more for attending the annual convention of the state federation of labor, to which there were also three delegates and three alternates from the local; and those delegates who were at the same time business agents continued to draw their regular salaries of \$165 a week for the whole period of the sessions. In 1928, three officers of the local attended the two meetings mentioned and also the convention of the plasterers' international, and received \$2,250 each plus regular salaries for their arduous three weeks' work. These were some of the reasons why it cost \$121,000 to run a union of 2,000 for one year, and why all the officers except the business agents were recently forced out of office under threat of court action.

Now, what did the opposition do? Did it conduct a propaganda campaign and go to the ballot box on election day confident that its candidates would be elected and the grafters thrown out? It did; but it did more. It raised \$800 to pay for underworld protection at the time of the election. Its explanation was that no union faction can today hope to win a union election without such protection.

The tactic was successful in that the minority became the majority, and all the union officers except the business agents were replaced. But the former opposition was hoist by its own petard, according to ringleader

Joel Munro. For the new president made his peace with the underworld and the old business agents, and plans to remain in office a while himself. A plum worth picking indeed.

In New York City alone, a dozen fights against union autocracies are in progress at the time of writing. It has recently been charged in great detail by Louis Kirshbaum and not denied in detail by the union, that the Amalgamated Clothing Workers runs one of the most smoothly functioning autocracies on the map. Many of the fights by the rank and file have little chance of success because of the fact that their own leaders are fakers like the men they seek to oust.

No United Opposition

The big weakness of the fight against autocratic leadership is, however, the ideological barrenness of the union movement generally. The abolition of local self-rule in the New York locals of the musicians, electricians and engineers is directly traceable to the abuse of that self-rule by

the locals, which had tried to set up "job trusts" by limiting their memberships. Without a philosophy, without joint action between the groups in the several industries, the minority factions struggle along blindly within minority faction. The cures for democracy's admitted faults are not always easy to find. In many unions reorganization on more modern lines is urgently needed; and unless the membership takes the job in its own hands, and comes forward with a carefully worked out plan, it will not be long before those unions too slip into receivership. But for the rank and file to undertake such a big job, mutual counsel and encouragement are necessary. Only a live, functioning militant organization over the whole field of trade-unionism, an organization conscious of its mission to supplant altogether the present boss control of society, an organization stripped of the craft narrowness which has rendered the union movement impotent to solve its most pressing problems, will furnish the necessary backing.

A STATEMENT ON RUSSIA

A great effort to establish a planned economy in the interests of the masses of producers and not for the benefit of any privileged class is under way in Russia. Some years ago prophecies that the Soviet regime would be ousted from political control were frequently heard but finally became absurd in view of the stubborn refusal of that regime to collapse. Prophecies of the failure of Russian economic plans are now as frequently made by certain interests, though it seems clear even in the midst of the welter of conflicting reports coming out of Russia that astonishing strides have been made toward the accomplishment of the Five Year Plan.

Not only are the propaganda factories kept busy but under various guises capitalist and imperialist interests are constantly leveling attacks on Russia. Hamilton Fish spends the taxpayers' money in conducting investigations, holding dramatic hearings, and with great labor bringing forth "information" about Russia as well as about Communism in the United States which might all have been found in the pages of the Daily Worker and news columns of the New York Times.

Vice President Matthew Woll of the A. F. of L. blithely suggests an embargo against all goods coming out of Soviet Russia, seemingly oblivious to the fact that this is tantamount to declaration of war.

In view of these developments the labor men and women and labor sym-

pathizers in this Eastern Regional Conference of the C. P. L. A. reaffirm their conviction that the experiment in a planned economy under workers control being worked out in Soviet Russia is of the utmost significance for the workers everywhere, their faith in the ultimate success of that experiment and their firm determination to oppose all efforts on the part of the militarists and imperialists to destroy or weaken it.

It is not necessary to hold that Russians, who are after all human, make no mistakes, and possibly serious ones. It is of the utmost importance, however, that all honest and militant laborites keep their sense of proportion in the present crisis. We brand as traitors to the world labor movement those who under present conditions join in the hue and cry against Russia by which capitalists throughout the world are seeking to distract attention from the horrible depression into which capitalism has plunged the workers.

The downfall or the serious weakening of Soviet Russia would be a serious blow not only to radicalism but to every form of liberalism in this country and throughout the world, and the signal for black and bloody fascist reaction.

We call for recognition of Soviet Russia by the United States as sound business policy in this era of depression.

We call upon all workers to maintain a united front in defense of the Russian experiment against every attack by capitalists and imperialists.

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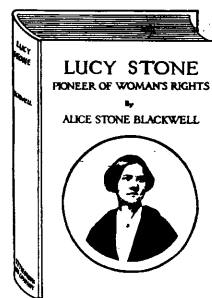
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By

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