

# Labor Age

## PROGRESSIVES ON THE MARCH

THE CONFERENCE

PURPOSE OF THE CONFERENCE FOR PROGRESSIVE  
LABOR ACTION

“To carry on research, educational work and agitation among the workers, both organized and unorganized, in industry and agriculture, in order to stimulate in the existing and potential labor organizations a progressive, realistic, militant labor spirit and activity in all its phases—trade union, political, cooperative and educational.”

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# Following the Fight

With Comment Thereon

By LOUIS FRANCIS BUDENZ

## OUR AIM:

To Educate the Unorganized—To Stimulate the Organized  
To Unity, Militancy and Intelligent Action.

## “For Progressive Labor Action”

*A Sorely-Needed Organization Arrives On the Scene*

**W**E are happy to announce that the inevitable has happened. The Progressive-minded laborites of this country have organized for action. In a two-day session in New York City they hammered out a program of an organization which the time sorely demands.

For many moons it has been apparent that the Age of Gigantic Corporations and Huge Machinery cannot be reckoned with effectively on the basis of the business-unionized officials of the A. F. of L. In the highly skilled trades, the 5-day week has been won for thousands of workers, it is true. But the growing needs of the millions have been allowed to remain unanswered, and a complacent, lethargy has even marked craft union relationships. The National Civic Federation—boss-controlled enemy of the workers—has been allowed free leeway to bore from within to its heart's content. Defeatism has grown, with no effort to stem its ill effects.

The Communists, presented with a golden opportunity for service to the workers by this state of affairs, have miserably muffed the ball. They have aroused the unorganized in Passaic and Gastonia; but they have given no promise of leaving anything permanent after them, and they have resorted to a campaign of vituperation and strikebreaking that is not helpful to progress, to say the least. It is only a matter of time until they will pass out of the picture, torn asunder by naive doctrinaire differences.

What has been needed for some time has been a movement of workers, who honestly want to get down to brass tacks, who are disgusted with the National Civic Federation domination of the Labor Movement, and who are familiar with the American scene. That need is now filled. The Conference for Progressive Labor Action enters the field—with no illusions, with no false hopes, but with the determination to get into action for the advancement of the American working class. This it will strive to do through every available working class avenue—industrial, poli-

tical, educational and cooperative. It is a worthy addition to the many international efforts of the workers to achieve a full measure of freedom and power.

The agitation of this Conference will quicken the trade unions. It will stimulate the organized to face their problems and to act upon them. It will give hope and daring to the unorganized. It will lay the grounds for aggressive industrial advance and for independent political activities. It has begun well with the creation of a research bureau and with a move for genuine workers education on a national scale. The discussion showed that it can reach unity of thought through unfettered consideration of the many problems knocking at Labor's doors. A new fighting spirit in the Movement is certain to come out of its endeavors. For in the line of Progressive Action lies the future triumph of American Labor.

### A MERRY TASK

**T**HAT Progressives have a merry task ahead of them, no one can doubt. That makes it all the more interesting. “Prosperity” continues to groan in every item of economic news. Mr. Hoover's Committee on Unemployment finds us doing very well. Our giant corporations will say “Amen” to that with gusto. A long line of figures shows their swelling dividends. “Prosperity” goes on, nevertheless, to give to millions of our workers less than \$25 a week in wages. It presents such slave-like conditions as the revolts in the South have brought into the limelight.

Worse than that, it has strengthened all the rigamarole of Autocracy. Wisconsin is the first state, this last month, to declare the “yellow dog” contract null and void because against public policy. In 47 other states that badge of involuntary servitude can still be imposed upon the workers. And there is no assurance yet, that the Sacred Cow at Washington—our scrofulous Supreme Court—will not take occasion to declare that Legislatures cannot nullify “Yellow Doggery.”

During the month of May the Sacred Cow has taken another stab at the people. Playing the role it has always played as servile tool of the Exploiting Interests, the Supreme Court solemnly O. K.'s an immediate \$20,000,000 grab on the part of the railways and paves the way for a real mess in the future. The workers will pay tribute on this \$20,000,000 grab in much of the food and clothes which they consume. Rates will rise, adding to the cost of everything.

With all the dull mystery with which many Supreme Court decisions are clothed, that august body opens the door to every fictitious method of valuation which the carriers may hit upon. It apparently does not care what the name of the method may be, just so it gives more and more to the railroad corporations. That in a nutshell, robbed of the hocus-pocus that the Sacred Cow has thrown about it, is the intent and meaning of the O'Fallon decision. Undoubtedly, the railroads believe in Hooverian "Prosperity." The Supreme Court is packed with Harding-Hoover-Coolidge men. Once the servant of the Slave Power, it is now the lapdog of the Big Corporate Interests.

There we have, out of the current news, snatches of the present "Prosperity." The time has come for strikes, red hot ones; for mass picket lines; for nullification of injunctions; for that workers' education that will make us all more effective in this fight; for Labor political action based on Labor's determination to secure power for itself. There is the job cut out for the Progressives.

### MATTHEW WOLL REPLIES

**S**OMETIME ago the Bulletin of the Federal Council of Churches printed extracts from "The Challenge to Progressives." Vice-President Matthew Woll of the American Federation now makes use of that publication in answering the criticism, made in the Challenge, of the present methods of A. F. of L. leadership.

Admitting that "there has been some slackness in labor union enthusiasm in recent years," Vice-President Woll attributes this "to the wave of relative prosperity that has been sweeping the country." That is scarcely a sufficient answer. "Prosperity" has been used as an alibi by those very same organizers and officials who use a "slump" as an excuse for not organizing the unorganized. The fact is, that the present policies of the A. F. of L. do not effectively challenge the company unions, and are not of the type that arouse the enthusiasm of the workers. Caution and fear to move have been the earmarks of the official movement.

When we say that, we say it with full knowledge that the Machine Age presents peculiar difficulties; the real stumbling blocks are the might of the corporations and the rapid displacement

of men that is possible in machinized industries. But the A. F. of L. has not even begun to face this problem. The study on company unionism that it was to have made, was never made. Even such a comparatively simple matter as that has been left to independent labor research.

When a really helpful agency arises, that would prove able to cooperate in such a task, the A. F. of L. proceeds to kick it out the back door. Oppression and suppression become the order of the day. Brookwood's case stands out eloquently in that respect. If the A. F. of L. officials had been alive to the needs of the day, they would never have committed such a ridiculous outrage on the Labor Movement. Without Brookwood and those who have drawn inspiration from it, workers' education in America becomes a joke. Now we see, in the case of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters, that mere attendance at Brookwood—this helpful institution—is occasion for being expelled from the union!

If this policy continues, then workers in the unions will be in no better place, spiritually and morally, than the company unions. Fear may prevent the unionized workers from speaking out their minds, but it will not aid the movement to grow.

Beyond that, what has the A. F. of L. done to overcome those difficulties which Vice-President Woll admits are most harmful to the unions? It has fallen in with the now discredited Mitten-Mahon plan, and at one time it was actually "treason" to speak against that company-unionizing scheme. The A. F. of L. almost adopted the Bar Association plan for wiping out strikes, until the Progressive revolt was heard from. It has been more intent on getting into the good graces of its enemies than in preparing plans for battle. A striking example of that is the childish attempt to sell unionism to the auto magnates, when not one worker in the industry was organized in the A. F. of L. unions. It has done nothing at all of a real character for social insurance, which would be one of the greatest weapons against the industrial insurance of the anti-union employers. Indeed, it must be said ironically enough, that the Fraternal Order of Eagles has done one hundred times as much for old age pensions—so vitally required today—as has the American Federation of Labor. Some State Federations are fighting for old age pensions in the State Legislatures; but on every occasion there appears, against these Federations and with the bosses, the representatives of the National Civic Federation, of which Vice-President Woll is Acting President.

In our next issue the Woll reply will be considered, item by item. But in the matters presented here, we submit, are things well worth thinking over—by the A. F. of L. leadership itself. Reform, it is clear, is urgently demanded.

# C. P. L. A. Organizes

## Deliberations and Accomplishments of Two Day Conference

By LEONARD BRIGHT

**C**HARACTERIZED by A. J. Muste, who presided over its sessions, as marking the inception of the most powerful opposition to official labor policies in the history of the American Federation of Labor, the Conference for Progressive Labor Action was launched on May 25th and 26th at the Labor Temple, 242 East Fourteenth Street, New York City. Present at the birth of this new organization were 151 men and women, active workers in the labor movement, most of them members of some of the largest unions in the American Federation of Labor. They came from 31 cities and 18 states.

The conference which grew out of "The Challenge to Progressives" which was published as an editorial statement in the February, 1929 issue of LABOR AGE, adopted a clear cut statement of policy. This statement analyzed the present deplorable situation facing the labor movement, and without mincing any words, declared that it has not been met by the present officials of the trade union movement, nor by the Communists.

President William Green of the A. F. of L. said recently that the Labor Progressives reminded him of "a rabbit spitting in the face of a bull dog." Judging from the spirit of the Conference and the resolutions adopted, the President of the American Federation of Labor may discover that this "spitting rabbit" has turned out to be a young lion, full of courage, conscious of its inherent strength, whose challenging roar will be heard throughout the land in every hall where workers meet, demanding progressive, realistic and militant labor action.

The Conference, for instance, showed that it would not permit President Green nor the Executive Council of the A. F. of L. to hand American Labor over to the militarists without a fight. A strong resolution was adopted condemning the acceptance of an invitation to review the West Point cadet corps. Another resolution protested vigorously against President Green's participation in a radio program conducted by COLLIER's magazine, against which the International Typographical Union has been fighting for years.

In opening the Conference on the afternoon of May 25th, A. J. Muste stated the purpose for which those present had met and declared:

"We here must resolve to create a new movement, to infuse the rank and file of the A. F. of L. with courage and determination to cope with the new problems of industry and conquer all obstacles which the subtle new capitalism raises. There is no question of our loyalty to the American Federation of Labor. We are more loyal to the A. F. of L. than many of those who attack us. We will show our loyalty to the A. F.

of L. by fighting for the principles of progressive trade unionism."

Tom Tippet, Louis F. Budenz and Clinton S. Golden reported vividly on their impressions of the labor movement as they found it in the South, Middle West and the West.

The chairman announced the appointment of the following committees:

**Policy and organization**—Abraham Epstein, Carl Holderman, A. J. Kennedy, J. M. Budish, Abraham Lefkowitz, Louis F. Budenz, Edmond Gottesman, Leonard Craig, Mary Goff, Andrew Vance, J. Armstrong, George Gooze, James Oneal, Eli Cohen, J. B. S. Hardman and Ludwig Lore.

**Resolutions**—Israel Mufson, Henry R. Linville, Louis Stanley, Robert Machin, Walter E. Davis, S. Bakeley, Charles V. Maute, Earl White, Edward P. Clarke and Mrs. Etta O'Neill.

**Program and Activities**—Clinton S. Golden, Justus Ebert, Frank Morris, Josephine Colby, Nathaniel Spector, Frank Manning, Tom Tippet, W. Elliston Chalmers, Sara Fredgant, A. Pomeroy, J. Kucher, Mary Hillyer, Algernon Lee, Gordon Ward, Frank Crosswaith, B. Noskin and Leon Koenig.

**Attendance Committee**—Leonard Bright, Louis Stanley, Frank Manning, Jennie D. Carliph.

**Press and Publicity**—Edward Levinson, Harvey O'Connor, Helen G. Norton.

### Members of 33 Unions

At the dinner that evening in the Teutonia Restaurant, 158 Third Avenue, the chairman of the attendance committee announced that there were 151 members of the conference present. They came from the following states:

Colorado, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Texas, Washington and Wisconsin.

They included members of the following educational classes and institutions:

Baltimore Labor College, Barnard Summer School, Brookwood Labor College, Bryn Mawr Summer School, League for Industrial Democracy, Philadelphia Labor College, Pittsburgh Labor College, Rand School, Seattle Labor College, Women's Trade Union League, Workmen's Circle and Young People's Socialist League.

He reported further that the conferees were active members or officers of the following unions (although not representing unions, as no organizations were requested to participate):

Auto Workers Union, Barbers Union, International Brotherhood of Boiler Makers, Bookkeepers, Stenographers and Accountants Union, Cloth Hat, Cap, and Millinery

## LABOR AGE

Workers International Union, Amalgamated Clothing Workers, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Hod Carriers Union, Jewelry Workers International Union, Laundry Workers International Union, International Ladies Garment Workers, Amalgamated Lithographers, Longshoremen's Union, International Association of Machinists, Mine, Mill and Smelter Union, United Mine Workers, Brotherhood of Painters, Brotherhood of Paving Cutters Union, Plumbers and Steam Fitters Union, Pocket Book Workers Union, Press Writers Union, Brotherhood of Railway Clerks, Brotherhood of Railway Signalmen, International Seamen's Union, Shoe Workers Union, Associated Silk Workers, Suitcase and Bag Workers, American Federation of Teachers, United Textile Workers, International Typographical Union, Tapestry Workers Union, Upholsterers International Union and Women's Trade Union League.

### Inspiring Addresses

A. J. Muste, the toastmaster, called on Frank Crosswith, former special organizer of the Pullman Porters' Union, Mark Starr of the National Council of Labor Colleges, England; Franz Longville of the Belgian Labor College and Howard Williams of the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party for short talks of greetings and encouragement.

Norman Thomas appealed to the conferees for a collection, announcing that about \$125 was needed to cover the expenses of the Conference. Within a few minutes \$124.41 was collected, and \$10 additional was pledged.

Mr. Thomas's eloquent talk was followed with rapt attention. He referred to the news just received that the workers at Elizabethton had voted to return to work without winning improved conditions. He thought an opportunity has been lost, due to the fact that machinery is not on hand for the proper support of striking workers in the basic industries.

The job of this Conference, said Mr. Thomas, is to "put fire in the boiler." "We are not here to organize a new labor union," he declared. "We are opposed to dictating to the unions. We must organize to get a new spirit."

The Sunday morning session, May 26th, opened with A. J. Muste in the chair.

Israel Mufson, secretary of the Philadelphia Labor College, chairman of the Resolution Committee was the first to report. The Conference adopted the following resolutions besides those already mentioned:

Commending the Railroad Brotherhoods and pledging support to them in their fight for the six-hour day.

Condemning the United States Supreme Court decision in the O'Fallon case, "as one in accord with its traditional anti-social policy."

Designating LABOR AGE as the official organ of the Conference for Progressive Labor Action.

Instructing the incoming National Executive Committee to do everything in its power to help free Tom Mooney, Warren K. Billings and the Centralia prisoners.

Declaring its opposition to the expulsion of union members for opinions on matters of policy.

A resolution that the Conference send a fraternal delegate to the Trade Union Educational League convention to be held at Cleveland, Ohio, on August 31, was defeated overwhelmingly—only two or three voices being heard in favor of it.

The report of the committee on policy was followed closely. Presented by its able secretary, Abraham Lefkowitz, only a few minor suggestions were offered until that section of the report dealing with the Conference's attitude toward the A. F. of L. leadership and the Communists was reached. Besides criticizing the Communists for ignoring realities and undermining the faith of the rank and file, the committee had added that the Communists "are crippling labor by setting up party controlled dual unions." An amendment by Tom Tippet to strike out these words precipitated a lively discussion which lasted more than two hours. The discussion was closed by A. J. Muste who stated that the attitude of Progressive laborites on the question of dual unions could not be condensed into one or two sentences—it required clarification and amplification—and suggested that this be done at some future time. Tom Tippet's amendment was carried by a vote of 82 to 25. Another amendment to strike out all reference to the Communists was overwhelmingly defeated—only 8 voting in favor.

The statement of policy appears on page 6.

### Organization Plan

With the statement of policy disposed of, the Conference quickly adopted the report on Organization, which follows:

#### I. Name

This organization shall be known as the Conference for Progressive Labor Action.

#### II. Purpose

The object of this organization is to carry on research, educational work and agitation among the workers, both organized and unorganized in industry and agriculture, in order to stimulate in the existing and potential labor organizations a progressive, realistic, militant labor spirit and activity in all its phases—trade union, political, cooperative and educational.

#### III. Membership

A. Active membership shall be of two kinds: individual and group.

B. Individuals belonging to a labor or farm organization—trade union, cooperative or political—who are in agreement with the aims of this association and desirous of actively forwarding its purposes, shall be eligible for membership.

C. Labor or farm organizations such as trade union, cooperative societies, workers' educational classes or institutions, farmers' unions, labor political organizations, etc., shall be eligible for active membership.

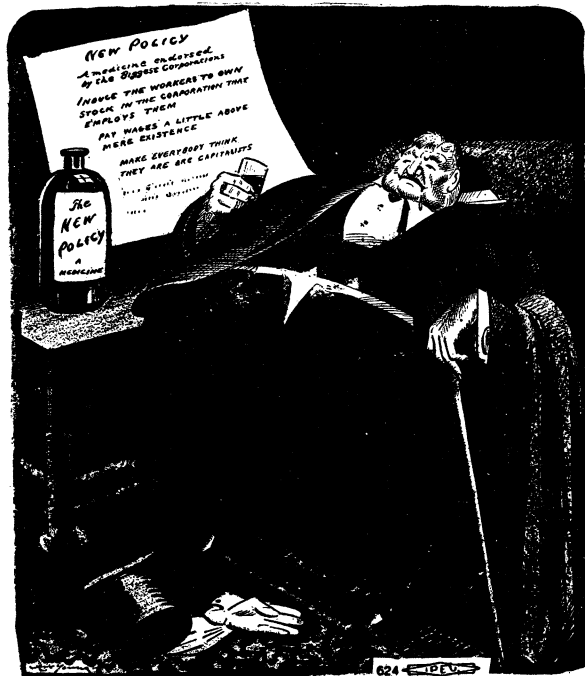
#### IV. Membership Dues

A. Membership dues for individuals and groups shall be decided by the National Executive Committee.

#### V. Officers

A. The officers of the Conference for Progressive

## THE "NEW CAPITALISM"



More subtle than the old, but it does not fool Progressive laborites, who have organized to give it combat, effectively.

Labor Action shall consist of a chairman, two vice-chairmen, a secretary and a treasurer. There shall be a National Executive Committee of twenty-six to be elected at this conference, and an additional national committee of 100 to be selected by the National Executive Committee. Seven members of the National Executive Committee shall constitute a quorum.

B. The Chairman, Vice-Chairmen and Treasurer shall perform the duties usually discharged by such officers.

C. The Secretary shall be in active charge of carrying out the policies and work of the organization as determined by the National Executive Committee.

D. The National Executive Committee shall have full power to carry on the work of the association, to administer its funds and determine eligibility for membership of individuals or groups, to appoint organizers or other workers, to form local groups if deemed advisable, etc. In determining important questions of policy it may consult the national committee of 100 either by referendum or by calling a meeting of the committee.

E. Vacancies in the National Executive Committee shall be filled by the Committee.

F. The National Executive Committee shall elect its own officers.

### Program and Activities

It also approved of the following report on Program and Activities, presented by Clinton S. Golden, chairman of the committee:

We believe that with the establishment of a national

organization and a functioning national executive committee there are many forms of useful services and cooperation that this organization can render to those sincerely and genuinely interested in a vigorous aggressive labor movement whether they be members of existing organizations or at present in the ranks of the unorganized workers.

We believe it to be practical and desirable to have a broad general program of activity sufficiently elastic to permit being useful in a variety of fields and in situations that cannot be altogether foreseen at this moment.

The program which we are recommending is intended to serve as a guide to the National Executive Committee which will be elected by this conference and which will function until such time as further organization plans are perfected. The Committee therefore recommends the following:

1. Promotion of, interest in, and organization of, regional conferences in cooperation with individuals and groups with whom we are now in contact or with whom contacts may in the future be established.

2. The working out of an understanding with the Labor Publication Society whereby LABOR AGE, which has rendered such valiant and helpful service in the past to the progressive movement, be made the official medium of expression of this organization and its circulation be extended as far as possible to all those interested in our work.

3. The formation of local committees and groups to carry on educational work of a broad general character designed to promote a better understanding of the problems of labor organization and activity both on the economic and political field.

4. The preparation and publication of pamphlets, literature and study course outlines that will supply groups and individuals interested with useful information and for propaganda purposes.

5. Development of research activities, the results of which may be available for use in pamphlets, study course outlines and publicity.

6. Establishing contacts with competent speakers and lecturers in agreement with our policies and arranging in cooperation with local affiliated committees or individuals for meetings to be addressed by such speakers and lecturers.

7. Encouraging local affiliated groups and individuals to be helpful in strikes, lockouts and wherever workers are engaged in struggles.

8. Wherever possible encourage and assist trade union members to advocate militant progressive labor policies and secure their adoption by local unions, central bodies and organized groups.

9. Wherever possible secure contacts with unorganized workers and interest them in forming study and discussion groups to consider problems of organization both economic and political and extend such help and direction as possible to them.

10. We recommend that the Executive Committee take steps to bring about co-ordination of the activities of various workers' educational groups now in existence which are in accord with the policies and purposes of this organization.



Here are the members of the National Executive Committee elected by the Conference:

J. H. Maurer, A. J. Muste, Louis F. Budenz, Leonard Bright, Andrew Vance, Frank Crosswaith, Justus Ebert, Carl Holderman, A. J. Kennedy, Abraham Lefkowitz, Henry R. Linville, Israel Mufson, Charles Maute, Norman Thomas, N. Spector, J. B. S. Hardman, Frank Manning, James Oneal, Frank Morris, Clinton Golden, Carl Johanntges, Walter Wilson, Winston Dancis, Leonard Craig, Joseph Schwartz and Nellie Lithgow.

Just before the Conference adjourned a motion that a message of greeting should be cabled to the British Labor Party was carried enthusiastically.

The Conference according to the plan of organiza-

tion adopted left it to the National Executive Committee to carry on the work. On June 6th the Committee will hold its first meeting. It faces a great responsibility, for much depends upon its collective ability, common sense and judgment. But more than that, the success of the movement depends upon the support of the organization will receive from progressive laborites throughout the country. If McAlister Coleman has caught the spirit aright, when in the NEW LEADER, he says: "'Rarin' to go,"—that's the attitude with which all of us left the last session of the Conference for Progressive Labor Action," then there is every reason for encouragement regarding the future.

## Statement of Policy of the C. P. L. A.

AMERICA is the richest and "most prosperous" country in the world with a national annual income approaching 100 billion dollars or several times as great as the next richest nation. Along with this unprecedented prosperity for the owners and manipulators of capital, millions of workers exist on less than a living wage. In the southern textile mills men and women toil twelve hours daily for a weekly pittance of twelve dollars. Similar conditions prevail in other industrial areas. Almost every effort of the worker to secure a larger share of his increased productivity or to stabilize employment—even under the most conservative leadership—is met with the most brutal clubbing by state guards or the terrorism of local or state police in complete disregard of constitutional guarantees.

The increased use of labor saving machinery accompanied by speed-up methods and other industrial changes is intensifying the ills from which American workers are suffering. Skilled and competent workers are being thrown upon the industrial scrap heap as martyrs to capitalist greed before the age of 45. Thus hundreds of thousands of workers face more acute unemployment and old age without any means of support. To meet this menacing situation the organized labor movement offers opposition to "paternalism," but presents no inclusive constructive program.

Why must the productive forces of America—whether in the factory, in the mine or on the farm—suffer intolerable treatment and unbearable working conditions? Because they are not organized well enough either on the industrial, the political, the cooperative or the educational field; because they have been educated to believe in the viewpoint of the employers rather than of the workers. Is it any wonder that they mistakenly believe that the present system holds out hope for the worker? Is it any wonder that they look with complacency upon the exploitation of workers of other lands? Is it any wonder they still believe in the myth of rugged "individualism" instead of labor cooperation which is the basis of the labor movement.

This situation has not been met by the present offi-

cial of the trade union movement, largely dominated by the boss psychology of the National Civic Federation, nor have the Communists shown any greater ability to cope with the situation. On the contrary, like the A. F. of L. leaders, they have ignored realities, have shown a complete ignorance of American labor and its psychology and have undermined the faith of the rank and file in the possibilities of the organized labor movement.

How then can we induce the workers of our country to think, and to act as workers? Primarily through working class education for action. The responsibility for this educational task must be assumed by progressive, militant elements who dare face realities, who are conversant with American conditions, who do not feel that vituperation is a substitute for effective organization and who stand ready to dedicate their lives to the labor movement and to serve it in every field—economic, political, cooperative, educational and social.

To this end we call upon progressives to organize for the achievement of the following:

1. To educate the workers to demand a complete program of social insurance to meet the problems created by unemployment, old age dependency, sickness and accident.

2. To help, in a constructive spirit, every honest effort to extend the sphere of trade union influence and effectiveness. This can be done by promoting and aiding in a more effective organization—along voluntary industrial lines—of the skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers in basic industries so that they may successfully cope with centralized and militant company-union capital. This labor activity must be accompanied by an aggressive fight on the political field and on the picket line; by an attack not only upon the power of the courts to issue injunctions in industrial disputes, but also upon their attempts to cripple unionism and to enslave labor through yellow dog contracts.

3. To encourage uncensored working class education not only to enlighten workers so that they may see clearly through the poisonous propaganda like that of the power trust, but also to encourage them to think clearly and fearlessly about important economic and political problems.

4. To help establish, and to bring to the fullest possible development, genuine farmer and labor cooperatives in order to strengthen labor consciousness, to develop labor solidarity and to give the workers an effective and necessary training in industrial democracy.

5. As Labor's effectiveness in achieving both its immediate and ultimate aims depends to a considerable degree upon the control of governmental agencies, we urge independent labor party action as a substitute for the useless non-partisan policy which results in the selection of public officials completely dominated by employers, who seek to crush and to enslave the workers of America, as they are now trying to do in Tennessee, North and South Carolina and elsewhere.

6. The new industrial revolution and the more subtle activities of big business which confuse unenlightened workers, necessitate a scientific study of labor and political problems and labor technique. Hence we recommend the establishment of a centralized research agency to make studies and to prepare literature to offset the misleading influence of the governing class and their intellectual hirelings.

American labor faces a grave crisis. On the one hand it must combat entrenched capitalism which dominates our millionaire cabinet, our legislative halls and the courts through their control of both dominant political parties—a control used to cripple labor's struggle for the right to live as free men and women. On the other hand, fooled by propaganda, disguised under the cloak of patriotism, the workers are induced to lay down their lives that imperialistic and aggressive capitalism may accumulate untold millions by exploiting their fellow workers in other lands.

We urge the workers to demand the wealth they create; to strike for their rights as of old; to give industrial battle whenever necessary. Far better to strive for industrial justice than to die in foreign lands in order that powerful American corporations may make untold billions through exploitation. Only through intelligent cooperation expressed on the industrial, political and educational fields can the workers bring in a new society embodying the age long ideals of all great leaders and teachers—social and industrial justice.

## Progressives On the March

### *Prospects and Problems of the Campaign*

By A. J. MUSTE

WHETHER the Conference for Progressive Labor Action held in New York on May 25-26 marks an epoch in the history of the American labor movement or not depends on many things, over some of which progressive laborites have control and over some of which they do not have any control. Time will tell about this, as about many other things. Sometimes men have great expectations, only to find that a mountain in labor has brought forth a mouse. On the other hand, "if hopes are dupes, fears may be liars," as the poet said. Sometimes we fail to get results because our faith is small, our courage falters, our energy and nerve are too scant.

That must not happen with this movement for progressive laborism. It must not happen because the workers of this country desperately need a militant and realistic labor movement.

It means a great deal that militant progressives in the labor movement dare to hold up their heads again, to make their voices heard, to meet in order to plan for action.

It means a great deal that the Conference was able to define the position of militant laborites clearly when it came to the fundamental and essential points. In plain terms it criticized the failure of the A. F. of L. administration to organize the unorganized in the basic industries, to push the campaign for social insurance, to develop effective independent labor political action.

On the other hand, the Conference made it clear that it is not the Communist party in another disguise. It

did not hesitate to criticize Communist tactics. It criticized, not with bitterness, not with the idea of making criticism of Communism an excuse for inaction, but criticized nevertheless, definitely and firmly.

Surely, it is bound to prove a healthy thing for American labor that progressives should refuse any longer tacitly to line up with reactionaries, that reactionary policies should receive criticism at the hands of men and women whose loyalty to the labor movement cannot be questioned and who do not feel that "vituperation is a substitute for effective organization."

It means a great deal that a group of progressives and radicals got together and talked about America, not Great Britain or Russia or China or Timbuctoo! Not that this group had a nationalistic spirit—far from it. But the members talked and acted in a realization that we have to deal first of all with American conditions.

#### Looking Ahead

It is not, however, the Conference which is in the past that is important now, but the future which lies before us. How can we meet the opportunity to develop progressive laborism in the United States? That is the great question. An extremely radical organ in commenting on the Conference made the sarcastic observation that the Conference had decided "to organize the unorganized—into study classes!" As Shakespeare or somebody like that has said, many a true word is spoken in jest. One young militant worker, when he

saw that statement, said: "That's just what the workers do need, to be organized into."

Research, education and agitation are precisely the tasks to which the Conference will address itself (it is not organizing a new trade union center and it is not in the business of forming nuclei to "capture" unions). We are not ashamed of the fact that research is to be one of our first jobs. The fact that too many labor leaders have lost the desire to organize, have grown indifferent or lazy or dishonest, is not the only reason why we have no organization in the basic industries, and have no political party of labor in the United States today. Ask anybody who has tried to organize in recent years whether the job is easy. The fact is that the "new capitalism" in America is skillful and subtle as well as powerful. Many an honest, active worker has tried all sorts of schemes to organize, only to find that they did not work under the new conditions. We have to study with painstaking care how we can organize, how workers can actually advance their standards. Otherwise, all our energy and enthusiasm and self-sacrifice will go to waste.

### "The Citadel of Capitalism"

There is another reason why education and agitation work is absolutely essential. A young auto worker who has made efforts to organize his fellow workers and was at one time very hopeful of getting speedy results, now is not so certain of quick results. He thinks that the chief reason why it is so difficult to organize is that "the citadel of capitalism is in the minds of the workers." The workers themselves accept the system. They want to be "like the boss." If at times they rebel, they don't know how to make their rebellion effective. This situation in turn is due largely to the fact that the agencies of propaganda which play upon the worker incessantly use such things as the power trust controlled newspapers, the movies, radios, etc., all of which seek to blind him to the real facts of American industry, society and politics, and to make him believe that he is a highly privileged and important member of the biggest nation on earth.

In a certain western state there is a central labor union which is pointing the way to what needs to be done, in very practical fashion. This central labor union reports that it is making a survey of the entire county in which it is situated "from a trade union standpoint." They are making a survey of local unions, their membership, the number of trade council affiliations, the number of unorganized workers in various trades in the vicinity; of the union auxiliaries, workers' educational and social activities being carried on; of the trade union publicity, labor press and other labor publications that are available or might be made available for their members. They are making a survey also of the fair and unfair products produced or sold in the county.

They have begun by placing in the public library and calling to the attention of the individual members such organs as the American Federationist, the American Teacher, Advance, Brookwood Review, Labor Age, Locomotive Engineers' Journal, Electrical Workers'

### OFFICIAL LABOR GREETES MILITARISM



Pres. William Green shakes hands with Major General Smith of the Military Academy at West Point, where he and members of the A. F. of L. Executive Council reviewed the cadets—a militaristic gesture condemned by the Conference for Progressive Labor Action.

Journal, Montana Labor News, Railway Clerks' Journal and Labor.

After their survey has gotten under way, they will hold a conference to study the results and to take steps toward establishing a non-resident labor college.

The example of this C. L. U. illustrates another point which it is important to keep in mind in connection with the progressive program. Education is sometimes used as a device for putting off action. Something needs desperately to be done, but there are difficulties in the way, or somebody is interested in preventing effective action, and so it is suggested that there must be more education first, and that is as far as it ever gets. But education can also be something which leads up to and right into action—intelligent, effective action. The people confront an obstacle, a problem, a task. At first they evade it or just "hot air" about it perhaps. At last they really "put their mind to it." They study the situation. They learn what precisely can be done about it. Then they set to work to do it. That is the kind of education the Conference for Progressive Labor Action has in mind.

Whether the movement can thrive depends, as has already been suggested, upon a great many factors. But it depends chiefly after all upon whether the militant and realistic elements in the American labor movement have the energy, courage and intelligence to measure up to the opportunities and needs confronting them.

The Conference sent greetings to the British Labor Party, then in the midst of the General Election. A member of the British Labor Party who was present reminded us that a much smaller handful of people laid the foundation for the modern British Labor Movement. The signal success of British Labor in the election may well, under these circumstances, cheer us on.

# West of the Hudson River

## Observations of a Trade Union Traveler

By CLINTON S. GOLDEN

*It is by no means an inspiring picture which Brother Golden presents of the labor movement, but Progressives as realists want to know the truth so that they may face the situation. The next article, dealing with the movement further West, on the other hand, is really encouraging.*

A TRIP across the northern tier of states, reaching from Western New York to Seattle, Washington, thence down the Pacific coast to Long Beach, Cal., and returning east via Salt Lake City, Denver, Omaha, Kansas City and St. Louis, in the interest of Brookwood Labor College, afforded me an opportunity to see the labor movement in many important industrial sections of the country at close range and at the same time to round up at least some of the progressive opinion in the movement.

Four years previous I had made a similar trip for Brookwood. Therefore, in starting out, I was not going into an altogether strange country to meet strange people but rather to renew old acquaintances and make as many new ones as possible.

By the time I had reached the Pacific Coast, I realized that a good many things had happened in those four years and that the labor movement of 1929 was considerably unlike that of 1925, to say nothing of its character in 1921.

Buffalo, a city of diversified industry and important manufacturing center of the East, provided the first view. Here is located the Lackawanna plant of the Bethlehem Steel Company, turning out thousands of tons of fabricated steel, rails, etc. Some 7,000 workers are employed, all members of a company union. Production since 1920 has practically doubled, while the number of employes has been reduced from 12,000 to a fraction over 7,000 in 1929. Seventy million dollars has been expended in the installation of new and improved machinery, which will still further increase the productivity of the plant and in all probability still further reduce the number of workers.

In Buffalo, besides steel, will be found a big rayon plant, Fisher body, Pierce Arrow automobile plant and Houdaille Shock Absorbers, with which all Model A Fords are now equipped, to mention but a few of the important industries. Usually measured by the past history of the movement, one would expect that here would be a live, vigorous, aggressive labor movement. But exactly the opposite proved to be the case. The building trades, to be sure, were the backbone of the local movement. Some of their members are employed by contractors installing new equipment at the Lackawanna, but there is little evidence that they are very much interested in whether the Lackawanna has a

company union at all. An unorganized revolt of the workers employed by the Houdaille Company, growing out of excessive speeding-up which in turn had resulted in an increase in production of 500 per cent in 12 months, with wages remaining stationary during the same period, had evoked no interest at all. Rather, a committee of the strikers had been informed that their action was "illegal" from a trade union point of view. The fact that the Pierce Arrow workers were restless and dissatisfied with speed-up methods introduced by the Studebaker Company when it took over control of the Pierce Arrow, provided no reason for initiating a serious attempt to organize these workers. And those self-appointed guardians of the welfare of the proletariat—the Communists—could not be found with a microscope.

Some little investigation and searching resulted in locating scattered progressive-minded groups, eager to have something to do but considerably out of contact with other groups and with no sense of direction.

### Chamber of Commerce Delegates

Erie, Pa., provided further evidence of the fact that our movement has almost ceased to move. Here in a smaller, but nevertheless important industrial center which some years back had an aggressive labor movement, the Central Labor Union exchanges, on the basis of fraternal relationships, delegates with the local chamber of commerce. And again, were it not for the building and printing trades' unions, there would be practically no union organization whatever. Nevertheless, one of the big plants of the General Electric Co., thoroughly company-unionized, to be sure, is located in Erie. Likewise, large wood working mills, drop forge and other steel and metal trades' industries.

Passing on to Cleveland, I found the situation not unlike those in previously mentioned localities. Largely because the Machinists' Union has an energetic local representative, that organization has been making heroic efforts to sow the seeds of organization in the big metal trades' shops, including some important automobile plants. Efforts to bring the metal trades' unions together to revive a defunct metal trades' council were being made, but surface indications, at least, gave one the impression that there was lacking the enthusiasm and vitality in the unions themselves to make possible much concentrated organizing work. The headquarters of the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks on the New York Central R. R. lines west of Buffalo are in Cleveland and here were found capable, energetic officers ready and willing to use all modern methods to build up and strengthen their organization, and meeting with a considerable measure of success. Building trades' unions largely dominate the central body, and

## LABOR AGE

some unpleasant tales were poured into my ears of the extensive use of strong-arm methods by the officers of some of these unions in dealing with members who were not in complete agreement with certain methods and policies.

At one time the Cleveland central body seemed to be very much interested in establishing workers' education classes but these finally drifted from the scene. After a lapse of some time in which no educational work was carried on, an adult education group, on whose board are some members of organized labor, revived the educational activity and its efforts were meeting with considerable success. This, however, can be credited chiefly to the fact that the adult education group employs an energetic director who is keenly alive to the possibilities and seriously goes about his job of interesting the workers in the possibilities of educational activity carried on by the unions but with his group assisting in whatever manner possible.

At Collingswood, Ohio, near Cleveland, the New York Central Railroad has large repair and overhauling shops for its locomotives. Union shopmen employed there told me of the company's plans for transferring repair work being handled in a number of smaller outlying points to the Collingswood shops and how out of a force of some 1600 shopmen some 400 "non-producers" such as time study men, rate setters (for the shop is on a piece-work basis) checkers, inspectors and supervisors are employed. The hardships brought upon workers by arbitrarily closing down shops and transferring work to other points evidently is a matter of little concern to the financiers who are ever wringing profits and more profits from the workers.

### Detroit's Mad Rush

For the student of labor problems and workers' psychology, Detroit provides a laboratory of greatest magnitude. For in no other one place will one find so gigantic a mass production industry as exists there. After spending a few days one gets the feeling of a mad rush to get a job, another mad rush to keep it and then a third one to get as much money as possible while the getting is good. When one witnesses the spectacle of tool and die makers getting an hourly rate of well over \$1 an hour and working a 5 day, 40 hour week, quitting their jobs in such numbers as to create probably the largest turn-over in the city, to accept jobs where there is a chance of working overtime and getting in from 70 to 80 hours per week at a lower rate, then one wonders just what sort of an approach is to be made to the problem of organizing nearly a half million totally unorganized auto workers.

Some superficial observers contend that first of all, an industrial rather than a craft union must be created and that the industrial union appeal will in itself be a sufficient incentive for the workers to organize. For several years the I. W. W. has been trying to gain a foothold in Detroit and a local union of the United Auto, Aircraft and Vehicle Workers' Union, also industrial in character, has been consistently plugging away at the task of carrying the message of organiza-

tion to the auto workers but only infinitesimal gains have been made.

Several of the alleged super-geniuses of the Communist party have been detailed to put their mighty intellects and reserves of strategy to the task of organizing the auto workers, only quietly to drop out of the picture in a few weeks, to go to other more promising fields where less genius is required. There are undoubtedly thousands of workers in Detroit who have been members of labor organizations before coming there. The auto industry attracts great numbers of young coal miners who have been literally squeezed out of that industry in the past few years; other thousands have come from the railroad shops, the war time shipyards and last but by no means least, the farms have supplied another large quota.

### A. F. of L. Tries Wire-Pulling

Inquiries as to what had actually been done by the A. F. of L. in carrying out its announced intention to launch a campaign of organization among the auto workers elicited the information that in the main it had contented itself with sending in a couple of "official representatives" who had pulled wires in an effort to get a conference with two of the most influential financiers and manufacturers in the industry, in an attempt to "sell them the idea of trade union organization" as a sound business policy. The fact that their efforts had been unsuccessful in this direction no doubt provided sufficient reason for temporarily giving up the task and for announcing in their subsequent reports to the conventions that "no progress had been made" or words to that effect.

Space limitation forbids going into further detail as to conditions in this "wonder city." Detroit provides a knotty problem for those, whoever they may be, who conscientiously believe that the auto workers there can and will be organized. Up to the present time it seems to the writer that such students and researchers as have set themselves to the study of this problem have approached it from an economic rather than a psychological viewpoint. And this does not imply that the one approach is more important than the other. But until there is a pretty thorough understanding of both, and this in turn is reduced to simple terms and understood by a considerable number of people with unlimited energy and unwavering enthusiasm, it is my guess that not much headway will be made toward organizing Detroit.

Coming from Cleveland by rail one reaches Toledo before arriving in Detroit. In this account we have passed it up altogether, but it may be worth while to travel back to Toledo and get a sketchy picture of some interesting conditions there.

In many respects Toledo is a miniature Detroit. Here, too, automobile production plays an all important part in the industrial life. And in the early days of the industry which is not so long ago either, a large number of workers were organized. It is not so many years ago that a considerable percentage of the tool and die makers of the Overland or present day Willys-Knight plant were organized. And in those days not

## THE CONTRAST



British Labor's triumph at the polls lends particular point to this illustration by Art Young in the New Leader. American labor progressives have gone on record against futile non-partisanship on the political field and are working for a Labor Party.

only economic organization but political organization and activity went hand in hand in Toledo. But times have changed. Local metal manufacturers' association officials boast that Toledo is a better city than Detroit for the "steady, industrious workers." The industry is somewhat more diversified and it is claimed more stabilized.

An interesting story of the manner in which use is made of radio broadcasting to keep the labor market abundantly supplied was heard there. An employers' association, it was claimed, which operates an employment bureau for its manufacturer members, broadcasts at a stated period over a local station. One week announcements will be made that a certain number of workers will be employed through its bureau and preference will be given to applicants coming from Kentucky, Tennessee and Virginia. During another week preference will be given to applicants from another area. I was told that usually within 36 hours after these radio announcements had been made, all sorts of antiquated flivvers would be seen on Toledo streets bearing the registration plates from the states in the areas named. The Southern central states usually provided a healthy quota of husky workers untainted by modern industrialization and to whom a wage of \$3 a day had previously been munificent. The psychological effect of suddenly getting almost twice as much wages as they had ever received previously, plus the

fascination that goes along with their first introduction in a modern industrial establishment, provides an interesting study for those interested in organization work.

To say that there are unsurmountable obstacles to organization work in either Detroit or Toledo is to ignore constantly recurring symptoms of industrial uneasiness and unrest. Thousands of former union members from various industries now work in the automobile centers. Hundreds of thousands of pieces of literature ranging from that distributed by the trade unions of the more skilled workers such as the machinists, to the periodic "shop papers" issued by the Communists and Auto Workers' Unions are eagerly picked up or purchased and read by the workers; spontaneous departmental strikes are of almost daily occurrence, and an undercurrent of unrest and social irresponsibility is easily discernible. Some day all those who can be helpful in this gigantic task will mobilize their forces, make use of modern methods of organizational work and approach the problem in an intelligent and scientific manner.

### Age Creeps In

Our present labor movement is growing old. The inflow of young blood so necessary to the life and vitality of an organization has almost ceased. This is particularly true of Chicago, the birthplace of many

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progressive ideas for organization work both on the political and economic field. The Chicago Federation officered by some of the most realistic and capable leaders in the country has tried to keep pace with changing times. Pioneering in the field of labor-owned and controlled radio broadcasting, it assumed a gigantic responsibility that the national center of the movement should have assumed. It has been obliged to fight every inch of the way against some of the most powerful interests of the country, and meanwhile the A. F. of L. has done little to aid other than to pay lip service. It is still the largest central body in the country but its leaders, valiant soldiers in the army of labor though they are, are growing old and are physically unable to blaze the trail as they once did. The powerful building trades' unions have emerged from the most severe struggles triumphant. But they, too, are growing old and becoming institutionalized. The same is true of other important organizations in Chicago. Traditionally, the Chicago movement is progressive but actually at present its progressivism, measured by past standards, does not go much farther than an occasional debate on fundamental issues and problems at Federation meetings. No vigorous attempts are being made to organize any of the newer mass production industries of which a considerable number are to be found in Chicago and nearby points.

### Too Much Bother

One of the largest single units in the comparatively new field of radio receiving set manufacturing is located there with some seven or eight thousand workers employed. A spontaneous revolt of the workers employed there broke out a few months ago. In contrast to such situations as described in Buffalo, the Federation officers immediately went to the aid of this group. Investigation developed the fact that if jurisdictional claims were observed, some three different building trades and one metal trades' union would claim the majority of these workers. Attempts to get these unions to cooperate in not only prosecuting the strike but in organizing the workers in this plant fell flat because, briefly stated, these unions did not want to become involved in trouble and extra effort, claiming that they were getting along nicely and did not "care to be bothered with this sort of a situation."

An ever-increasing amount of energy, time and finance is required to keep the Federation's radio broadcasting station functioning effectively. Add to this the policy of actively engaging in city politics plus the fact that there are a seemingly decreasing number of trade union members who take an active part in the movement and the present lethargy can be understood.

What has happened to the trade unions in so many industrial centers has likewise happened to the Socialist movement in Milwaukee. It, too, has grown old. Its vigor and vitality have all but disappeared. Few young men take an active part in party affairs. And fewer still in the labor movement in that city. Were there the vitality that existed a decade or more ago in the Milwaukee and Wisconsin movements, the heroic struggle of the Kenosha knitters would have galvan-

ized into action the economic and political movement of the entire state. As matters now stand, the State Federation of Labor has failed to take advantage of the dramatic struggle at Kenosha.

### Workers Want Modern Unions

Huge plants of the Seaman Body Corporation, a Nash automobile subsidiary and of the International Harvester Co., to mention but two of the larger metal trades plants, employing thousands of metal trades workers are located in Milwaukee and neither have a semblance of trade union organization. Yet employed in these plants are hundreds of Socialist voters. Personal conversations with some of them brought out the fact that they consider craft organization obsolete and incapable of coping with present day industry effectively. "Show us a modern industrial union of metal workers" they said in effect, and "we will show you how quickly the workers will organize."

A battle-scarred veteran of the pioneering days of the movement is the Federated Trades Council organizer. His contribution to the progress of the movement in past years has been large. He told me that if he lived until August he would be 80 years of age! A labor college, among the first to be organized in the country, has been functioning continuously, and one gets the feeling that there is more hope and enthusiasm and promise for the future among this small group than in the rest of the movement.

Jumping from Chicago to the Twin Cities I found still another phase of disintegrating influences so apparent in widely scattered sections of the country. In Minneapolis and St. Paul particularly, and throughout the state, there have been until of comparatively recent date, vigorous trade union and political organizations of the workers. On paper to the superficial observer, there still appears to be an influential workers' political movement. 40 Farmer-Labor members of the state legislature in addition to many county and city and township officers elected under the F. L. P. designation look formidable, and one would expect to find a net work of vigorous political organizations of the workers throughout the state. Yet this is hardly the case. Vigorous, militant and resourceful leaders largely responsible for building up the remarkable movement of a few years ago in Minnesota have been cast aside because they refused to become hysterical over the alleged "Communist menace." Some of the more active and energetic trade union members have been thrown out of their organizations because of "red tendencies." Yet the average Minnesota Communist is as much unlike his New York needle trades brother as day is unlike night. These cast-off leaders and rank and filers have been supplanted by small calibre substitutes, incapable of inspiring, enthusing and directing the farmers and workers. Local Farmer-Labor associations existing in scores of towns and hamlets have dwindled to a few dozen because of lack of inspiration and direction. Insufficiently trained leaders who have controlled the political movement the past few years are engrossed in problems of political administration and have neither time nor capacity for necessary organizational activity.

# Electioneering in Britain

## Labor Party's Rank and File at Work

By CARA COOK

**A**NXIOUS to see the British Labor Party wheels go round, I signed up with a group of volunteer workers from the London School of Economics, and as luck would have it, we were assigned for campaign duty to the North Southwark district of London. Southwark (pronounced Suthak), is one of the slum areas of London, though perhaps not the "slummiest," lying south across the Thames River from business and financial center of the city.

The professional guide books say that the district is "mainly industrial, and has little interest for the visitor unless he is specially concerned with Dickens associations." As a likely Labor seat in a three-cornered fight, with a voting population of 32,000, chiefly working class, it is decidedly interesting to this visitor, however.

To be sure it rather adds to one's interest to come across a mean-looking dwelling with a brass plate on it, "Dickens House," and be told by the local agent showing us over the ground that Dickens once lived there; to come out of a squalid back alley near a slender-spired church and be told that Little Dorrit worshipped there; to pass the site of the old Talbot or Tabard Inn, from which Chaucer pilgrims set out to Canterbury, and not far away the White Hart, where Mr. Pickwick and Sam Weller used to pass the time of day.

But we are very much in the present now, with a big job on our hands, to turn North Southwark's 1,100 Liberal majority into a Labor majority. How to go about it?

The first time this group of volunteer workers met, we were addressed by the local election agent, the key

man of the campaign. He described the district as a general might describe his field of battle. One of the most over-crowded city districts in the old world, he called it; 432 persons to the acre, sometimes 27 voters in one family. The whole district covers only 380

acres, and "you can walk around it in 40 minutes, but not up all the stairs! It's packed as tight as sardines in a tin."

The type of voters we would meet and how to meet them were explained. No high-sounding theoretical policies nor international relations stuff for them, but bread and butter politics, "you've got blankets and rabbits to fight in this district."

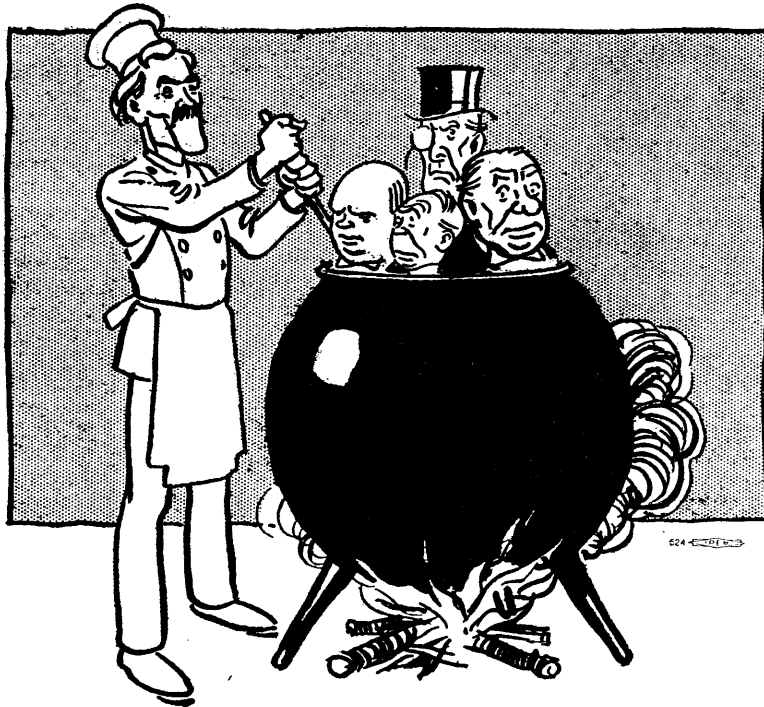
Everybody else seemed to understand blankets and rabbits, but I had to get a private explanation later. It seems that the local liberal candidate owns an estate outside London from which he frequently supplies the workers in his Southwark hop factory with rabbits for their Sunday dinner and in winter

gives out blankets to the poor. His wife patronizes a sort of boy scout club, which takes week-end trips to the estate—and brings back rabbits. A further hold on the voters is secured by a loan club run under the auspices of the Liberal candidate.

### Importance of Canvassing

Half an hour of questions and answers by the agent, and then the Labor candidate spoke to us briefly. Grateful for the influx of eager workers, not only for their immediate assistance, but the inspiration they bring to the old timers, anxious that they get the right start on this, the first campaign for many of them, the candidate told us of the past political history of the district, of how the previous Labor candidate had

### THE NEW CHEF



*The New Leader. London. Eng.*  
MacDonald has succeeded in putting the Tories in the soup. The Labor Party with 288 members of parliament is now the strongest in Great Britain.



"ratted," and by going over to the Liberals demoralized the party organization, and of the slow building up again of the constituency.

"North Southwark ought to be a Labor seat," he said earnestly. "It has a fine bunch of workers and an equally fine bunch of electors. We've got to bring them together by patient, thorough canvassing. We needn't waste time on the admittedly Tory and Liberal strongholds; it's the doubtful voter and the new voter that we want to reach. Canvassing is not unpleasant in this district. They will say directly yes or no to your appeal, but will never treat you snobbishly."

Canvassing might be called the key word of Labor Party strategy. I met it first in Battersea, another London district, during a by-election. The ground work had already been done, and all we volunteers did was to "knock up" on polling day, that is, go around to the known Labor sympathizers and urge them to come out to vote. It was a soft job in Battersea, for at that time the "bookies," who make their living by betting on the races, had loaned their limousines to the Labor Party as a protest against the Tory betting tax, which Baldwin has now promised to repeal! All we had to do, therefore, was ride around Battersea with a chauffeur and take Labor voters to the polls.

But preliminary canvassing is a different thing. It is slow, sometimes discouraging work, and involves an ability to size up people quickly and approach them tactfully with the party program in such a way that they will stop in the middle of a busy morning or after a hard day's work and discuss issues with you. All new comers in the Labor Party are urged to try canvassing at the start; there is nothing which familiarizes one with party machinery and party issues more quickly.

The next step in our instruction was a trip around the district. The group was divided into five groups, one for each of the district wards. The secretary of each ward then conducted his group around the ward to show us the lie of the land, to pick out likely spots for open air meetings, and to introduce us along the way to Labor supporters who might be able to give us a hint when it came to canvassing.

The groups of women gossiping in their doorways and the mobs of children playing in the dirty streets must have wondered what we were up to as we wound in and out the narrow, slum streets, sizing up the situation and them. Certainly, I thought, this ought to be a safe Labor seat, and, as I wormed my way through swarms of children, birth control ought to be the principal party plank!

Great long blocks of buildings, one of them alone

## AN EFFECTIVE POSTER



One of many used in the British electoral campaign, which helped to get Labor's message across to the voters.

with 1700 voters; 710 flats to a block and an average of six or seven persons to a flat. Difficulties in canvassing these buildings were pointed out to us. Meetings could not be held in the courtyards, and personal canvassing or even distributing literature was a problem with doughty janitors and watchmen, many of them unsympathetic to the Labor Party, to get by.

### An American Does Her Bit

And then the real work began, and every day a few workers may be found coming to the local headquarters for their canvass cards, made out by other workers, and the door to door appeal goes on. Those of us cursed with an American accent find the canvassing unproductive, and help in other ways. In the by-election I discovered that my appearance on the doorstep and my polite "Have you been to vote yet; can't we take you in the car?" aroused curiosity rather than response, and in some cases even suspicion. What is an American doing mixing up in our local election?

So recently I spent an afternoon addressing 700 envelopes, in which special appeals will be sent out to the new women voters of 21 and over, just granted the franchise. My three hours took care of about half the new voters in one ward; there are five wards in the district, and the new voters are only a quarter of the total electorate. And this is the third batch of envelopes that has gone out, which gives some idea of the clerical work involved.

I was interested in the names on my list; you can imagine what jaw-breakers such a list in the east side of New York would present! But outside of a rare Feagan, McDonnell or McMahan, these were all simple English names, Hawkins, Banks, Townsend, Tipson, Bailey, Cowley, Gosbee, Jenkins, Edwards, Hopkins, Wackett, and the stories they told, with anywhere from five to a dozen at the same address!

This, I realize, has touched only a small phase of party organization. I have not space for a description of the national publicity work, such as the condensed "notes for speakers," which can be carried around in your pocket, and which, indexed and numbered, provide answers to every question you may get; of the magnificent work of the only labor newspaper, the DAILY HERALD, and the carefully planned system of public meetings at which prominent Labor Party speakers are heard. I suppose in general it is not unlike the organization of any political party, but the fact that it is Labor's party, which has every hope of winning a majority of seats in the coming election, makes it all especially significant to the "foreign onlooker."

# Frame-Ups and Framers at Kenosha

## Including a Brief Account of Wisconsin's "Mooney Case"

By LOUIS FRANCIS BUDENZ

"Private detectives are sewer rats who should be driven from the country."

WITH this turgid quotation from the late Theodore Roosevelt, State Senator Thomas M. Duncan opened a denunciation of private detectives and their works. His attacks upon the "sewer rats" of industrial life were applauded to an echo. Despite the bitter cold, with mid-November blasts sweeping the wet open places, 3,000 enthusiastic champions of the locked-out hosiery workers stood for two hours in Library Park to express their feelings on the fight.



LOUIS F. BUDENZ

Senator Duncan is the Socialist representative in the Wisconsin upper house, who has been responsible for the passage of the first anti-"yellow dog" contract law in the country. It was signed by the Governor

only the other day. His remarks on the private detectives were not general platitudes, but were supported by hundreds of newspaper clippings and court records, some of which he read to the eager crowd.

What he said on that score was reiterated by State Senator Herman J. Severson, La Follette Progressive, who told of his fight against the appropriation of funds for private detectives for the Kenosha Grand Jury. Kenosha has had enough of this type of "Law and Order" agent, it is agreed, and the failure of the Grand Jury to get any funds for that purpose reflects the bitter feelings of the rank and file of Kenosha's citizenship.

These bitter sentiments have not been cooled by the recent conviction of Elmer Hackbarth, a locked out hosiery worker, for "detention" of a scab last September. Kenosha Labor has denounced this as another "Mooney" case, and the fact that the State did not dare to introduce his alleged "confession" adds color to the charge. The further fact that the jury panel, from which the Hackbarth jury was chosen, was loaded down with enemies of Organized Labor, is another significant thing. In the parade of 2,000 trade unionists which preceded the mass meeting at Library Park on May 18th, many signs could be seen, demanding: "We Want Workers on Our Juries." A studied effort seems to have been made by Judge E. B. Belden's jury commissioners to exclude workers from the jury panels.

The reason why the State did not introduce the alleged "confession" of Hackbarth is that thereby the door would have been opened wide for a consideration of the manner in which it was obtained. If the Hackbarth verdict were to stand, then Wisconsin law allows the police aided by private detectives to grab any man in the middle of the night, not only to grill him but drug him, and then have ten to twelve witnesses in the persons of the police officers to say that nothing out of the way was done to the victim. The original charge against Hackbarth was kidnapping, but if there ever was any kidnapping in fact it was the unnecessary midnight seizure of this young man and his drugging by Pinkertons in the police station. The Pinkertons were so abominable in their methods that the Chief of Police, himself the head of the private detective bureau, testified that he had thrown them out of the station before the night was over.

### A Vicious Sentence

Add to these facts, and many more that could be recited, the damning fact that the State proved nothing substantial against him, and that the judge thereupon gave him a sentence of five years in Green Bay at hard labor—and the picture is complete. As Senator Duncan said: "Sinclair, the Oil magnate, stole \$200,000,000 from the United States and gets six months. Your brother, I am sure, did not steal \$200,000,000, but he gets five years."

This incident is not the only one on which Kenosha bases its hatred of private detectives. There have been too many of them on the scene, and the pitiless publicity of the KENOSHA HOSEY WORKER has shown up their true character. They have not added to the pleasantness of their reputation by the many acts of violence that followed their appearance on the scene. One of them, it will be recalled, one Leslie Zales, was caught in some of these violent acts. It has now come to light that his employer, one O. G. Williams, has recently been engaged in the task of trying to bribe Carl Holderman, the New Jersey representative of the Hosiery Workers. Under the name of "Robinson," this Williams suggested to Holderman that he continue in the race for the national presidency of the union, and then send radicals into Reading to "raise Hell." Meantime, the all-knowing Mr. Williams would tip off the employers, with great profit to himself and to the Railway Audit and Inspection Company, whose representative he is.

In New Jersey it is a felony to bribe labor officials, and the said Williams now faces that charge. He has lived five years in Philadelphia, investigation shows, acting as a private dick all that time. At the time of Zales' arrest in Kenosha, the acid thrower mentioned

"O. G. Williams of the Railway Audit and Inspection Company" as his employer.

At the time of Williams' arrest, it is interesting to know, I received a letter from Kansas City, offering to sell me information in regard to Zales and the "plant official" who employed him. The letter came from Kansas City, but instructed me to put an ad in the CHICAGO TRIBUNE, stating how much the proposition was worth to me. It happened that it was worth nothing, for I never pay for information from those sources. I print this here for several reasons, as the person offering the information professed to be a reader of LABOR AGE.

**"Communist" Spies**

To complicate the situation in Kenosha, private detectives are represented in good numbers in the small local branch of the Communist Party. It is even uncertain or not as to whether they may be in actual control of that local. The exposure of John Bugna, the trusted local secretary, as an employe of the Corporations Auxiliary Company is but one link in the chain between several Kenosha "Communists" and the espionage agencies. Bugna was one of a committee which I refused to allow speak at our meetings, and it is unfortunate that thereafter the Communist press attacked me as a "reactionary." Would I not have been in a pretty pickle, gentle reader, had I allowed the spy Bugna to become an active part of the strike?

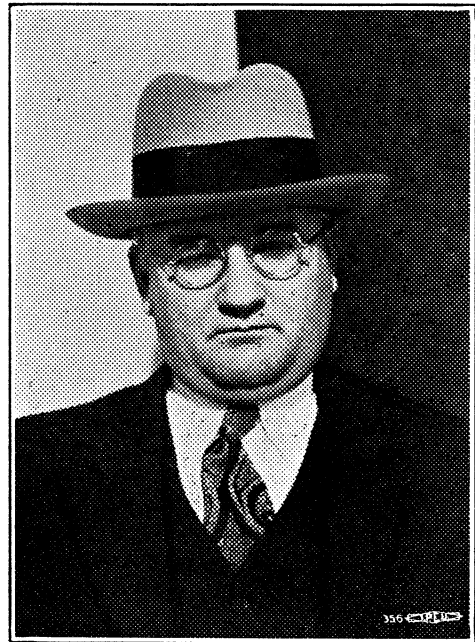
From the same source that we secured the "goods" on Bugna, we also know that other local Communists are spies, but have no means to make the accusation stick. It is interesting, though, to know that "Yellow Dog" MacDonald proudly boasted in WOMEN'S WEAR in February that he had five undercover "Communists" on his Kenosha payroll. While his words in themselves count for little, we do know that there are several working for the Corporations Auxiliary Company. It is little wonder, then, that "Communist" propaganda in Kenosha has consisted solely in attacks on every organization effort put forward, and that these attacks have been considered of such value by the Allen-A Company that they reprinted an entire "Communist" attack on the union in their now-suspended "SPIKE," gotten out for the scabs. This leaflet, later discussed in the DAILY WORKER, declared the strike to be lost and told the workers that the union could not finance the fight. This has been proved a lie by the continuance of the generous strike-pay 8 months after this false statement. The only thing the leaflet did was to help uphold the morale of the scabs, as the locked out workers recognized.

**Halt Manufacturers Scheme**

It was the intention of the Manufacturers Association to put \$40,000 worth of these "sewer rats" and frame-up artists on the county payroll. The election of many on the Labor ticket to the County Board upset that little plan. For, by a vote of 13 to 8, the new County Board held up the entire fund, until an opinion as to its legality can be obtained from the Attorney General. There is but little doubt that he will declare it illegal.

Happily, also, Elmer Hackbarth seems certain of a

**CAUGHT RED-HANDED**



**O. G. WILLIAMS**

Private dick who tried to bribe Carl Holderman of the Hosiery Workers' Union.

new trial. For one thing, the sentence was excessive under the law. For another, the judge communicated with the jury by a note, during its deliberation, contrary to all judicial procedure. We have enough confidence in the Supreme Court of Wisconsin to believe that it will not sanction such fundamental violations of our current law. And when Hackbarth's second trial comes up, there will be another story to narrate. Some workers will get on that jury!

While these things have been going forward, Roger Kimball, vice-president of the Allen-A Company, has been busily dodging legal examination. Some months ago he made certain irresponsible statements about the leaders of the union men which led me to file suit for libel against him. My attorneys sought to examine him under the discovery statute, but he secured an injunction through another court commissioner and dodged the arrest warrant issued for him for not appearing.

And all the time Unionism extends itself in the other factories and crafts in Kenosha. The city is awake, and the workers realize that the hosiery workers' fight "has aroused the State, as nothing else for a long time." Those are also the exact words of William R. Evejue, Editor of the MADISON CAPITAL-TIMES. Perhaps that is so in a political and moral sense rather than in the quickened extension of unionization through Wisconsin. In the state at large, there has been no great labor union drive, and no marks of union revolt in any great industries. But in Kenosha itself, organization has made great headway. May the good work thus begun, go on and become permanent!

# Farm Relief and Workers' Relief

## A Lesson for American Wage Earners

By JOSEPH GILBERT

THE question of relief for agriculture is one that has been agitated for, for some years but conditions have finally become such that at the last general election both the two old political parties were pledged to enact legislation in the farmers' interest. The result is that immediately upon the accession of Herbert Hoover to the presidency a special session of Congress was called for the express purpose of passing a farm relief bill.

In the House of Representatives on April 15, 1929, Mr. Haugen introduced a bill "To establish a Federal Farm Board to promote the effective merchandising of agricultural commodities in interstate and foreign commerce, and to place agriculture on a basis of economic equality with other industries."

The purpose of the bill is stated to be "to protect, control, and stabilize the current of interstate and foreign commerce in the marketing of agricultural commodities and their food products by minimizing speculation, preventing inefficient and wasteful methods of distribution, and limiting undue and excessive price fluctuations by encouraging the organization to producers into cooperative associations and promoting the establishment and financing of a farm marketing system of producer-owned and producer-controlled cooperative associations and other agencies, and by aiding in preventing and controlling surpluses in any agricultural commodity, through orderly production and distribution, so as to maintain advantageous domestic markets and prevent such surpluses from unduly depressing prices for the commodity."

The method whereby it is proposed to attain the desired results is for the President of the United States to appoint a chairman and five other members, who shall act much in the same manner for farmers as do the Federal Reserve Banks for the bankers, having at its disposal a revolving fund of \$500,000,000 to be administered by it to cooperative associations complying with the rules and regulations of the Farm Board Bill. These associations are required to be formed around some staple commodity, such as grain, cotton, live stock, poultry and eggs, dairying, rice, tobacco. It is proposed for the Federal Farm Board to create a stabilization corporation for each of these commodities. These corporations are to have broad powers and authority to buy and sell the commodity, not under the control of the cooperatives, and to act as an export agency for their respective commodities. The Federal Farm Board to furnish a revolving fund so that the stabilizing corporations may carry on their business without the sale of stock or the advancement of initial capital from the farmer or the cooperative.

The stabilization corporation, in grain, for instance, will control surplus production for export or carry-

over, and, with funds from the Farm Board revolving fund, to purchase sufficient of the grain outside of the cooperative to stabilize the price and to prevent speculation and manipulation. Control of the stabilization corporations to be held, through stock certificates, by the district or state cooperatives.

### Organizing the Farmers

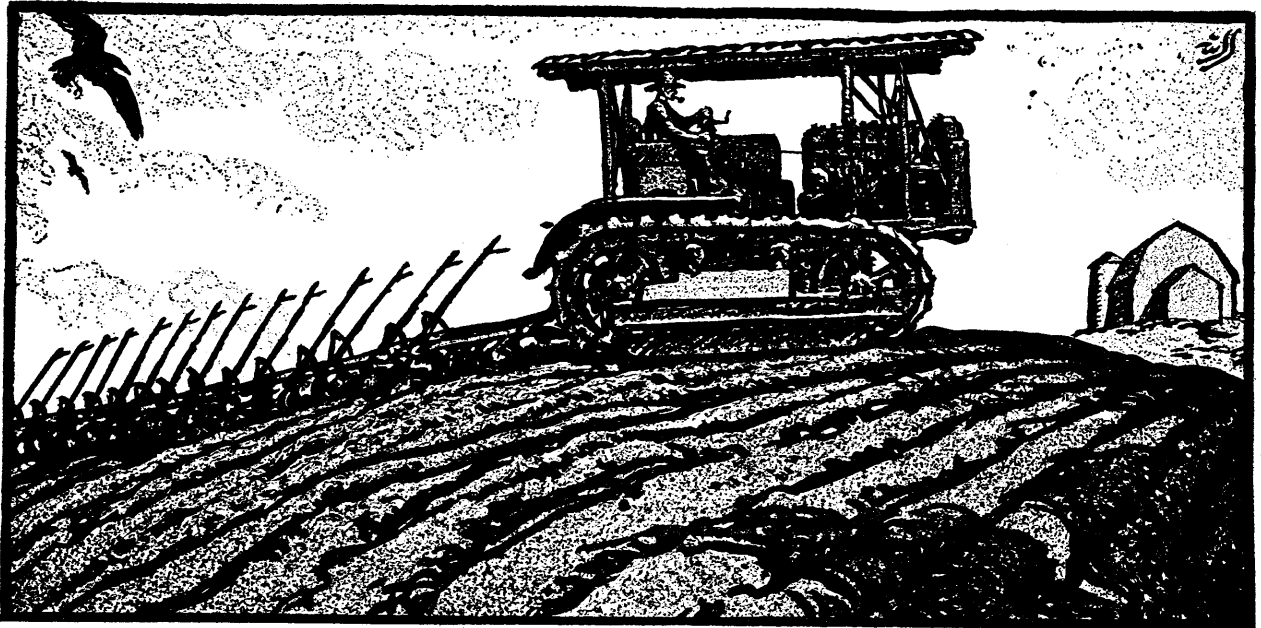
The state or district marketing associations, organized under the Standard State Marketing Acts, will have direct control of the Stabilization Corporation. The local organizations will be the key and base of the whole structure. The local organization will be the organization and education center at each shipping point or in each community. The members organize into local units to elect local officers and delegates to speak for them in the control and management of the district organization. The control of the stabilization corporations will be thus in the hands of the grower.

The Federal Farm Board shall invite the cooperative associations handling any cooperative commodity to establish an advisory committee to consist of seven members, of whom at least two shall be experienced handlers or processors of the commodity, to represent such commodity before the board in matters relating thereto. Members of such committee shall be selected by the cooperative associations from time to time in such manner as the board shall prescribe.

Upon application of any cooperative association the board is authorized to make loans to it from the revolving fund to assist in (1) the effective merchandising of agricultural commodities and food products thereof; (2) the construction or acquisition by purchase or lease of storage or other physical marketing facilities for such commodities and products; (3) the formation of clearing house associations as hereinafter described; and (4) extending the membership of the cooperative association applying for the loan by educating the producers of the commodity handled by the association in the advantages of cooperative marketing of that commodity.

Such is a brief outline of the legislation passed by a vote of ten to one by the House of Representatives. When this bill went to the Senate, however, a fight was made against it, probably more because it was an administration measure than any other reason and there was, after some minor changes, tacked on to it what is known as the debenture feature. This is nothing more or less than a bounty on exported wheat. Stated briefly this debenture plan provides for the payment in the form of certificates to the exporter of wheat one half the tariff on this commodity, which at the present time amounts to 21 cents per bushel, the

## MACHINERY ON THE FARM



*The New York Times*

Large scale farming, mechanization and chain operation are revolutionizing agriculture—and driving small farmers to the cities.

tariff on wheat being 42 cents per bushel. These certificates are receivable by the Government in the payment of import duties. Since very few, if any, farmers are importers, it is difficult to see how they will be benefitted, as the chances are that these certificates would have to be discounted even by the few farmers who export directly.

The average amount of wheat for export annually from this country is 200 million bushels out of a total crop averaging 800 million bushels, or about twenty-five per cent of the wheat raised. This debenture plan might have a tendency to stimulate the production of wheat by our farmers which would still further depress the price while whatever advantages are derived through the bounty would go in the main to exporters and not actual wheat growers.

Such in brief outline is what is proposed to be done for the farmers by the government, and by the time this article is published the chances are that with or without the debenture feature a federal farm bill will have become law. In this is a lesson for the wage earners of the country.

### \$500,000,000 Appropriated

In this federal farm legislation the government is practically telling the farmers to organize themselves into industrial unions for the purpose of stabilizing the price of their products and giving them control over them. The government is not only telling the farmers to do this but at the same time is appropriating \$500,000,000 to be used in assisting the farmers

to so organize themselves and educate themselves in controlling the product of their labor.

There is a direct similarity between the working farmer and the wage earner. The farmer instead of selling his labor power directly to an employer as does the wage earner, sells it in the form of a product in which his labor power is incorporated. Therefore, in order that he may exercise control over the product in which his labor power is incorporated he must first organize. But how must he organize? Around a given product or commodity, the government tells him. And if he will do this the government will help him financially. When so organized these groups of farmers will be in a position to determine how much they shall raise, or in other words, how long they shall work, and afterwards, they will have a voice in determining the price they shall receive for their product.

When farmers, in any considerable numbers, organize themselves in the way in which the government is advising them to, and wage earners follow a similar course by organizing themselves around industries instead of crafts, the whole, both farmers and workers, federating their industrial organizations into a national federation, we shall witness for the first time in the history of the world an industrial instead of a political government, with the actual workers administering their own economic affairs in their own interest. Either our industrial and agricultural development must follow along such lines or we shall become more and more an industrial and agricultural feudalism in which the overlords will exercise autocratic power over all workers, whether in the shop, mill, mine or on the farm.

# Farm Relief or Revolution?

## Agriculture Attracts Big Business

By JUSTUS EBERT

LABOR'S NEWS of May 4, 1929, contains an article headed "Hoover's Plan Ends Small Farm Era." This we already knew; so we read the article itself in order to find what the Hoover plan not only ended but also began. We learned, for one thing, that the farm relief legislation now before congress, if enacted, "will mean a new economic order for agriculture . . . Hoover will try the experiment of big business in agriculture. . . . The plan will make large scale corporation farming possible and attract large aggregations of capital into agriculture."

The *Chicago Economist* is liberally quoted to support these contentions. It says: "While the proposed measures provide for many things, what they actually create is a super-corporation that dwarfs all other industrial consolidations and corporations both from the point of view of capital invested in the production end or in far-reaching influence. The era of big business for the farmer is dawning and the experiment is almost unique in history."

On the other hand, the small farmer vents his resentment against Hoover's letter on farm relief in a way that supports these contentions. In the same *Labor's News*, under a heading, "Farm Swindle Hurts Hoover," it is stated: "What is stirring up the revolt is the prospect that American farmers will soon be forced off the land, and that the banks will administer the foreclosed farms through a chain-operation scheme, with cheap labor secured through letting down the immigration bars."

Now all of the foregoing would be in the nature of a speculation as to future possibilities born of prospective legislation if it were not a fact that all of present day farm tendencies are in the direction outlined. Already are banks foreclosing farms and operating them on the chain plan by means of salaried managers and wage laborers. In the *Des Moines Register*, J. S. Russell, farm editor, describes what is happening in Iowa, as follows:

"Hundreds of thousands of acres of land in the state are owned by corporations and thousands of acres are operated by these corporations with hired labor. By means of a system of supervised tenancy several insurance companies and other owning corporations are bringing their farms back to a standard of fertility and productivity that has resulted in an increase in crop yields and presumably in land valuation.

"There are in operation in the state today several examples of chain farms operated entirely with hired labor and on a basis which entirely eliminates the individual farms as a social and economic unit. Several more are being contemplated."

The outstanding example of the industrialized farm

in Iowa, according to Russell, is the Adams ranch near Odebolt in Sac County. This is a grain farm of more than 7,000 acres operated as a single unit with hired labor. Much of this labor is apparently of the unskilled, floating bunkhouse type that is customarily associated with railroad construction or the logging camps. The common mess hall and bunkhouse are a feature of this enterprise.

### Production Engineer Enters

Russell lists other of the more important examples of large-scale Iowa agricultural enterprises operated either under a system of supervised tenancy or under a managerial plan, employing hired labor. His list includes the Brenton livestock farms in Dallas and Polk counties, the Collins Farms Co. with headquarters at Cedar Rapids, the Maytag livestock farms in Jasper County, the Keeler farms in Cerro Gordo County, the Ellis farms in Floyd County, the Shugart livestock farms in Story County, the Kunz-Benson-Ochs Co. in Kosuth County, the McArthur farms, the Wagner farms and farms in O'Brien County, managed by L. G. Chrysler for a Davenport syndicate.

Russell calls attention to the fact that nearly every bank in the state now owns from two to twenty farms and speaks of a movement on foot to establish in each bank a competent agricultural adviser not only to look after its farms but also to advise clients. Summing up the whole situation he says:

"The most noticeable development in the changing trends of land ownership and land operation in the state is the recognition of the value of the production engineer or efficiency expert whose duty it is to introduce improved agricultural methods, cut production costs and increase returns from Iowa land."

Interesting in this connection is the address delivered before the Ohio State Real Estate Convention by Renick W. Dunlap, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture, as reported in the *New York Times*. Says the Assistant Secretary:

"I see also in the future a large-sized farm in many, but not in all, sections of the country. Right now there is an unmistakable tendency on the part of the more aggressive and foresighted farmers to enlarge the size of their holdings, a factor which may not be the best thing for country life. Larger-scale farming usually permits certain economies of production. That enlargement so far has been somewhat more rapid and spectacular in certain sections of the country farther west. There the increase in size has been stimulated largely by the wide-spread adoption of new machinery which enables one man to plant, cultivate and harvest a larger acreage than ever before. Take for example

## THE FARMERS' CHORUS



The New York World

"We want relief," is the burden of the song heard in the corn field. The government listens, for the farmers, unlike labor, wield political power, and it helps to the tune of half a billion dollars.

the combined harvester-thresher. The man-hours of labor required to harvest an acre of wheat have been reduced from three and one-half to three-quarters in the great plains of the West.

## Corporation Farms

"The Corn Belt farmer of the future very likely will also have a larger farm unit, although naturally the change will come more slowly in an older agricultural area like Ohio than in Montana or Western Kansas. That larger Corn Belt farm will be made possible by reason of increased mechanical efficiencies—tractor, cultivator, corn picker, etc. But it will also come because the farmer of outstanding business ability realizes that the successful management of the larger farm of the future offers as wide a scope for his resourcefulness as do many of the enterprises of the city. The farmer on the larger farms of tomorrow will be a business manager in the strictest sense of the word.

"The ultimate extent to which this opportunity for the cultivation of larger units will be carried, is, of course, difficult to say. Whether or not the technical advantages to be derived will be such as to make profitable holdings large enough to bring the advantages of corporate ownership and financing into play is, of course, a question. I do know of successful large cor-

poration farms in this state which are paying dividends. One corporation farm of which I have personal knowledge in January of this year declared a 30 per cent dividend and had money left in its treasury."

It is well known that within the past four years fully 3,000,000 persons have left the farm for the city. With big capital entering agriculture and reducing costs of production, thereby making small farm competition impossible, with foreclosure by banks and insurance companies likely to increase under the circumstances, how many millions more persons are likely to leave the farm for the city in the next three years? And with 30 per cent dividends as the attraction how much more big capital is likely to rush into agriculture in these days of surplus funds seeking investment?

All this leads to some considerations not usually indulged in.

## A Crumbling Bulwark

In Europe the development of nations is much taken up with the so-called peasant problems. That is, the problem of the peasant and his interests in the scheme of social progress. The peasant is held to be a backward, reactionary class and to his dictatorship is much of European retrogression since the war said to be due. In Russia especially is the peasant problem acute.

In this country there is no peasant problem to make retrogression possible. This country has no peasantry. It has a farmer class. This farmer class has always been an anti-socialist class. Benjamin Marsh has well described the American farmer as "an individualist in a collectivist society." The American farmer class was hailed as a bulwark against Socialism and as impossible of the large scale co-operative labor and operation that made Socialism inevitable in industry. Now, it is undergoing what Assistant Secretary Agriculture Dunlap, in the address specified above, calls "a veritable revolution"—a revolution that drives the small farmer from the land, while making the big chain and corporate farm dominant.

This revolution, working in so many ways, mainly through foreclosure, machinery, chain operation, and also through the necessity for adequate sources of supply by packing and preserving companies, truly spells, in the language of *Labor's News*, the end of the small town era; and the opening up of the agricultural ante-room, long closed to Socialism!

In view of these facts, what should be the course of labor, politically and economically? Should it attempt, as in the past, to save the small farmer; or should it recognize the new revolution and act accordingly?

# Cotton Mill Towns

## What the New Technique Means To the South

By ESTHER LOWELL

**H**OW long will the southern cotton textile mill village survive the onrush of the new industrial technique?

This question comes to mind after reading Lois MacDonald's careful study of three Carolina cotton textile towns, "Southern Mill Hills."\* The author's intimate pictures of three typical company villages makes one wonder how long the archaic social form will last. The mill hills described are in the heart of the Carolina Piedmont textile district, where workers rebelled this spring against a new speedup "efficiency" system.

Today the mill village may seem in full bloom throughout the southern textile areas. If there is any sign of fading paternalism, it is in the decline of welfare work in older centers—as those of Lois MacDonald's book—and the transfer of schools from company to county or city.

In the latest development sections of Georgia and Alabama, through which we recently traveled, company villages cluster around each new mill imposed on the landscape. Despite an evident attempt to overcome defects complained of in older villages—by varying house designs and colors, especially—the new mill hills are unmistakably like their predecessors. Houses are small, of light wood frame construction (except in one case where brick and stucco are used), and packed together in the shadow of the mill. The paint so bright now will soon weather. Early eagerness of farm families for mill work quickly wears down to the dull acceptance described by Lois MacDonald, with protest seldom put into action.

On the surface, the southern cotton mill village seems "all set" to stay awhile. The same factors operate as when mills first were started in the south to make company business pretty much a necessity. Mills are placed in the open cotton-growing country where no housing for workers is available until the company builds it. Or if the mill adjoins a small independent town, as do the ten new plants established last year by Alabama Mill Co. (sponsored by Alabama Power), the low-paid textile worker can't pay big enough rentals

to make private house building profitable. So again the mill village appears.

The chief economic advantage of scattering textile mills in southern rural regions is plentiful cheap labor. Chamber of commerce and power company boosters of southern industrialism agree with more sober students that the surplus of workers willing to labor long hours for low pay is the region's chief advantage for textiles. Lois MacDonald's study is a good guide toward understanding these workers. If you want to

know why they can be described as "docile, dependable, not influenced by labor agitators, 100 per cent American," read her "Southern Mill Hills." You will learn there, too, why they have upset that description at various times, by spontaneous strikes, sometimes in response to United Textile Workers organizers (especially in 1919), and in 1914 when a young girl from New York drew them into the Industrial Workers of the World.

But when modern technology hits the cotton textile industry, good-bye to that

cheap labor advantage! There may yet be many a "Deserted Village" in the south. And what of the mill workers? Well, what of workers everywhere in this modern world where machinery is more and more doing the labor, and where radical new processes toss great groups of workers into the scramble for other jobs?

To the layman, the cotton textile industry may seem mechanized already to a maximum. Walking through a mill, the visitor sees rows and rows of spinning frames whirring away with only a few girls and women attending them. In the weave room there are a few more workers for the total of chugging looms. Speeding workers to tend more and more machines has been pushed rapidly during the last decade and may have reached a limit. It is further speeding that workers in the older Greenville, S. C., to Charlotte, N. C., district resisted by this spring's strikes.

Introduction of the warp-tying machine and circulating spindle-winder, improvements in automatic looms and spinning frames, and change to individual motors on machines cut the labor item considerably in these post-war years. But as yet there has been no such radical change in technique as occurred in the glass

### PICKETING IN DIXIELAND



Part of a picket line in front of one of the mills at Elizabethton, Tenn.

\* Alex L. Hillman, New York, publisher.



# PICKETING IN DIXIELAND



Part of a picket line in front of one of the mills at Elizabethton, Tenn.

industry, for instance. There the new method reduced the workers employed to a fraction of former forces and yet shot production way up. Operating labor, even at low wages, is a large figure in cotton textile production costs, because so many workers are employed in proportion to output or value added by manufacture.

Hand labor is still used in the best textile mills. In one of the big denim mills of Greenville, N. C., which boasts of keeping up-to-date in equipment, I saw a gray-haired old woman bent to use the full force of her thin body in pushing a wheeled fibre bin of bobbins. In all the mills I've been through I've seen men shuffling empty and full silver cans to and from carding and combing machines. In fact, throughout the mills, practically all moving of material from one set of machines to the next is done by hand labor.

First developments toward modernizing the technique of cotton textile making may be noted in the one-process picker which was introduced last year. In this one machine the first four operations in preparing cotton for spinning are performed without human handling from the time the opened bales are thrown into the hopper until they emerge at the other end mixed into a smooth, even lap of cleaned fibre ready for the carders. In one mill, three of the new machines replace eight old ones and two workers are left where four were. There is an accompanying reduction in power consumed.

Machinery makers now advertise that their engineering forces will help textile manufacturers put present equipment "in range." Although the material does not actually pass mechanically from one machine to the next, handling by human labor is much reduced, space and power saved, and production speeded. Then there is the vacuum waste removal system being introduced to clean mill machines and automatically carry lint and debris assorted to bins in a special section of the plant.

So, it is fantastic to think there may be very drastic changes in cotton textile technique which possibly will destroy company towns like those of "Southern Mill Hills."

### Mill Villages Doomed

In the new technology, cheap labor will not be the dominating factor in mill location. Workers may not be paid more, but that's not the point. So few will be required that a picked group will be easy to get—easier to obtain in larger centers of population than in the open country. Advantages of being close to shipping or consuming points will outweigh the present cheap labor factor which brings mills south. The geography of the industry may be radically changed.

What will hurry the appearance of new technique in cotton textiles? What has pushed it in other industries? Growing competition, appearance of a cheaper rival product, need for speedier or greater production, pressure of unions. Why not, in this case, the protest of progressive southern groups as translated into the pressure of legislation? Why not the organization efforts which are being made and will increase among southern cotton mill workers? Forcing shorter hours,

## BOMBED!



What was left of home of Mack Elliott, Southern Union textile leader, after bombing.

banning night work, raising wages, mean higher labor costs for the manufacturers. When the owners of southern cotton mills can no longer squeeze their extra margin of profit from cheap labor, economy must be sought in other ways—maybe by radical technical changes.

New technique requires big money to put over? Surely. Note the merger movements afoot—the frank freeze-out of smaller and less efficient mills by the big fellows. The industry is getting into the big finance group which can afford to modernize—and must to survive. The manufacturers' associations and Cotton Textile Institute go on searching for new uses and for improvements in marketing, but behind the scenes, engineers may be working even now to revolutionize the industry's processes.

Lois MacDonald does not take up these questions in "Southern Mill Hills." She limits her study to a factual consideration of the three Carolina cotton mill villages as social communities, partly to fulfill her requirements for a Ph. D. degree. She develops in more detail the social effects of mill hills than Paul Blanshard in his "Labor in Southern Cotton Mills," which is a broader study.

The author of "Southern Mill Hills", is herself a native of South Carolina. She joined other notable southerners in the Southern Industrial Council to seek improvement of mill conditions, following the appearance of Blanshard's book. More than that, she is a founder of the Southern Summer School for Women Workers in Industry. Every summer she guides girls from southern cotton, rayon, hosiery mills, shoe, tobacco, garment factories to learn economics from their own experiences. She is economics instructor at Washington Square College of New York University in winter.

Everyone interested in unionizing the south's main manufacturing industry, or indeed in improving conditions of all southern labor, will profit by Lois MacDonald's study. But the wise labor organizer will cock a weather eye toward the technical trend of his industry, or he'll learn that an organization of jobless workers can't function as a trade union.

# BOMBED!



What was left of home of Mack Elliott, Southern Union textile leader, after bombing.

# Research For Workers

By LOUIS STANLEY

## XIII. WHAT IS LABOR DOING?

**I**F it were not for the fact that the distrust of the general daily press has reached a point in labor circles where many forego reading it rather than be irritated or misled by perverted news, there would be little need for dwelling very much on the daily newspaper as a source of labor information. As a matter of fact, the dailies have been constantly improving in the quality and quantity of labor news they have been supplying. The labor problem is attracting wider attention as its solution becomes more pressing. Employers want to know whether what is taking place among the workers may affect them. Unions and other labor organizations are learning the art of obtaining publicity. Press agents, press statements, and a little politeness have greatly facilitated the gathering of labor news. If there is perversion, it is just as likely to be the consequence of the reporter's ignorance as of his prejudice. The reading of the best daily "capitalist" newspapers is the first requisite in following the activities of labor.

One of the little tricks that the research worker soon discovers is that he can obtain a wealth of material from the out-of-town paper. When he knows of a convention, a strike or other labor event that is taking place a hundred or a thousand miles away, he can be quite sure that the daily papers in the town in question are reporting that event with some fulness for the same reason that they would report a murder or the return of a prodigal son. It is news to them. The research worker, if he is living in a fairly large city, can purchase out-of-town papers at certain stands near the railroad station or in the business part of town. Still better, he can write directly to a local newspaper or to a newspaper in the nearest largest town and purchase copies by mail. It is cheaper that way and besides, if a strike, let us say, is likely to last several weeks, it is more economical of time, energy and money to subscribe for a month or so at a time. Ayer's Newspaper Directory will supply names of newspapers. The local librarian also will help.

In this connection it is well to mention the trade papers. They are published daily, weekly or monthly for the business men of the various trades and industries. A union office which does not subscribe to its trade papers is neglecting the knowledge that makes for power. Employers want to know what is happening to the field of labor if it is of reasonable significance to them. In some instances, as in the case of the Fairchild Publications, the Women's Wear Daily and the Daily News Record, more accurate labor information can be obtained from them than in most labor papers.

There are hundreds of labor papers in the United States but only a handful are a credit to the labor

movement. Still the research worker tries to run over as many as possible each week for the bare chance that he may find something originally of interest to a particular locality or trade that is worthy of general attention. To find a nugget no matter how small is a sufficient reward for hours of digging. Sometimes, of course, current events will direct attention to particular papers. In any case, the process of examining the labor press fairly regularly gives one a realistic slant on labor occurrences. Union offices and even individuals can very often arrange for the receipt of publications. Large libraries keep a liberal number of labor periodicals on file.

There are a number of labor papers published today that are indispensable for the research worker. The only daily in the United States devoting itself exclusively to labor news is the Daily Worker, official organ of the Communist Party. It is highly colored in its presentation of news but is useful as a clue to labor events. Labor's News, a weekly, makes available to the general reader, the most important news gathered by the exceedingly efficient and sympathetically fair Federated Press. The New Leader, a weekly, is official spokesman for the Socialist Party, and is noted for its special articles. Labor Age, monthly, is spokesman for the progressives in the labor movement. Labor Unity, weekly, represents the Communist left wing in the trade unions. The American Federationist speaks for the A. F. of L. The three labor press services are the A. F. of L. Weekly News Letter, the International Labor News Service (semi-officially A. F. of L.) and the Federated Press (non-partisan but inclined to the progressive side). The most useful labor periodicals of more narrow interest than the foregoing are: Labor (standard railroad unions), Advance (Amalgamated Clothing Workers), Locomotive Engineers' Journal, Electrical Workers' Journal, Reading Labor Advocate, The Federation News (Chicago Federation of Labor), Minnesota Union Advocate, St. Louis Labor, and Illinois Miner.

Finally, we must call attention to the reports of proceedings of trade unions and other labor organizations as a source of information. Frequently, one can arrange to receive the daily proceedings as they are printed for the delegates. In any case, the minutes are usually published shortly after the convention, although secrecy is still observed in some instances. The reports of the A. F. of L. conventions which are of most general interest, are obtainable from the headquarters in Washington, D. C., for fifty cents.

### For Your Own Research

Take some current labor event and see what information you can obtain from the sources mentioned in this article.

# Flashes from the Labor World

## Rayon Strike Settled, Temporarily

Was it a victory, a draw, or a defeat? Three answers are given on the settlement of the great uprising of the Bemberg-Glanzstoff rayon workers at Elizabethton, Tenn. The agreement which sent 5,500 strikers back into the huge rayon mills may be any one of the three, says John W. Edelman, research director for the American Federation of Full Fashioned Hosiery Workers, who helped direct union strategy in the last three weeks of the strike. The terms of the settlement, he told Federated Press, may mean victory if the workers have strength enough to enforce it. But that, among workers only recently organized, depends entirely upon the support given them by the labor movement. Relief funds to keep the union going, to back up active strike leaders who will be discriminated against, and to keep up morale, are crucial in this stage.

The strikers return without recognition of the union, and to that degree the strike has ended in defeat. The promise of Dr. Mothwurf, Prussian boss of the mills, not to discriminate against active strikers will be another scrap of paper, similar to his prior promise which ended the first strike and brought on the second one April 15, observers are certain. It was the same promise, made by the Passaic mill owners, which ended that bitterly fought strike, but today there is hardly a vestige of unionism in the Botany and Forstmann-Hoffman mills.

To an increasing number of students of labor organization, the rayon mills loom as the key to the unionization of the south. Here we have a few great mills, located in half a dozen

southern localities. Their control interlocks. They employ masses of workers. They throw unindustrialized workers into the very vortex of industrialism. An effective union drive, conducted perhaps by a Rayon Workers Federation of a textile union and backed by hundreds of thousands of dollars thrown into the war chest by millions of organized workers, might

weapons. Railway Audit & Inspection—you'd never think that was the name of a strikebreaking agency, would you?—has been having highly unfortunate experiences. Carl Holderman, aggressive young Hosiery Workers organizer in New Jersey and New York, trapped one of their slickest articles when he got a certain "Ralph Robinson," later thought to be Maj.

C. E. Russell himself, into a Paterson jail cell. This specimen turned out to be none other than O. G. Williams himself, of Philadelphia. No mean racketeer, he tried to induce Holderman to betray his nation. "Oh, yes," said the organizer, "let's talk this little matter over." And they talked and talked, until Williams had talked himself into jail on a charge of trying to bribe a labor organizer. He is out under \$5,000 bail and the union hopes to get some useful information when Williams is put on the stand.

\* \* \*

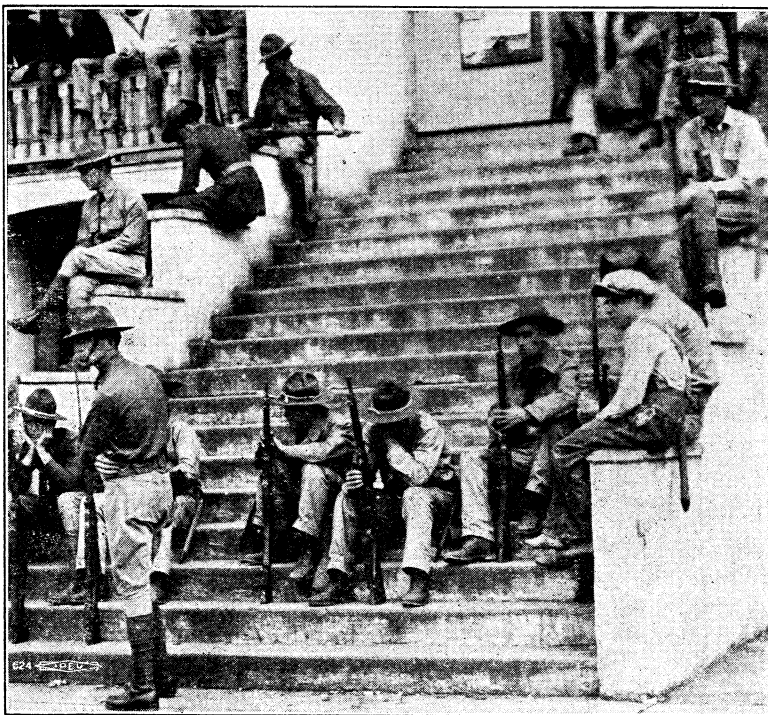
Down in Allentown, Pa., another Hosiery Workers organizer snared no less a prize than E. C. Cummings, district manager of

Railway Audit & Inspection. This chap was caught red-handed framing striking knitters. He almost had them on the way to the penitentiary when Organizer Earl White found that his whole case rested on the perjured evidence of strike-breakers. Cummings is out under \$1,500 bonds awaiting trial for subordination of perjury.

\* \* \*

Many of the very biggest of the big business leaders, widely praised in the sycophantic press as broad, far and deep-visioned, have gotten millions of

### TO CRUSH STRIKE



National Guardsmen on steps of Elizabethton, Tenn. Court House.

well break the back of open shopper in the south. Certainly such a drive would promise more results than one against cotton mills, scattered in hundreds of villages through a half dozen southern states. Centralized control in rayon as against the anarchy in cotton textiles, might well be a factor favorable to unionism.

\* \* \*

A labor spy's lot is not a happy one in these days. Labor is beginning to understand these vermin. Backed by years of bitter experience, it is beginning to fight them with their own

**WHAT DO YOU SMOKE?**

"Not a union-made cigarette in a carload."

That is a correct description of Camels and all other tobacco put up in cigarettes, smoking or chewing tobacco by the Reynolds Tobacco Company. The tobacco workers, led by Vice-president Ed. Crouch of Winston-Salem, N. C., are putting up a splendid fight to organize the workers in the Reynolds plants. Here is the story in a nutshell:

"Average wage in the Reynolds factories \$11 a week; minimum pay \$2.65 a week; net profits in five years \$127,369,244."

In addition to Camels, the Reynolds company makes Prince Albert, Red Kamel and Reyno, Stud, R.J.R. Advertiser, George Washington, Red Apple and Brown's Mule.

Union men and union supporters should keep this list handy and make a point of telling their tobacco dealers why they prefer certain brands and dislike others.

inches of unpaid advertising for coming out flatly for the 5-day week. This was especially marked among those sterling executives whose factories were experiencing slackness. The 5-day week made a fine story, when the boss didn't have enough work to keep his plant going six days.

Come now the railroad brotherhoods, and throw the spurious claim of our industrial leaders' willingness to shorten hours on the counter, and find it does not ring true. For not one of the railroad presidents has hailed the rail unions' proposal for a 6-hour day as a blessing to the industry. Indeed, the unions will have to fight for the 6-hour day, just as they had to fight for the 8-hour day.

\* \* \*

In this age of high pressure salesmanship, of manifold demands on every running reader's attention, the art of publicity is the one indispensable auxiliary to any action. Most labor unions still hate publicity, because they have been burned too many times by the poison acid pens of the press. Half the unions in this country never get into print, save when some big strike is on, and then unfavor-

ably. A few unions have realized publicity's power, and in one case, a small federation has been able to make more news than half a dozen of the biggest internationals in the country.

These remarks are introductory to a bouquet tossed in the direction of the railroad unions. Their announcement of their 6-hour day demand was a masterful stroke of publicity. It was not a long-winded, pompous handout given out at international headquarters. Instead, it was launched at a New England brotherhood conference attended by hundreds of delegates, held in historic old Faneuil Hall in Boston. It was not prefaced by windy paragraphs about love of the industry and regard for the public. Instead it came as a white hot challenge from the minds and lips of thousands of jobless railway men, speaking through their representatives.

With this may be contrasted the inept A. F. of L. announcement made at the Detroit convention, of the Federation's stand for the 5-day week. Henry Ford, whose ability to make news marks him as an outstanding figure, beat the labor men to it by talking up the 5-day week immediately before the convention opened. All the leaders of the A. F. of L. could do then was lamely to repeat Mr. Ford's proclamation. Is it any wonder that millions of unorganized workers look to the Fords for guidance, rather than to organized labor?

\* \* \*

The American people like daring, imagination. They like to be swept off their feet. Why should the Henry Fords, the Dwight Morrows, the Owen D. Youngs have a monopoly on this sort of publicity. As pointed out above, if organized workers would toss one tenth of what they spend for movies into a unionization war chest, they could conquer the rayon trust. Something of the same imagination and spirit could dramatize for all the workers the possibilities of unionism, if organized labor were to announce an immediate goal of the 6-hour day, the 5-day week and a minimum wage of \$2 an hour.

\* \* \*

Crazy? Not if you look at the profit statements of General Motors. Standard Oil of New Jersey, U. S. Steel, Pennsylvania R. R., Bemberg-Glanzstoff Rayon and a score of other in-

**ABOUT YOUR ELECTRIC BILLS**

Get out your electric bill. What are you paying per kilowatt hour? If you are paying more than five cents per kilowatt hour you are being milked good and plenty by the power trust.

Morris L. Cooke, well known consulting engineer, has just published a pamphlet called "What Price Electricity in the Home." In this pamphlet, Mr. Cooke establishes the fact that the homeowners and workers who use electricity in their apartments or flats are not only paying tribute to the power trust, but are also helping to pay the bills of the large industrial plants. As Mr. Cooke shows, the rates for homes are far higher than the rates charged manufacturers.

Five cents is all a consumer can fairly be asked to pay, Mr. Cooke declares. Even the five cent rate, he points out, includes items that do not actually represent necessary elements in production and distribution of electricity.

dustrial giants. As a matter of fact some well organized trades already have the \$2 minimum scale. Many printers' unions have the 36-hour week on night shifts. All New York building trades workers will have the 40-hour week beginning August 24.

The 8-hour day was the great slogan which resulted in the early strength of the A. F. of L. It was a daring demand in days when most workers toiled from sunup to sundown, when the 10-hour day was regarded as ultra-humane, and millions worked 12 hours. When workers thought of the A. F. of L. they thought also of the 8-hour day. The two ideas were inseparable, and unorganized workers did not have to be told that the unions were their hope.

\* \* \*

Publicity won't do the job of organizing. But given the will to organize and the machinery, publicity is the indispensable method of selling unionism to the worker.

*This department prepared from Federated Press news reports by Harvey O'Connor, Eastern Bureau Manager of The Federated Press.*

# In Other Lands

## BALDWIN KICKED FOR A GOAL

By far the most important event in European politics is the general election just concluded. For the first time since 1848 a working class issue—the unemployment question—was the pivot around which all parties fought.



The Conservatives asked to be elected on the traditional ground of imperialism, bold diplomacy and safeguarding of industry. Unemployment would be solved if industry were improved and commerce increased, the Tories said.

The Liberals backed by the syndicated press of the Berrys, the Inveresks and the Rothermeres proposed a grandiose scheme of road-making and bridge-building to be paid for by the state as the one infallible cure for unemployment. Mr. George made bold and brilliant appeals to the electorate with the hope of reviving the Liberals. But the workers of Britain have been through too many crises to be fooled again even by such an artful dodger as the Welsh Wizard. Besides British organized labor has never forgotten the tricky and treacherous work of David Lloyd George when as President of the Local Government Board, his first Cabinet position, he fooled the railway employes of the country. The Labor Party advocated nationalization where private industry had broken down and rationalization that would benefit the workers as well as the employers, rather the opposite of the rationalization scheme of the Mond-Tory group which was a one-sided affair. To be sure, questions of foreign policy, peace, disarmament and emigration were debated by the rival parties and leaders, but important as all those were they were pushed into the background of minor issues. Churchill, this time, had no fake Zinovief letter to help him scare the middle class into voting the Baldwin government into power again.

Such in brief were the issues and the tactics. The outcome of the battle is now history. The Labor Party is today the strongest in Britain. It will probably be the last three cornered contest, for the Liberals, unless they are saved by a proportional representation bill, are practically out of the picture. All regret the elections were not decisive and that Labor did not get a majority over all parties. The Communists with their usual genius for political blundering contested several seats against official labor but they were roundly trounced everywhere. The smallness of their vote prevents their being taken seriously in either the political or the industrial arenas for a decade at least. The defeat of Dr. Haden Guest, the renegade, by the veteran Ben Tillet is one of the brightest and happiest events of the campaign.

One development that has been overlooked by foreign observers is that in proportion as the industrial wing of

the movement has weakened through loss of members Labor has gone forward politically. The past twelve months were the poorest for the unions since 1914 while they were the peak of prosperity for the Labor Party.

## CHINA HONORS SUN YAT SEN

All factions, parties and generals ceased fighting and joined in paying tribute to and honoring Sun Yat Sen, first President of China and founder of the Republic. They gave him a funeral that was worthy of the man and the cause he served. The display of emotion and unity at Purple Hill where Sun was buried was sincere for the time being. During the truce between Chiang and Feng negotiations began for more harmony in the Kuomintang and for a cessation of warfare. Since the radicals moved out, or were thrown out of the Kuomintang the generals have been in possession of the party. This stopped all social and political progress as well as disrupted the civil life of the country. The party may be reorganized, and Mme. Sun is advocating a new political organization to counteract the generals and the professionals who advocated reactionary measures. The Western capitalists have found that the Chinese working men have a higher conception of liberty than the Americans or Europeans in that since the Revolution and particularly during the past six months they have been compelled to pay higher wages to their employees. National unity does not appear to be as far away as we are led to believe by the daily papers. Relations with the Soviet are strained but a diplomatic break is unlikely.

## THE NEW WAR

Should the legislatures of Germany, France, Belgium, Britain and Italy ratify the findings of the Reparations Conference and its \$9,000,000,000 levy on the people of the Reich the last chapter on the World War will be written and the first chapter on the commercial and financial war for the domination of the world have begun. Wall Street comes out the overlord and super-boss of Europe with Paris and London as tributary states in the Empire of Finance. Unemployment in Germany is still a serious matter for the government. With more credits and more American investments industry will take on new life and the number of out-of-works will be reduced appreciably. The next big question is, Where will Germany find markets for her manufactured products? The same applies to all the other countries. In this we have the riddle of the universe. Mass production means mass sales, if not we have the inevitable mass panics.

## PRICE OF DICTATORSHIP

Riviera, the Spanish dictator, is killing off his opponents by mass executions of students and intellectuals. True to form, he is having peace by making a desert. Strikes are treason in Spain, Italy and the Balkans. The Latin contagion for dictators has crossed the Atlantic to South America with Venezuela and other countries, following the example set by Italy.

PATRICK QUINLAN.



# "Say It With Books"



## PIONEERS OF FREEDOM

### Some Recollections

EVERY man has heroes of his own. Some of us incline to prostrate ourselves before either one of two extremes, namely the Napoleonic or Christly. For ourselves, we prefer the Lincolnian as a perfect blend of both the strategist with the humanitarian.

But we never were strong on military heroes. Military "genius" is so primitively conceived and endowed in our minds, as to cause us to think of it as a reversion to lower types; undesirable types, too. We can see the day coming when its atavism will be so recognized.

Now, you'll wonder what's all this about, anyway? We've been reading a book, "Pioneers of Freedom," by McAlister Coleman (Vanguard Press). This book is intended to create a new idealism in heroes in the young. As such it is anti-military; well-conceived and executed, and, in addition, provocative of some recollections.

Some of the pioneers—the new type heroes—portrayed by Coleman, we have either met personally, or come under their influence. They are Henry George, John Altgeld, Eugene V. Debs, Chas. Steinmetz and John Mitchell. We interviewed the latter, a medium-sized, dark-haired, slightly jaundiced, priestly-looking stock individual, for a labor paper during the anthracite strike. He was evidently a man of conservative habits of thought, with considerable physical and mental strength and reserve. We can still recall him standing in the New York hotel lobby surrounded by newspaper men, rolling a cigar in the corner of his mouth, while carefully parrying the questions flung at him. Possibly our prejudices did not permit us to appreciate his personality.

Steinmetz we stumbled on quite accidentally, long before he was as well-known—as famous—as he became. We had obtained a pass to see the General Electric works at Schenectady, New York. We were looking into one of the big buildings when a little hunchback, with a big black cigar, and the most penetrating, yet withal, beautiful, kindly blue eyes, came along and struck up a conversation with us. Well, the first thing we knew we were listening to an unusually interesting talk on the meaning of Electricity and such giant corporations as the G. E. in modern society. And when the little hunchback, after suggesting some worth while things to see within the plant, bade us a pleasant good-bye, we got our senses together and said (to ourselves, of course) "That's Steinmetz! He's been talking Socialism." And when, in after years, we met workers who knew him from daily contact on the job only

to laud him, it was easy to understand why. Here was certainly a most intellectual and loveable individuality.

Debs we met three or four times in life. Twice under remarkable circumstances. Debs was a genial soul, despite his vitriolic invective and denunciatory eloquence. And like most genial men Debs was convivial. We were introduced to him during one of his moments of conviviality. It was in pre-war days, on the stage, at a mass meeting he was to address. Considering Debs' condition we feared for the outcome of that meeting. But it went off like a charm. Debs not only handled his subject but himself with remarkable ability. We can still see, from the rear wings of the stage, that tall lanky figure, crouched in characteristic attitude, pouring forth his eloquence with such power as to make us forget all else. It was great!

On another occasion, we met Debs after his release from war-time prison. It was in a Chicago building devoted to labor organizations and publications. The news that Debs was in the building, emptied all of the offices immediately. Almost all of the employees and visitors rushed to the lower floor to greet Debs; to shake his hands and to hang on his every word. The old fellow was kindly disposed, even towards those who had sent him to jail. While he urged us forward in the cause of labor—there was no bitterness in his words. He appeared more mellow and kindly, if possible, than ever before, though racked with ill-health and full of what to most men would be bitter memories. And when we heard him speak subsequently for two hours to a capacity audience in the Ashland Auditorium in behalf of all of the political prisoners, without regard for factional difference, we felt ennobled by his wide labor catholicity, while marveling at this extraordinary physical endurance. Only great idealism could sustain such a course and such a man.

John Altgeld we never knew personally, but we revered him; we never knew why. When we were a mere lad, some of the Chicago anarchists were hung. We were too young to understand it all, but the hanging impressed us as an ominous act—as terrifying, awful. When Altgeld as governor of Illinois, pardoned the remaining anarchists, imprisoned for life, the act seemed to us like a burst of sunshine amidst dark clouds. It also served to bring Altgeld to our notice, but in a vague, indefinite sort of way. When some time later we heard of his favorable attitude towards the Pullman strike of '94 and his anti-trustism of the Bryan campaign of 1896, we still regarded him as a



great but not completely understood personality, even to ourselves, thanks to our lack of social understanding. With the passage of time, we read up on Altgeld and have come to the conclusion that he is one of this country's greatest moral heroes, fighting alone and unaided and in the face of overwhelming economic forces, a terrible grim struggle for the underdog.

We think of Altgeld as a lone bulwark of traditional Americanism, trying desperately, yet grandly to stem the tide of incoming trustified capitalism. He lived in old school idealism, the foe of modern predatory realism, which crushed him. He was the embodiment of courage and as such an inspiration to all who knew of him.

"The greatest Roman of them all," in our boyhood days, was Henry George. A mere stripling, we came under his magnetic influence during the New York Mayoralty campaign of 1886. We attended his meetings in Cooper Union and Academy of Music as long as they lasted and read every pamphlet and article from his pen during those memorable days, made so by his incisive campaign for the single tax, a campaign that enlisted the aid of trade unionists, land leaguers, socialists, communards, and all the radicals of the day; and that opened a wide discussion of all of the social and economic problems of that now seemingly far-off time—with such rapidity have events moved since. That campaign has only been surpassed, for its attacks on basic economic conditions, by the Bryan campaign of 1896. In retrospect, both seem now like the final chapter in the story of individualism in this country. They were attempts of the workers and middle class to escape the domination of monopoly and special privileges; attempts, as we now know, foredoomed to failure.

Henry George was the best platform speaker we have ever heard. He was a keen dialectician, a keynoter par excellence, striking in his opening sentence, with telling effect, the theme of his discourse and building thereon climax after climax, all with an eloquence and wit, that were pervaded by a religious fervor and an unflinching enthusiasm, culminating in round after round of applause, and apparently sweeping everything before it! He was a campaigner hard to beat, was Henry George. His attacks on the socialists, his expulsions of them from his party, caused his downfall, in our opinion. It was an act of political expediency, that necessitated the moderation of his social criticism and thus destroyed his great effectiveness. At least, it did so with us, who were then on the threshold of a great era of social activity; though we knew it not at the time.

Have we any heroes now, after all these decades of disappointment and struggle? Certainly. Why not? These are great times full of great men, not the least of whom are unknown men, rank and filers, so to speak. Since 1886 our contacts with greatness of all kinds have been many and it would surprise you to know whom we think are the real heroes of today.

In the meanwhile, excuse us from naming them, while we turn again to the reading of this good book, "Pioneers of Freedom," by McAlister Coleman, written for the Pioneer Youth of America; and to be had through them or the publishers, the Vanguard Press.

JUSTUS EBERT.

## A CHANT FOR THE NEW TIME

*A Chant for the Robot.  
Arms moving forward and back,  
Forward—a pause—and back.  
Forward—a pause—and back.  
Now taut,  
Now slack.  
There is sweat on his brow,  
On his lips,  
And grime on his hands that grip  
The lever.*

*Forward—a pause—now back.  
This is a man,  
Not a jumping-jack.  
This is a man who can love,  
Make wheat-rows smile on the plain,  
This is a man who can fight,  
Feel pain.*

*Forward—a pause—now back.  
Forward—a pause—now back.  
If he should stop  
Forward and back  
On his rack,  
Trains would crash,  
Wheels smash,  
Cities tremble in darkness.*

*Forward and back,  
Forward and back,  
This is a man,  
This black  
Twisted thing,  
A man who can sing.*

DAVID P. BERENBERG.

## VICTIMS OF BOSTON BLUE-BLOODS

*Thirteen Days.* By Jeannette Marks. N. Y.: Albert and Charles Boni. 1929. 132 pp.

**I**N this small volume, Jeannette Marks, Professor of English Literature of Mt. Holyoke College, Socialist and well known author, gives a vivid and truthful description of the fight for freedom of Sacco and Vanzetti during the thirteen days prior to their execution.

Professor Marks had read the appeal of the Sacco-Vanzetti Defense Committee to the "rank and file" of artists, authors, teachers, to go to Boston and to bring what influence they could to stay the execution of the now immortal fish peddler and shoe maker.

She responded to that appeal and soon found herself at Socialist headquarters and the headquarters of the Defense Committee in Boston. From that time on she was with the long list of men and women well known in the literary world, and with the superb workers on the Defense Committee, who were struggling day and night with Governor Fuller for a pardon. While telling of their work and their repeated rebuffs by the millionaire automobile salesman, Governor Fuller, the author throws added rays of light on the character of the martyred Italians, the Lowell report and the trial leading to the conviction. Here also may be found some of those letters of Sacco

and Vanzetti which promise to receive an honored place in the literature of the movement for human progress, some of the noble poems written about these men, a short bibliography of other books and articles on the trial, and a revealing chapter on the "blue menace."

Two of the executed men's statements recorded in this volume bear constant repetition for their classic English and their nobility of sentiment. They are Vanzetti's letter shortly before his death and Sacco's advice to his son.

"If it had not been for these things," writes Vanzetti, speaking of his unjust arrest and trial, "I might have lived out my life, talking at street corners to scorning men. I might have died, unmarked, unknown, a failure. Now we are not a failure. This is our career and our triumph. Never in our full life can we hope to do such work for tolerance, for justice, for man's understanding of man, as now we do by an accident. Our words—our lives—our pains—nothing! The taking of our lives—lives of a good shoemaker and a poor fish peddler—all! The last moment belongs to us—that agony is our triumph!"

And here Sacco's letter to Dante:

"What here I am going to tell you will touch your feelings, but don't cry, Dante, because many tears have been wasted, as your mother's have been wasted for seven years, and never did any good. So, son, instead of crying, be strong, so as to be able to comfort your mother, and when you want to distract your mother from the discouraging soulness, I will tell you what I used to do. To take her for a long walk in the quiet country, gathering wild flowers here and there, resting under the shade of trees, between the harmony of the vivid stream and the gentle tranquility of the mother nature, and I am sure that she will enjoy this very much, as you surely would be happy for it. But remember always, Dante, in the play of happiness, don't you use all for yourself only, but down yourself just one step, at your side and help the weak ones that cry for help, help the persecuted and the victim because they are your better friends, they are the comrades that fight and fall as your father and Bartolo fought and fell yesterday for the conquest of the joy and freedom for all the poor workers. In this struggle of life you will find more love and you will be loved."

The story is one that is worth telling. It is told simply, sympathetically and impressively, and will add its mite to the truth about New England's shame in this tragic episode.

HARRY W. LAIDLER.

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