

With regard to the increase of reindeer breeding, fishing and hunting, for the purposes of the market, this is a question which is closely connected with industrialisation. The raw materials of the North, such as meat, fish, poultry, berries, nuts, hides, wood, etc. can be used to produce tinned goods, suède leather, extracts, fats, oils, etc. and thus be made into profitable export commodities. For the North, canning and preserving factories, leather and chemical works come chiefly into question. For the economic development of the Polar district of the Soviet Union, the building of land and waterways is of decisive importance. The potential productive possibilities of the Northern district of the Soviet Union are very great. It is only necessary to understand how to open them up. The beginning has already been made.

TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

The Convention of the Trade Union Unity League.

By Wm. Z. Foster (New York).

The Convention of the T. U. U. L. (the Fourth National Convention of the T. U. E. L.) was held in Cleveland, Ohio from August 31st to September 2nd inclusive. It was the most successful general Convention ever held by the left wing trade union movement in the United States, despite a number of weaknesses in its preparation and make up.

There were present at the Convention 690 delegates. These included 181 miners, 66 steel workers, 52 automobile workers, 54 needle workers, 41 building workers, 38 textile workers, and 28 railroad and marine transport workers. The bulk of the representation came from six principal industrial states: Ohio 127, Pennsylvania 121, New York 95, Illinois 66, Michigan 59, West Virginia 45. Somewhat less than half of the delegates came from the new industrial unions, the rest coming from Shop Committees in the organised industries, left wing groups in the old unions, etc. There were 159 youth delegates, 72 women, and 64 Negroes. The union delegates represented approximately 50,000 members. The delegates from the unorganised industries came from plants and factories employing approximately 600,000. These included many of the great basic trustified industries of the United States.

The figures of this Convention compare very favourably with those of the previous National Convention of the T. U. E. L., held December 3rd, 1927. At that Convention there were 297 delegates, of which there were miners 28, metal 19, automobile none, needle workers 107, building workers 50, textile 9, railroad and marine transport 8. About two-thirds of the 1927 Convention (172 delegates) came from New York, where the Convention was held, and the bulk of these were needle trades workers; whereas in the 1929 Convention, which had more than twice the number of delegates, the delegation came from 19 states, and principally from the basic industries.

One of the most outstanding features of the Convention was the large delegation of Negro workers — 64. These delegates came chiefly from the basic industries. It was far and away the best Negro delegation ever developed at any left wing convention in the United States. This delegation was the very centre of interest and activity at the Convention. It indicates that the T. U. U. L. has a splendid field for work amongst the Negro workers.

The T. U. U. L. Convention was a striking example of the radicalisation of the American workers. The large size of the Convention, the militant spirit of the delegates, and the unusual intensity with which they carried through the work of the Convention, all were examples of this. The difficult situation inside the Communist Party, with the intense fight against the Lovestone attempt to split the Party, together with certain pessimistic moods, tended to prevent the necessary preparation work for the Convention, but nevertheless the workers responded splendidly. This is a concrete demonstration of the radicalisation process that is going on amongst them under the fierce pressure of capitalist rationalisation, and which is making them increasingly ready for struggle.

The Convention was a striking demonstration of the correctness of the Comintern and Profintern line for trade work in the United States, namely the building of revolutionary industrial unions in those industries where the workers are unorganised or where the reformist unions have no real power. The Convention delegates enthusiastically accepted the programme based upon the Profintern Fourth Congress decisions, and the Profintern open letter to the Convention.

At the Convention there was established a new trade union centre which affiliated to the R. I. L. U. as its American section. The old Trade Union Educational League was principally a loose organisation of the left wing inside the reformist unions. The new Trade Union Unity League, however, will be a firmly knit dues-paying organisation, and will act as the coordinating centre not only for the new unions being established in the various industries, but also for the left wing groups in the old unions. It will actively lead the whole movement in the struggle against the employers and the social reformists. The very centre of its programme is the organisation of the unorganised into new revolutionary industrial unions. The T. U. U. L. is headed by a large National Committee which meets semi-annually, and a National Executive Board of 15 which meets monthly. The National Officers are: General Secretary, Wm. Z. Foster; Assistant Secretary and Treasurer, Jack Schmies; National Organiser, Jack Johnstone; National Vice Organiser, J. W. Ford; and Editor, Wm. F. Dunne.

All the new unions were represented at the Convention. These include the National Miners Union, Needle Trades Workers Industrial Union, National Textile Workers Union, Independent Shoe Workers Union, and the Automobile and Aircraft Workers Union. There was also a strong representation from sections of the Amalgamated Food Workers Union. In addition there were also represented the Marine Workers League, which is now developing itself into a labour union.

The Convention adopted a general programme of action as well as a constitution to fit the new character of the League. This programme is based upon the struggle against capitalist rationalisation and imperialist war. It deals with the organisation of the unorganised, strike strategy, social insurance, the Negro question, the Labour Party, work among the colonial peoples, the fight against imperialist war, the defence of the Soviet Union, protection of foreign-born workers, etc. The Convention placed great stress upon the fight against wage cuts, and for the 4-day and 5-day week, with the 6-hour day in mining and the 8-hour day in road industries, and against unemployment. The whole Convention was built around the question of the organisation of the unorganised. The Gastonia trials, in which sixteen militant leaders of the textile workers face the electric chair, occupied a very central role in the Convention. The Convention voted to send a workers' jury to participate in the Gastonia trials, to listen to the evidence and to render its verdict to the workers generally regarding this attempt to kill off revolutionary leaders of the textile workers.

The convention was animated by a revolutionary spirit. It not only outlined a programme of everyday struggle, but it condemned the capitalist system as a whole, and declared for its overthrow and the setting up of a workers, and farmers government.

The whole Convention delegation blazed with resentment and condemnation of the A. F. of L. and S. P. social reformist agents and strike breakers of American Imperialism. More and more the A. F. of L. — S. P. leaders are acting as the instruments of the capitalists to speed up the workers in the industries and to demoralise them in the face of American Imperialism. The programme. The so-called Muste-ite or "progressive" opposition to the A. F. of L. came in for special condemnation. This group, with its sub-grouplets of Cannonites and Lovestonites, only serves as a screen for the revolutionary bureaucracy. This is particularly dangerous now that the workers are in a mood to organise, its policy being to draw these masses into the control of the A. F. of L. leadership to betray them shamelessly.

In connection with the Convention, a whole series of special and industrial conferences were held. These were all highly successful. The special conferences dealt with Negro workers, women work, organisation of the South, work among Latin-American workers, and the building of the official Labour Unity. The industrial Conferences dealt with the

isms in the respective industries. They concentrated themselves principally upon the working out of economic programmes of each of the industries and the development of the work of organising the unorganised. Among the more important campaigns outlined, and the Convention distinguished itself for the practical character of its work, were big movements to organise the coal and metal miners, the automobile workers, marine transport workers, shoe workers, needle workers, and especially the textile workers in the South. Many of these projects are already well advanced. In various trustified industries active campaigns were laid out for the beginning of the formation of preliminary groups of workers in the plants and factories, as preparation for eventual union building.

The T. U. U. L. Convention delivered a decisive defeat to the **Right** tendencies in the movement. Prior to the holding of the Convention, both the Cannon-Trotskyites and the Lovestonites made open efforts to mobilise their forces for the Convention; but their work came to nought. The Cannonites were not in evidence at all at the Convention, and the Lovestonites not much more. The Lovestonites had a few delegates but they were simply drowned out by the militant spirit of the Convention. They did not venture to speak during the Convention. They confined themselves to introducing two resolutions, one an opportunistic conception of the Labour Party, and the other a proposal to adopt the line of the liberals regarding the Gastonia trials. Both of these were unanimously defeated by the Convention, no one voted for them. The climax of the defeat of the right Lovestone tendency came when **Gitlow**, their leader in the Convention, was defeated for election to the National Committee of the T. U. U. L., receiving only two votes.

The prospective before the newly formed Trade Union Unity League is excellent. The workers in all the basic industries are showing signs of increasing discontent and willingness to struggle. The A. F. of L. gives no leadership to these disoriented workers except to shamefully betray them into the hands of the employers. The T. U. U. L. has a splendid opportunity to acquire leadership of large masses of them. The convention just held gave it a good start in this direction. Without doubt, in the next months the new organisation will play a highly important role in the American labour movement. The Cleveland Convention is a milestone on the road of development of the American working class.
