A Departmentalized Union

Misinformed persons believe that industrial unionism is a sort of crazy quilt or mulligan stew. This is a false conception. With a scientific plan of amalgamation, the crafts will not lose their identity. The general body would be divided into several sections, as follows, each of which, if necessary, would have a number of sub-divisions:

1. Steel Workers
2. Machinery and Engine Builders
3. Ship Builders
4. Automobile Constructors
5. Shop Crafts on the roads
6. Jewelry and small instrument workers

Such a departmentalized industrial union would be able to take care of the interests of the affiliated crafts far more efficiently than at present. Beaulieu has proved amalgamation prove this conclusively. In Germany for instance, the metal workers are all in one union, which is highly departmentalized. Each craft functions alone in its own field, and yet by virtue of the fact that all the crafts are united in one industrial organization, with only one executive the whole of the 1,800,000 members can at a given moment be moved as a unit. Last year the German Metal Workers' Union signed agreements with 73,000 firms, covering all kinds of metal work from jewelry making to locomotive building. The interests of each craft were taken care of to the smallest detail. In America, where outside of the railroad shops we have scarcely an agreement at all, this wholesale signing up of the employers seems almost unbelievable.

The various former craft unions which amalgamated into the German Metal Workers' Union, had a multitude of insurance and fraternal features. To enumerate all the different schemes of dues, premiums, funeral and unemployment benefits, and others would make one dizzy. Yet these were all eliminated without the least friction, and at less than half the original cost, through a separate fraternal benefit department. Dare anyone suggest that American brains are not capable of an equal intelligent organization?

The objection that amalgamation of the metal trades and railroad trades would split the crafts and break assunder various natural combinations of labor, is ridiculous. The railroaders, on the contrary, would become the charter members of the metal workers' union. But they would also be affiliated with the railroad workers' union, paying part of their dues into both organizations. Gunsmiths and blacksmitheas leaving a contract shop and going on to a railroad work, would merely transfer into a local of the railroad department, and thereafter, instead of all their dues going to the metal workers, part would be paid to the railroad workers. They would become part of the railroad industry, and while there would be subject to the jurisdiction of the railroad workers, a good road would be more concerned. But they would be primarily members of the metal workers' union. Both metal workers' union and railroad workers' union would be benefited by such an arrangement.

A Plan of Action

Amalgamation should become a burning question in the order of business at every local meeting of all the metal trades. In organizations having referendum, local unions must commence to place these various organizations on record. All delegates to the district and international conventions, should be instructed to have those conventions go on record for amalgamation. All candidates for international officers should be forced to voice their position on the question. When two or more unions go on record favorably, immediate action should be taken to see that they amalgamate. This will help move the more backward organizations into action. Let amalgamation be the question of the hour.

Metal tradesmen! Progress calls you to action. Concentration of capital, industrial development, are moving forward with terrific speed to be organized. Get off the bumpy road of craft unionism, and enter upon the broad boulevard of departmentalized industrial unionism.

Program of the Needle Trades

Preamble

At a period when the working class is being dealt heavy, crushing blows by the arrogant capitalists; when the unions led by partly corrupt and generally cowardly officials are succumbing one after another to the onslaughts of the capitalist class, the Trade Union Educational League is the only hope for a regeneration of the American trade union movement.

The League is uniting in its ranks the militant workers of all trades; those elements who alone are willing and capable of reorganizing the workers and stiffening t'eur number of resistance. Its program of amalgamation is the crying need of the movement. It is absolutely right when it declares that the labor movement is confronted with the alternative of amalgamation or extermination.

In the struggle against the reactionary leadership of the American trade union movement, the unions of the needle trades can play an important and vital role. Being a more class-conscious and militant element, they should set an inspiring example to workers in other industries. Before this can be accomplished, however, these unions them-
selves must be reorganized on a new basis and infused with a new spirit. To carry on this necessary work of reorganiza-
tion; to further the agitation for the amalgamation of the
unions in the industry and for the establishment of the shop
delegate system; make the workers realize that they have a vital part to play in the American labor movement—that is the purpose and work of the needle trades section of the Trade Union Educational League.

Amalgamation

Why are we, the workers belonging to the Trade Union Educational League, in favor of the amalgamation of the
unions in the needle industry? It is true that the unions in this industry have most of the characteristics of a dangerous
organization than the typical American trade union. In our
industry there is no open secession of one craft upon another.
There is no constant warfare; already a union made for all
are for amalgamation because we wish to extend this prin-
ciple of "one shop, one union" to "one industry, one union."

The problems and interests of the workers in the needle
trades in one plant or organization are not likely to
be solved by any other method than the amalgamation of
all the needle workers. It is not only better for the
interests and the unity of the united, but it will increase
the fighting strength of the 350,000 workers in our
industry. Amalgamation is a question of more power for
the worker in the class in order to make his power really
realizable. A locally unionized of all the needle workers will prove to be a
source of creative power for the good of the workers. Federation does not do it, a loose alliance is a dangerous
undertaking in the clothing industry. It would not add
one iota of actual strength to the unions, but it would arouse
the workers to stimulate an even greater degree of
solidification of their ranks. An alliance would provoke
the employers to unite still further without giving a corresponding
increase of power to the unions.

Federation as proposed by some of the union officials, may or
cannot be a step forward in the case of the typical
American craft union. In the case of the needle workers,
human nature is not so step forward. What is necessary, and
what the situation demands, is a closely knit union of
all the needle trades.

Amalgamation of the needle trades union will increase the strength of the union and guarantee a larger and more
powerful force in the class in order to make power realizable. Not only because of its moral and financial strength, but also because of its
the side of the workers, assuring their victory. More
over, amalgamation of all the needle trades into one solid union will not only strengthen the individual trades themselves but will create the unity for the amalgamation of all the
other craft unions in other industries.

One amalgamated needle trades union, organized on the
basis of the present lines of division, such as ladies' garments department, men's clothing workers, furriers, cap-
makers, etc., with one central fund and one central staff in
the national office, one district council of all trades in each
district—would eliminate waste, duplication of effort, over-
lapping of administration, and make the union generally more
effective.

To bring about this amalgamation the militants in every
local union in the industry must begin to agitate for the
coming of a special convention of all the unions in the
needle trades, which shall formulate definite plans for amalgamation. Representation at such a convention should be on the basis of at least one delegate for every 5,000 members.

Shop Delegate System

The present form of local organization in the needle trades has outlived its usefulness and is no longer suitable
for carrying on the work properly. The numerous local divisions tend to cause dissension in the ranks of the workers and to develop in them a spirit of local patriotism which is destructive to the workers as a whole. The local unions are largely political clubs and mostly lick. Usually a local with a membership of
10,000 can boast of no better attendance at meetings than
from 100 to 200. Through the local union meetings only a
small fraction of the membership actively participates in the
affairs of the organization. As a result it becomes possible
for a group of un paid officials to control the shop
workers. Under such a system the interests of the shop
are distinct and separate from the interests of the union. The union is to
him too often merely an office where he pays compulsory
dues. The best way to establish a closer bond between the
workers and the shop owners is to arouse the initiative and individual activity of the rank
and file, to transfer the power from the hands of the paid
officials into those of the workers. We shall abolish not only the local but also the craft divisions,—the
present system must be changed and the shop delegate sys-
tem adopted by the workers. With the help of this new unit of the organization, the union will be conducted and
controlled by the rank and file.

How shall we change the system? Under this system the
workers at their regular shop meetings elect committees
which administer the affairs of the shop and act as
representatives of the workers in that shop at local councils, con-
sisting of a specified number of shop representatives. The
delegates in these local councils formulate policies, elect and
control officers to the higher units and report back to their
respective shops, thus linking up the problems of the union
with those of the shop. In this way the union becomes the
true expression of the needs of the workers in the industry.

Program of Immediate Demands

As active workers in the union and the shops who are faced with the daily struggle, we propose a program to improve
the working conditions in the shop while we are agitating for
the amalgamation of all our unions into one industrial
unit and the bringing about of the shop delegate system.

Week Work:—We declare the speed-up system in the
form of piece work to be a method introduced by the capi-
tals to the workers in order to exploit the workers more effectively.
The piece system is injurious to the health of the workers, and the competition which results from it is de-
structive and stimulative. We will fight unceasingly for
the abolition of the piece work system.

Standards of Production:—The militants in the needle
trades unions will fight any proposal of week work with a
method of production. We recognize that piece work is a disguised form of piece work, which will not abolish
the evils of piece work. Week work with a minimum wage
is the slogan.

Consolidation of Locals:—There are entirely too many local
unions in the needle trades. We stand for the unification of
all the locals of one craft, such as operators, pressers, etc.,
and of all the locals of one trade, such as coat makers, dress
makers, etc.

Employment Bureaus:—We advocate the establishment of
employment bureaus in the unions of the needle trades to
equalize the present activity and give the workers a
strength they apply at the shops for jobs advertised in the
newspapers. This will give the unions control over the jobs in the
industry already has been demonstrated by the Amalgamated
Clothing Workers.

Shop Chairman in an Advisory Capacity:—Realizing that
only through the establishment of the shop delegate system
can the present evils in our unions be eliminated, and as a
step in that direction, we advocate the establishment of a
shop chairman body to meet regularly and to act in an ad-
visory capacity in the unions. We will also support all pro-
gressive measures in the unions, such as recall of officers, refer-
dendums, proportional representation to the higher units of
the organization, etc.

Injunctions:—The American labor movement since its
beginning has fought against the use of injunctions. The
injunction is the most powerful weapon the exploiters are
using to crush the labor union. The American labor move-
ment destroys that weapon. For any union to use the injunction
or to recognize its legitimacy, as did the International Ladies' Garment Workers, in the recent cloak makers strike in New
York, confuses the workers and weakens their fight against
the injunction. We will use all power to oppose the enforce-
ment of the injunction by any union in the future.

To familiarize the workers in our industry with this pro-
gram, and to make the people aroused advocated a fact in the life
of the organization, and that the militants must be organized in
every local union. All these groups are working for the pur-
purpose of carrying on the educational campaign effec-
tively throughout every branch of the industry.

With this program in mind, the members of the T. U. E. L. comes to the workers in the industry. We ask those who are serious in their desire to make the

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T. U. E. L. comes to the workers in the clothing industry. We ask those who are serious in their desire to make the