

ON THE WORKERS' FRONT

In the Needle Trades

Tasks Before the Plenum of the Needle Trades Industrial Union

The Needle Trades Workers Industrial Union Plenary session of the G. E. B. has been announced for the first week in January. This Plenum will take the place of a convention and will therefore have to consider the work of the whole period since the last convention.

What has the Union to report and register as accomplishments for the last eighteen months? Have the policies adopted at the last convention been verified? To what extent have the resolutions adopted at the convention been instrumental in the building and strengthening of the Industrial Union?

Even a superficial glance will point to negative results. The last convention was held under the banner of the "third period". This was evidenced in the phraseology employed and in the policies adopted. The Right wing controlled unions were branded as hopeless company-unions and the building of Left wing opposition groups in them pronounced—futile. The policies proved wrong to the root and disastrous for the Left wing. Not growth and expansion followed the convention, but isolation.

A Genuine United Front Imperative

The plenum is confronted at present with one basic problem from which all the others follow. The sentiment for united front and for one union has become the outstanding issue of the day. The Industrial Union, as well as the reformist unions, cannot any more dull the voice of the workers for unity. The future of the Left wing in the trade unions depends largely upon the correct solution of the problem of unity. The latest mechanical gesture of the leadership in going through the motions of united front action in the Dress Trade, and the distorted manner of applying united front tactics, as exemplified by the Furriers of which the Militant, (Nov. 24, 1931) spoke, confronts the Left wing with many new contradictions. The Left wing must strive for unity in such a way that it will rise in the eyes of the workers and gain strength in the struggle with reformism. What the Left wing has done up till now is the exact opposite.

Unity over the heads of the bureaucratic officials would be very desirable if it were possible—but unfortunately this is not the case.

The slogan of "united front from below" used aimlessly and mechanically by the leadership of the Party and the Union disregards all circumstances and is therefore not realistic and applicable as a weapon against the Right wing.

Lovestone For Liquidation

It is absolutely impermissible to follow the path of the Lovestone united front maneuvers. Here is a group that is always ready to stab the Left wing in the back; always ready to give the benefit of doubt to the Right wing; always ready to plead the case of the Right wing and to throw the blame upon the Left wing and unites for that purpose with any shady and unprincipled cliques. (Zimmerman's article in the Revolutionary Age (12-26-31).

It is wrong likewise to pursue united front tactics as were practiced by the

Golds and Wortises under the Lovestone Party regime—with Sorkin and others in the furriers.

But it is perfectly in line with Communist principles for the Left wing to demand unity from the Right wing bureaucrats on the basis of a struggle against the bosses, to call them to conferences for this purpose and at the same time call upon the workers to press the issue of unity; to send committees to the Executive and Joint Board, etc. Nor must we necessarily demand a majority at the conference as a prerequisite for trade union unity negotiations. As long as we are able to bring the message of unity before the workers and to make our demands known, we are in a position to expose the Right wing fakery and to educate the workers in the class struggle. In the struggle for unity, in the endeavor to build one union, we must strive to gain all possible concessions from the Right wing to assure a fighting chance for the militant workers. What the Lovestone group proposes is identical with the proposals made by Zaritsky a few years ago to Local 43 of the Milliners—not amalgamation but liquidation of the Left wing as an organized group.

Issues of Struggle Must Be Posed

The present intolerable conditions of the needle trades workers can be improved only through a united struggle of the workers. Because of the division in the ranks, the weakness of the Industrial Union and the utter ignorance of the Party leadership of how to lead the united front movement—the great need of a struggle for better conditions, shorter hours, the week work system, etc., is being lost sight of. The Left wing has as yet not considered nor made mention of these issues.

The great number of Italian, Spanish and Negro workers in the dress trade requires special attention and an organization campaign, well equipped with language speakers and language literature. This is being abandoned because of the organizational weakness of the Left wing. The Right wing is not interested to improve their lot. The result is brutal exploitation by the bosses.

The Plenum must deal adequately with each branch and with the Union as a whole, and lay emphasis where it's due. In some branches like the Millinery, for instance, the original base is practically gone. Here undoubtedly more attention must be concentrated on the building of a real opposition within the Right wing controlled union.

In the dress industry we are nearing the expiration of the agreements. Again we find ourselves in the midst of a great deal of confusion and indecision. The tactics to be pursued are huddled behind the scenes—the open platform is decorated with a lot of name calling, denunciations, slander, etc. The dress-makers who come to meetings hear a lot of monotonous and meaningless speeches, but not a word about the real issue involved—namely, how to solidify the broken ranks; how to build one united

strike committee and when we will draw up demands. The time is short and too much of it is wasted by the Stalinist leadership of the Industrial Union.

Opposition Points the Way

This pre-strike period is very similar to the same period of last year, before the so-called general strike of the dress-makers under the direction of the N. T. W. I. U.

The Freiheit writes editorially (Dec. 7, 1931): "The strike of the Industrial Union of a year ago did not accomplish much, because in the preparation only general and often meaningless propaganda was made use of and very little healthy practical work." This is said now by the official organ of the Party a year after the strike was lost. It is said in a big-hearted way and in the name of self-criticism. These writers conveniently forget that members of the Industrial Union and adherents of the Left Opposition were called counter-revolutionists and betrayers for saying the same thing at the time of the strike discussions in order to avoid a failure of the strike.

The Left Opposition was and remains the only consistent fighter in the ranks of the Left wing. Our proposals to effect a united front for the dressmakers strike (Militant, Oct. 24, 1931) should be taken as a basis.

The sooner we get on the job, the stronger we will be to undertake a struggle against the bosses and the Right wing bureaucrats.

The Plenum has a big job before it—Not a policy of one-sidedness and the calling of names, not mechanical control over a small group of blind followers, but a free discussion on the matters before us will help the Plenum to solve the tasks before it. Not victimization of Left wingers and Left Oppositionists for disagreements with the official policy, nor the repulsion of tried devoted workers from active participation.

Will the Plenum measure up to the tasks before it?

—SYLVIA BLECKER.

In the Workmen's Circle

The Membership Begins to Awaken

Since the split in the Workmen's Circle in 1930, organized by the Left wing, tranquility has reigned there. The Socialist Party bureaucrats who are entrenched in the Workmen's Circle, and more so since most of the militant elements split away, expected easy sailing. The self-complacent bureaucrats of the S. P. school don't seem to have learned anything, nor, surely, have they forgotten anything. To them the cause of the Left wing is just the agitation of a few trouble-makers and not the product of objective conditions.

But this self-complacency didn't last very long. The working class elements in the Workmen's Circle, who still predominate (contrary to the contentions of the Stalinists) remained for a long time after the split, as if in a stupor. The organization was being pushed further to the right by the stupid tactics of the "third period" (by the way, what became of the "third period"?), by which every worker who remained in the Workmen's Circle, or in other mass organizations, was called a "social-fascist". Such tactics by the Left were only grist to the mill of the corrupt clique of Right wingers.

But the workers in the Workmen's Circle did not remain forever in a stupefied state. In the present period, when the foundations of the capitalist structure are being ever more undermined, the capitalists are driven to vicious attacks on the standards of living of the workers. Consequently the cleavage between the workers' ranks and the bosses deepens and widens. Impelled by the worsening of his economic conditions, the workers in the Workmen's Circle, especially the revolutionary elements among them, who would not respond to the Stalinist cry to split away from the Workmen's Circle, are awakening.

From occasional rumblings there finally resulted a statement by Branch No. 417, W. C., which was published. In no uncertain terms it declared its adherence to the revolutionary movement. With this definite act, new hopes arose in the hearts of many of these workers, and a readiness to renew the struggle.

The Paterson Strike and the W. C. Scabs

There is no need to tell the readers of the Militant that there was a strike of silk workers in Paterson, though the "wisecracker" Harrison George of the

Daily Worker isn't sure of it. Over 7,000 workers participated in it. Despite the misleadership, to which Lovestone and Co. contributed their share, the rank and file led a heroic struggle. The strike was lost, and no small share of this loss is due to over 200 members of the Workmen's Circle who scabbed during the strike,—against the National Textile Workers Union (for which act the Lovestonites have excuses) and against the United Textile Workers of America, affiliated with the A. F. of L. The U. T. W. strike received the support of the leadership (S. P.ites) of the Workmen's Circle, and over 300 branches of the Workmen's Circle contributed support to the strikers.

After the strike was over, a few of the more aggressive and militant workers of Paterson attempted to call on the strikers for action against those scabs still members of the Workmen's Circle. They discovered that many, if not most, of the workers are disheartened and brow-beaten by these same scabs who are co-members with them of their fraternal organization, the W. C.

Socialist Party Supports Scab Members

These workers realized that under these conditions it will be a difficult task to get rid of the scabs in the Workmen's Circle. They have appealed to the National Executive Committee of the Workmen's Circle to dispense with the ordinary rules of procedure because of the special conditions in Paterson, pointing out that when and if the workers bring charges against these scabs, the latter, small employers, etc. retaliate by black-listing them. They have asked the appointment of a special committee to deal with the scab problem in the W. C. of Paterson. The reply was: "We must obey the laws of the constitution"; but in the struggle against the militants and Left wingers they spoke differently. "To hell with the constitution" was the slogan then.

The question will be asked, "What are the reasons that the Socialist Party leadership of the Workmen's Circle supports scabs?" The Socialist Party leadership everywhere is losing its hold on the workers. True to their breed, they follow in the footsteps of their comrades, Noske, Scheidemann, Renaudel, etc. They have thrown off the little baggage of revolutionary phrases they

still retained. Today they find their allies in the middle class elements in the Workmen's Circle, who have increased tremendously in numbers during and after the war. These S. P. bureaucrats cannot divorce themselves from these elements, their chief supporters, who have become a decisive factor in the Workmen's Circle.

A Movement For A Special Conference

The Paterson workers seem now to have realized this. They know that this is not a Paterson affair only. It involves the very existence of the organization, sometimes called the "Red Cross" of the Jewish labor movement. The Paterson workers, members of the Workmen's Circle, have sent out a clarion call to rally the broad membership of the Workmen's Circle around this struggle. So far, the New York District has responded, and the response is a very encouraging one. This call was first published in the Jewish Day and, after a delay of three weeks, in the Freiheit. An organization has already been formed for the purpose of calling a Special Conference of the branches of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.

This movement must be supported by every class conscious worker. The issue is clear-cut. "The scabs must be driven out of the Workmen's Circle!" "The leadership that makes it possible for scabs to belong to the Workmen's Circle must go!"

There are great opportunities for the Left wing movement, as well, of course, as serious dangers. In another article I will deal with various points and the role the Party and Communists should play.

—J. B.

Carpenters' Local Supports Marine Defenses

When on Dec. 23 a member of the Marine Workers Defense Committee asked for the floor at our local Union, L. U. 2000, U. B. of C. & J. of A. to speak in behalf of the three framed up Marine Workers in jail, a member of the I. W. W. made a motion that the delegate be granted ten minutes to state their case. Immediately Spitzer, a leading member of the T. U. U. L. made an amendment, that the time be reduced to five minutes. A vote was taken and the result was that the speaker was given the floor for ten minutes.

The speaker was able in a few minutes to explain the frame up case. He appealed to the membership for its moral as well as financial support, when Friedman, chief leader of the T. U. U. L. made a motion that we send two delegates to their conference, to find out who this committee was. Having fully understood this act of sabotage, I made an amendment that since the case of these prisoners was already somewhat neglected and mainly due to lack of financial support, that we grant them twenty-five dollars immediately. My amendment was seconded. Again Friedman took the floor and spoke against my amendment. His argument was that we should send our delegates to this conference and then act in accord with their report. They had the whole thing summed up as follows: Since our meeting, on account of the holidays, was held on a Wednesday instead on Thursday, therefore we only had an attendance of a few hundred. Friedman thought that they would succeed in electing both delegates from their group and thereby the unfavorable report would automatically follow. But due to their efforts to get on the committee, when many of us knew that they never supported any proposition in our local Union except it comes from the I. L. D. or the Party), my amendment to Friedman's motion carried by three votes. Then, along with one of their supporters I was elected delegate.

With such unscrupulous tactics the T. U. U. L. intends to build up a Left wing movement in a trade union. Not even the reactionary Hutcheson machine cares to place itself in such a position. The T. U. U. L. must get wholeheartedly behind the Marine Workers Defense and help to smash the frame-up.

—W. H. H.

THE ECONOMIC MONTH

The American crisis continues to reach new depths. Steel production for the last week of December was at the rate of 21% of capacity, the lowest operating rate since 1921, against 29% at the beginning of the month. Undoubtedly there will be some increase during January and February in steel production, as there was in the early months of 1931 as well as 1930, due to some accumulation of orders in the automobile and other industries, but any such increase will have little bearing on the immediate perspectives of the crisis.

Railroad car loadings have kept on decreasing week after week; in the week ended Dec. 13 they amounted to 613,000 cars, against a weekly average of 740,000 for the year 1931 to date. These figures are of special significance because of the quickness with which they reflect any tendency to recovery out of the crisis.

Automobile production for November of 69,000 cars was the lowest reported for any month since 1921, and compared with an average of 203,000 cars per month for the first 11 months of 1931, and with 136,000 cars for November 1930.

Unquestionably the present crisis, in proportion to the present development of productive facilities in the United States, will go down in history as the deepest up to the present time, reflecting the accumulation and intensification of capitalist contradictions on the economic field on an unprecedented scale.

Senator Brookhart has introduced a bill to abolish the gold standard, and replace the gold dollar by a new unit equivalent to one-third hundred and sixty billionth of the national wealth of the United States as of July 1, 1931. The present currency is to be exchanged for Treasury notes redeemable in any of the commodities used by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in computing its index number of prices, and the total volume of currency in circulation is to be manipulated on the basis of the 1926 level of prices. Senator Shipstead, Farmer-Laborite, wants to issue non-interest bearing Treasury notes having legal tender to inflate the currency.

It has been characteristic of the petty bourgeois liberal-reformist and agrarian movements in this country that they have tried to pick the pockets of the grand bourgeoisie through currency manipulations as a basic tactic rather than fighting them openly in the political arena. Senator Brookhart continues the traditions of the Greenbackers of the '70's, the Free-Silver movement of W. J. Bryan, the 1920-21 agrarian agitation against the so-called "Federal Reserve deflation conspiracy", etc. If these gentlemen need an ideological basis, they will find it in the Proudhonist theories of money

culminating in the "exchanging banks" which were so thoroughly exposed by Marx and Engels.

The grand bourgeoisie itself is not above using financial manipulations to create the illusion that there is a way out of the crisis through other means than the class struggle in the field of production. The National Credit Corporation, commented on previously in the Militant in connection with the acute phase of the banking crisis of September-October 1931, is being discredited even among bankers.

In a hearing before the Senate subcommittee on finance and banking, Melvin A. Taylor, president of the half-billion-dollar First National Bank of Chicago, said the N. C. C. would only transfer undesirable loans from bank to bank and in the end leave the stronger banks holding \$500,000,000 worth of such paper. The practical outcome of his criticism is—an endorsement of Hoover's proposed Reconstruction Finance Corporation, which would make the government put up the money instead of the banks, and incidentally holding the bag. George L. Harrison, governor of the New York Federal Reserve Bank, said the N. C. C. "could not be employed in the general situation and had not done as much as desired in relieving frozen credit among the banks".

All of which does not prevent Mr. Hoover from proposing as Point 10 of his 12-point program in a statement of Dec. 11, "the safeguarding and support of the banks through the National Credit Corporation, which has already given great confidence to bankers and extends their ability to make loans to commerce and industry". The Germans have the word for it—"unverschämte"—something more than shameless.

The Brüning government has shot its last bolt with the group of emergency decrees cutting wages 10%, raising the turnover tax from 85-100 of 1% to 2% which tends to raise prices and the cost of living while it hypocritically "orders" a 10% cut in prices, etc. As the bourgeois financial press remarks, the 10% wage cut is sure, the 10% cut in prices may in practice "result in hardships" which will lead to modification.

While German capitalism thus strengthens itself internally, it is being forced to its knees internationally, in its relations with the capitalists of other countries. Foreign bank credits continue to be withdrawn; the short-term debt, which amounted to 4 1/2 billion marks on July 31, had been reduced by Oct. 31 to 3.7 billions, of which the American share declined during this period from 2.1 to 1.8 billions. The Basle committee of bankers has had to throw up its hands and pass the buck back to the

governments, with the notation that Germany surely cannot pay reparations by July 1, 1932, when the moratorium expires.

The exploitation of the German proletariat which now has to carry on its back capitalists of other countries as well as its own bourgeoisie is raising international contradictions to a still higher level and hastening the relief of the accumulating social tension through an explosion in the form of war, revolution or fascist coup d'état.

One of the expressions of the intensification of the crisis in France is the growing inability of taxes to cover expenses; a point of special importance to France because the whole stabilization since 1927 was predicated on the ability of the government to balance its budget. For the month of October, 1931, the yield of taxes was off 11 million dollars from the same month of the preceding year; for the seven months to October, the decline was 31 millions! an official estimate before the Chamber of Deputies is that the 1933 budget will show a deficit of 240 million dollars. The unstable nature of the "equilibrium" of French economy, pointed out in a recent article in the Militant, will lead to an immense piling-up of contradictions and sharpening of the class struggle when French capitalism attempts to put through its solution of the crisis in Government finance—reduced expenses through cutting the pay of Government employees, and attempts to cut wages in industry at a time when living costs are adjusting themselves to the international level.

The sharpening of the industrial crisis and its development to a higher level, that of the financial crisis, has been exemplified by the declaration by Hungary of a moratorium on at least two-thirds of its foreign debt of \$715,000,000. So far it claims to be able to deposit the required amounts in Hungarian currency, but to be unable to sell this currency for gold without breaking down its foreign exchange values. The logical next step would be the declaration that it is unable to accumulate the 60-odd millions per year required, even in Hungarian currency.

Japan too has had to withdraw formally from the gold standard, after having lost gold consistently ever since the attempted stabilization. Yesterday the yen broke to about 37 cents, losing 6% of its value in one day, and the Tokio Stock Exchange has had to be closed after a one-day gesture to restore confidence by reopening. Imperialist wars in the declining phase of world capitalism create fresh crises and contradictions as fast as they solve old ones, but the new crises are on a higher plane—this is what Japan is illustrating on a small scale now, as the European war has done since 1918, and as the next world-wide war will triumphantly prove.

—B. J. F.

The Struggle For Power In Germany

(Continued from page 1)

Itself from the trade unions, and draws itself further away from the millions of social democratic workers. The C. P. "Social-Fascism" the Party has isolated G. has aped the Fascists in an effort to stem their growth. In these efforts it has traveled another step away from a policy of revolutionary struggle and adopted instead a line of nationalism, dragging along with it the demands of Hitler. Within the Party a strong wave of anti-semitism exists.

The huge growth of the C. P. G. (its membership is now over 200,000) only testifies to the revolutionary character of the present situation. But the negative features of the Party policy, which is a negation of struggle and signifies a surrender to Fascism, will have disastrous results for the international working class. A victory of Fascism in Germany would mean the destruction of the German Communist Party. It would mean the dissolution of the labor movement. Once in power, Fascism would strengthen and unify its forces. It would cause a reaction to the Right in other countries. With the destruction of the German Communist Party, the Comintern would find itself weakened tremendously. A Fascist Germany, would in a short period of time receive the support of the imperialist powers and result in a quick attack against the Soviet Union.

The Party has as its task to prepare the basis for the seizure of power. It is an unavoidable task. The struggle in Germany is between Fascism and Communism. A victory for Fascism is a defeat for the international revolutionary movement. The Soviet Union would be in immediate danger of a military attack of the imperialist powers. It

New York Open Forum

N. Y. FORUM
On Friday, January 8, 1932, comrade Albert Glotzer, member of the National Executive Committee of the Communist League of America (Opposition), will speak on his visit to comrade Trotsky. Comrade Glotzer, who has just returned from a trip to Europe, spent five weeks with Trotsky and has much to relate to the American workers. The meeting is part of the program of regular forums held by the Left Opposition in New York. The meeting will be held in the Labor Temple, 14th Street and Second Avenue, and begins at 8 P. M.

PHILADELPHIA

MASS MEETING
PHILADELPHIA—On SUNDAY JANUARY 10, 1932, at 8 P. M., a lecture on "The Economic Crisis and the Communists" will be given by Arne Swabeck. The lecture will be held at OSTROPOLER HALL, 943 No. FRANKLIN ST. The admission is free and everyone is invited. There will be a period for questions and discussion by the audience. The meeting is being held under the auspices of The Philadelphia Branch, Communist League of America (Opposition).

would be the signal for a reactionary turn to the Right on a world scale.

The international Communist movement, and in particular the German Communist Party must block this development. It can do this if its line is reversed. If it realizes that the foremost task for it is the organization of the working class for the revolutionary struggle. In this situation the Opposition must exert all its energies to force a turn in the Party line, and must actively project itself into the situation.

—ALBERT GLOTZER.

Prospects for Jewish Paper Bright

The preliminary work for the early publication of the Jewish organ of the Communist League of America (Opposition), **Unser Kampf** is well under way. We are now ready to announce the editorial board of the paper. It will consist of comrades: M. Lewit, Albert Orland, and F. Rubinstein. Sylvia Blecker has been chosen Business Manager. As yet we cannot with certainty announce the exact day of its appearance. We are aiming to have **Unser Kampf** out on the fifteenth of January.

Will we succeed in that? The answer to this question lies with our comrades and sympathizers throughout the country. We have not yet received all the payments on the pledge.

Rush your contributions immediately, so that there may be no delay in the appearance of **Unser Kampf**.

From the manuscripts we have at hand, we can say that the first number of **Unser Kampf** promises to be very rich in content. No worker will want to miss the first issue—and we are sure—the issues following. The only way to assure yourself of a copy of **Unser Kampf** is to subscribe. For one dollar (Canada \$1.25) the paper will be mailed to you for one year (26 issues).

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