

FROM THE MILITANTS

Conservative Unions Grow in St. Louis

St. Louis, Mo.—The American workers are on the march! Strikes everywhere. Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Missouri, New York, California, in every town and hamlet, in every industry and occupation, workers are daily marching up to the bosses and demanding higher wages, shorter hours. The prices of the necessities of life are rising. The workers are losing their "individualism"; are learning to "stick together".

These strikes are for the most part bare-ups, not planned struggles of an organization. The "re-voits" express the accumulated resentment of the workers against the past four years of hellish suffering. After the workers gain their demands, or a portion of them, the "rebellion" is usually over. In most cases there is not yet a full understanding by the mass of strikers, the need of permanent union organization. They do not foresee the coming winter, the next spring....

With the worsening of conditions, as NRA inflation continues, union organization will be forced on the agenda of every shop, factory, and mill in the United States. The Communists recognize this, and plan accordingly. Big struggles are ahead—the present strikes will appear as molehills to the mountains on the horizon of tomorrow.

The capitalists and their government officials have considered the probabilities of the Communists gaining control over the haphazard strikes and have already laid plans to "avert" the danger. The "democratic" statesmen are using the same methods that proved so successful during the last "democratic" war. A pact with the wolves in cheap clothing, the labor fakery, Capitalism promises through its government that it will "recognize the rights of the workers to organize" (into AFL unions) if the AFL bureaucracy will agree to "prevent strikes and walkouts".

The "Great labor leaders", Green and Lewis, naturally agree with any proposal for "industrial peace" and so they are drafted by the militarist, Johnson. The first duty of the Industrial Peace Board being to phony by long distance the local leaders of the 70,000 striking Pennsylvania coal miners and instruct them to "get the men behind the National Recovery program by going back to work".

With the blue eagle of the NRA on their breasts, and patriotic speeches in their mouth about the new Messiah, Roosevelt, the AFL is accomplishing the organization of hundreds of thousands of workers through the country. The AFL organizers are now met with open arms by the at-their-wit's-end bosses.

Even the Southern bourgeois responsible for the Gastonia and Harlan nightmares now give the glad hand to their arch enemy of yesterday, the American Federation of Labor. According to AFL figures, over 150,000 workers have been organized "down South" within the past couple of months.

In St. Louis, within less than sixty days time, the AFL Organization Committee has written over 20,000 membership cards. And their "recovery" campaign is only in its infancy.

The method of organization varies. Sometimes it is openly acknowledged as a joint drive in the employer and the AFL organizer to "ensure industrial peace". The Johnson, Stephens, Shinkle Shoe Company, open shop for years, suddenly locked out its employees, remained closed for several days, and then refused to re-hire any worker unless he first joined the Boot and Shoe Workers' Union! Waving the American flag, Shinkle's two column ad explained that they were henceforth going to operate "under the provisions of the National Code".

Generally the agreement between the labor fakery and the company is kept more or less under cover. For example the organization of the workers employed at the Chevrolet Plant and the Fisher Body Company, by the Automobile Industrial Workers' Union, an affiliate of the AFL. Already over 2,000 workers have joined, signifying their need of higher wages. But the union officials announce that they are going to proceed in an "orderly and careful manner". They are not going to make any wage demands upon the employers "just yet". All they want is union recognition "in conformity with the NRA". In Silent Cal style, the employers pun. They state they would "rather have a company union."

The Industrial Ladies Garment Workers' Union has now a membership of over 3,000 in St. Louis. As prophesied, the baby outgrew its swaddling clothes fast. Approximately 90 percent of the silk and 65 percent of the cotton garment workers joined the union to date in order to fight against the piece-work stretch-out system and wage scales of \$5.00 and \$10.00 a week. M. Bialis of Chicago, vice-president of the ILGWU came to St. Louis to "prevent trouble". He went into a huddle with representatives of the local garment manufacturers' association, forgetting about the workers wage demands, abolition of piecework, minimum wage, etc. In his vehement insistence that "first" must come the recognition of the union. The near-sighted manufacturers replied that they would wait until the completion

of their industry's code of fair competition. So tomorrow night a meeting of the union membership will be held; a general strike call will be the likely outcome. The Left wing will try to convince the workers of the necessity of a settlement of all their grievances during the strike—and not merely struggle for the abstract right of union recognition. —MARTIN.

N.Y. Doll Workers Call Strike

One thousand Doll and Toy workers of Greater New York have gone out on a general strike, with at least that many more coming out as we go to press. The Doll and Toy Workers' Union, Local 18230 of the American Federation of Labor, called the strike after a mass meeting of the workers had voted unanimously in favor of it.

The conditions in the trade were so bad that the workers could stand it no longer, and they would have struck at beginning of the season, in June, but for the fact that there were two unions in the field, the A. F. of L. union and the Independent Union. Now the latter appears to have left the field and, though it is the middle of the season, the strike has been called with every prospect of winning.

The conditions in my shop, and the true of all the others, were such that dippers and grinders average about ten dollars a week apiece, where in 1929 they used to make fifty dollars a week on the average. The two main reasons for these terrible conditions, of which the above is merely an example, are the piece work system of paying and the contracting system of letting out work. The abolishment of these two evils, and the enforcement of all the other demands of the union would be of the greatest benefit to the Doll and Toy workers.

The demand of the Union, as put forth in a leaflet calling for the strike are the following:

1. Recognition of the Doll and Toy Workers Union No. 18230
2. Maximum work week of thirty hours
3. Wages equal to the 1929 scale.
4. No overtime nor Saturday nor Sunday work.
5. Equal distribution of work in the slack season
6. Abolishment of contractor system
7. Wages shall be paid weekly on a stated pay day.
8. Dismissal wage
9. Safety and sanitary provisions to be adopted
10. No home work
11. No workers under 17 years of age to be employed
12. Employment should be made through the union office.

The split of the strikers is high and they mean business. We expect to hold out until all our demands are granted so that we can again make a decent wage for a higher standard of living under good working conditions. —A DOLL WORKER...

N. Y. Mirror Workers Organize Union

Proof of the fact that workers are now becoming conscious of the need of organization is afforded even within the smaller sections of light industry. The New York Novelty Mirror Industry is an example. A number of young workers, driven to desperation by the systematic declining of their living conditions, unheard of wage cuts, lengthening of hours, unpaid for overtime work, firing upon the least sign of protestation, some time ago declared a strike in one of the shops and began picketing immediately. These young workers lacked trade union experience, and unaided by anyone had difficulties in surmounting in forming an organization. But as it matured in the process of the struggle they quickly learned that unless they extend their victory and drew in other shops to their aid they would fall in their task.

Aided by a member of the Left Opposition, a worker of the trade, plans were quickly laid to accomplish that aim. Workers in other shops, slaving under the same conditions, hearing of the example set by one shop, needed very little coaxing. And within a short period of time the strike extended to other shops. But because of the above mentioned obstacles—lack of organizational ability, no functioning apparatus, the strike was dissipated. Nevertheless it was not in vain, a partial victory was scored by one or two groups, in obtaining a 25 percent increase in wages.

Union Extends to All Crafts In the midst of the strike, the union took shape and crystallized into the Novelty Mirror Workers Union. At first the intention of the inexperienced union organizers was to organize only certain crafts, and although ignore the other workers. But after systematic explanations and persuasion by the member of the Left Opposition the former decisions were rescinded and the doors were opened to admit all workers employed in the industry.

The industry comprises some twenty or more shops, in greater New York and New Jersey. It employs some three hundred workers, of which a good number are highly skilled, glass cutters, bevelers, polishers, silverers, who in former

The New England Shoe Unions

Question of Amalgamation and the Blue Eagle Code

Boston.—In our last article we stated that at present the three outstanding problems in the New England shoe industry were: (1) those of amalgamation, (2) those connected with the agreements which terminated August 1, and (3) those presented by the federal government in placing the shoe code not far down the list. How have these problems been approached?

Amalgamation gets lip service from everybody. Nolan, head of the Protective, speaking at the National Shoe Convention on invitation, praised amalgamation. Actually, he and Mahan of the National after trying to arrange a fusion could arrive nowhere, because there wouldn't be enough jobs for the henchmen of each. The workers distrusting these bureaucrats took up the initiative. On the invitation of one local they sent representatives to a planning board whose purpose is to force through amalgamation. This planning board consists of rank and file representatives of the majority of the locals in the National, Protective, and Independent (Salem). The planning board has over sixty members, a few being former members of the TULU union which has dissolved. This group, under the leadership of Klarfeld, has made every effort to get this body to go ahead with amalgamation over the heads of the union by calling an amalgamation convention.

Opposed to the TULU group are the Lovestonites led by I. Zimmerman of the Brooklyn local. They have gained prestige by their efforts in the original Boston and Chelsea strikes, which they helped lead. At that time their position was that the National must be organized—with increase in pay if possible, but without it necessary. The TULU group called them traitors, etc., because in many shops they sent the workers back without increase. Their answer was "Wait until August, then with a strong union and a busy season we will get an increase that will mean something." Another bone of contention was the use of the state board of arbitration. This also the Lovestonites insisted was temporary and would go in August. They convinced the workers.

The Issue of Amalgamation Now let us return to the planning board. The Lovestonites insist that if the planning board takes the initiative in the amalgamation procedure that they will be playing right into the hand of the bureaucrats who will split away, taking the conservative workers with them. Zimmerman, in an article in the Labor Age attacks the Communist party group openly claiming that they want this split, hoping to get control of those workers who would rally to the planning board if a split occurred. He says all amalgamation must go through regular union channels. In this he is correct. The panning board meetings have degenerated to a fight between the C. P. and the Lovestonites, a fight which is reported to have included the use of fists.

When the National held its convention in early June, amalgamation was approved and a committee of five was elected to meet with a committee of five from the Salem Independent and five from the Protective. This provisional committee was to go ahead with the amalgamation. The Salem Independent Union immediately appointed five on a similar committee, and the two groups met for discussion, awaiting the convention of the Protective at the end of July, hoping that the Protective would appoint a similar committee.

Comrade Cooperstein of the Left Opposition is on the Salem committee and several of the five representing the National are Lovestonites or under their influence. The setting up of this provisional committee with complete power for amalgamation, was followed by a fight in the planning board, Zimmerman proposing that this board go on record as limiting itself to amalgamation propaganda only. Klarfeld pointed out that the Protective has still to meet, and that they might not vote for amalgamation or for a committee. However, the planning board backed Zimmerman. In the meantime it is said that Nolan of the Protective proposed to the National group of five a plan of amalgamation. This plan

years were earning as much as fifty and sixty dollars. To-day their wages have been cut in half and in some cases to even less. Only recently the union gained considerable strength through the addition of a number of shops, which comprise the most skilled and better paid workers, including also a number of women. To-day the young organization of more than seventy is growing daily as workers come to realize the many advantages that can be gained through a union.

This is taking place, to be sure, not without the usual hardships and confusion attending the formation of a union by a group of inexperienced workers. Leadership is naturally slow in developing. However there are good possibilities and the union in this small industry will grow. A temporary Executive Committee has been elected representing every shop and craft which is engaged at the present in drafting a Code covering the entire trade, and forming shop committees to manage a possible strike that looms in the near future. —A MIRROR WORKER.

amounted to having the other two unions move into the Protective headquarters until January 1, and that then they could discuss amalgamation.

Officials in Log Rolling Game At the Protective convention a committee of five was elected but they were only given power to meet the other two groups and ask them for their plan of amalgamation, obtaining this they were to report back to the convention. Zimmerman had submitted a plan of amalgamation to the two groups representing the National and Independent, but no action had been taken. Nolan had got wind of this plan and was afraid that the other two groups had already adopted it, so he took this means of finding out. The three committees met and the National and Independent groups insisted that they had accepted no plan. The Protective group then presented, unofficially, Nolan's old plan mentioned above, which the others opposed. The National and Independent groups were then invited to the Protective convention where they pleaded that the Protective give its committees powers equivalent to their own. Finally a committee was elected. Finally a committee was elected.

The Bolsheviks under Lenin and Trotsky in 1917 showed the workers the way to emancipate themselves and the International Left Opposition holds to this same program. The speaker concluded with the demand for the repeal of section 98 and the freeing of all class war prisoners. Comrade T. Mill added a few words and the meeting was thrown open for questions and discussion.

A Reformist Has His Day As Buckley of the Toronto Trades and Labor Council and one of the leading spokesmen of the C. C. F. was invited to take the platform. Buckley spoke for fifteen minutes in which he attempted to justify the class struggle in Canada why he resolved through the use of parliamentary methods only. Buckley was against all dictatorships whether it be socialistic or capitalistic. Comrade Spector when he took the platform to reply asked the assembled workers whether they would rather be under a dictatorship of the workers over the capitalist or a dictatorship of the capitalist over the workers because there was no in-between. The workers dictatorship would in the end do away with all dictatorship and class repression, the capitalist dictatorship must today in its present period of decline, increase the repression and suffering of the workers in order to maintain its class rule.

In a masterful way, comrade Spector tore all of Buckley's arguments to shreds and tatters and exposed the C. C. F. as a party to save capitalism despite all its "socialistic" phrases.

The meeting was a huge success and a decided gain for Communism and the Left Opposition.

SUCCESSFUL MEETING

On August 23, another big open-air mass meeting was held in Earlscourt Park, with comrades J. MacDonald and M. Spector as the principle speakers, and comrade Chris. Morrow as chairman. Comrade J. MacDonald dwelt on the capitalist crisis, the bankruptcy of the old political parties and the present belated attempt of reformism, which has shown its bankruptcy and worthlessness on a world scale to resurrect itself anew in Canada, by exploiting the radical trend to the Left of the Canadian workers, farmers and sections of the city petty-bourgeois. He warned the workers that the C. C. F. will only be able to repeat the failure of reformism in Europe.

When comrade Spector took the platform the C. C. F. supporters made a futile attempt to disrupt the meeting, which met the significant resistance of the workers. The speaker was able to handle the situation quite easily and continued with more fire his short talk, which was a reply to several questions asked of him by C. C. F. supporters. This meeting like the previous one was very successful. The criticism of reformism in this C. C. F.

etc.), and a split will occur leaving the radical workers isolated. The Provisional committee should be allowed to prove its worth with plenty of pressure through propaganda by the planning board. Even if the Provisional committee fails to agree on amalgamation, a part of it could call an open convention with more authority than the planning board. A call by the planning board should and Provisional committees closer together should be supported.

The ideal thing at present would be to have all the Left wingers get together and work out a minimum program on which they can agree. This is an impossibility unfortunately. The Communist party group were wrong in maintaining their TULU unions back in the March days. When offered five on the Provisional committee in July, they dissolved their union. This was wrong again. They were correct in their attacks on the negotiations and the "holiday". They are wrong in their desire to have the planning board proceed with amalgamation. The Lovestonites on the other hand are right on amalgamation procedure but have played a shameful role in the negotiations. These positions are irreconcilable at present. —W.

The important question now is amalgamation. The planning board is a Soviet representing the locals. It is a true rank and file expression, not a Communist party affiliate. It is, however, not official. All attempts to weaken it are to be detected. On the other hand if the planning board does more than propagandize for amalgamation, the bureaucrats will yell "Moscow, Reds,

LEAGUE ACTIVITIES

Toronto L. O. Branch Scores New Gains

An open-air mass meeting of the International Left Opposition of Toronto took place Friday, August 18 in Earlscourt Park before an interested crowd of about 1500 workers. The meeting was organized as the chairman, comrade Chris Dorow announced, in the interests of the fight of the workers for free speech and assembly.

The first speaker was comrade M. Spector who pointed out that the reasons for the growing repression in Canada and throughout the world was because capitalism was decaying and its further existence was possible only through the introduction of Fascism, the restriction of the workers rights and the forcing down of the workers living standards. The capitalists were now only way out for the workers into new imperialist war and the only way out for the workers was through organization for the Socialist revolution. He further pointed out what was behind the present Swastika movement in Toronto and finally the fallacy of the Commonwealth Co-operative Federation as a party to free the workers from capitalism.

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We Are Active in Strikes

The Left Opposition of Toronto is able to record progress in the economic as well as the political sphere of the class struggle. In the strike of the Italian and Sable fur dyers, members and sympathizers of the Left Opposition assisted in the organization of the strike and actively participated in the picket demonstrations. Likewise we have given assistance to the strike of the Durable Leather Goods and Cloak workers. Our members have been invited to attend the strike meetings and have daily appeared on the picket lines. Comrade MacDonald has addressed meetings of the railroad workers and valuable contacts exists in the Boot and Shoe Trade.

Bureaucratic Expulsion Rebuked

A short time ago the Stalinists organized a "united front" on the election issue. The presence of delegates from the Left Opposition, Unser Kampf and Spartacus Clubs was the cause of the Stalinist bureaucrats bringing in a motion for our exclusion on the same grounds that the Right wing bureaucrats demand the expulsion of Left wing organizations from their conferences.

Several years ago when we were excluded from a Stalinist packed election conference we had only 3 votes registered against the motion. This year over 30 delegates voted against the Stalinist split policy and bureaucratic ultimatum. Amongst those who voted and spoke against the motion were the Workers Ex-Servicemen's League, who voted in a bloc. This organization is the most militant of the Left wing on the English field. The delegation of the Furriers Union representing 800 workers also appealed to the delegates to reject the introduction of the Amalgamated methods in a Left wing conference.

A leaflet on this question was issued in English and Jewish languages, and for the first time in Toronto, protest against Stalinist opportunism and bureaucracy is being heard amongst the Ukrainian Left wing masses.

—M. Q.

Anti-War Confab of Boston Youth

After many weeks of delay, a youth conference against war and fascism was finally held in Boston. Despite all the talk about the need of a broad united front conference, there were united delegates from several Y. C. L. units, N. S. L., the National Alumni Assn., the Marxian Youth Club and one pacifist youth organization, a total of 14 delegates from 11 organizations.

After the election of the officers and credentials committee, Max Weiss, the district organizer of the YCL in the Boston section, took the floor and opposed the proposal of the provisional committee to elect a resolutions committee. In spite of the fact that four YCL members had previously agreed with us that such a committee should be elected, that resolutions should be presented, and that a discussion should be held, Weiss' "stirring" appeal for "concrete proposals only" (such as the distribution of leaflets) quickly made them swing into line. The Marxian Youth Club delegates, Lewitt and Craine, were the only ones to demand that a discussion on the problems confronting the conference take place. The defeat of our proposal turned the conference into a vaudeville show.

The Pacifist Position Explained Prof. Dana, the first star number on the program, waxed eloquent on the work done by Roland and Barbusse in their struggle against war. Not a word as to what to do should war break out, not a word about the struggle conducted by the revolutionary movement. Pure pacifist tommyrot!

Following the report of the credentials committee, John Weber, the organizational secretary of the Party spoke as a member of the New England Anti-war Committee. Among other things, he said that the peace pacts signed by the Soviet Union were hindrances to imperialist war. He ended by saying that he was not concerned with his own viewpoint on the conference, but rather with the concrete proposals of action against war. "To-night we are not concerned with our own positions on war. We want no quibbling."

The conference was thrown open for discussion. The chairman made it clear time and time again that only concrete proposals were to be discussed. The first participant in the discussion, comrade Craine of the Marxian Youth Club, stated that her organization had seriously considered the question of war, had discussed it and come to definite conclusions. She pointed out that a clear understanding of our positions was the first pre-requisite for the struggle against war.

The statement of the Marxian Youth Club to the conference was read, which contained an analysis of the danger of war, of the causes for the defeat of the working class, the victory of Fascism, and proposed methods to fight against war. The statement ended with a declaration that only the working class could lead this struggle against war and Fascism, and that it was the duty of the Communists, youth and adult, to initiate this struggle, instead of leaving it in the hands of a group of liberal and pacifist elements who

are entirely divorced from the working class and its organizations. Slanders as Usual

This was the only serious contribution to the conference, the only clear-cut position presented. In spite of all the attempts of the Stalinists, to prevent a discussion on policies, the Communist stand on war was heard at the conference. The fear of the YCL to take a stand on this Communist approach outside of labeling it "obscure" and to the bourgeoisie is nothing less than cowardly and capitulation before liberalism and pacifism on so important a question.

The "concrete" contribution of the Y. C. L. consisted of three proposals: Participation in International Youth Day, holding a mass meeting, squads to visit other organizations and get them to participate in the conferences. Besides a pledge to contribute \$25 to International Youth Day, and to issue a certain number of leaflets, the Y. C. L. had nothing to say. These, plus our proposals for the holding of open-air meetings and discussion meetings on war and Fascism, sum up the accomplishments of the conference. Comrades Burgin, Craine and Weiss were elected as the arrangements committee for International Youth Day. The Marxian Youth Club will continue to fight for a Communist approach to these problems of war and Fascism, because only such an approach can solve them and overcome them. —R. C.

Fight for Unions in Los Angeles

Los Angeles.—In the midst of an intense and ever growing strike wave, with the class-consciousness of the workers developing at a rapid pace, the TULU once again refused to recognize the necessity for one union (through the I. L. G. W. U.) and instead made feeble attempts to organize the workers into their insignificant dress and cloak section of the Needle Trades Workers Industrial Union.

The situation in Los Angeles is an excellent example of their isolated character, for whatever the causes may be, the ILGWU has become the mass organization. There are 2,000 workers who have already joined and each succeeding day sees an influx of new workers. Left wing, Right wing, and workers who have never belonged to a union before are all gripped with the necessity for organization.

Organizing a Small Shop

For example, I am a needle trades worker, recently I got a job in one of the many small shops here. The shop has 13 workers, five are Mexicans and Spanish workers who before have shied even at the mention of a union but now rebel against their forty hour week and their lower than-minimum wages. After having contacted the most important workers in the shop, and through them the others, I learned that the majority of workers in the other dress shops had already begun the struggle for the 35 hour week and higher wages. I came to my shop and got the workers together then I called for the stopping of all machines at the end of seven hours and to proceed to the ILGWU hall where we could conduct a shop meeting and decide for a plan of action inside the shop. The workers did not need any pep talks. The most backward workers accepted my agitation with the greatest enthusiasm and after seven hours work and with no more preparation they stopped work and all proceeded to the union hall. On the way to the hall and in the hall while waiting for an organizer of the union—for I was not yet a member—I advanced the idea of joining the union. I showed the necessity for a united working class and proved to them that only through a union could we achieve our aims. Before the organizers came the thirteen workers had paid their initiation fees and dues, and had become members of the ILGWU.

We held the shop meeting and they elected me shop chairman. We decided to continue working seven hours a day and agreed to meet the following day to decide upon prices. The next day I was fired. Before I left I spoke to the boss; I told him his shop was a union shop and although he had fired me he could not fire the union; that the workers were going to work a thirty-five hour week and that they would shortly present him with a list of prices. I pointed out the fact that not only were the workers not getting the union scale but they were not even getting the minimum wage scale. After speaking to the workers and reminding them of the meeting that night, I left. Seven hours later they stopped working and were leaving the shop when the boss announced that all wages were to be raised until they conformed with the \$14 wage scale.

Will the T. U. U. Learn? The workers in the shop have seen the effectiveness of united action and they have pledged themselves to help in the fight for better conditions. They have joined the conservative class-collaborationist—yes—but they have joined it.

My role—and the role of a Communist will be to expose the reactionary policies of the leadership of the ILGWU and to form an effective Left wing opposition within it. It is high time that the TULU, realizes that it will continue to remain as impotent and isolated as it is at present until it will not get the message of militancy to the workers, unless it changes its attitude and integrates itself into the mass unions. —FLORENCE WYLE.