

Organizing the CWA White Collar Workers

At the most critical moment in the struggle against the ending of the CWA, the Associated Office & Professional Emergency Employees, the "white collar" CWA workers' union in New York City, has been deliberately split two ways by the Stalinists and the Lovestonites, each faction now claiming to be the A. O. P. E. E.—but neither is able to do anything in the interests of the workers. Each held a meeting claiming to be the Council of Delegates. Despite efforts for unity made by a progressive group with four delegates, both factions refused to come together. Each blamed the other for the split, and both declared they were glad the split had occurred. The Lovestonites further declared that they would "never again let Stalinists into the organization."

The A. O. P. E. E. was organized six months ago and won recognition from the state officials in a successful fight to prevent the State from putting the emergency workers on a budget instead of wages. Several minor victories were won and a demonstration on January 24th of 2,000 white collar and professional men—one of the first in the country—against a 23% hour-wage cut; led to the growth of membership to 2,000, the high point of the organization. This was, however, nothing compared with its possibilities. There are 40,000 CWA "white collar" workers in New York City and eagerness for organization is evident everywhere. The failure of the organization to grow is due to bureaucratic control and factionalism, and the consequent incapacity to activate the membership.

The Lovestonites captured the first tentative apparatus and, in order to cling to it, kept the membership out of organization activity and responsibility. Control was kept in the hands of the Lovestonites and a few Socialists and "non-politicals" allied with them. No organizing committee was established. Organizing was left on a free-lance basis, without plan. The Council of project delegates was not activated, and was manipulated by the Lovestonites. For the most part, the membership merely paid dues and came to an occasional (and even rarer) project or membership meeting.

This state of bureaucratic control, with the membership inactive and ill-informed, made it possible for the Stalinists to disrupt the A. O. P. E. E. Having failed to get workers into the "Red" Relief Workers League, the Stalinists moved into the A. O. P. E. E. determined to amalgamate it with the R. W. L. or to split it. They proceeded as usual: Stalinist delegates were produced on phony membership lists, or without having been elected by members, membership meetings were packed with outside Stalinists, and slanders were circulated against the Lovestonites (stealing of funds, making themselves paid jobs, etc.). Such outrageous tactics could never have worked had the organization been previously healthy. But the bureaucratic control of the Lovestonites gave the Stalinists an opportunity to disrupt under the slogans of democracy, militancy, and spreading the organization.

The cure for the Stalinist attack, at this point, as earlier, was activation of the membership for a vigorous campaign of organization on the basis of a militant, class struggle policy. But the Lovestonites declared the union could not be built until the Stalinists were driven out. An offer by some militants to form a progressive bloc was refused. Instead the Lovestonites formed a bloc solely on the issue of fighting the Communist Party, recruiting for their bloc all the Right wing and reactionary elements. The Stalinist disruptions evoked red-baiting tendencies on the part of the most backward and reactionary elements, but not only did the Lovestonites not fight the red-baiting, but members of their bloc came from caucuses to meetings and made anti-red and flag-waving speeches. Thus they interpreted the policy of the Lovestonite leadership.

Backed by this Right wing bloc, the Lovestonites forced through a Committee of Eleven to run the organization until the adoption of a constitution. The Stalinists claimed that this election by the Council was packed by the Lovestonites; the fact is both had fraudulent delegates. The Lovestonites also put through a resolution against "one-sided" united fronts, i. e., against any united front with Communist organizations.

On February 20th a membership meeting was called to ratify the Committee of Eleven and the "united front" resolution. Both sides proceeded to pack it. While workers cried out they were being freed, and what should they do, and why didn't the organization take some militant action, Lovestonites and Stalinists debated the united front.

The meeting broke up with no plans for organizing or action agreed upon. From that day, February 20th, until March 11th—three critical weeks—the Lovestonites absolutely refused to call Council meetings or membership meetings, or in any way move the masses into action. Why? They sent out a referendum on the resolution and the Committee by mail—putting the issues in most misleading terms, not even giving the names of those on the Committee, so that members thought they were voting for the idea of a Committee of Eleven. Until the phony referendum came through, the Lovestonites refused to make any move.

March 3, the Stalinists called a rump Council meeting. The Stalinists, determined to split, constituted themselves the Council at a Wednesday meeting, deposed all officers and committees and elected their own. This was just what the Lovestonites wanted; they convoked the Committee of Eleven and, though the Committee was created by the Council and limited to executing Council decisions, it expelled the rump Council. Sunday night the rump members came to the meeting called by the secretary, and found only themselves present; the Lovestonites had meanwhile convoked the rest of the Council elsewhere.

A few progressives got together to try to save the unity of the organization, but without success. The mistake of all progressive and militant elements lay in their failure to organize sooner. Some progressives came together only in the last stages of the split, too late to prevent it. This organization is now proceeding rapidly and, since the split is now an accomplished fact, will concentrate its efforts in the "official" organization. The Stalinists will quickly reveal themselves, as in scores of other splits, as incapable of leading the split-off group to any healthy development. The Lovestonites in the official organization must be forced to break their bloc with Socialist and reactionary elements or confront the solid opposition of all the class-conscious elements in the organization.

The secretary of the progressive group is Herbert Abel, 1525 Madison Avenue.

Marine Park

Two weeks ago a general shifting of CWA workers in Marine Park occurred. Groups of men were transported by truck to various other parks. This was a maneuver to first separate and then weed out certain workers whose militancy had made them obnoxious to the browbeating straw-bosses. Most of these groups were told to report back to Marine Park the next day, but each group reports that many workers are missing, never came back, were fired during this shifting back and forth.

Since then workers have been fired daily. The reason, according to the foremen, is "loafing" and "agitating". Any worker expressing his disgust with the conditions is labeled an "agitator". The bosses find the "Red-scare" one of the best in their bag of tricks. Gang B is rife with spies. A worker, complaining of the meagre pay (\$11.20), said he had seen checks made out for \$15.00 distributed to various individuals, and demanded an explanation.

"Those checks are for the rats", was the admission of Ruggiero, the Assistant Supervisor.

Government agents (Federal check-up men) prowled around the park the entire day. A radio police car is often stationed in front of the supervisor's office, and one or more cops are in the office all day.

The discontent of the workers has created a favorable opportunity for organization. The workers talk of the need to organize, but there is not yet an organization active on the field.

The Militant is distributed by me to a few workers, is passed from hand to hand and the articles are discussed. They are also tacked upon the walls of the shacks and toilets.

There is a crying need for an organization of all C. W. A. workers. Only the mobilization of all workers in one strong organization, the Association of Civil Works Employees, can prevent the wage-cuts, firing and mass lay-offs, the program of Hunger proposed by Roosevelt throughout the demobilization of the CWA.

WHITHER ENGLAND?

Pioneer Publishers have just received a supply of the English edition of "Whither England?" by L. D. Trotsky. Price 95 cents per copy postpaid.

The "League Against War and Fascism" in Action at Newark

The "American League Against War and Fascism", like all the similar counterfeit "united front" formations under Stalinist party domination, has been cracking up badly since the famous affair at Madison Square Garden. Large numbers have been rushing to leave the fraudulent body and join the still larger numbers who stayed away in the first place. Among these who have been departing in a hurry were quite a few "prominent" people and professional non-partisans who originally served as "decorations" on the National Bureau to cover up the C. P. control.

Roger Baldwin, head of the American Civil Liberties Union and all-around reconciler of irreconcilables, has, however, thus far stuck to his place on the National Bureau. He has issued a public statement, jointly with Earl Browder, to the effect that everything is on the square in the organization and that there is no danger of domination by "one political party". This statement was issued on March 10.

The next day, the Newark Committee of the League, at the direct instigation of Norman Tallentyre, a professional Stalinist utility functionary, at present "representing the National Bureau" of the League Against War and Fascism, chucked out the delegates of the Communist League. It will be interesting to see what Baldwin does about the following letter, addressed to him by a group of delegates to the Newark Conference of the League:

OPEN LETTER TO BALDWIN

Newark, N. J. March 13, 1934.

Dear Mr. Baldwin: On Sunday, March 11th, the Newark Branch of the League Against War and Fascism called a Conference of all political, social, religious, youth, etc., organizations and all individuals interested in the fight against war and Fascism. The Communist League of America was among those organizations handing in its credentials.

The Credentials Committee, composed of all Communist Party or youth members brought in the following report:

That the Conference should not seat the representatives of the Communist League because "they were not a bona-fide organization, its membership consisting of expelled or followers of expelled leaders from other organizations; were anti-Soviet, slandered and scurrilously vilified the Soviet Union and its peace policy, and therefore could not support point five in the League's manifesto."

This astounding report was brought in with no attempt to prove in any way that the Communist League of America for valid reasons should be excluded. John Perry of the Essex Peace Society pointed out that if they excluded organizations which criticized certain aspects of Soviet policy and economy, his organization would also have to be excluded. The League's program, he continued, did not demand complete agreement with Soviet policies. Sam Silver, representing the International Labor Defense stated that exclusion on that basis would also apply to A. F. of L. locals. I. Rosenberg of the Retail Shoe Clerks Association, Local 708, A. F. of L., stated that his organization was anxious to cooperate in a genuine united front, but was definitely opposed to bureaucratic domination by one organization. He insisted that the Conference censure the Credentials Committee for bringing in an unjustifiably discriminatory report against the Communist League. He went on to state that it was such actions on the part of the Communist Party that resulted in fiascos such as Madison Square Garden.

Mr. Tallentyre, representing the National Bureau of the League Against War and Fascism rose and asserted that "he did not see the sense of including organizations with whom you have fundamental differences, which cannot, because of its nature contribute anything to the League." At this point Mr. Rosenberg insisted that Tallentyre be seated, and declared, "That it was a disgraceful display of prejudice on the part of Tallentyre, inasmuch as his assertions were directly contrary to the following statement signed by Annie E. Gray, Earl Browder, Roger M. Baldwin, for the National Bureau of the League:

"The League has used its efforts in the past, and will continue in the future to avoid conflict and disruption among the forces fighting against war and Fascism, whether members of the League or not. Agreements have been sought and will be sought to promote the greatest possible unity and to prevent disunity. The League is not and will not be dominated by one political party. No majority on any committee now does or will represent any political party."

We, the undersigned, protest this exclusion policy and urge that you take a definite stand on this matter.

Fraternally yours, Irving Rosenberg, Retail Shoe Clerks Association, Local 708, A. F. of L.

Sam Silvers, International Labor Defense

Esther Sellers, American Workers Party

Leo Roberts, American Workers Party

Louis Nagy, Hungarian Workers Home

(All the above are duly accredited delegates)

Shachtman Tour

The schedule for the tour, in addition to the cities already covered, is as follows:

- Tues., March 13th—Pittsburgh
- Wed., March 14th—New Castle
- Thurs., March 15th—Youngstown
- Fri., March 16th—Youngstown
- Sat., March 17th—Cleveland
- Sun., March 18th—Chicago
- Mon., March 19th—Chicago
- Tues., March 20th—Chicago
- Wed., March 21st—Chicago
- Thurs., March 22nd—Chicago
- Fri., March 23rd—
- Sat., March 24th—Minneapolis & St. Paul, Minn.
- Sun., March 25th—Minneapolis
- Mon., March 26th—Minneapolis
- Tues., March 27th—Minneapolis
- Wed., March 28th—Duluth, Minn.
- Thurs., March 29th—
- Fri., March 30th—Winnipeg, Can.
- Sat., March 31st—Winnipeg, Can.
- Sun., April 1st—Winnipeg, Can.
- Mon., April 2nd—
- Tues., April 3rd—Williston, N. D.
- Wed., April 4th—
- Thurs., April 5th—Portland Ore.
- Fri., April 6th—Portland Ore.
- Sat., April 7th—
- Sun., April 8th—San Francisco
- Mon., April 9th—San Francisco
- Tues., April 10th—San Francisco
- Wed., April 11th—
- Thurs., April 12th—Los Angeles
- Fri., April 13th—Los Angeles
- Sat., April 14th—Los Angeles
- Sun., April 15th—Los Angeles

"THE COLLAPSE OF AUSTRO-MARXISM"

A Lecture by Max Shachtman National Socialist Institute, Chicago 3222 Douglas Building Tuesday Eve, March 20th at 8 p.m. Sponsors: Friends of the Militant Club Questions Discussion Admission 15 Cents

THE MILITANT

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«Reforming» the C.I.

"Already there are signs, not as many as we would wish but nevertheless some signs, that our criticism is having an effect in reforming the C. I."—J. Lovestone at Cannon-Lovestone Debate.

"The world-shaking events in the interval, the terrible blows suffered by the Communist Parties, and the long deliberation of the C. I., resulted in not the slightest sign of improvement in understanding or policy compared with the thesis of the 10th, 11th and 12th Plenums. The 13th Plenum accomplishes the feat of out-diving all other Plenums of the Comintern, and establishing a record for low theoretical level."—B. Herman in the Workers Age, March 1st, 1934. Take your choice.

Shachtman Tour Minneapolis MASS MEETING

"Do We Need a New Revolutionary Party in America?" PYTHIAN HALL—431 So. 4th St. SUNDAY, MARCH 25th—8 P. M. Admission 15c in advance, 20c at the Door. Sponsors: Minneapolis Br. C. L. A. Tickets on Sale at Zack's Book Store, 505 Hennepin Ave.

OPEN FORUM

"The Lessons of the Austrian Events" at Labor Lyceum—1426 6th Ave. No. Speaker: MAX SHACHTMAN SUNDAY, March 25th 10 A. M. Sponsors: Labor Lyceum Open For.

Shachtman Tour Minneapolis HOUSE PARTY & Entertainment

at 4648 West Lake Harriet Boulevard SATURDAY, MARCH 24th at 8 p.m. All Militant readers are urged to attend.

The Question of the Hour!

THE PROGRAM OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

a Lecture by

JAMES P. CANNON

IRVING PLAZA HALL 15th Street and Irving Place

SUNDAY, MARCH 25th, 8 P.M.

Admission 15c Questions and Discussion

Roosevelt's '12 Points' Against the Workers

Speaking before the NRA Code Authorities, President Roosevelt said: "The real truth of the matter is that for a number of years in our country the machinery of democracy had failed to function." It is no accident that the President and the NRA officials do not report to Congress but instead present the 12 point program of the NRA at the "Public Hearing" while Roosevelt and Johnson deliver their speeches on policies and aims of the NRA to the meeting of the Code Authorities.

Speak to the "Captains of Industry"

They speak to the "captains" of our economic system, lining up support that can bring the necessary pressure on the Senate and House for any rubber stamp legislation required for speedy action in the whirl of deepening international antagonisms and conflicts of world capitalism.

Under the NRA the further centralization of government and industry is rapidly proceeding. The order of the day does not present us with the alternative of Communism or Fascism. This is a problem of the not too distant future. The task of the rulers of today and their NRA office boys is to answer the immediate problems of the capitalist mode of production in order to canalize the class relations. The latest moves of the Roosevelt administration are designed to serve this purpose.

The '12 Points' Ballyhoo

The NRA ballyhoo about the 12 points means nothing more or less, when boiled down, than an increased offensive against the small producers and the working class. It is an old trick to speak of peace when preparing for war. And, likewise, it is an old trick to speak about the workers' needs and the small producers' interests when the dominating exploiters are going to take another pound of flesh.

One of the most effective ways of drive out the small producer is to place restrictions on free competition. When the large producer, operating with modern machinery and a high rate of exploitation of his labor power, is placed on an equal basis with the small producer, with a lesser degree of exploitation—with hours and wages the same—the small producer will be driven to the wall faster than if the process is left to unbridled competition.

Reducing the Hours A permanent army of millions of

unemployed American workers calls for a reorganization of labor power in relation to machine production. This can only be expressed by the reduction of the hours. As far as the ruling exploiters are concerned, the workers' interests have nothing to do with it. They are making a forced retreat to safeguard their own rule. At the present juncture this forced retreat, as we have pointed out before in the Militant on the question of the Six Hour Day with no reduction in pay, has also resulted in a political defeat of the working class. There is a world of difference between "concessions" put through by the capitalists and those forced by the workers.

The reduction of hours under the NRA calls for wage increases. Up to the present this has resulted in a reduction of the real wages of the workers. Concealed under the talk of a money wage increase a leveling off process for the American workers has taken place. There has been a reduction in real wages, and a little bribery here and there whenever the rulers had to turn a sharp corner.

Senator Wagner's Admissions

Senator Wagner admits this. He says: "Real earnings of the individuals working full time are slightly less than they were last March." Further: "Some of the minimum wage provisions under the codes are lower than the standards actually prevailing in the industry." And the skilled have had hours reduced but no pay increase.

Right now the capitalists are turning another sharp corner. That is the reason for the 12 point program and the special talks on policy by the President and the General. Industry under the NRA is not solving the crisis. Johnston let the cat out of the bag in the speech before the NRA Code Authorities when he said: "We know something about what is toward in this country—the worst epidemic of strikes in our history. Why suffer it. There is a way out. Play the game. Submit to the law and get it over quickly."

Johnson warns the exploiters to go easy with their Company Unions and tells them to deal with Green, Lewis, and Company. The thought is unsaid but understood—that the agents of the capitalists in the ranks of the workers are far better to deal with "in the worst epidemic of strikes in our history" than leaders of strikes who represent the working class. —HUGO OEBLER.

WILLIAMSBURG MASS MEETING

Friday, March 23rd, 1934 WHY A NEW COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL? Prominent Speaker Sponsors: Communist League of Am. Williamsburgh Branch 58 Manhattan Ave. ADMISSION 15c

SPECIAL NOTICE

The full page article by comrade Trotsky in last week's Militant, with its devastating summary of the 13th Plenum of the E. C. C. I., has evoked a demand for its re-publication in cheap pamphlet form. One sympathizer has offered to contribute \$10 for this purpose. If \$15 more can be secured we will proceed immediately with the publication of this brilliant article as a small pamphlet. Send contributions to PIONEER PUBLISHERS 84 East 10th Street New York

Shachtman Tour St. Paul, Minn. "THE LESSON OF THE AUSTRIAN EVENTS"

at DEUTSCHES HAUS, 444 Rice St. Monday, March 26th—8 P. M. ADMISSION 10 CENTS

Mistakes of the Commune

Under the conditions these plans were never executed. The Versailles government launched a military attack on the Commune and the foremost task was that of revolutionary defense. Mistakes were made by the Communards, such as the failure to commence a military offensive against Versailles, the failure to take over the national bank and the hurried transfer of power from the Central Committee of the National Guard to an elected Commune. These mistakes, while directly the consequences of the practices of the parties in the Commune, the followers of Proudhon and the Blanquists, were fundamentally, a reflection of the backwardness of the conditions of capitalism for successful working class revolution. The Parisian workers of 1871 were artisans, journeymen, and employees in small factories. A sound revolutionary party, the indispensable weapon for victorious working class revolution, could only develop on the basis of mass production, large scale industry and through varied experiences of class struggles.

Courageously the Parisian workers fought for the defense of their Commune. The forces against them were too great. Thousands were killed on the field of battle. Other thousands, men, women and children were captured, tortured and murdered in the most brutal fashion.

Heirs of the Communards The militant working class in

the worst epidemic of strikes in our history. Why suffer it. There is a way out. Play the game. Submit to the law and get it over quickly." Johnson warns the exploiters to go easy with their Company Unions and tells them to deal with Green, Lewis, and Company. The thought is unsaid but understood—that the agents of the capitalists in the ranks of the workers are far better to deal with "in the worst epidemic of strikes in our history" than leaders of strikes who represent the working class. —HUGO OEBLER.

THE PARIS COMMUNE

(Continued from page 1)

work of journeymen bakers; the prohibition, under penalty, of the employers' practice to reduce wages by levying upon their workpeople fines under manifold pretexts—a process in which the employer combines in his own person the parts of legislator, judge, and executioner, and fleeces the money to boot. Another measure of this class was the surrender, to associations of workmen, under reserve of compensation, of all workshops and factories, no matter whether the respective capitalists had absconded or preferred to strike work." (Karl Marx). The church was separated from the state, the pawn shops were abolished, plans were made for cooperative production for the benefit of the real producers, the workers.

It is not through peaceful methods that these bloody oppressors will be overthrown. The American master class will undoubtedly employ the most violent means to continue their bankrupt robber system. American labor history is replete with instances of the use of the armed forces against strikers and workers' demonstrations.

The Party—the Instrument of Struggle

We must reply by forging our own instrument of struggle, a revolutionary party which through the battles of today can lead the workers to the decisive class conflict. In the present epoch, when all the material conditions are ripe for a socialist transformation of society, it is the revolutionary party, uniting the most advanced and experienced militants, bound by a common program and steered in a common struggle which is the decisive factor.

The absence of such a party in Germany resulted in the victory of Fascism; in Austria, the bloody slaughter of the militant workers preparatory to a full Fascist regime. Fascism, the most violent weapon of capitalism, is growing in all capitalist countries. At the same time imperialist war looms as an imminent threat to the entire world. Workers' Russia, the inheritor of the Paris Commune, is in danger of military attack.

The true continuators of the heroic traditions of the Paris Commune have one and only one course to follow: to take their place in the great movement now being carried on for the construction of a world party of revolution—the Fourth International—which can inspire the workers in struggle, give them guidance and leadership, insure the final emancipation of the working class, and with it the whole of humanity.

—JOSEPH CARTER.