

American Trade Unions and the Social Crisis

A Conversation on the Problems and Program of the American Labor Movement

(Continued from page 1)
 tion only—what can be done now, immediately. Among the leaders of the trade union movement there are, it is true, also those who give themselves a clear accounting of the threatening danger. But they cannot change the psychology of the masses. Habits, traditions, views of the American workers bind and limit our possibilities. All this cannot be changed in a single day.

Threat to Unions
 B—Are you sure that history will grant you many years for preparation? The crisis of American capitalism has an "American" tempo and scale. A strong body which has not known sickness begins to deteriorate very rapidly from a certain point on. The collapse of capitalism signifies at the same time a direct and immediate threat to democracy without which trade unions cannot exist. Do you think, for instance, that Mr. Hague is a chance phenomenon?

A—Oh no, I do not think so at all. During the last period I have had not a few talks with trade union functionaries on this subject. My opinion is that in each state we already have now—under this or that banner—a full-fledged reactionary organization ready to become on the morrow the mainstay of fascism on a national scale. We will not have to wait 15 or 20 years. Fascism can become victorious in three or four years.

B—In this case...
 A—What is our program? I understand your question. The situation is very difficult, some great measures are necessary. But I do not see the necessary forces, the necessary leaders.

Psychology of Leaders
 B—This means capitulation without a struggle?

A—The situation is difficult. We must recognize that the majority of trade union functionaries do not see or do not want to see the danger. Our unions, as you know, have grown tremendously within a very short time. It is natural, therefore, that the leaders of the C.I.O. go through a honeymoon period. They are inclined to view the difficulties lightly. The government not only considers them but even plays ball with them. They have not been accustomed to this in the past. It is natural, therefore, that their heads swim a little. This pleasurable dizziness does not predispose them to critical thinking. They enjoy today without thinking of the morrow.

B—Very well said! In this I am in complete agreement with you. But the successes of the C.I.O. are temporary. They are only symptomatic of the fact that the working class of the U.S.A. has come into motion, has broken with routine, and is now seeking new methods to save itself from the menacing abyss. If your unions do not find new methods, they will be crushed into pulp. Even right now today Hague is stronger than Lewis because Hague, despite his limitations, knows clearly what he wants and Lewis does not. The whole thing may end by your leaders waking up from their "pleasurable dizziness" ... in a concentration camp.

Meetings Poorly Attended
 A—Unfortunately, the past history of the United States with its unlimited possibilities, with its individualism has not accustomed our workers to social thinking. It is enough to tell you that trade union meetings are attended at best by 15 per cent of the organized workers. Just consider this fact!

B—But is it not possible that the cause for the absence of 85 per cent lies in the fact that the speakers ... have nothing to tell the masses?
 A—Well ... to a certain extent this is true. The economic situation is such that we are forced to keep the workers back, to put a brake on the movement, to retreat. Of course, it is not to the workers' liking.

B—That is just it. The fault lies not with the masses but with the leaders. In the classic epoch of capitalism, too, the trade unions found themselves in a difficult situation during a crisis, were forced to retreat, lost part of their membership, spent their basic capital. But at least there then existed the certainty that in the next rise they would retrieve all their losses. Now there is not the slightest hope for this. The unions will become weaker and weaker. Your organization, the C.I.O., might collapse just as rapidly as it came into being.

Masses and Leaders
 A—What is to be done?
 B—First of all clearly tell the masses what it is. It is impossible to play hide and seek. Of course, you know the American workers better than I do. Nevertheless I permit myself to say with certainty that you look at them through old glasses. The masses

are immeasurably better, more audacious, more decisive than the leaders. The very fact of the rapid birth and growth of the C.I.O. shows that the American worker has changed radically under the influence of the terrific economic jolts of the post-war period, especially of the last decade. When you showed even a little initiative in the creation of more militant unions, the workers responded immediately and gave you an exceptional, never before heard of support. You have no right to complain about the masses. And the so-called "sit-down strikes"? It was not the leaders who invented them but the workers themselves. Is not this an unmistakable sign of the readiness of the American workers to pass over to more decisive methods of struggle? Mr. Hague is a direct product of the sit-down strikes. Unfortunately, in the upper layers of the trade unions no one dares to draw just as daring conclusions from the sharpening of the social struggle as the capitalist reaction has drawn. This is the gist of the matter. The leaders of capital think and act immeasurably more firmly, more logically, and daringly than the leaders of the proletariat—these sceptics, rut-followers, bureaucrats who dim the fighting spirit of the masses. And out of this grows the danger of the victory of fascism, moreover in "the very near future. The workers do not come to your meetings because they feel instinctively the insufficiency, the inconsistency, the lifelessness, the direct falsity of your program. The leaders of the trade unions get off general phrases while each worker feels catastrophe over his head. You must find a language corresponding to the real situation of rotting capitalism and not to bureaucratic illusions.

A—I have already told you—I do not see leaders. There are individual groups, sects, but I do not see anyone capable of uniting the working masses, even if I should agree with you that the masses are ready for struggle!
 B—It is not a question of leaders but of program. A correct program not only will raise up and weld the masses together, but it will train leaders.

The Program
 A—What do you consider a correct program?
 B—You know that I am a Marxist, more precisely, a Bolshevik. My program has a very simple and short name—the socialist revolution. But I do not demand of the leaders of the trade union movement that they adopt immediately the program of the 4th International. What I do demand of them is that they draw conclusions from their own work, from their own situation; that for themselves and the masses they answer at least these two questions:

1. How can the C.I.O. be saved from bankruptcy and ruin?
 2. And how can the U.S.A. be saved from fascism?
- Sliding Scale of Hours**
 A—What would you do today in the United States if you were an organizer of a trade union?
 B—First of all the trade unions must pose squarely the problem of unemployment and wages. The sliding scale of hours as formulated by you is correct: all must have work. But the sliding scale of hours must be supplemented by a sliding scale of wages. The working class cannot permit a constant lowering of its standard of living, as this would be tantamount to the collapse of human culture. The highest earnings on the eve of the crisis of 1929 should be taken as the point of departure. The powerful productive forces created by the workers did not disappear, did not perish; they exist. Those who own and dispose of the productive forces are responsible for unemployment. The workers know how to work and want to work. The work must be divided among all the workers. The earnings of each worker should not be lower than the maximum reached in the past. This is the natural, the necessary, the inexorable demand of the trade unions. Otherwise they will be crushed aside by historic development as so much trash.

Capitulation or Struggle
 A—Is this program realizable? It spells ruin for the capitalists. Precisely such a program could hasten the development of fascism.
 B—Of course, this program presupposes struggle and not prostitution. The trade unions are faced with two possibilities—either to navigate, maneuver, retreat, close the eyes and capitulate on the installment plan in order not to "aggravate" the bosses and not to "provoke" reaction. The German and Austrian social democrats and trade union functionaries tried to save themselves from fascism in this manner. The result is known to all—they broke their necks. The other road is to

understand the merciless character of the present social crisis and to lead the masses into an attack.

Danger of Fascism
 A—But still you have not answered the question of fascism, that is of the immediate danger which the trade unions would bring upon themselves by more radical demands.
 B—I have not forgotten this for a single moment. The fascist danger is here now, even before the advancing of radical demands. It flows from the decline and decomposition of capitalism. I grant that it could become increased for some time under the influence of the radical program of the trade unions. The workers must be openly warned of it. They must be called to the defense of the trade unions. They must immediately begin the practical creation of special organizations of defense. There is no other road! One can just as little save himself from fascism by means of democratic laws, resolutions and appeals as he can save himself from a cavalry detachment by diplomatic notes. The workers must be taught to defend their lives and their future with weapons in hand against the gangsters and bandits of capital. Fascism thrives in an atmosphere of impunity. We need not doubt for a moment that the fascist heroes will put their tails between their legs when convinced that the workers are ready to advance against one of their "corps," two, three, or four of their own corps. The only way of saving the workers' organizations and reducing the number of inevitable victims down to a minimum is through timely creation of a mighty organization of workers' self-defense. This constitutes the first task of the trade unions if they do not want to perish ignominiously. The working class needs a workers' militia!

The Labor Party
 A—But what is the outlook for the future? What will the trade unions finally come to with these methods of struggle?
 B—Naturally, the sliding scale and workers' defense squads are insufficient. These are only the first steps necessary in defending the workers from hunger, death, and from fascist knives. These are elementary and urgent means of self-defense. But by themselves they do not decide the matter. The basic task consists in making a path to a better economic regime and to a more correct reasonable and honest utilization of the productive forces in the interests of the entire people. This is impossible of achievement through the usual, the "normal," the routine methods of trade union work. You must agree that under the conditions of capitalist decline isolated trade unions are incapable of stopping the further worsening of the conditions of the workers. More decisive and more profound methods are needed. The bourgeoisie which owns the means of production and state power has brought economy to a complete and hopeless chaos. The bourgeoisie must be declared an insolvent debtor and the economy must be transferred to fresh and honest hands, that is to the hands of the workers themselves. How can this be done? The first step is clear: all trade unions must unite and create their own Labor Party. Not a party of Roosevelt and LaGuardia, not a labor party in name only, but a genuine independent political organization of the working class. Only such a party is capable of rallying to itself the ruined farmers, the small handicraftsmen and storekeepers. But to accomplish this it must carry on an irreconcilable struggle against banks, trusts, monopolists, and against their political agents, that is the Republican and Democratic Parties. The task of the Labor Party must constitute taking power into its hands, the entire power, and bringing the economy into order. This means to organize all national economy according to a single reasonable plan, the aim of which is not enhancing the profits of a handful of exploiters but the material and spiritual interests of a population of 130 millions.

Roosevelt's "Popularity"
 A—Many of our leaders are beginning to understand that the development is in the direction of the Labor Party. But the popularity of Roosevelt is still too great. If he should agree to run for a third time, the question of a Labor Party will be postponed for another four years.
 B—That is just the misfortune—that Messrs. Leaders look upward and not downward. The approaching war, the collapse of American capitalism, the growth of unemployment and misery, all these basic processes directly determining the fate of tens and hundreds of millions of people do not depend at all on the candidacy or "popularity" of Roosevelt. I assure you that he is much more popular among well paid functionaries of the C.I.O. than among the unemployed. Moreover, trade unions exist for the workers and not for the functionaries. If the idea of the C.I.O. for a cer-

tain period could inflame millions of workers, the idea of an independent, fighting Labor Party which wants to put an end to economic anarchy, to unemployment and misery, is capable of inflaming tens of millions. Of course, the agitators of the Labor Party must show to the masses by deeds and not words that they are not electioneering agents of Roosevelt, LaGuardia and Co., but real fighters for the interests of the exploited masses. When orators begin to speak the language of working-class leaders instead of agents of the White House, 85 per cent will come to the meetings and 15 per cent, consisting of conservative old men, aristocrats of the workers, and careerists will remain behind. The masses are better, more decisive than the leaders. The masses want to fight. The fight is hampered by the leaders who lag behind their own indecisiveness, their conservatism, their bourgeois prejudices behind excuses that the masses are unprepared. This is now the real situation.

A—There is quite a lot of truth in what you say. But ... we shall talk about it next time.
 —Crux.

THIRTEEN GREEK COMRADES JAILED

(Continued from page 1)
 mistreatment is being used for this purpose.
 3,000 Imprisoned
 The Metaxas regime has already sent at least 3,000 militants to concentration camps on Aegean islands and to the jail at Acronauplia, a medieval castle where our comrade Scalas died. Among these exiles are at least ten of our comrades.
 The notorious police tortures include castor oil, hanging by the feet, the beating of the soles of feet until they bleed, insertion of sharp sticks under fingernails, unnameable tortures of girls. Many are thrown out of windows, as was our young comrade, Tele-gades.

Sailors Union Granted Charter by AFL Conclave

SAN FRANCISCO, Oct. 25.—Last night the membership of the Sailors' Union of the Pacific meeting in union headquarters here formally accepted their new American Federation of Labor charter.

Two weeks ago the A.F. of L. convention in Houston, Texas, issued an international charter for all seamen sailing in North American waters. At that time the Sailors' Union of the Pacific was named as receiver of the charter. Name chosen by the S.U.P. for the new international is the Seafarers' International Union of North America.

The charter was granted after the old International Seamen's Union, which lost the loyalty and support of American seamen by default, was formally and officially declared defunct. An A.F. of L. federal charter issued a year ago to an outfit known as the A.F. of L. Seamen's Union was automatically lifted when the new International came into being.

As Secretary of the Sailor's Union of the Pacific, Harry Lundeberg will be in charge of organization work.

Membership of New Union

The Seafarers' International has an initial membership of 7,000 West Coast sailors, plus 2,500 fishermen in Alaska. 5,000 sea-going firemen organized in the Independent Marine Firemen, Oilers, Wipers and Waterenders' Association on the West Coast are known to be sympathetic to the sailors there, and may be expected to affiliate with the new International. On the east coast the 7,500 men in the Deck, Engine and Stewards departments, formerly members of the A.F.L.-S.U. will come immediately into the new set-up. East coast fishermen, now under the banner of the A.F.L., will also affiliate.

Add to these figures the 3,000 laces seamen claimed by the A.F.L. and the new organization begins its day with roughly 25,000 members. It plans to bring in 50,000 seamen during the coming year.

Upon receiving the Charter at Houston, Harry Lundeberg immediately announced to the press that the central point in his program, around which he proposes to organize one big seamen's union, is a vigorous fight against Government regimentation. West coast seamen have waged a head-on fight against the Maritime Commission's program of Government hiring halls and Government training ships.

Program of Organization

That the new union will continue this fight with the full support of the entire forces of the American Federation of La-

bor was corroborated by both Harry Lundeberg and William Green. Full program of the S.U.P. as it appeared in WEST COAST SAILORS, official organ of the union, follows:

- 1) A continued fight for better living conditions, better quarters, food and higher wages;
- 2) Hiring of all seamen thru Union Halls. Definite and unqualified opposition to fink halls ... and this includes government hiring halls and ship owners' agencies for hiring seamen. We pledge our combined economic force to resist the establishment of any other than hiring halls for American seamen;
- 3) Opposition to a policy of training new seamen for the American Merchant Marine on Government schoolships in the face of the fact that thousands of qualified bona fide American merchant seamen are flooding the beaches of this country, unable to secure employment;
- 4) Strictly against the arbitration of inter-union jurisdictional matters by any government bureau or board, and against the arbitration of any fundamental union dispute;
- 5) Against the introduction into trade union affairs of either politicians or their political philosophies;
- 6) Friendly and solid relations with bona fide labor organizations on the basis of mutual self-respect and self-protection against predatory employers;
- 7) Aid to all other workers in their fight against their employers.

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Machinery for organizing on the east coast, where the majority of seamen now belong to the National Maritime Union (C.I.O.).

With organizing machinery set up and with the militant program which has characterized the Sailors' Union of the Pacific since the 1934 strike on the West coast, as a foundation stone, spokesmen for the new International Union appeared confident that they could win the allegiance of all east coast seamen. Their fight will be conducted against the policy of collaborating with government agencies for regimenting seamen as now followed by officials of the National Maritime Union.

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NMU Leaders Accused As Shipowners Agents

(Continued from page 1)

worked in close cooperation with a detective agency. He says that Ray Carucci worked in the union as a labor spy under direction of "Industrial Service" detectives James A. Walsh and Harry J. Conner whose offices are at 110 East 42nd St., New York City. The charge is that all these people are employed by the Isthmian Steamship Line, working with the company's personnel director, J. A. Jump.

An open letter to the La Follette Civil Liberties Committee calls for a thorough investigation of the situation.

King Involved
 Mentioned in Loones indictment are: A. L. Hennessey, newly appointed assistant editor of the Pilot, official organ of the National Maritime Union; Peter J. Innes, Jerome King and Walter Carney. Both King and Carney were elected to office in the recent vote taken by the union. King is national Secretary. Carney heads the deck division.

According to Loones's statement, King and Carney met regularly with agents of the shipowners to discuss union policy. He tells how he also was involved, accuses Hennessey of receiving "money from Walsh on repeated occasions; sometimes it was given to me and I in turn would give it to Hennessey." Agents of the shipowners first became associated with union spokesmen last March at which time information from the files of the Naval Intelligence Service was offered to the group putting out the N.M.U. Rank and File Pilot, Loones claims.

Why Paper Was Published
 The paper based itself upon the justified resentment of east coast seamen against the dictatorial policies pursued by the Communist Party leadership in the N.M.U. "A great amount of dissatisfaction was evident and rumbles of impending revolt were heard daily with increasing force wherever small groups of the membership gathered and discussed union affairs."

Original purpose of the rank and file paper was to voice the opposition of the membership to the now infamous "Tanker Agreement" signed by Joseph Curran last Spring. Loones says, "The agreement reached with the oil companies was considered by many members a dangerous document which, if ratified, threatened the very existence of the Union ..."

Tool of Opportunists
 Expressing these grievances but failing to adopt any clearly defined program for improving conditions of seamen, the N.M.U. Rank and File Pilot easily became the tool of unscrupulous opportunists in the Union. The struggle against C.P. oppression degenerated into a dog-fight over posts and control within the N.M.U. Loones was expelled from the union for editing the rank and file paper. He was conveniently forgotten by his former associates after they were elected to office.

About King he has the following to say, "He lacked the courage to identify himself with the publication although he took the leading part in the publishing and no issue was produced without his instructions." King Denies ... The Pilot, official paper of the N.M.U., carried a flat denial by Jerome King of all allegations against him. His statement said in part: "A certain group using Octave Loones and the 'Rank and File Pilot' have attempted to infer that I have been friendly with labor spies working in the interests of the operators. This is an absolute lie."

About Sherman Lemmon, now employed by the Maritime Commission and formerly associated with King and the NMU Rank and File Pilot, Loones says: "I wish to state that I believe Sherman Lemmon to be ignorant of the fact that detectives were involved in this picture and that to my knowledge he had no part in betraying the interests of the membership but was himself also a victim of an attempt to slander him." Both Lemmon and the Commission have apparently decided to maintain discreet silence. No comment on the whole affair has come from that source as yet.

The Stalinist Game
 Most carefully guarded of all opinions expressed after appearance of the Loones expose came from official Stalinist spokesmen. The Daily Worker (Oct. 22) carried a story indicating that the C.P. was willing to deal with Loones on their terms. They state that if Loones has the real proof "he should have turned the proof over to the proper union authorities for action. He should not have published the proof in the so-called 'Rank and File Pilot' which was the mouthpiece for the union-dividing red-baiters during the union election period."

This statement also fore-shadows the future. The Stalinists in the union are determined to clear out all opposition and rule again with a high hand, expelling militant members, collaborating with the Government in its drive to regiment seamen, and signing sell-out agreements with the boss. If the statement by Loones can be proved, the discredited leaders of the opposition whom he exposes will be used as a whip against all opposition groups in the future. Singularly enough the Daily Worker has no mention of the fact that the policy pursued by King since his election to office has not differed in any important respect from that advocated by the Communist Party.

Appeal Army

A Few Still Left:

Out of the many extra thousands of copies of the World Congress and Anniversary issue printed, there are still a few hundred copies left over. Those branches which have neglected to get "extras" on this magnificent issue still have the chance to do so.

New York City has disposed of 3,000 copies of this issue, with Chicago handling 1,000 and Los Angeles close behind with 750. Practically every branch took more than double its usual quota and early reports indicate successful sales and great interest displayed in the basic program of our newly founded International. Send in reports of how sales went and we'll print extracts in next week's issue.

Increased Sales and Subs:

We're very pleased to report that our strenuous efforts of the past few weeks (special anti-war issues and World-Congress 12-pager) are beginning to have excellent results in the way of added circulation. The way subs have been coming in indicates that our goal of 50 per week may soon be attained. Also, bundle order increases have been mounting steadily. Each and every branch should now be in an excellent position not only to start a subscription campaign (New York City is in the midst of such a drive now!), but also to add many more copies to its weekly bundle-order.

New Advertising Manager:

Bob Browne, former Appeal business manager, has returned to work for us as Appeal advertising manager. We're especially glad to welcome Bob back to the Appeal staff and know he'll be more than successful in his work. Henceforth, all communications and questions regarding advertising (aside from routine branch announcements) should be addressed to Bob Browne, care of the Socialist Appeal.

Branches would be doing well if they paid some attention to the problem of getting ads. How about trying to get a few from stores and restaurants used by our comrades? A little effort in this direction would be appreciated and be very helpful to Appeal finances.

Here is the list of new subscriptions obtained last week:

NEW YORK CITY	5
Chicago	7
Massachusetts	6
California	4
Seattle, Wash.	3
Indiana	2
Philadelphia	2
Arkansas	2
Illinois	2
Denver	2
Foreign	2
New Jersey	1
Total	48

And look at this list of new and increased bundle-orders!

- (1) M. Sapire of Johannesburg, South Africa has increased his bundle by 6 each week. Incidentally, Johannesburg sells over 100 Appeals each week among native and English workers living in South Africa!
- (2) Reading has gone up to 25 per week.

(3) P. Scott, who is easily the best agent Cleveland has ever had, has increased his order by 15 and now takes a total of 50 per week.

(4) John Murphy of Los Angeles has jumped again by 30! John now takes (and pays for!) a weekly total of 215. Incidentally, John is the best literature-agent the west coast ever had. He's to California what Ruth Querio is to Pennsylvania, and anyone who rises to her class is going some!

(5) C. E. Taylor of our new Seattle, Washington branch, has raised his order from 10 to 20 per week.

(6) D. T. Burbank of St. Louis has doubled his order by adding 15.

(7) Toronto, Canada, takes 6 more, making a total of 95 per week; while the Syracuse, N. Y., Yipsel circle has a new literature-agent in Herb Lewin who begins with a modest 5 per week.

All in all, one of the best bundle-order weeks we've had in a long while!

Bound-Volumes:

Bound volumes of the 1937 Appeal will be mailed out this week. We urge more orders (there are still some left) and thank those who have waited so patiently.

New York City Subscription Campaign:

New York is in the midst of a subscription campaign, conducted by Abe Miller. The contest is closing on November 1st of this year and a prize consisting of 3 books ("Not Guilty," "Case of Leon Trotsky," and "The Revolution Betrayed") will be awarded to the one getting the most subs. In case of a tie, duplicate prizes will be awarded to the winners. Who's in the lead, Abe?

Send all contributions and subs to:

SOCIALIST APPEAL
 116 University Place
 New York, N. Y.

Have You a Suppressed Desire to be Napoleon, Stalin or Cleopatra?

Suppress It no Longer!

Come in Costume to the

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 at
 Irving Plaza
 15th Street and Irving Place
November 5th
 8:30 P. M.

Swing Band • Entertainment Competitions

Sub: 50¢ with Costume
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Aspices:
 Socialist Workers Party
 Tickets May be Obtained at
 Labor Book Store

THE MARXIST SCHOOL

116 University Place, New York City

FALL TERM ANNOUNCEMENT

Classes Begin Nov. 9.

I. THE AMERICAN TRADE UNIONS B. J. Widick
 Mondays, 7:00 P.M.—8:30 P.M. 6 lectures, \$1.00

II. AFTER THE MUNICH CONFERENCE Jack Weber
 Mondays, 8:45 P.M.—10:15 P.M. 6 lectures, \$1.00

III. LIVING MARXISM—A COURSE IN FIRST PRINCIPLES John G. Wright
 Tuesdays, 7:00 P.M.—8:30 P.M. 6 sessions, \$1.00

IV. THE BRIDGE TO REVOLUTIONARY ACTION James P. Cannon James P. Burnham Max Shachtman
 Tuesdays, 8:45 P.M.—10:15 P.M. 6 sessions, \$1.00

V. LABOR JOURNALISM James Casey
 A course in both theory and practice—news reporting, news writing, editorial writing, newspaper make-up, book reviewing and drama criticism. Students will be given assignments. This course will be continued next semester.

Wednesday, 7:30 P.M.—8:30 P.M. 6 sessions, \$1.00

VI. THE THREE AMERICAN REVOLUTIONS George Novack
 Wednesday, 8:45 P.M.—10:15 P.M. 4 sessions, \$.75

VII. CAPITALIST ECONOMY IN CRISIS David Cowles
 Fridays, 7:00 P.M.—8:30 P.M. 6 sessions \$1.00

REGISTRATION
 Registration may be made either at the school office, 116 University Place, N. Y. C., between 8 P. M. and 10 P. M., or at the Labor Bookshop, 28 E. 12th Street, N. Y. C., between 1 P. M. and 8 P. M. Registrations can also be made by mail or by calling Stuyvesant 9-0567. The school term will begin on November 9th.