

*Industrial  
Unionism*

BY

**WM. Z. FOSTER**

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P R E F A C E

**P**RESIDENT William Green and the entire Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor, with the exception of David Dubinsky, have sallied forth on a holy crusade to block the development of the industrial union form of organization.

These men, whose principles of trade union organization were reactionary even as far back as 1903, insist, yes, fight militantly to maintain backwardness in the American labor movement. The craft union, paragon of backwardness in unionism, which divides the workers against themselves, is what Green and his followers advocate.

William Green not only advocates the moss-covered craft-union form; he and his cronies have acted in undemocratic drum-head, court-martial fashion against the Committee for Industrial Organization, suspending ten of its affiliated unions, menacing two others, and threatening to split the whole American labor movement at a time when unity of labor is needed to uplift the conditions of the workmen.

The great mass of unorganized workers are in favor of industrial unionism. The Green policy in no sense represents their opinions and interests.

Out of 18 recently held conventions of state federations of labor, 16 have gone on record as opposed to the suspension order of the Executive Council. The national conventions of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees' International Union, and the American Federation of Teachers, have done likewise. Similar action was taken by Central Trades and Labor Councils in more than a score of cities, including Chicago, Philadelphia, Birmingham, Detroit, Seattle, Hartford, New Haven, New Orleans, Newark, Jersey City, Chattanooga, Tampa, Louisville, Ky., Columbus, O., and Coshocton, Ohio.

All forces of labor throughout the trade union movement should be united to reject the suspension order and preserve the unity and progress of the trade union movement.

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UNIONIZING STEEL  
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The Committee for Industrial Organization is fighting on the side of trade union progress. John L. Lewis and other leaders of the C.I.O. see that for successful unionizing of steel, auto, rubber, electrical, printing and other industries, different methods than have been used in the craft unions of the building trades, service trades and railroads, are necessary—the industrial method.

William Green aims to saddle this obsolete craft form of organization on the American workers even at the expense of unity of the labor movement, and at the price of keeping twenty-five million workers unorganized. He wants to put a bustle on labor and drive it around in yesteryear's horse and carriage.

The fight of the Committee for Industrial Organization against horse-and-carriage unionism and for industrial unionism has drawn sharp lines in the American labor movement. It goes on with the progressives lining up on the side of the C.I.O.

What this fight means and the forces involved in it have never been so clearly revealed as they are by William Z. Foster in this pamphlet which is now being published in its second edition.

No man living today can speak with more authority on the industrial union question than Foster. He was a pioneer in the fight for the industrial form of organization since 1900. In the Carmen's Union in Chicago, among the packing-house workers and as leader of the Great 1919 Steel Strike and hundreds of labor struggles throughout the country during his years of courageous and militant organizing, Foster was always the leader in the industrial union fight.

This pamphlet presents a shrewd and clear analysis of the big issue facing the labor movement today.

A hardboiled literary critic, reviewing Foster's book "The Great Steel Strike" several years ago, said: "Here's a man who knows labor and he also know how to write."

What the critic said of "The Great Steel Strike" holds true for this pamphlet. It not only tells what it's all about but it's mighty interesting reading.

HARRY RAYMOND.

# INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM

By WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

THEY TELL THE STORY of a sparrow who fell out of a tree, and while falling, lightly brushed against the tail of an elephant. "Oh, excuse me, sir," the sparrow apologized, "did I hurt you?"

That covers the situation of the weak, powerless craft union, up against a powerful group of industrial and financial barons in control of any important American industry today. This old yarn is all the more apt when you look at a typical craft union head and his painful eagerness to avoid offending any big employer. But it's not so funny to the three and a half million members of the American Federation of Labor. Nor is it funny to the almost two score million unorganized workers, anxious for unionization, but left out in the cold, to fight the employers' attacks as best they can, because at present, the American Federation of Labor, hog-tied by policies that might have fitted back in the horse-and-buggy days, is not able to organize these desperate millions of workers.

No, the old-fogy, craft union, pals-with-the-boss policies of the Executive Council of the A. F. of L. are not funny to the masses of workers in the United States, but on the contrary, a serious tragedy. They are tragic because they have left the American workers divided and wide open to any attacks the employers have chosen to make. And the employers have grabbed every advantage that the policies of the A. F. of L. Executive Council have given them. It's only necessary to realize that wages have been jacked down to 50 per cent of what they were in 1929.

Because the result of such policies is so plain to the American working class, there has been a great seething going on in the ranks of the American Federation of Labor, affecting a growing section of the A. F. of L. leadership too. A struggle of the greatest importance to the whole American working class is taking place inside the A. F. of L. around the issues of industrial unionism. The struggle for industrial unionism reached a sharp point at the 1935 A. F. of L. Convention in Atlantic City, under the leadership of the John L. Lewis bloc, which later formed the Committee for Industrial Organization. The Communist Party supports that struggle, as it has always supported all progressive struggles aiming at the unity of the working class and the organization of the unorganized.

Among the rank and file and many of the lower A. F. of L. officials, the struggle isn't just being confined to the fight for industrial unionism, that is, to a change in the structure of the A. F. of L. It's also shaping up as a question of displacing the whole rotten gang of reactionary leaders playing ball with the employers, as well as a fight on the part of the membership of the A. F. of L. to run their unions in a democratic way, without bossism and strong-arm rule. The membership of the A. F. of L. have sacrificed much for their unions; they've even been willing to buck up against machine guns for the unions, on the picket-line. They want to see their unions ship-shape in every way. The membership of the A. F. of L., and the two score million who want to be organized into the A. F. of L., realize that these three things—industrial unionism, meaning the unity of the workers in each given industry; a policy of fighting against the bosses (class struggle), instead of smoking cigars with them over the conference table (class-collaboration); and third, trade union democracy, can go together to make the powerful kind of organization that could stop the bosses, as strongly united as they are, from taking it out of the hides of the workers through wage cuts, increasing speedup, firing and blacklisting workers for joining a union, etc.

## The A. F. of L. Membership Takes Stock

It's just because the employers have been getting away with such tricks that the A. F. of L. membership has begun to take stock and to realize that the blame must be put on policies that might have fitted in when the Civil War was still a fresh memory. That's why the masses of workers in the A. F. of L. and the many times greater masses outside, who want to be inside the A. F. of L., are raising the demand and taking very active steps for industrial unionism. One shop, one industry, one union, is the demand—one union for each mass-production industry, like automobiles, steel, chemicals, rubber, etc. And as for the industries which are not mass-production in character, and where the policy of anywhere from a half-dozen to two dozen or more craft unions in an industry has played hell with the unity and the conditions of the workers, the demand is rising more and more for unity, and steps toward industrial unionism in the shape of closely knit federations (like the Pacific Coast Maritime Federation, which unites every marine craft), the commencing and expiring of agreements of all crafts in the industry on the same date; or in the shape of amalgamation, between a few trades, or on a general scale in given industries.

The carrying through of such steps in every industry with the object of finally bringing about industrial unions not only in the mass production industries, but in the old time craft-ridden industries like building, railroad, etc., together with a fighting, class struggle policy, and rank-and-file control in the A. F. of L., will find the employers facing a Rock of Gibraltar of working class solidarity and joint action whenever they dare plan a wage cut, an attack on conditions or a blacklisting campaign against union members.

## Horse-and-Buggy Unionism

How did it start, the present day A. F. of L. horse-and-buggy

system of craft unionism, and why does it cripple the workers in this modern day and age? When trade unionism was young, there were no industries as we know them today. Shops were small and far between. Each shop employed one kind of tradesman only. Blacksmiths worked only in blacksmith shops, and only blacksmiths worked there; molders worked only in molding shops; wood-turners worked only in shops that did wood-turning. The craft unions served a real purpose then. The craft unions in those days were able to cope with the employers who were for the most part small shopowners. Those were the days when the employees usually called the boss Frank, or Tom—by his first name. Imagine a man on a Ford belt today walking up to Ford and saying: "Hello, Hank, how's the wife and kids." Times have changed.

Gradually, the employers piled up more and more wealth, and combined their capital and factories into larger industrial units. A fellow like Andrew Carnegie would begin to buy out all the little iron works or tool shops he could lay his hands on, and pretty soon, the giant United States Steel Corporation took shape as a great trust, with competition narrowing down to the point where there were only two or three huge trusts instead of thousands of little shops in a big industry. These are the sort of great trusts which now dominate all American industry.

Employers also began to form employers' associations—great unions of capitalists—to control output and prices; to fix wages—that is, to cut them jointly; to fight the trade unions; to establish industry-wide blacklists and spy systems against workers who joined unions, or those who tried to organize unions. Billions of dollars are behind these employers' associations, in the fight against unionization of the industries.

Here are just a few of these Goliaths of the open shop whom the workers are expected to face with the sling shot of old time craft unionism: the Iron and Steel Institute; the National Electric Manufacturers' Association; the National Metal Trades Asso-

ciation; the National Association of Manufacturers; the National Founders' Association; the National Industrial Conference Board; the California Merchants and Manufacturers Association; the Associated Employers of Seattle, Indianapolis and a host of other cities; the Waterfront Employers' Union of San Francisco; the so-called "Citizens Committee" of cities like Detroit, Cleveland, Chicago and many others. Just because David was supposed to have slain a giant with a sling shot in biblical times, it can be done now, the A. F. of L. Executive Council figures.

These are some of the changes that have come about in industry since the early days of American trade unionism. (In a few moments we'll see some more startling ones, which apparently the craft union leaders haven't yet learned about.) Did the tactics, the strategy, and the structure of the A. F. of L. change to keep step with the great strengthening of industrial and finance capitalism, in such a way that these powerful trusts could be balked in their attacks on the working class? They did not.

There were more than a dozen metal craft unions in the A. F. of L. back in the days when shops were small and trusts undreamed of. There are the same number today, even though lined up against the workers in the metal industries there is a powerful National Metal Trades Association and a still more powerful Iron and Steel Institute. Blacksmiths, boilermakers, coopers, sheet metal workers, molders, machinists unions and the rest—they're like a bunch of birchbark canoes against a superdreadnought. The worst of it is that they're usually sent up against the dreadnought, one canoe at a time.

Asbestos workers, bricklayers, carpenters, operating engineers, and the rest of the building trades craft unions—it's like facing sixteen-inch guns with bows and arrows, when you consider the powerful building trades employers' associations, the powerful real estate interests tied up with Wall Street. And now the A. F. of L. Executive Council proposes to take the auto workers who face Ford and General Motors, the chemical workers who face

du Pont; the rubber workers who face Goodyear, Goodrich and Firestone; the aluminum workers who face Andrew Mellon, and separate them into so many canoes against battleships.

### What's Happening to Skilled Trades?

There are other strong reasons which show that craft unionism no longer fills the bill, and must give way to industrial unionism. Machinery and super-machinery in modern industry have largely done away with skill. This is not only true in the mass production industries, as we shall soon see; it is becoming more and more true even in industries where the craft unions have always dominated; which seemed the very stronghold of the skilled craftsmen. The International Molders' Union, once one of the strongest of the A. F. of L. craft unions, when molded castings required skilled hand work, has lost nearly all its ground because new molding machines have been introduced into foundries and today handymen aided by machines produce castings by methods of mass production. Machines, application of electricity, press steel plates, mass production, specialization have dried up the sources from which this antiquated craft union was once able to draw its membership. The skilled man in this and numerous other once skilled crafts is headed where the cigar store Indian went.

Let's take a look at the building trades industry. The Building Trades Department of the A. F. of L. may try to ignore it, but changes have been going on in their industry affecting at the same time, tools, processes and materials. Structural steel, electricity, imitation stone, displacement of wood, changes in decoration and architecture, the assembling of factory-made housing units on the job, the cement and plaster gun, paint spray guns, and other innovations, have knocked into a cocked hat the old craft boundary lines, the skills that it took long years of apprenticeship and experience to acquire, and with them, the wage scales.

That's what's happening to skill in the old craft union strongholds. Now let's look at a few of the mass production industries, which the craft union leaders want to divide up among themselves on the basis of "skilled trades."

### Timed to 154/1,000 of a Minute

Let's peep, for a moment, into the big General Electric plant in Schenectady, with its 350 buildings, covering 645 acres, employing eighteen to twenty-five thousand workers. Let's see what the Micromotion System—one of the many speedup systems—is doing to "skill." We see the General Electric efficiency experts measuring the movements of the employees' hands down to one-two thousandth of a minute, by means of a clock, which has a hand revolving at the rate of twenty revolutions a minute. The clock has a face graduated into 100 divisions; it is placed where it will appear in a moving picture taken of the man at work. Let's take a glance at a chart of "Micromotion Study," of a man screwing studs in a threaded plate and then "swaging" them by means of a die and punch press (a study of just the motions of the left hand of this worker).

*Time* (in minutes):

- .0155 Gets plate and carries it to meet stud held in right hand.
- .0650 Holds plate while right hand screws in stud.
- .0280 Places the assembly in die.
- .0120 Trips the press.
- .0335 Removes finished piece and drops it in box at left.

Entire job completed in 154/1,000 of a minute, but the speed up experts found the man's right hand was idle 735/1,000 of a minute, while the left hand was doing the above, so they "re-educated" the worker in the use of his hands so he could screw a stud into a plate while his left hand was busy on the above motions.

That's what's been happening to machinists, blacksmiths, electricians, molders, etc. The gentlemen who are the head of craft

unions ought to be told to take their bat-wing collars off; they're living in 1936!

### Nineteenth Century Unionism and the Automobile Industry

A little look in at the automobile industry, one of the most highly specialized, will give us a further sidelight into how futile the craft union system, the "nineteenth century" trade unionism, is, when up against modern industry. Henry Ford, himself, says in *My Life and Work*, that 43 per cent of all jobs in his plant require not over one day's training; 36 per cent from one day to one week; 6 per cent from one to two weeks; 14 per cent from one month to a year—and only 1 per cent of all jobs need over a year to learn. And still an A. F. of L. official like Frey of the Metal Trades Department, or Matthew Woll, will tell you that "union organization can only be based on craft skill."

What a laugh, if it weren't so tragic for the workers of the United States! What such "leaders" of labor really mean is that they don't want to organize the approximately 30,000,000 unorganized workers, for if they come into a Ford or a Chevrolet plant, where there are hundreds of different special jobs, some requiring but one or two simple movements, others several or more complicated movements, and propose to put this man into the boilermakers, this man into the molders, this one into the machinists, and this one into the painters, they're simply not going to organize these workers.

It is easy to see how it would be impossible to fight the employers in such industries by pitting one craft union today, another one some other time, and so on down the line, against a man with the power of Henry Ford; or let's say against the House of Morgan, which directly, or through subsidiaries like the First National Bank and the Bonbright brokerage house or through its members on boards of directors, has its fingers in such pies as General Motors, General Electric, American Telephone and

Telegraph, Baldwin Locomotive, Firestone Tire and Rubber, U. S. Rubber, Radio Corporation of America, International Harvester, Kennecott and Phelps-Dodge Copper, U. S. Steel, etc., etc. Or against Rockefeller, with his finger in American Smelting and Refining, General Foods Corp., White Motors, as well as the various Standard Oil Companies, to name but a few.

### Pebbles Against Machine Guns

Only fools can think of facing machine guns with a hatful of pebbles, thrown sparingly as they are under the craft union separate agreement system. If a fight against companies like the above is to be won, it can only be fought on a basis which can paralyze the whole industry—and that means industrial unionism, together with a fighting policy and trade union democracy in the A. F. of L. Imagine trying to organize and win better conditions in such industries on the basis of anywhere from a dozen to two dozen different craft unions, each with different initiation fees, different dues, different headquarters, agreements expiring at different dates, different sets of officials, each trying to advance their own cause at the expense of others, making raids on one another's membership. To come to workers, who are faced by such conditions as above, imposed by such powerful interests as mentioned above, with craft unionism, is, to call a spade a spade, not to want to organize these workers at all. And the A. F. of L. top leadership has neither organized the vast majority of workers in these basic, mass production industries, nor made any serious attempt to do so. The records will show this.

### A. F. of L. Hasn't Organized Mass Production Industries

There are 98,087 workers in the rubber products industry, according to the 1931 census of manufacturers as made by the U. S. Department of Commerce. To the 1935 A. F. of L. Convention there came but six delegates from six federal locals of

rubber workers, with a total of 39 votes (one vote for every 100 dues-paying members).

There are 230,377 workers in the chemical and allied products industry, according to the above-mentioned census. To the 1935 A. F. of L. Convention there came but one delegate from one chemical workers' federal local (Barberton, Ohio) with three votes.

There are 598,308 workers in the iron, steel, and iron and steel products industries. At the 1935 A. F. of L. Convention in Atlantic City, the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers had but 86 votes, representing 8,600 dues-paying members. (No doubt this voting strength is an underestimation of the actual membership, for many lodges understate their dues-payments so that they may retain a part of the per capita for themselves; nevertheless it does show how far from being in the A. F. of L. are the half million or more steel workers.)

In the motor vehicle bodies and parts industry, the above census lists 151,799 workers, plus 135,426 workers in the motor vehicle industry itself. To the 1935 A. F. of L. Convention there came but six delegates from eight federal automobile workers' locals, with 18 votes.

In the cigar and cigarette industry there are 87,600 workers. At the A. F. of L. Convention in 1935 the Tobacco Workers International Union, which is supposed to organize the big cigarette factories, had 104 votes, meaning 10,400 members (it listed 2,500 members in 1932); while the Cigarmakers Union had 70 votes, for 7,000 dues-paying members (it listed 15,500 members in 1932).

The electrical machinery, apparatus and supplies industry, which includes radio, employs 180,064 workers, according to the above census; at the A. F. of L. Convention not a single delegate was present from an electrical manufacturing plant, and only seven delegates from seven radio factory federal locals, with 75 votes, representing 7,500 dues-paying members.

This is a brief picture of the failure of the antiquated craft union system in the A. F. of L. to organize the millions of workers in the mass production basic industries. The great masses of workers in these industries have not been given the protection of trade unions, and so have been forced to work under low wages, incredible speed-up such as pictured above, spy systems and company unions. These workers have not been given the trade union protection they need and want, because the A. F. of L. craft union leaders have offered them, when they have offered them anything at all, not unionism adapted to the industrial conditions under which they work, but a plan of splitting them up into a score or more of unions based on crafts, which either no longer exist or are fast fading from the picture.

Organization into industrial unions on the basis of one shop, one industry, one union, means bread and butter, life or death to the workers in these basic mass production industries. The proposition the A. F. of L. Executive Council tries to force on them means death, because it means being split up every which way against one powerful foe.

The A. F. of L. has not been able to organize these mass production workers into craft unions. (A chemical union in Buffalo and an electrical manufacturing union in Lynn sent back their charters when told they must submit to division into craft unions.) These workers, clamoring for trade union protection, went ahead and organized themselves on scores of occasions since 1933, instinctively adopting the industrial union, only to have the craft unions come in like a pack of starving wolves to divide them up.

The workers themselves organized federal locals of auto workers in General Motors plants in Detroit, Flint, St. Louis, Tarrytown, Cleveland, Kansas City, etc. They organized auto-parts federal locals in Toledo and other cities. They organized aircraft federal locals in Buffalo, Baltimore, and other cities. They organized federal locals in rubber factories in Akron, Chicopee Falls, etc. They organized federal aluminum locals in the Pitts-



burgh area, in Manitowoc, Wisconsin, in Massena, N. Y., etc., and other aluminum centers. They organized radio federal locals in Philadelphia, New York, etc.

### Industrial Unions Led Most Strikes

Just to mention these locals—all of them organized on an industrial basis by the workers themselves—is to call out of the pages of recent labor history some of the most glorious and valiant struggles known to America. Who will ever forget the Toledo strike of 1934? These are the unions, together with the industrial United Textile Workers of America, the industrial United Mine Workers of America, the semi-industrial needle trades unions, the closely federated marine unions on the Pacific Coast, which wrote such brilliant pages of struggle into American labor history in recent years; while the Molders Union, the Machinists Union, the Patternmakers Union, the railroad craft unions, the building trades craft unions and practically every single other long-standing craft union took part in no struggles, or at best, scattered and minor struggles, even though their members and the unorganized masses in their own trades kept taking it on the chin and demanding strike action.

Instead of having led struggles in their own trades, the big shots in these craft unions tried to break the backs of the new industrial unions in the mass production industries by making grabs for their members and splitting them up. Sixteen crafts in the metal trades went to divide up the Association of Oil Field, Gas Well and Refinery Workers at the present time, to give one example of such wolfishness. They are like hungry boarders scrambling for the eats with their forks, but instead upsetting the whole platter in their greed, so that nobody has anything.

Another example of such splitting was when the Montana copper miners had decided on the industrial form of unionism as the only form under which they could, and in this case actually did, lick the powerful Anaconda Copper Co. (in the Butte district,

May, 1935). But after the International Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers (an industrial union) had fought the copper barons to a standstill, the craft unions stepped in and signed some 13 separate agreements for 13 different craft unions in the building and metal trades.

Against this policy of splitting, of tearing apart the ranks of the A. F. of L. and the working class in general, the slogan "For a United A. F. of L." must be raised, a slogan which the Communist Party backs and actively fights for. "For a United A. F. of L.", on a basis of "one shop, one industry, one union," plus a fighting policy to gain the demands of the workers, and real trade union democracy within the A. F. of L.

### Haven't Even Organized Their Own Trades

Not only have the craft unions failed to organize the mass production industries, but the plain fact is that they have failed to organize the bulk of the workers in their own trades.

The proof of the pudding is in the eating, and here are the facts.

Trade	Number of workers in trade (1930 Federal Census)	Number of members in A. F. of L. craft unions, 1932		Number of votes unions had at 1935 A. F. of L. Convention*
Blacksmiths, forgemen and hammer-men	147,460	Blacksmiths Union	5,000	50
Boilermakers	49,923	Boilermakers Union	15,000	153
Brick and stone masons, tile layers	170,896	Bricklayers Union	56,700	650
Carpenters	929,376	Carpenters Union	290,000	2,000
Electricians	280,279	Electr. Bro.	139,900	1,300
Machinists, millwrights and toolmakers	761,075	Machinists Union	70,700	924
Painters, glaziers—				
Building	429,982	Painters Union	79,600	656
In factories	89,546			
Plasterers, cement finishers	85,477	Plasterers Union	35,300	180
Plumbers, gas & steam fitters	237,813	Plumbers Union	45,000	340
Chauffeurs, truck, tractor drivers	970,916			
draymen, teamsters	111,178	Teamsters Union	82,000	1,370

\* One vote for every 100 dues-paying members.

Craft unionism, together with a policy of playing ball with the bosses, and gag-rule within the unions, therefore, has been an obstacle to organizing the huge majority of workers even in the particular crafts they cover, as these examples from the metal trades, building trades, etc., show. It may be added that craft unionism also has been an obstacle to organizing the huge majority of the workers in such industries in which mass production is not so well developed, and where the trades still have a grip, as transport, food, and the like, and has left large numbers unorganized on the railroads. Not such a hot record, even on their own "home grounds".

#### Union Scabbing on Union

One of the most disgusting and most vicious results of craft

unionism is the record of scabbery by A. F. of L. craft unions against A. F. of L. craft unions. Such a spectacle is absolutely impossible under industrial unionism and with rank-and-file control of the unions. It is the direct result of craft ideas, that the craft union leaders constantly take advantage of the position of each others' unions and of the unskilled, by making a bargain for their own craft union at the expense of the rest. Such scabbery is the direct result of craft unionism, under which the various unions in the shop have agreements with the same employer, but expiring at different dates, so that if one craft strikes, the others cannot on the excuse that they are bound to the job by their agreements.

Let's hold our noses as the sickening pageant of scabbery resulting from craft unionism, and the consequent splitting up of the workers, goes by. It cannot be blamed on the membership themselves; they don't like craft unionism; they have it forced on them by policies which were already outliving their usefulness when Steve Brodie took a chance.

John Olchen, chairman of the trustees of the Cleveland Metal Trades Council, a craft organization, member of Machinists Local 439, a craft union, gives his experience of craft unionism in action. In 1915 he struck in Youngstown with 1,500 machinists. The molders were ordered to remain at work. The scab machinists used molds made by union molders. The strike was lost. A year later the molders struck, on the expiring of their agreement, but the machinists were ordered to scab. As a result, both strikes were lost and both unions practically wiped out.

No wonder Olchen has had his bellyfull of craft unionism and is strong for industrial unionism for the entire A. F. of L.!

In the big 1921 shop crafts strike, seven crafts tied up the mechanical departments of all the railroads in the country. But transportation kept right on: train crews, trackmen, clerks, telegraphers stayed at work. The railroad companies had one organization, one center, one head, to combat the strike; the rail-

road workers were divided up into many unions with as many sets of leaders, headquarters, dues systems, agreements, etc.

Scabbery of this sort, of craft union against craft union, has happened innumerable times on building trades jobs. No wonder: on one building job there may be as many as 20 different agreements with 20 different business agents.

The only reason it's hard to give many examples of craft union scabbing on craft union in the most recent years is because the craft unions have ceased calling strikes altogether, except in small and isolated cases. And in most of those cases the same sickening story of scabbery, particularly in building trades strikes, holds true.

But wait. There have been some strikes called by craft unions in recent years. They were jurisdictional strikes—in which a craft union called a strike, not against the boss, but against another craft union.

#### Paralysis by Jurisdictional Fights

And this brings to mind another one of the poisoned fruits of craft unionism, jurisdictional disputes, in which the craft unions battle each other, in some cases, in order to steal jobs away from each other, or in other cases, to steal members from each other. When it comes to fighting for relief jobs at union wages for the unemployed, the craft union leaders are usually somewhere else. When it comes to stealing jobs from other unions you'll find them Johnnies-on-the-spot. When it comes to getting new members by conducting a real campaign for organization of the unorganized the craft union top leaders aren't around. When it comes to getting a handful of new members by "swiping" them from other unions, they're always willing. Let us see some examples of this method of dividing the ranks of the workers by the craft unions.

The Tobacco Workers International Union has been able in all its years of existence to organize only two of the cigarette

factories, the Axton-Fisher and Brown-Williamson plants in Louisville. Even at that, the Tobacco Workers International has had to divide 232 out of the 2,684 Brown-Williamson employees up with 14 other craft unions. The Tobacco Workers International had a contract with Axton-Fisher for 39 years, when, suddenly, in 1936, the Machinists Union stepped in and demanded a contract for 138 employees whom it claims in Brown-Williamson, and the machine-fixers in Axton-Fisher, which means an attempt to open up a war between the craft unions in these plants.

The Glass Blowers Union has fought the Flint Glass Workers Union for control of neon signs. The Teamsters Union fought the Railway Clerks for control of the employees in the vehicle department of the American Railway Express. The Flint Glass Workers Union has fought the Machinists Union for control of the machinists working in glass factories. Naturally, the employers sit back and smile. Instead of fighting for better conditions and wages these unions keep fighting each other.

The main business of the Building Trades Department of the A. F. of L. has been concerned with jurisdictional disputes between the unions. As far back as 1918 these jurisdictional scraps got so sharp that an attempt was made to work out a solution by setting up a National Board of Jurisdictional Awards, composed of men from the A. F. of L. Building Trades Department and the American Institute of Architects. But it didn't last long; in a year the Carpenters Union quit the Board because an award went against it. When this Board broke apart, attempts were made to form local boards to settle jurisdictional disputes; but certain building trades unions wouldn't take part on the grounds, as one of them stated, that "no two local boards would settle the questions in exactly the same way". The truth was evident. The building trades craft union leaders saw the jurisdictional disputes not only preventing the organization of the majority of building workers, but also bringing about the loss of members already in these unions. Still they weren't interested

in putting a stop to these fatal inter-union fights by means of a closely-knit federation, leading to amalgamation of the unions in the building trades industry, through which they could get down to the real business of organizing the hundreds of thousands of unorganized building trades workers. So the same warfare between the building unions goes on today.

The craft union leaders often hate each other so bitterly that when the plumbers, painters and molders tried to get admission into the Railway Employees Department of the A. F. of L., consisting of nine craft unions, they were turned down, "to avoid jurisdictional disputes".

#### The Ambition of a Craft Union Leader

For the past few years Tobin and the rest of the top leaders of the Teamsters Union seem to have had one all-consuming ambition. Has this ambition been to organize the more than one million teamsters and chauffeurs in the United States? Wrong! Their sole ambition has been to snatch away from the Brewery Workers (an industrial union) all the drivers employed in breweries. The Brewery Workers Union naturally has resisted this; they don't want the forces of the brewery workers split up. The A. F. of L. Executive Council has ordered the brewery workers to surrender the drivers to the Teamsters Union; they even were responsible for the lockout of the brewery drivers in some of the plants in Washington and Oregon, because these drivers want to stick with the other brewery workers in an industrial union. The mere fact that a referendum in April, 1934, held by direction of the A. F. of L. in every brewery in the country resulted in 24,161 votes for the industrial Brewery Workers Union and only 170 against doesn't mean a thing to the A. F. of L. craft union leaders.

Scabbing by union against union in strikes, the calling of strikes against other unions instead of against the employers and for improvement of wages and conditions, a mad scramble for jurisdiction over jobs and for who shall control a handful of

members instead of going out and organizing the many millions still unorganized—these are the miserable results of craft unionism and its division of the workers.

#### Industrial Unionism in Action

Is this possible under industrial unionism? Let's look at a typical strike of an industrial union and see. In September, 1935, the soft coal miners wanted a wage increase. They struck for it—they went on strike 400,000 strong, tying up almost every soft coal mine in the country. There was no scabbing of a coal cutter against a mine electrician in this strike; nor of mine carpenters against slate-pickers. They all went out, to a man. Why? Because they were members of an industrial union, the United Mine Workers of America, embracing every man who works in and around the mine. And as a result the soft-coal miners won a 10 per cent increase. And in April, 1934, by a strike threat, this industrial union won the seven-hour day.

Or take the marine industry on the Pacific Coast, where, as a step toward one industrial union for the marine industry, long-shoremen, ships' clerks, seamen, masters, mates and pilots, marine engineers, marine firemen, oilers and wipers, marine cooks and stewards, and other unions working in connection with the shipping industry formed the closely knit Pacific Coast Maritime Federation. Demand after demand has been won for these unions because each marine union had all of the others behind it. The members of the International Seamen Union on the Pacific Coast have won a wage scale of \$62.50 a month, while the Atlantic Coast seamen, not part of such a federation, work under a lower scale of \$52.50 a month. One would suppose that the staunch advocates of craft unionism in the A. F. of L. leadership might learn something from these facts. They not only learn nothing, but they hate the guts of the Pacific Coast marine workers for having accomplished so much through solidarity, and therefore they order the charter of the Sailors Union of the Pacific revoked

and a new dual union established in its place. Talk about splitting the labor movement!

### Making More Money—For the Bosses

The top leaders of the craft unions have shown great willingness to allow warfare between the unions to go on. But they don't show a willingness to fight the employers. Quite the opposite; they seem to prefer collaborating with the bosses, working hand in hand with them, even going to the extent of working out schemes by which the employers' profits can be increased at the expense of the employees. Here are some examples of it:

The International Printing Pressmens Union maintains a special bureau to study methods of improving the processes of printing and engraving, which means methods of speed-up and eliminating thousands of workers from their jobs.

The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, in combination with the electrical contractors, has set up machinery for establishing standards of work in the industry and for settling disputes without recourse to strikes.

And who does not know of the Baltimore and Ohio Plan, originated in 1923 by the railroad shop craft unions, whereby the unions cooperate with the management on that railroad to speed up and cheapen the cost of production. Shortly after the plan was adopted, 5,000 men in the B. and O. shops were permanently laid off through efficiency schemes. In the spring of 1934, through a drive to get more work in the B. and O. shops, 1,500 were laid off. The plan has been adopted in essence by the Chicago and Northwestern, the Milwaukee, Canadian National and other railroads. There are many cases of industrial or semi-industrial unions, such as in the United Textile Workers and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, where such schemes are practiced. The leaders of these unions who fight for industrial unionism must realize that this only weakens the fight for industrial unionism and the organization of the unorganized.

### Organize the Negro Workers!

Craft unionism has not only resulted in splitting the ranks of the workers generally, but the top leaders of the craft unions have been the leaders in splitting the ranks of the workers as between white and Negro workers. It is in the craft unions especially that the Negro worker has been met with the color bar. Many of the craft union leaders have actively fostered the practice of preventing the Negro workers from obtaining skilled positions. In their apprenticeship systems young Negroes have strictly been barred, closing up the avenues leading toward the holding of skilled jobs. Not content with barring Negroes from membership in many unions, not satisfied with keeping them from holding skilled jobs, the craft union leaders have made little or no attempt to organize the Negro workers generally. In most cases where Negro workers spontaneously organized themselves, they have been isolated in little federal locals of "laborers", and given no attention thereafter.

It was only in October, 1935, that the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, consisting entirely of Negro workers, was given an international charter. The Pullman porters were kept out of the A. F. of L. for four years, and then given federal local charters in 1929. Craft unions that never lifted a finger to organize the porters claimed the dues, and on the excuse of these jurisdictional claims, the A. F. of L. Executive Council help up the porters' national charter for six years. One of the craft unions which claimed the porters' dues, the Pullman Car Conductors, itself had a color bar, and offered to organize the pullman porters as a lower caste within the union, on condition that no porter could rise to the rank of pullman conductor. The result of craft unionism and its accompanying policies is that only about 50,000 out of the million or more Negroes employed in American industry are organized into the A. F. of L.

In permitting jim-crowism in its locals and allowing the prac-

tice of keeping Negroes out of the skilled jobs in southern cotton mills, an industrial union like the United Textile Workers, even though it fights for industrial unionism, also must stand guilty of helping to split the ranks of the workers.

Craft unionism has also left the huge majority of the millions of young men and women workers in the lurch, without trade union protection. Women and young workers do not work in large numbers in the strongest crafts and trades which the A. F. of L. Council considers its "backbone", and little or no attempt has been made to organize those industries where large numbers of young workers and women work. In those cases where large numbers of young workers and women have been organized, it has been done by unions industrial or semi-industrial in form, like the textile workers and the needle trades unions.

#### Poisoned Fruits of Craft Unions

These are the fruits of craft unionism, of a class-collaboration policy and lack of trade union democracy in the A. F. of L.: splitting the ranks of the workers; leaving the vast majority of them, both in the mass production industries and in the trades, unorganized and at the mercy of the employers' attacks; scabbery of unions against unions in strikes; fierce warfare between unions; working with the employers to dope out new schemes of eliminating hundreds of thousands of workers from their jobs; setting up bars between Negro and white workers; leaving the bulk of the women workers unorganized.

Despite all this, which has left the unions pale shadows of the powerful bodies they could be, the A. F. of L. Executive Council persists in basing policies affecting 30,000,000 workers in the United States on the antiquated Scranton Declaration of 1901. This Declaration itself went back to conditions of the eighteenth, sixties, seventies, and eighties, and compels the A. F. of L. to be shackled by strict adherence to organization based on craft lines throughout the years, come what may in the shape of mechaniza-

tion of industry wiping out craft lines, in the form of huge trusts dominating industry, of powerful open-shop bosses' organizations.

#### Fight for Industrial Unionism Not New

The present great and ever-growing demand within the A. F. of L. for industrial unionism is not the first such demand. The unions were being enfeebled right along by the effects of craft unionism. As far back as 1903, reactionary old Sam Gompers himself said that "scarcely an affiliated organization is not engaged in a desperate fight with one or more other unions", and that unless they changed their course the unions would destroy one another.

Such self-destruction—in the face of the ever-increasing attacks on wages and conditions by the employers who were steadily growing stronger, integrating mines, mills and plants into giant holding corporations with billion-dollar financial interests, taking control of the main industries through subsidiary corporations and seats on boards of directors—such self-destruction was tragic. Trade union members who had sacrificed, and were willing to sacrifice considerably more, for their unions began to press hard for a change in the structure of the A. F. of L. away from the hide-bound craft lines, on the basis of plant and industrial unions.

In the years immediately after the World War, when the big corporations, bloated with war-time profits, began to launch plans to take away the hard-fought gains made by organized labor during the war, the craft form of unionism was more seriously than ever before felt to be a handicap for the workers. The 39th Annual Convention of the A. F. of L. in 1919 found the craft union leaders hard pressed by the demand for industrial unionism. In the great 1919 strike wave, craft unionism was the main cause of the loss of strikes, as it was in the ensuing railway and printing trades strikes. In 1922, 23 and 24 agitation, led by the Communist Party and the Trade Union Educational League for amalgamation

of the craft unions into industrial unions, assumed large proportions, especially making itself felt at the 43rd Annual Convention of the A. F. of L. in 1923.

In the following years, the deadly toll of craft unionism began to be felt so sharply that no one could fail to notice it. As a result of the warfare between craft unions, as a result of the no-strike policy, the policy of playing ball with the employers, the policy of expulsion of members who had the guts to say what they felt on the union floor, the membership of the A. F. of L. declined from its highest point of 4,078,740 in 1920 to about two and a half million in 1929.

The result was that at the 1929 Annual Convention a resolution was introduced for the appointment of a committee of 15 to formulate a plan for reducing the number of international unions and for consolidating them. The stodgy craft union leaders succeeded in voting down this expression of the sentiment of more and more of the membership. The craft union leaders reaffirmed the Scranton Declaration of 1901 as the expression of the A. F. of L. policy—on the principle of the fellow who says, "What was good enough for my great-great-grandfather is good enough for me".

#### Communists Played Big Part in Fight

The fight for industrial unionism in this period was guided by the fighting Left-wing elements in the various A. F. of L. unions, marshalled by the Trade Union Educational League and by the Communists whose aim in the trade unions was to lead the workers in the struggle for industrial unionism, amalgamation of the various crafts in each industry, rank-and-file control of the unions, a policy of real struggle against the employers for improvement of wages and conditions instead of boot-licking on the part of the top leadership of the A. F. of L. These fighting elements formed influential movements for amalgamation in the railroad industry, the metal trades, the building trades, etc. Later, when

the fighting independent unions of the Trade Union Unity League were formed on an industrial basis, the example they set of solidarity in strike action, of rank-and-file control of the unions, of a policy of fighting the bosses for what the workers wanted instead of trying to lick their boots—this example had a great effect on the A. F. of L. membership in increasing their disgust with the effects of the craft union policy.

When, for the sake of the unity of the working class, the Trade Union Unity League dissolved its unions, its members entered into the unions of the A. F. of L., and brought to the welcoming A. F. of L. membership the fruits of their experience in hard-fought struggles against the employers. Inside the A. F. of L. they continued to be among the staunchest fighters for industrial unionism, for trade union democracy, and for a policy of struggle against the employers, instead of palship by the top leaders with the employers.

#### The Importance of the Fight Today

However, never before has the struggle for making the A. F. of L. into a powerful, unified weapon against the employers' attacks been so great as now. And here are the reasons for the intense seething going on in the A. F. of L., with the eyes of the entire working class on the struggle for a powerful A. F. of L. based on industrial unions.

For one thing, following the introduction of the N.R.A., the craft union policy was shown up by the great upheaval of the workers during the 1933-34 strike movement and the great desire for unionism expressed the determination of the American working class once and for all to take a fighting stand against the repeated wage cuts, loss of conditions, layoffs, etc. This time, the workers in the big mass production industries—aluminum, automobiles, rubber, steel, for example, who had been absolutely ignored by the craft-ridden A. F. of L. leadership

—determined to take matters into their own hands, and organized hundreds of locals by themselves. They took part in some of the best-fought strikes ever known in American history. In most cases where the craft unions showed any interest at all in these workers, it was either to try to settle their strikes behind their backs or to come in during or after the strikes and attempt to split up these fighting, industrial locals among themselves. The great fighting spirit of the workers following the N.R.A. showed that if the A. F. of L. had had a policy of industrial unionism and a policy of struggle against the employers, from ten to a score of millions of these workers could have been organized, so anxious were they to fight and to have the benefits of trade union protection.

For another thing, company unionism began to grow by leaps and bounds, under Roosevelt, and the craft union policy could do little against it in the industries where it was especially rampant,—steel, radio, electrical apparatus, oil refining, chemicals, automobiles, etc. In these industries the only A. F. of L. organizations which existed, if there were any, were a few small crafts, like bricklayers in oil refineries, or a molders local here and there in an electrical apparatus plant, and the like. It is significant that an industrial union like the United Mine Workers of America was able to lick the company unions to a frazzle in nearly every case, organizing nearly 500,000 miners into an industrial union.

#### Fight Against Fascism Needs Unified Working Class

Then, fascist tendencies, like the Liberty League, Coughlin, Hearst, blue, black, brown and many other colored shirt movements began to raise their ugly heads, one of their avowed aims being to smash trade unionism, as the fascists did in Germany, Italy, and Austria. What chance has a trade union movement, enfeebled and torn asunder by craft unionism and weakened by an anti-struggle policy—what chance has such a trade union move-

ment against fascist movements which can develop into organizations as powerful as in Germany, Italy and Austria, if the working class doesn't unite to stop them? This fact set millions of workers thinking, and that's one of the big reasons why the demand for industrial unionism has become greater now than ever before.

To the three and a half million workers inside the A. F. of L., and to the nearly 30,000,000 other workers watching them in their fight for industrial unionism, it's a bread and butter proposition. The protection of powerful unions, industrial in form, democratically controlled, with a policy of fighting the bosses with a determined front, would mean not only a halt to the attacks of the employers, but a chance to take the offensive and get back what has been taken away from the workers in the shape of wage cuts, hacking away at conditions, etc.

The rumbling in the ranks of the A. F. of L. that foreshadowed the present big fight for industrial unionism was felt at the 1934 Convention of the A. F. of L., held in San Francisco (the scene, a few months earlier, of the historic general strike). At that Convention 14 resolutions for industrial unionism were introduced. In an attempt to stave off the revolt they felt coming, the A. F. of L. Executive Council pretended to agree to allow the unions in at least a few of the mass production industries—automobiles and rubber — the status of international industrial unions. As for taking any steps toward industrial unionism in general, that was strictly taboo to these gentlemen. They were forced to talk glibly of organization campaigns for the steel, auto and other mass production industries, which they later never even attempted to carry out. Instead of organizing the steel industry, they allowed the Tighe machine to expel those leaders and locals of the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers who wanted the campaign for organization of the steel industry carried out. Instead of organizing the mass production industries they busied themselves after the 1934 A. F. of L. Convention in scrambling to divide among the craft unions whatever organiza-



tion the workers themselves had been able to bring about in the mass production industries.

### The Lewis Bloc at the 1935 Convention

The 1935 Convention in Atlantic City showed that a great movement for industrial unionism had begun to sweep through the ranks of the A. F. of L., a movement of such determination that international union leaders like John L. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers; Charles P. Howard, president of the International Typographical Union (a craft union); Sidney Hillman, president of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers; David Dubinsky, president of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union; Thomas P. McMahon, president of the United Textile Workers; Harvey C. Fremming, president of the Oil Field, Gas Well and Refinery Workers; Max Zaritsky, president of the Cap and Millinery Department, United Hatters, Cap and Millinery Workers Union; Thomas H. Brown, International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, and other higher officials found it a good idea to become leaders of the movement for industrial unionism.

Lewis and Howard led a powerful minority at the Atlantic City Convention in the fight for industrial unionism in the mass production industries. A minority report signed by five members of the Resolutions Committee, including Howard, Dubinsky and Lewis, pointed out that "the time has arrived when common sense demands the organization policies of the American Federation of Labor must be molded to meet present-day needs". Showing that in its 55 years of existence the A. F. of L. has enrolled only about three and a half million members out of thirty-nine million organizable workers, the minority resolution stated that "we refuse to accept existing conditions as evidence that the organization policies of the American Federation of Labor have been successful".

The resolution further stated that "in those industries where the work performed by a majority of the workers is of such

nature that it might fall within the jurisdictional claim of more than one craft union, or no established craft union, it is declared that industrial organization is the only form that will be acceptable to the workers or adequately meet their needs". The resolution went on to show how fears of jurisdictional claims dividing the workers and preventing their unity had prevented organization of these workers to any large extent.

### Why Not Industrial Form for All Unions?

A seriously weak point in the minority resolution was this: "It is not the intention of this declaration of policy to permit the taking away from National or International craft unions of any part of their present membership, or potential membership in establishments where the dominant factor is skilled craftsmen coming under a proper definition of the jurisdiction of such National or International Unions." This means that the curse of division into many craft unions, the curse of scabbery of craft union on craft union in strikes on the railroad, in the building trades, printing trades, etc., would continue, that jurisdictional fights sapping the life of the A. F. of L. would go on as merrily as ever.

### The Committee for Industrial Organization

The minority resolution on industrial unionism was defeated at the craft-dominated A. F. of L. Convention by 18,025 votes against 10,924. About a month after the Convention, in November, 1935, a Committee for Industrial Organization was formed, with Lewis, Howard, Hillman, Dubinsky, McMahon, Fremming, Zaritsky and Brown as its members and John Brophy, of the United Mine Workers, as its Director. It aims to "bring the unorganized into the American Federation of Labor . . . by carrying on education within the Federation for industrial unionism, in order to win over a majority, and by giving advice and help to

groups of newly organized workers in the mass production industry”.

Some of the strong arguments against craft unionism and for industrial unionism made in the speeches and literature of the Committee for Industrial Organization are here given:

“There are forces at work in this country that would wipe out, if they could, the labor movement of America, just as it was wiped out in Germany or just as it was wiped out in Italy.

“There are those of us who believe that the best security against that menace and against that trend and against that tendency is a more comprehensive and more powerful labor movement. We believe that the way should be paved so that those millions of workers who are clamoring for admission into our councils might be made welcome upon a basis that they understand and that they believe is suited to their requirements. And in consequence of that we are assembled in this Convention with the eyes of these millions of workers upon the Convention to decide this momentous question. Methinks that upon this decision of this Convention may rest the future of the American Federation of Labor, because upon this decision will rest the question of whether the American Federation of Labor may be forged into an instrumentality that will render service to all of the workers or whether the American Federation of Labor and its leaders will rest content in that comfortable situation that has prevailed through the years, where they are only required to render service to a paltry three or four or five million of the forty-odd million wage workers of this country, who, after all, want to be union men.” (Speech of John L. Lewis at 1935 A. F. of L. Convention in support of the Minority Resolution on Industrial Unionism.)

“Our own experience in the headwear industry is a striking illustration of the dangers to which our movement is exposed when several organizations claim or hold jurisdiction in the same field. While these jurisdictional claims occupied our attention many thousands of workers remained unorganized. The evolution of our industry compelled us to recognize that our own methods must be changed if we are not to become impotent as an instrument for the protection of the workers employed in the industry. It was only when this fact was recognized that we were able to sacrifice charter rights and surrender conflicting claims, and begin the work of organization, without regard to jurisdiction. As a result, thousands of new members have been enrolled in our organization.” (Letter to William Green by Max Zaritsky, President, Cap and Millinery Dept., United Hatters, Cap and Millinery Workers International Union.)

“The American Federation of Labor has not done anything with

the problem [of organizing the steel workers—*Editor*]. The Executive Council report says that it has done so because there has been turmoil in the Amalgamated Association, an organization of six or eight thousand men. Well, there are four or five hundred thousand outside of it clamoring to join an industrial form of union. We are assured the way is now open for an aggressive campaign of organization in the steel industry. What kind of a campaign—a campaign to organize them in fifty-seven varieties of organizations? You ought to know without my telling you how effective that kind of campaign will be, and with several hundred thousands of members of the United Mine Workers of America who understand the position of interests of that character and who also understand the practical problems of organization in these big industries, they know that the officers of the American Federation of Labor might as well sit down in their easy chairs and twiddle their thumbs and take a nap as to conclude that any results will come from that kind of organization in the iron and steel industry. . . .

“If you go in there with your craft union they will mow you down like the Italian machine guns mow down the Ethiopians in the war now going on in that country; they will mow down, and laugh while they are doing it, and ridicule your lack of business acumen, ridicule your lack of ordinary business sagacity in running your own affairs, because of the caviling in your own councils and the feebleness of your methods.” (Speech of Lewis at the 1935 A. F. of L. Convention.)

#### Feeble Arguments by Craft Union Advocates

These are strong indictments of the great and tragic harm that has been dealt to the American working class by the evils arising out of the antiquated craft-union system, but they do not go far enough, as we shall see a little later.

The answers to these arguments by the enemies of industrial unionism, at the Atlantic City Convention and since, are feeble in their defense of craft unionism. The enemies of industrial unionism among the craft union leaders made no attempt to deny any of the arguments that crafts are disappearing; that mechanization, specialization, mass production in industry as it is today make industrial unionism necessary (as has been shown above); that the trustification of industry has placed enormous power into the hands of the bankers and capitalists who control

the major industries, and that a system of unionism which divides the workers, as does craft unionism, is ineffective against such enormous power. They are not able to deny that craft unionism has been responsible for the scabbery of union against union, for bitter fights over jurisdiction between unions, which has paralyzed the trade unions in face of the sweeping attacks of the employers.

The majority report of the Resolutions Committee at the Atlantic City Convention could only answer the arguments against craft unionism made by the industrial union advocates, by reindorsing the craft unionists' declaration at the San Francisco Convention in 1934 to the effect that "Experience has shown that craft unionism is most effective in protecting the welfare and advancing the interests of the workers. . . ."

Let us see. We have mentioned the gains made by the industrial United Mine Workers in the past two years. Let's see what the craft railroad unions did, in the same period. Wage cuts of \$200,000,000 were made on the railroads and extended two years. The longshoremens on the West Coast, protected and aided by the Maritime Federation, of which they are a member, won a six-hour day through their July, 1934, strike; the railroad unions are still finagling around Washington, trying to get the six-hour day through legislation. In the railroad industry, 800,000 are out of work, while the union leaders stand helpless before the federal coordinator who O.K.'s a plan of consolidating the roads—a plan which will throw tens of thousands more out of work. On the Mobile and Ohio Railroad, the national wage agreement was violated for two years before the grand lodge officials found it necessary to take a strike ballot. Instead of calling a strike they accepted an Emergency Board Ruling allowing the railroad to keep 6½ per cent of all back wages and extending a 3½ per cent cut in addition to the 10 per cent cut prevailing on all roads. On the Chicago and Northwestern, basic changes in working rules, for the worse, were authorized by the Unions. These are just a few

examples of the "effectiveness" of craft unionism in protecting the welfare and advancing the interests of the workers. The fact is that the only definite gain made by the railroad workers in recent years was through the Railroad Retirement Act (pension act), the fight for which was led by a Pension Association which cut across all craft lines and even bucked the opposition of many of the craft union heads.

### The Joke on Frey

The same sort of an argument was raised by Frey, head of the Metal Trades Department, who stated that "if an organization wants to convince me that the form they have adopted is more effective than my own International Molders Union they will have to show me that they have made more progress." He got the answer he deserved in the statement by Philip Murray of the United Miners, who told that among the 100,000 or so steel workers in the Pittsburgh area from which he comes, the Molders Union had not one member. Frey ignored the fact that the Molders Union membership is on record for industrial unionism.

Another feeble argument the craft union leaders gave against industrial unionism was the fact that such industrial organizations as the American Railway Union and the Western Federation of Miners have gone out of existence. But they ignored the fact that the American Railway Union was scabbed out of existence by the A. F. of L. craft union leaders; that these organizations mentioned also fought some of the most valiant battles in American labor history and through those battles won much of what the American workers have today. They tried to pull a fast one by not mentioning the fact that such industrial unions as the United Mine Workers, the United Textile Workers, the semi-industrial needle trades unions are far from having disappeared off the map.

The craft union leaders don't come out with the real reasons

why they want to hang on to the craft union system. They're afraid, for one thing, that by bringing into the A. F. of L. the masses of unorganized, semi-skilled and unskilled workers, and through industrial unionism they will lose control of the unions and will have to give place to more progressive leaders. They're afraid they will lose their fat-salaried positions. They're afraid the nice friendships they have built up with open-shop employers, bankers, and corrupt labor-hating politicians of the Republican and Democratic Parties might be cut off if the unions became unified, fighting organizations. These are the reasons they haven't wanted to organize the millions of unorganized—their interests are not with the working class, but on the bosses' side of the fence. The A. F. of L. Executive Council has even rejected the offer of \$500,000 made by the Committee for Industrial Organization to aid in organizing the steel workers!

There remained only one other answer for the craft union leaders. And that answer they gave when William Green and the Executive Council, unable to meet the strong arguments of the Committee for Industrial Organization, ordered the C.I.O. to disband on pain of severe action. Reports are that the Executive Council will go to the length of splitting the A. F. of L. by expelling those unions which support the Committee. Yes, these so-called labor leaders would split the A. F. of L. rather than adopt forms and methods which would unify the working class by enabling the A. F. of L. to organize the big majority of the unorganized.

### C.I.O. Doesn't Go Far Enough

The arguments of the Lewis industrial union bloc are powerful, and none but the blind or those who wilfully refuse to see the 30,000,000 American workers organized can fail to support them. But arguments like these should be followed to their logical conclusion, which the Committee for Industrial Organization fails

to do. It does not see that the question of industrial unionism affects not only the mass production industries, but every industry, for craft unionism, as we have shown, has paralyzed the trade union movement in all industries. The C.I.O. does not see that without a fighting policy by the A. F. of L. and without trade union democracy, industrial unionism would be weakened as a weapon against the employers' attacks.

The Committee for Industrial Organization weakens its own fight when its members repeatedly state that "The suitability of existing craft unions in the industries where skilled labor is predominant is not called into question" (statement by Sidney Hillman of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers in reply to Green's order for the disbandment of the C.I.O.), or, "there is no attempt or even thought to take advantage of or destroy any satisfactorily existing form of craft organization wherever they have been able to establish themselves in accordance with their policy" (speech of Lewis at Atlantic City Convention).

Those industries in which the craft unions have established themselves have been the scenes of the most vicious scabbery of union against union and the most bitter self-destructing jurisdictional fights between the unions. It is an elementary task of the workers in those unions (like transport, food, building trades, printing trades, on the railroads, etc.) to strive toward industrial unions, through steps toward them in the shape of closely knit federations, partial amalgamations (as is at present desired by the trainmen, switchmen and conductors on the railroads), through joint agreements to expire at the same time, joint strike movements and the like.

### Trade Union Democracy

The Lewis industrial union bloc also as yet hasn't been able to see as far ahead as growing sections of the rank-and-file membership of the A. F. of L. as to the true implications of the fight for

industrial unionism. The members of the Committee for Industrial Organization see the fight only as a question of a change in structure of the A. F. of L., and at that, as a change in structure only for a part of the A. F. of L. (only where the mass production industries are concerned). But they don't see, as the great masses of the rank and file do, that hand in hand with the fight for industrial unionism, goes the need for genuine trade union democracy, which means the holding of conventions regularly by all the unions, freedom of discussion for all members of the unions, the democratic election of all officers, the right of all members of the unions to run for and hold offices, the right of all A. F. of L. members to hold any political belief they desire, the use of democratic methods so that the membership can decide on all questions affecting the unions they sacrifice so much for. It means cleaning house in the unions—doing away with all forms of racketeering and gangsterism which still hold sway in many sections of the labor movement.

The leaders of the industrial union bloc themselves now feel the results of high-handed bossism and lack of trade union democracy in the way in which Green and the Executive Council refuse, because they are unable, to argue the question of industrial unionism in any logical way, but resort instead to the method of autocracy, ordering the Committee for Industrial Organization to disband; resorting to threats, hinting at expulsion of those unions fighting for industrial unionism; sending letters, as Green did, to 1,354 local and federal unions directly affiliated to the A. F. of L., to all state federations and to 730 central labor bodies, ordering them not to have anything to do with the perfectly legal Committee for Industrial Organization. This is the same sort of tactic which is used against Communists and other fighting elements in the trade unions (and which Lewis himself has used repeatedly in the U.M.W.A.) because they speak out for a policy of struggle for the unions.

Because there is no real trade union democracy in the Carpen-

ters Union, for instance, the fighters for industrial unionism saw the spectacle of Hutcheson, the leader of the Carpenters Union, speaking and voting at the 1935 A. F. of L. Convention against industrial unionism in the name of 200,000 carpenters, even though he was speaking and voting against the real wishes of his members.

The union leaders who are at the head of the fight for industrial unionism can see attempts at discussion in favor of industrial unionism being choked off by gag methods in the craft unions. There is little question but that the bulk of the craft union membership would vote overwhelmingly for industrial unionism if given the chance. If the fight for industrial unionism is to be won, it must be carried into every craft union, and the members of the craft unions must be shown a real example of genuine trade union democracy by the industrial unions which make up the Committee for Industrial Organization. If, for example, at the 1936 Convention of the industrial United Mine Workers of America, John L. Lewis had been one of the strongest supporters of the right of the miners to elect their own district officials, what a further strengthening of the fight for industrial unionism that would have meant!

John L. Lewis further weakened the fight for industrial unionism when he nominated the reactionary clique headed by Green back into office at the 1935 A. F. of L. Convention. As long as this clique heads the A. F. of L., every real attempt to organize the unorganized will be seriously hampered, for the Green clique does not want to organize the unorganized.

### A Class Struggle Policy Is Vital

The Committee for Industrial Organization bases its fight for industrial unions, and correctly so, on the fact that this will unify the ranks of the working class and will enable the A. F. of L. to organize the 30,000,000 unorganized workers in the United

States. But these workers, so desperate, are raring to go for real struggle against the employers, as was shown on innumerable occasions in the past few years, when they struck without waiting for the sanction of the leading officials, when these officials refused to give such sanction, or when they struck on numberless occasions spontaneously. The Committee for Industrial Organization must come to these unorganized workers, offering them an A. F. of L. policy of class struggle, a policy of fighting for the workers' demands. By not seeing that the fight for industrial unionism is closely connected with the need of a class struggle policy, the C.I.O. greatly weakens the struggle for industrial unionism.

The masses of workers in the A. F. of L. not only want, through industrial unionism, to make the A. F. of L. a solid, united weapon against the bosses' attacks, but they want an end to the policy of class collaboration, of friendship for the bosses on the part of the A. F. of L. leaders instead of a fighting policy.

#### Industrial Unionism and the Farmer-Labor Party

The Committee for Industrial Organization is talking common sense when it points out that the workers nowadays must face powerful financial interests and powerfully organized employers' organizations, and that this in itself is a strong argument for industrial unionism. But it is not only the powerful organizations of the employers that the unions now face on the picket line. They face terror at the hands of the Republicans and Democratic politicians controlling the government, who are ready at the drop of a hat to send police against strikers, to order out the militia and to declare martial law in order to smash any struggle of the workers.

We see a Republican governor doing this in California; a Democratic governor doing it in Indiana or Kentucky.

We see Democratic and Republican judges handing out injunctions right and left against unions.

We see so-called investigations of rackets, supposed to get after the gangster mobs, turning into attempts to discredit the unions as a step toward crushing them.

We see more terror against strikers under the Roosevelt administration, which Lewis had the U.M.W.A. Convention endorse in 1936, than ever before.

We saw Roosevelt and his Labor Boards hand the auto workers over to the company unions. We saw the Department of Justice under Roosevelt let the Weirton Steel, the Budd Body, and a host of other open shop corporations get away with murder despite decisions of the N.R.A. Labor Boards.

The C.I.O. states it wants to see the unorganized organized, and that's why it favors industrial unionism. The members of the C.I.O. must begin to see that the organization of the unorganized is going to meet the resistance of the Republican and Democratic politicians who use the police force, the militia, and injunctions against the workers. That sort of business wouldn't go on for one second if the workers elected officials of their own to governmental positions, if the workers elected Farmer-Labor officials.

The old-time craft union leaders hob-nob with the Republican and Democratic politicians while the latter order strikers shot down. The leaders of the industrial union bloc must be made to see that by failing to cast overboard their ties with these politicians they hurt the cause of industrial unionism.

The Communists point out that the endorsement of Roosevelt by the U.M.W.A. Convention therefore seriously weakened the fight for industrial unionism. The Communists, supporting to the limit the fight for industrial unionism, will also, in the most comradely manner but firmly, try to do everything in their power to win the miners, and all the trade unions, behind the Farmer-Labor Party, which so many locals, central labor bodies, and even state federations and some internationals, have endorsed.

The Communists back the fight for industrial unionism to the

fullest extent because it is a progressive step for the A. F. of L. But they point out that industrial unionism will be weakened in its effectiveness as a weapon in unifying the workers against the employers unless genuine trade union democracy is established in the A. F. of L., unless a fighting policy of class struggle is adopted, unless the unions rally behind and become the backbone of a Farmer-Labor Party which will elect real representatives of the workers to political office. The "reward-your-friend-punish-your enemy" policy of supporting the candidates of the Republican and Democratic Parties is as much of a relic of the "dear-departed" days of yesteryear as is the craft union idea.

Industrial unionism means more bread on the table of every worker, and more than bread. The well-being of every worker in the country is involved in the fight for industrial unionism. It means better clothing on the children's backs; it means a chance to take the whole family to a show more frequently (and millions of workers never get that chance). It means the organization of the unorganized; it means a successful fight for the 30-hour week; for unemployment insurance. It's vital if company unionism is to be abolished; it's indispensable in order to buck the back-breaking speedup system. Industrial unionism with trade union democracy and a fighting policy would enable the unions to walk up to the employers and talk turkey to them. With the unions solidly united, instead of divided, the employers would sing an entirely different tune when workers ask for wage increases.

If Hitlerism, if any form of fascism is to be stopped in this country, the greatest solidarity and unity of the unions is required. A powerful front of everyone who hates the tyranny of fascism—a might People's Front—is needed for that task, and a strong Farmer-Labor Party, as a step toward that People's Front—a Farmer-Labor Party based first of all on solid, industrial unions.

Fascism crushed the trade unions in Germany, Italy, Austria. The French fascists were hell-bent on crushing the French trade

unions. But in France a mighty People's Front was built up, with the trade unions in the foreground of the People's Front there. In the face of the fascist menace the trade unions in France have been merging themselves into strong industrial unions. The result is that the French fascists have been taking one whipping after another and haven't made the headway they expected. That's the kind of treatment we must dish out to the Liberty League (with Morgan, du Pont, General Motors and other open shoppers behind it). That's the kind of treatment for Hearst and the rest of the would-be Hitlers in this country.

It must here be pointed out that Lewis, if he wants to be regarded as an enemy of fascism, must cease giving the fascists the kind of support he did when he headed a delegation to Roosevelt to protest the importing of Soviet coal. There's nothing the fascists like better than any kind of attack on the Soviet Union which is the greatest enemy of fascism. Nor does Lewis express the will of the U.M.W.A. membership in such actions. Time and again U.M.W.A. locals have submitted resolutions for recognition, and defense of the Soviet Union.

### The Next Steps

The Communist Party has always stood four-square behind the building of the trade unions. Because it is for class struggle policies, the Communist Party has faced the cry of "splitting" just as the Committee for Industrial Organization now does because the C.I.O. is for organizing the unorganized. The Communist Party urges all workers, whether they belong to craft or industrial unions, to carry through the following tasks:

1. To see to it that there be a storm of resolutions from every local union, city or county central labor council, district trades council, state federation of the A. F. of L. endorsing the policy of industrial unionism, supporting the Committee for Industrial Organization in its fight; protesting the order of the Executive

Council to split up the radio workers, auto workers, and other industrial unions; protesting the order for the disbandment of the Committee for Industrial Organization. They should protest and fight against the expulsion of 13,000 seamen on the Pacific Coast, who were the staunchest fighters for union solidarity.

2. The members of the craft unions are urged to lift their voices in the demand for a democratically conducted referendum, or special convention, in each craft union, to decide on these questions of industrial unionism. The members of the craft unions are urged to initiate a movement for more solidly uniting the craft unions in each industry by means of forming tightly-knit federations which will work closely together against the common enemy in each industry—the strongly organized employers. Such federations should be modeled after the Pacific Coast Maritime Federation, which unites all marine crafts in common action against the employers, and not like the so-called railroad federations, which still permit the inter-union disputes to go on unchecked. The craft union members should fight for agreements of all unions in the industry which expire at one time, instead of on different dates, so that all crafts can strike together and not have to scab on one another. In some cases, as with the conductors, trainmen, and switchmen on the railroads, the movement can take the shape of a campaign for partial amalgamation. These are the necessary steps toward the formation of industrial unions in industries like the building trades, metal, railroad, marine, needle trades, transport and food trades, etc.

3. Steps should be taken to initiate and to give full organizational, financial, and moral support for a campaign to organize the unorganized in the steel, auto, radio, metal mining, rubber, chemical, electrical apparatus, agricultural machinery, agricultural and all other unorganized industries, giving special attention to the need for winning the Negro workers into the trade unions, and abolishing all forms of discrimination against Negroes in the trade unions.

4. Steps should be taken to organize the resistance of the workers against wage cuts, for wage increases and for maximum support to every strike of workers for better conditions. This means also a fight for a policy of class struggle in all trade unions.

5. The fight for trade union democracy must be redoubled, now as never before, so that the fight for industrial unionism can be more effective, and the unorganized more easily brought into the trade unions.

6. Maximum support must be given to the struggle of the unemployed for adequate relief and for union wages on all relief jobs. The unions must join in the fight for social and unemployment insurance, supporting the Frazier-Lundeen Bill, thus developing the unity of the employed and unemployed, and strengthening the unity of the working class against the attacks of the bosses.

7. A solid front against the fascist menace in this country, a menace which aims at reducing the workers' wages and conditions to the coolie level, at crushing the trade unions completely. The swinging of all unions behind the Farmer-Labor Party, an independent working class party, participated in by all sections of the masses of the people who want to preserve and strengthen the democratic rights in our country.



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