

Revised Edition

Socialist Industrial Unionism: *The Workers' Power*

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Foreword

Shortly after the Constitutional Convention of 1787 there appeared a series of essays, or pamphlets, in which the newly adopted Constitution of the United States was defended against the attacks which were being directed against it by various elements, notably by those opposing the republican form of government in favor of the monarchical form, or one resembling it; but also by those opposing the Constitution as not being sufficiently democratic, or as giving too much weight to property and not enough consideration to those without property. Ostensibly written by one person, all being signed “Publius,” these essays came in fact from the able pens of John Jay, James Madison and Alexander Hamilton. These essays (later known collectively as the Federalist papers, or *The Federalist*, for short) were brilliant, learned and extraordinarily persuasive, and represented the clearest and soundest thinking of the political scientists of the day. The oneness of thought expressed by otherwise divergent personalities is striking. They were undoubtedly instrumental in securing the ratification of the Constitution by the majority of the states. It is to be observed, however, that this “debate,” this “pamphleteering,” *followed* the organizing of the republican form of government in the United States — it was an *ex post facto* justification for establishing the bourgeois democratic political State in America.

We are now facing another revolution in America, the revolution which will transform this country from a Political State based on private property into an Industrial Commonwealth. For reasons made clear in the body of this pamphlet, the “defense” of the “Constitution” and the organic composition of the Industrial Commonwealth — this “pamphleteering,” or the issuing of “essays” corresponding to the “Federalist papers” — must today *precede*, rather than *follow*, the organizing of the new form of society, to wit, the Industrial Union Republic.

This pamphlet is in the nature of a “Federalist paper” — that is, it is one of many such “papers” written by the “founding fathers” of today, in explanation and justification of the Industrial Union Republic which is destined to supersede the present capitalist (political) form of society. It is an able defense and a lucid presentation of the principles and program of action underlying the Industrial

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Union idea of government, and withal a vigorous attack on the present outworn political society and the institutions (obviously equally useless and outworn) which this political society has projected, with particular reference to the reactionary pro-capitalist unions such as the AFL, CIO, and so forth. This pamphlet, and the many others of similar character published by the Socialist Labor Party, likewise represent the clearest and soundest political and economic thinking of this modern revolutionary period, and though these neo-“Federalist papers” proceed from different pens they, too, reflect that same oneness of thought which characterized the original Federalist papers. And like these, they embody the spirit of the age and respond scientifically to the imperative need of the times. Studied with care, this well written pamphlet will help to guide and direct the workers into the right channel, and aid them in steering clear of the multitudinous pitfalls with which the road is filled that all revolutionary classes must travel, and particularly the modern revolutionary class, the wage working class.

Accordingly, this pamphlet is far more than a mere dissertation on organizing the workers in unions for self-protection or for advancement within their present class boundaries. It presents the question of reconstituting society on new principles, and upon a completely new basis, as an answer to the problem posed by the unmistakable breakdown of our present political society, or the capitalist system of wage slavery. This proposed reconstitution of society on an occupational or industrial basis was originally projected by the American social scientist, Daniel De Leon, who, as long ago as 1904, outlined the structure and basis of the new society. Early in 1905 Daniel De Leon said: “What the several States are to the present Nation, the several Industries are to the Industrial, the Socialist, or Cooperative Republic — with the difference that, whereas the boundary lines of the States are arbitrarily geographic, the boundary lines of the Industries are dictated by the output [i.e., by the particular product of a given industry].” And he summed up the matter in these terse words: “Industrial Unionism is the Socialist Republic in the making; and the goal once reached, the Industrial Union is the Socialist Republic in operation.”

This conception of future society constitutes a flash of genius. It places the conceiver in the “hall of fame” of the immortals of the race.

This brief, yet carefully worked-out presentation of the program and principles

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of Socialist Revolutionary Unionism should have a wide circulation. Its claims should be as earnestly debated wherever workers gather as the Federalist papers of 150 years ago were debated by the serious citizens of that day. May its hoped-for mass circulation speed the day of working class emancipation, and of humanity's deliverance from all the evils born of a social system now rendered useless, yes, harmful, and utterly outmoded and outworn.

— *Arnold Petersen*

December 18, 1940

Amended Feb., 1974

SOCIALIST INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM: THE WORKERS' POWER

By Eric Hass

1. Twentieth Century Democracy

“WHEN A MAN does not know what harbor he is making for,” said the Roman poet Seneca, “no wind is the right wind.”

What harbor are we, the workers of America, making for? What kind of a social system do we want? Until we have a clear conception of where we are going, we cannot know how to get there and “no wind is the right wind.”

On these points, however, we can all agree: We want the abolition of poverty, unemployment and war; we do *not* want totalitarianism in any form, be it Stalinist, Nazi, Fascist, Franco or a domestic adaptation of any of these European models.

We want a world freed of the war-breeding struggle for capitalist markets, a world in which goods are produced for the use of the producers and not for sale with a view to profit. We want a world in which machinery will become a blessing to multiply our output and give us, the producers, leisure in which to study, travel and enjoy the product of our labor. We want to live full lives relieved forever of want and fear of want.

He who says such a world is a dream is himself a dreamer. Throughout the ages man has struggled to learn how to produce an abundance. At last that problem has been solved. All the marvelous *material* requirements to make this world a veritable paradise are here! This fact cannot be denied. But between the hell on earth of today and the paradise of tomorrow stands a predatory social system based on private ownership of the means of production and the exploitation, by a few owners, of the useful producers.

It is self-evident that we cannot produce for use and enjoy the product of our

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labor until we own the means of production. As we run the industries socially we must *own them socially and run them democratically*.

The present form of political government was suited to the material conditions prevailing in this nation 150 years ago. Then the majority of citizens either owned, or could easily acquire, property.¹ A government established to protect property under such conditions represented the interests of the majority. When a Congressman, for example, voted for a measure which would make property more secure, he expressed the wishes of the majority of his constituents. Yet even at that early date, farsighted men, capable of peering into the future, foresaw the time when the number of owners would diminish and the non-owners increase.

James Madison, the Father of the Constitution, declared (as quoted by Daniel De Leon) that the time would come when “wealth will be concentrated in the hands of a few,” and that it would be necessary “to readjust the laws of the nation to the changed conditions.” Today Madison’s prophecy has been fulfilled with a vengeance. A handful of corporate empires control America’s economic life. “If nothing is done to check the growth in concentration,” the Federal Trade Commission told Congress, July 25, 1948, “either the giant corporations will ultimately take over the country or the government will be impelled to step in and impose some form of direct regulation.” (New York *Daily News*, July 26, 1948.)²

Today when a Congressman supports a measure in the interest of property-owners, he supports the interests of a *minority* and, inasmuch as property interests and the interests of the propertiless workers are decidedly antagonistic, his action

¹ According to Bulletin 604 of the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, craftsmen were given land by many communities in colonial times if they would “afford citizens the use of their trade.” Typical of numerous examples cited is the following: “As early as 1635 Lynn voted to admit a landless blacksmith, and later granted him 20 acres of land, thus keeping both the blacksmith and the letter of the law requiring that residents be landholders.”

² “There is no question about the general trend toward control of the economic life of the United States by a relatively small number of managers of great corporations...The managements of such corporations are responsive largely to their own self-interest and the profit interest of the security holders and the banking interests financing their companies.” (Quoted from a study prepared by the staff of the monopoly subcommittee of the House Committee on Small Business, 79th Congress.)

As for ownership of America’s corporate wealth, the census of shareholders conducted in 1952 by the Brookings Institution for the New York Stock Exchange completely exploded the capitalist claim that share ownership was widely diffused. The census showed that about one-fourth of one per cent of the population, or 394,188 big capitalist shareholders, owned about 58 per cent of all the outstanding common stock in U.S. corporations.

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injures the majority! The political State is, in fact, nothing more or less than the executive committee of the capitalist class, responsive to its will and its interests.

WHY THE STATE IS OUTMODED

A hundred and fifty years ago production was simple. Nearly all communities were more or less self-contained, i.e., they produced flour, leather, cloth, lumber, and most of the things they consumed, locally. Geographical representation — representation from states and Congressional areas — harmonized with the economic as well as the social needs of the people.

Today our productive mechanism is as complex as it is vast. It cuts across all arbitrary boundary lines and can no more be controlled and directed by Congressmen elected from Congressional areas than you can drive a streamliner with a bull whip. To direct this huge and complicated industrial machine under a collectivist society requires an *Industrial Form of Administration*. Industrial representation must take the place of geographic representation, and an Industrial Congress must replace the present outworn political State.

This is no arbitrary assumption on the part of the Socialist Labor Party. It is a goal made mandatory by (1) modern mass production methods and (2) the insoluble problems arising from private ownership of industry. The functions of this government are as simple as the productive machinery is complex. They are to coordinate and direct production for the benefit of all. In short, the government of the future Socialist society will be an *administration of things* instead of a government over people. It will be a Central Directing Authority of production. As Daniel De Leon, the celebrated American Socialist pathfinder, summed up its functions:

“The Socialist, in the brilliant simile of Karl Marx, sees that a lone fiddler in his room needs no director; he can rap himself to order, with his fiddle to his shoulder, and start his dancing tune, and stop whenever he likes. But just as soon as you have an orchestra, you must also have an orchestra director — a central directing authority. If you don't you may have a Salvation Army pow-wow; you may have a Louisiana Negro breakdown; you may have an orthodox Jewish synagogue, where every man sings in whatever key he likes, but you won't have harmony — impossible.

“It needs the central directing authority of the orchestra master to rap

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all the players to order at a given moment; to point out when they shall begin; when to have these play louder, when to have those play softer; when to put in this instrument, when to silence that; to regulate the time of all and preserve the accord. The orchestra director is not an oppressor, nor is his baton an insignia of tyranny; he is not there to bully anybody; he is as necessary or important as any or all of the members of the orchestra.

“Our system of production is in the nature of an orchestra. No one man, no one town, no one State, can be said any longer to be independent of the other; the whole people of the United States, every individual therein, is dependent and interdependent upon all the others. The nature of the machinery of production; the subdivision of labor, which aids cooperation, and which cooperation fosters, and which is necessary to the plentifulness of production that civilization requires, compel a harmonious working together of all departments of labor, and thence compel the establishment of a Central Directing Authority, of an Orchestra Director, so to speak, of the [production] orchestra of the Cooperative Commonwealth.” (*Reform or Revolution*)

INDUSTRIAL UNION GOVERNMENT

Industrial Government is an entirely new conception of administration. It implies an entirely new basis of representation. Instead of Senators and Representatives from States and Congressional areas, it requires industrial constituencies and functional representatives. For example, instead of Senators from New York, Ohio, Nebraska, etc., we shall elect to an Industrial Congress representatives from the steel industry, automobile industry, textile industry, and all the other industries of the land.

The qualifications of the representatives elected to the Industrial Congress will be vastly different from the “qualifications” of the present rhetoricians in Congress. The greatest asset of these politicians is their “lie-ability.” Wretched though the pun is, it expresses a truth only too palpable. The qualifications of those who will serve in the Socialist Industrial Union Congress, on the other hand, will be (aside from a devotion to duty) a knowledge and understanding of the processes of production and distribution and an ability to coordinate and direct these processes. On the basis of reports from local and national industrial councils, they will decide such questions as: how many pairs of shoes will we, the people, need next year; how many tons of coal; how many ton-miles of railroad transportation. They will ascertain the existing capacity to produce these things, and, if necessary, they will see that the capacity is

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increased. They will coordinate research and facilitate the adoption of new techniques as these are developed, especially the techniques of automation which, under Socialism will be a blessing instead of a curse. The questions are, of course, many and varied, but they are infinitely simpler than the questions which arise in a class-divided society.

We have referred to *industrial* representation. It is more correct to say *Industrial Union* representation, for the Socialist Industrial Union forms the basis of the Industrial Union Administration. The workers who operate the industries today under capitalism are the workers who will operate them tomorrow under Socialism — plus, of course, those millions who are ruthlessly thrown upon the capitalist industrial scrap heap, that is, the unemployed and so-called “unemployables.” They will vote in their union, elect their foremen, administrative committees and representatives to local, departmental and national councils, and finally to the All-Industrial Union Congress. They, the organized workers in the factories, mills, mines, stores, farms, ships and railroads of the land, will constitute the basis of a Workers' Democracy — the most complete democracy ever achieved since the dissolution of the primitive gens.³

THE STRUCTURE OF SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT

We do not presume to make a rigid blueprint of the Industrial Union Administration or lay down arbitrary lines of demarcation. But the general outline is clearly defined in the *mode of production itself*. All industries will be represented on the All-Industrial Union Congress which replaces the political Congress. Industries producing closely related goods or services will be grouped into departments, such as mining, food processing, transportation, etc. National Industrial Union Councils will direct and supervise production within each industry on a national scale, while the Industrial Union Congress will coordinate production and distribution in all lines.

The **charts** in the centerfold depict the line of representation of the Socialist Industrial Union using the auto industry as an example. However, the principle involved is applicable to any industry. Here, we illustrate the point by citing the

³ The “gens” or “clan” was a unit in so-called tribal society. It was a blood-related group claiming a common ancestor.

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example of the baking industry (which would be integrated in the Food Processing and Supply Department).

Modern bakeries are subdivided into many departments, such as delivery, bread, confectionery, mixing, etc., in each of which it is essential that the workers be organized to manage those affairs which are their exclusive domain. For example, workers driving trucks are not qualified to vote for the foreman of the mixing department, any more than the dough-mixers are equipped to select the best truck foreman. Each of these subdivisions we call a *shop unit*.

The workers, voting in their shop units, elect their foremen and representatives to their plant union. The latter supervise and coordinate production throughout the plant, order the materials, fix schedules, etc.

Every bakery in each locality is directly represented in the Local Industrial Union whose function is to coordinate production in the industry locally, ordering supplies, allocating production, assigning territory, etc.

The representation to the National Baking Industrial Union is also direct, these representatives being elected by the direct vote of the workers in the bakeries in each locality. And in every instance these democratically elected representatives are directly responsible to those who elected them. They can be recalled and replaced whenever a majority of their industrial constituents so decide.

The national industrial unions' duties are manifold, yet simple. Manifold because it must direct a vast industry with hundreds of units; simple because its problems are purely production problems. It will have research divisions to develop new techniques, testing laboratories and the facilities with which to inform every local unit of such methods as are devised for either improving the product or reducing the expenditure of labor time.

Here is obviously the logical form of social organization for a highly developed industrial nation. It is the one form of organization which achieves the ultimate in both democracy and efficiency. It is the form of administration only vaguely described by Marx and Engels, but clearly defined by the great American Marxist scholar Daniel De Leon.

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Here is the “harbor” the American working class must make for, if it is to escape the imminent danger of shipwreck on the reefs of industrial feudalism so familiar to workers in European fascist nations. Once a conception of this goal is clear in the mind’s eye, the means to get there are easily grasped. Until this conception is achieved, “no wind is the right wind.”

2. The Road to Peace

THE UNIONS should be a powerful force for peace. They should be centers of working-class education. They should reveal to their members the real, underlying cause of war. They should expose the imperialist and commercial interests that are ever found lurking behind the facade of pretended ideals. Through education in the facts of capitalist life, they should acquaint their millions of dues-payers with the class role of militarism and refresh in them the civilized American tradition of antimilitarism that began when this nation was founded. In short, through the mass enlightenment of the workers, the unions should take out of the hands of the capitalists and their executive committee, the State, the exclusive power they now possess to beat the war drums, create war fever and, finally, to plunge the nation into war's fiery furnace.

Especially in this age of nuclear warfare, when the ruling class has the power to start a war of suicidal dimensions, should the workers' economic organizations be a source of light on this fateful subject.

THE FAKERS' RECORD IN WORLD WAR I

That the present unions fail egregiously in this role is a matter of record. Instead of enlightening their members they have played the part of bellwethers leading their victims to the capitalist shambles. Turn back the pages of history to the first World War. Note how, in the early years of that war, the labor leaders conformed to the dominant spirit of pacifism. Then note how their "pacifism" declined in direct ratio to the rise of artificially inspired war fever. Soon a cautious note endorsing "preparedness" crept into their speeches. Finally, the comedy was ended and they screamed for war at the head of the pack. As the late William Green, long president of the AFL, affirmed in his book, *Labor and Democracy*:

"Whatever our attempts had been to keep this country out of war, when war was declared we were prepared to cooperate in every way with the government to win the war."

And cooperate they did — with a vengeance! With their cooperation wages were anchored at the pre-war level while the cost of living soared and hours lengthened to the breaking point! Rank-and-file protests were answered with chauvinistic

abuse. The fakers hailed with unqualified approval the government's drastic attack on civil liberties. "We all had to shift from freedom of action, thought, and speech that belongs only to peace over to circumspection and control made imperative by war dangers," wrote the charlatan and labor faker, Samuel Gompers, in his autobiography. In short, none were more zealous in their "patriotism," none more vicious in subduing labor, than the crew of labor skates who, a few years earlier, had posed before the workers as paladins of peace!

Nor were the American labor fakers unique in this treachery. The sordid performance was repeated in each of the belligerent nations. The "patriotism" of British labor leaders and the resultant grinding down of the British wage slaves are well known. In Germany the Social Democratic union leaders "opposed" the war before its outbreak with vapid declarations, but with the explosion in August, 1914, their tongues came out of their cheeks. Thenceforth they repeated all the philistine shibboleths of their masters. In a press communiqué, November, 1915, the Imperial Government declared:

"The free trade unions have proved a valuable aid...and almost indispensable to the economic and communal life of the nation. . . . The gratitude of the nation [German plunderbund] for the patriotic efforts of organized labor [read "labor fakers"] has been frequently expressed by responsible authorities. . . ."

Thus were the workers of the various countries on both sides betrayed by their once "pacifist" union leaders and hurled into the inferno of war!

FAKER TREACHERY IN WORLD WAR II

The deceptions and betrayals were repeated in World War II. In the early years of that war the labor fakers pretended to go along with the prevailing antiwar spirit while, simultaneously, cooperating in war preparations disguised as "defense." Not all of them were circumspect in their utterances on "labor's" attitude toward war. Thus at the first convention of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) in November, 1938, ten months before Hitler's army invaded Poland, John L. Lewis not only suggested the possibility of war but implied rhetorically that the CIO would cooperate in defense of capitalist property. He said:

"If that day [day of war] comes, who is going to sustain the United

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States of America? Who is going to man the industries? Who is going to send its young men to military ranks to engage in war? Labor — labor! Who is going to protect the institutions of this country, those that are meritorious? Labor! *Who is going to protect the titles to property and great wealth down through the generations in America? Labor!*

“Who is going to do the suffering and dying in the future but the sons and daughters of the workers of this country? The workers of this country will never make anything out of war,⁴ they merely work and sweat and fight and die. Someone else takes the profits. Who took the profits in the last war? Not labor. *And if war comes the United States needs the cooperation of the millions and millions of workers that are members of the CIO.*” (Emphasis ours.)

Lewis was directing his words to the CIO delegates, but he was really speaking to the employers. He was reminding them that if they expected the cooperation of the labor fakers in mobilizing labor to fight a war for the capitalists' markets⁵ they would have to get something in exchange, and specifically so-called union-shop contracts that would give them a club to brandish over the rank and file.

As the record shows, the labor fakers got their reward. Some of them were appointed to the War Labor Board where they functioned cheek-by-jowl with capitalist appointees, and so-called “public” appointees — who, in fact, were disguised agents of the capitalist class. The WLB had two jobs. One was to keep the workers' demands wrapped up in red tape and otherwise give labor the runaround. The other was to protect the labor fakers against the wrath of the rank and file by awarding them maintenance-of-membership (under which union members had to remain members for the duration of the contract) or the union shop (under which all employees had to enroll in the union).⁶

⁴ Lewis should know. He was party to the shameful “tripartite” agreement of 1917 under which the miners were shackled with a “no-strike” clause while their wages were frozen.

⁵ “Why, my fellow citizens, is there any man here, or any woman — let me say, is there any child here — who does not know that the seed of war in the modern world is industrial and commercial rivalry? . . . This war, in its inception, was a commercial and industrial war. It was not a political war. . . . The real reason that the war we have just finished took place was that Germany was afraid her commercial rivals were going to get the better of her, and the reason why some nations went into the war against Germany was that they thought Germany would get the commercial advantage of them. The seed of the jealousy, the seed of the deep-seated hatred, was hot successful commercial and industrial rivalry.” — President Woodrow Wilson, in a speech in St. Louis, Mo., Sept. 5, 1919.

⁶ “In the North American Aviation Case, the officers of the national union had not objected to the use of troops to break the strike. The indirect effect has been greatly to weaken the local union. There was an urgent need for reviving the union in order to insure stable labor relations, and the quarrel between local and national leadership made it doubtful whether the national leadership

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Thus throughout World War II the labor fakers cooperated to hold wages down and to choke off rank-and-file protests. Indeed, the Roosevelt labor policy of using the unions as the chief agency in disciplining the workers — and protecting the union leaders against losses of dues-payers — was a tacit recognition of the existing distinction between union members and their leaders. Charles E. Wyzanski Jr., a Felix Frankfurter protege and a member of the WLB panel that handled the North American Aviation Case (in which troops were used against the strikers), said in justification of the maintenance-of-membership award that he thought the union leadership was entitled to “some guarantee of membership” in order to “re-establish the organization the undermining of which it [the union leadership] had permitted in the interests of national defense.”⁷

Aside from the labor fakers' treachery, it would be a grave mistake to imagine that the present unions could ever become a real defender of peace. Unions that accept capitalism as a finality cannot act as an effective obstacle to war if only because this system elevates war to an economic principle. Capitalism means war! Capitalism implies international struggle for markets, sources of raw materials and spheres of influence. In its early phases the struggle is a commercial war and a jockeying for strategic advantage, but as it sharpens it ever turns to trial by arms. “There was never a war at arms that was not merely the extension of a preceding war of commerce grown fiercer until the weapons of commerce seemed no longer sufficiently deadly,” said the late Gen. Hugh Johnson in a 1935 radio address for World Peace Ways. Hence, while it is true, as John L. Lewis said, that the workers “fight and die,” they do so in the interests of their capitalist exploiters. For, in the final analysis, modern wars are the inevitable result of the fierce economic competition inherent in class-divided society. Unionism that accepts capitalism and the wage system thus upholds the cause of war.

Just to lock a switch, it should be emphasized here that behind the facade of clashing ideologies, the present East-West struggle is basically a contest for the economic domination of the world. Moreover, the capitalists and their statesmen and military leaders know this. The following official U.S. Navy document, prepared by the Office of Naval Intelligence and distributed to members of the U.S. Senate

could restore it without the assistance of the maintenance-of-membership clause.” — Bulletin No. 714, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, p. 27.

⁷ *Labor Relations Reporter*, Jan. 19, 1942, p. 545.

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Committee on Armed Services in 1947, is candid testimony on this score:

“Realistically, all wars have been for economic reasons. To make them politically and socially palatable, ideological issues have always been invoked.

“Any possible future war will undoubtedly conform to historical precedent.

“Present difference with our world neighbors [Soviet Russia and satellites], now in the diplomatic stage, we hope can be kept there. But, after all, war is merely diplomacy by force of arms.”⁸

THERE CAN BE NO PEACE WITHOUT SOCIALISM

While hypocrisy reigns supreme in the councils of the AFL-CIO leaders, with war being promoted under the pretense of peace, “it is on the other side of the line, in the Socialist camp only, that peace is a cardinal principle, a religion, a goal earnestly, sincerely and devoutly pursued with all the intelligence at the command of the race.” (De Leon) Instead of making empty declarations, Socialism strives to implement its hope for peace by organizing the economic power of the working class; by creating the Socialist Industrial Union which alone can abolish the cause of war; and by working ceaselessly for a world in which competition will be replaced by cooperation.

The hope of peace lies in unionism that unites the working class around its class interests. Such unionism aims beyond a *temporary* truce or tenuous capitalist peace to a *permanent* peace; beyond the dog-eat-dog jungle of capitalism with its law of claw and fang, to the Industrial Republic of Labor raised on the principles of cooperation among the toilers of all lands and plenty for all. Socialist Industrial Unionism alone is capable of bringing about the reconstruction of society on the higher, humane plane of international amity. There is nothing in the world so crucially important, so indispensably vital, as the speedy consolidation of labor’s industrial might!

He who declaims for peace, who would spare the generations that follow the awful trials of war, yet who gives his allegiance to unionism based on perpetuation

⁸ *Congressional Record*, April 15, 1947, p. 3496.

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of the wage system, supports the cause of war! Earnestness and sincerity do not alter this irrefutable conclusion. Therefore, if *you* be genuinely devoted to peace and an implacable foe to war:

“Organize the working class integrally-industrially. Only then can the revolt against militarism result in a Waterloo to the class of sponge instead of a massacre to the class of labor.” (De Leon)

3. Nemesis to Unemployment

ONE DAY a delegation called on Abraham Lincoln and demanded that he issue an immediate proclamation of emancipation. The moment was not propitious. Lincoln knew he couldn't enforce the proclamation after he had issued it. So he asked the delegation this curious question:

“How many legs should a sheep have if you called a tail a leg?”

“Five,” they answered.

“You are mistaken,” said Lincoln, “for calling a tail a leg doesn't make it so.”

As easily as Lincoln's visitors were led to call a “tail” a “leg,” many workers have been led to call unions like the United Auto Workers, United Mine Workers and United Steelworkers, “industrial unions.” The same workers, without hesitation, correctly designate the Teamsters Union, Carpenters Union and Bricklayers Union as “craft unions.” Yet, what difference is there between these unions? Only this: There is a superficial difference in *form*.

Otherwise, in principle, and in goal, there are no essential differences. Both believe the poverty- and war-breeding capitalist system is here to stay. Both want it to stay. Both proclaim the principle of “brotherhood between capital and labor.” Both contend that the way to realize this idyllic relationship — and secure the well-being of workers — is through collective bargaining. As John L. Lewis expressed it when he headed the then independent CIO:

“It is the opinion of the CIO that signed contracts are the essence of mutual good will between unions and employers expressed in collective bargaining.”

The late William Green, speaking for the AFL, expressed the same view, saying:

“It is the opinion of the American Federation of Labor that stability of industrial relations in employment calls for the negotiation of wage agreements through collective bargaining.”

In so far as form is concerned, the so-called “industrial” unions supposedly

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organize workers (“divide” is the apter word) more or less along *plant* (“vertical”) lines, while other unions stick strictly to *craft* (“horizontal”) lines. Still others — the machinists’ and teamsters’ unions for example — care little for form and grab dues-payers where they can, signing plant agreements here, craft agreements there.

However, the absurdity of the claims of the UAW, UMW, USA, and similar unions to being “industrial” becomes apparent when one realizes that there is not a single plant union belonging to these organizations that embraces every worker in the plant. Such workers as bookkeepers, stenographers, file clerks, stock clerks, maintenance men, designers, night watchmen, etc., are all or in part excluded from such “plant” unions.

For example, in the September, 1952, issue of *Reader's Digest*, Charles E. Wilson stated that in 1951 General Motors had nearly 100 union contracts with 17 unions covering more than 300,00 employees, thus giving the lie to the UAW's claim that the automobile workers were organized into “industrial unions.” Not only were 17 different unions involved, but each of these unions divided the workers into so many categories that a total of nearly 100 contracts were needed to cover them all. And unquestionably there were hundreds, perhaps thousands, of additional General Motors employees, who belonged to no union at all. Though the figures may vary, the same conditions still exist in all essential respects today.

The absurdity of the claim of such unions to being “industrial” becomes even more apparent when all the basic principles of bona fide industrial unionism are understood.

BONA FIDE INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM

Industrial Unionism is known today as *Socialist Industrial Unionism* in order that it may not be confused with its caricature, for Socialist Industrial Unionism and the fake industrial unionism are as different as the nutritious mushroom and the poisonous toadstool. Socialist Industrial Unionism is a weapon with which the workers can free themselves from the humiliation and degradation of wage slavery and build a safe, sane and decent world. Fake industrial unionism is an instrument with which the capitalists, aided by their labor lieutenants, keep the workers on the capitalist treadmill, piling up fantastic concentrations of wealth and economic

power in capitalist hands while the useful producers themselves exist either in poverty or within weeks of its ragged edge. How the present unions — “industrial” and craft — fill this treacherous role may be understood in the light of their approach to but one of the problems besetting the working class, the problem of unemployment or job security.

Children may quarrel over facts; mature men and women accept them. And the salient facts relating to the problem of unemployment that the working class must accept and face are these:

1. Today the capitalist class, a small minority of the population, has a monopoly of the means of social production. As the owners of the nation’s factories, mills, mines, railroads, land, etc., the power of capitalists over these properties is despotic. When business is dull, they can curtail production or close plants altogether regardless of the suffering of laid-off workers. Or they can, whenever their profit interests dictate, displace workers with machines. Or move their operations to distant cities leaving their workers stranded. Despite the vaunted growth of the job-trust unions, in all essential respects the economic power of the capitalists is still absolute.

2. The unions accept the capitalists’ economic despotism as permanent and everlasting. “We believe in the free enterprise [capitalist] system, and we shall defend it,” said Walter Reuther, boss of the UAW.⁹ Indeed, the position of the AFL-CIO on capitalism and private property *is identical with that of the National Association of Manufacturers*. As the AFL Executive Council summed it up:

“The AFL is committed to the principle of private ownership, private initiative and the protection of private property. The right to own and manage property must be conceded and safeguarded.”¹⁰

Before the first convention of the CIO, when many workers wishfully imagined the CIO was going to be different from the reactionary, faker-ridden AFL, John L. Lewis said the new union “is dedicated to the proposition of the right of investors to have a profit in their investment . . .” As Mr. Reuther has affirmed, it still is.

⁹ *The Challenge of Automation*, Public Affairs Press, Washington, D.C.

¹⁰ *Manifesto to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce*, May 4, 1938.

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MASS JOB-DESTRUCTION VIA AUTOMATION

All this is comforting indeed to the employers, but what about the workers? Do the workers' interests come before, or after, those of the capitalist investors in the eyes of the union leaders? Why *after*, of course! Unions "dedicated to the proposition of the right of investors to have a profit on their investment" accept as a matter of course the capitalists' despotic power to close down when business is bad, and to "cut costs" by introducing labor-*displacing* machines. Indeed, employers who once fought unions now depend upon them to ride herd on the rank and file, forcing the workers to accept job-destroying technology. Especially is this true since the introduction of automation. More and more unions are following the example of the UAW in accepting an annual "improvement factor" wage increase of three or four cents an hour in exchange for which they choke off all rank-and-file protest.

Automation is spreading through America's offices and factories with phenomenal speed. Before it is over, says MIT's Prof. Norbert Wiener in his book, *The Human Use of Human Beings*, it "will produce an unemployment situation, in comparison with which . . . the depression of the thirties will seem a pleasant joke." Through the "feedback" principle, jobs, once believed completely safe from mechanization, are being wiped out by the thousands. Meanwhile, smaller capitalists, unable to invest tens or hundreds of millions in automation equipment, are being forced to the wall. Their employees are also victims of automation which, under capitalist auspices, spells only suffering and insecurity for the workers.

UNION LEADERS BANKRUPT

Do the labor fakers understand what is happening? They do. Take Walter Reuther (who says he will "defend" capitalism) for example. He told the April, 1955, Conference on Automation, about industry after industry in which a handful of workers, equipped with automatic facilities, are turning out work formerly requiring the labor of hundreds. And he disposed of the specious capitalist argument that these displaced workers would be hired to make machines. He said:

"James Carey [boss of the International Union of Electrical Workers] points out that today two workers can assemble a thousand radios which required 200 workers before. Some people say that the 198 displaced fellows will be employed in making the machine that laid them off. Now that sounds good, but it isn't true.

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“When the General Motors Corporation has a billion dollar expansion program, of which 98 per cent is not expansion but modernization in terms of automation and the new technology, does anyone believe that this firm is going to find a way to displace workers directly involved in the production of cars and then turn around and pull them back into the production process in terms of indirect labor in making the machines?”

“You can say a lot of things about General Motors, but it is not known as being a great philanthropic organization.”¹¹

In fact, Reuther knows that all the capitalist arguments about automation are just as phony as this one, that they are soothing-syrup lies meant to allay the workers' job jitters. But instead of telling the workers the truth and preparing them to take the necessary action, he diverts them with such palliatives as “broader seniority,” “separation pay,” “training and retraining at employer expense,” and the “guaranteed annual wage” — demands that duck the real problem of mass displacement, and merely try to soften the blow.

The woeful inadequacy of these measures, none of which protects the working *class* from the dire effects of automation however much they may give temporary surcease to individual workers, is shown by the effect of the first so-called GAW contracts in *speeding the adoption of automation equipment*. Thus, shortly after the UAW signed pacts with Ford and GM embodying GAW (or, as Ford's John Bugas, called it, “supplementary unemployment benefit plan”), the *Wall Street Journal* (June 13, 1955) bluntly forecast a spurt in the sale of automation equipment *as a result of the union's “victories.”* It said “the most probable and most obvious consequence [of the layoff-pay plans] . . . is to be found in expanded outlays on labor-saving machines,” adding:

“There is a certain irony in the thought that layoff pay will bring on more of the very automation against which the union claims to be protecting its members.”

*

How does Socialist Industrial Unionism approach the problem of unemployment? It faces the issue squarely. The unemployment problem — to the solution of which automation has lent new urgency — cannot be solved as long as

¹¹ *The Challenge of Automation*, Public Affairs Press, Washington, D.C.

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the means of production are privately owned. Not even a multi-billion dollar arms program can do more than postpone a new outbreak of mass joblessness. There is one solution and only one — the conversion of the privately owned means of production, now operated for the profit of capitalist investors, into the collective property of society, to be operated for use. Owned socially, and used to produce things to satisfy human needs, there could be no such thing as involuntary unemployment. New machinery would no longer kick workers out of jobs; they would kick hours out of the working day. Indeed, through automation and the rationalization of social production, through the elimination of the waste, duplication and anarchy characteristic of capitalism, and the utilization of the labor now used for such socially harmful pursuits as military duty and arms production, it is a virtual certainty that the four-hour day and 16-hour week could be established within a couple of years.

Such is the unparalleled productivity of labor that we could produce in the 16-hour week a superabundance of all the good things of life and have the leisure in which to enjoy them in full measure.

This is no fanciful dream. It is a sane and logical solution to all the problems besetting society. Furthermore, it is the only way that our class — the working class — can free itself from the horrors and degradations of wage slavery. It is the only way we can establish a society of peace, freedom and affluence.

It is the revolutionary way out.

4. *Peaceful Revolution*

SOME FOLKS, recalling Gompers's old slogan, "no politics in the union," imagine that the modern breed of labor fakers have abandoned the Gompers policy. Actually, they have done nothing of the kind. "Politics" in Gompers's vocabulary, in so far as it related to the activity of the rank and file, meant *working-class politics*. At no time was capitalist politics barred. On the contrary. From their inception the AFL, railroad brotherhoods and kindred unions have practiced the policy of "Reward your friends and punish your enemies." Nor has labor ever lacked "friends" at election time. The list is long and includes such names as Warren G. Harding, Calvin Coolidge, Herbert Hoover, Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Harry Truman¹² — all of whom received the fulsome praise of prominent union leaders.

As for lesser politician "friends-of-labor" the political woods are full of them — and there isn't one of them who wouldn't sell the workers down the river whenever an important question involving capitalist interests arises.¹³

Where latter-day fakers depart from Gompersism is in their brazen *organized* political action. Only legal restraints prevent them from compelling rank-and-file workers to contribute to the campaign funds of capitalist politicians of *their* — the labor fakers' — choosing! As it is, all sorts of subtle coercions are used to persuade the dues-payers to support the AFL-CIO political action organization.

Otherwise today's fakers play the same role of political bell-wethers that they did in Gompers's day, hailing as "friends-of-labor" the politicians with whom they make the best deals — for themselves.

¹² It is the custom for labor fakers to close their eyes to, and "forget," outrageous and vicious antilabor acts by labor's supposed "friends. Thus the fakers soon "forgot" the evil day when Franklin Roosevelt sent battle-equipped troops to break the strike of workers at the North American Aviation Corp. in Inglewood, Calif., June, 1941. They also conveniently forgot the day (May 25, 1946) that President Truman, requesting special power to break the railroad strike, asked Congress "immediately to authorize the President to draft into the armed forces of the United States all workers who are on strike against their government."

¹³ A lesser "friend-of-labor" who gained some notoriety was Congressman Fred A. Hartley, co-author of the vicious Taft-Hartley Act. On April 26, 1940, William Green, president of the AFL, sent a letter to all central bodies and local labor unions in Rep. Hartley's district in New Jersey, describing him as "an outstanding friend-of-labor." The letter wound up: Let us prove to all that we are truly grateful to Congressman Hartley for the fine service he has rendered us by returning him to Congress by an overwhelming vote."

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With this sort of “political” action Socialist Industrial Unionism is in violent disagreement. It holds that, as the workers must organize as a class on the economic field, they must also organize politically as a class. As Daniel De Leon formulated the principle:

“The social question and all such questions are essentially political. If you have an economic organization alone, you have a duck flying with one wing; you must have a political organization or you are nowhere. Watch the capitalist closely and see whether the social question is exclusively an economic one, or whether the political wing is not a very necessary one. The capitalist rules in the shop. Is he satisfied with that? Watch him at election time; it is then he works. He has also another workshop, not an economic one — the legislatures and capitals in the nation. He buzzes around them and accomplishes political results. He gets the laws passed that will protect his economic class interests, and he pulls the wires, when these interests are in danger, bringing down the strong arm of political power over the heads of the striking workmen who have the notion that the wages or social question is only an economic question.

“Make no mistake: The organization of the working class must be both economic and political. The capitalist is organized upon both lines. You must attack him on both.”

But there is still another reason for working-class political action. Even though the propertied class has perverted and distorted the Constitution, it still remains the organic law of the land. That Constitution sanctions a change in the form of government by providing, through Article 5 (the amendment clause), the means to amend, or even to abolish, the present system.¹⁴ In the language of Washington the people hold the government in the hollow of their hand. We can, whenever we like, unite to effectuate the revolution to Socialism by the peaceful and legal means of the ballot, i.e., by voting for the candidates of a political party of labor that demands the unconditional surrender of capitalism in its platform. Political action, because it offers the opportunity to agitate and educate for Socialism in the broad open day, and because it holds out the possibility of peaceful revolution, is a weapon vital to

¹⁴ The Declaration of Independence, which is, in a sense, the preamble to the Constitution, goes a step further. It unequivocally asserts that “whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends [Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness], it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.” Again, as though to emphasize this right, the Declaration of Independence declares: “. . . It is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government and to provide new Guards for their future security.” This is precisely what the program of Socialist Industrial Unionism is designed to do.

our success.

The mission of the political party of labor may be briefly stated:

1. It is to agitate, educate, clarify the issue and lay bare the true nature of the class struggle;
2. It is to place the issue of collective ownership squarely before the people by adopting a platform based on this single demand and by nominating candidates to contest elective offices; finally
3. It is to complete its mission the moment its candidates are elected, by adjourning the political State *sine die* and by itself disbanding.

According to the biblical tale, Samson destroyed himself when he destroyed the Temple of the Philistines. Except for the fact that Samson was blind and the political party of labor has its eyes wide open, the parable holds. Instead of taking office *to govern*, the candidates of the political party of labor will take office only to abolish political office. It captures to destroy,¹⁵ in the same sense that a conquering army captures, only to destroy, the fortifications of the vanquished foe, though blood and treasures were poured out to secure possession of these fortifications. The political State is the robber citadel of capitalism, and can serve capitalist purposes only. The political State is a *weapon* of suppression and oppression — a weapon designed to enable the skimmers to keep in subjection the class that is being skinned. The true Industrial Union is a *tool* designed to direct the processes of production for socially useful purposes. *Hence the victorious workers will turn the reins of*

¹⁵ The Social Democrat, James Oneal, offered this feeble “critique” of De Leon’s argument in *Socialist Reconstruction of Society* that the political State must be conquered only to be destroyed:

“Political action is not completely rejected [in “Socialist Reconstruction of Society”], but to abandon political power after winning it differs little from refusing to struggle for it in the first place.”

De Leon disposed of Oneal’s “critique” as follows:

“This is a choice chunk of dialectics. According to such logic —

“To have demolished the Bastille, after having captured it, differs little from having refused to capture it in the first place; or —

“To have disbanded the federal armies, after having overthrown secession, differs little from having refused to gather the federal armies in the first place; or —

“To cast off your crutches, after you have regained the use of your legs, differs little from having refused to use crutches in the first place.

“Mr. Oneal’s pamphlet should be read. It is a dialectical blunderbuss fired at the SLP from a blunderbuss that ‘kicks’ the blunderbusser.”

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government over to the administrative councils of the Socialist Industrial Union!

The point to note here is that the political party of labor, crucially important though it is tactically, is transient and has no place under the Industrial Republic of Labor. The Socialist Industrial Union, on the other hand, is a *permanent* form of labor organization, becoming the framework of the new social order.

But let us look at the question in another way.

Suppose the workers unite politically to demand Socialism but fail to consolidate their economic power. Their political victory would then be the signal for a bloodbath. Without the power to enforce the peaceful demand of the ballot they would be at the mercy of a class whose malignant hatred of those whom they exploit knows no bounds. Here one can see the vicious and disastrous consequences of all “pure and simple” political movements. They leave the workers defenseless against the onslaughts of reaction and prepare their neck for the industrial feudal yoke.

Of the weakness of the ballot alone, De Leon said:

“The ballot is a weapon of civilization; the ballot is a weapon that no revolutionary movement of our times may ignore except at its own peril; the Socialist ballot is the emblem of *right*. For that very reason the Socialist ballot is

weaker than a woman's tears,
Tamer than sleep, fonder than ignorance,
Less valiant than the virgin in the night,
And skillless as unpracticed infancy,
unless it is backed by the *might* to enforce it.”

But how can the “might,” i.e., the Socialist Industrial Union, enforce the ballot? Precisely what are the workers to do?

The source of all power is economic. Armies, particularly modern armies, cannot operate unless they are constantly supplied with a multitude of items which flow uninterruptedly from industry. Although an army is a military *power*, it is dependent on industry, hence *on the workers who operate industry*.

Modern capitalist production has achieved such magnitude that it has greatly

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expanded the potential economic power of the workers. This is true because the workers *run the industries from top to bottom and are therefore in the best strategic position to take possession*. "Take possession" is precisely what they must do in an orderly and resolute manner the moment the victory at the polls is achieved. This is not a general strike (which leaves the workers in the open terrain and precipitates chaos and anarchy) but a general lockout of the capitalist class!

Summing up, these are the tactics of the Socialist Industrial Union:

1. Political action to agitate and capture the political ramparts of capitalism.
2. Economic action to back up the ballot by occupying the factories, mines, mills, railroads, and all the other means of social production, and locking out the outvoted owners and their agents.

These tactics are not designed arbitrarily. They are determined by the economic and political topography of America. They are the tactics of an industrialized proletariat in a nation which has not yet surrendered to Fascist barbarism. They are the only tactics which can prevent such a surrender.

5. The Unions and Fascism

WE HEAR it said frequently that the Nazis and Fascists destroyed the free trade unions of Germany and Italy. Actually, although the unions were deprived of independent action, they were not destroyed. On the contrary, the Nazis and Fascists *took them over* and transformed them into instruments of suppression. The methods that were employed are too familiar to require elaboration here. We know, for example, that on May 2, 1933, Nazi hoodlums, under the direction of Dr. Robert Ley, struck “brutally and ruthlessly” as they had been instructed. They seized and occupied the property and premises of the German unions and imprisoned the union leaders. With the exception of the Jews and those considered politically “unreliable,” the members were then informed that they were enrolled in the Labor Front.

Although the Fascist coup in Italy ten years earlier was less efficiently conducted, it followed a similar pattern. Long before Hitler’s rise to power, Mussolini recognized in the existing trade unions (based upon the tenets of class peace) the logical instruments for keeping the workers under control.

The question arises: Why did not the rank and file possess the initiative to act? Why was it merely necessary for the Nazis to capture the union headquarters, arrest the leaders, and by so doing take over the entire union? Why were these unions so flabby and inert as to be unable even to make a show of resisting when they were led into the Fascist camp?

Why? Because the German and Italian unions, like our own so-called free trade unions, the AFL-CIO and railroad brotherhoods, were never organized to unite the workers as a class and promote their class interests. They were job trusts organized to restrict competition for jobs. Instead of cultivating a spirit of unity, they kept the workers involved in internecine strife. Over the years the union members in Germany had acquired certain dubious “benefits,” such as pensions, insurance, equities in caskets, etc. These are also familiar devices to American workers, devices used to hold members who might otherwise drop away. The Nazis well understood that the German trade unionists, being nonclassconscious, treasured their “benefits.” Dr. Ley swore that he would “keep intact everything that already exists” and “extend still farther” the alleged union gains that had been made. Had

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the workers rejected membership in the Labor Front, their precious “benefits” would have been lost to them. They were led into the Nazi stockade without a struggle.

In some instances the German and Italian unions which were thus taken over and incorporated in the State apparatus were “*industrial*” in form. Where they were not, they were reorganized into “industrial unions” under Nazi or Fascist direction. Thus it is seen that merely aping the industrial form does not make of a union an instrument of emancipation. Daniel De Leon cautioned the American workers against this assumption. In a “Letter Box” answer to a question, published in the *Daily People*, June 26, 1910, he said:

“Caution must be observed lest one attach to the term Industrial Unionism more than there is in it. Industrial Unionism does not of itself mean the economic body necessary for the revolutionary act. The form of Industrialism may subserve the most reactionary of schemes. It is with Industrialism as with the alphabet. Without the alphabet there can be no good literature; but the alphabet may also furnish vulgar words. *Without Industrialism the Social Revolution is not accomplishable in America; but Industrialism could also be turned into the most effective capitalist weapon to bridle the working class.*”

To which we might add: Remember the unions of pre-Fascist Italy and pre-Nazi Germany! Believed to be weapons of defense against the encroachments of capital, they were transformed into huge “company” unions to bridle labor, serving substantially the same purpose for the Italian and German capitalist classes that company unions serve for the individual capitalists.

It is well to think long and hard on this lesson. It is well to ask ourselves: Are the AFL-CIO and the railroad brotherhoods as flabby and inert as the “free trade unions” the Nazis took over? Do the American unions also divide the workers? Cultivate a narrow, selfish outlook instead of a class outlook? Teach that the present system is everlasting? Utilize insurance, burial policies, pensions and similar “benefits” to hold members? The answer to all these questions is, alas, yes! Moreover, in a greater degree than in Germany and Italy, the American unions foster class disunity. Witness the commonplace shame of organized scabbery! When one union walks out on strike, other unions in the same industry stay on the job and scab upon the strikers. Should the rank and file of the latter unions, moved by the

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instinct of solidarity, demand of their leaders that they too be called out, a contract is waved in their faces. They have a sacred contract with the boss. Would they repudiate their sacred word? Would they be so lacking in honor, so low, so iniquitous? Ninety-nine times out of a hundred they would not be “so low, so iniquitous.” *Ninety-nine times out of a hundred they scab it on their brothers!* On the rare hundredth time the international officers recall their charter, expel them from the union, and furnish the “injured” employer with more docile workers.

In view of this disunity, fostered by brotherhood-between-capital-and-labor unionism, it is palpably visionary to look upon the AFL-CIO as a bulwark against Fascism. Like the German and Italian unions, they are better suited to become weapons with which reaction may bridle the working class.

Socialist Industrial Unionism could not be led into the prison of Fascism because it organizes squarely on working-class interests, unites all who labor, and aims for the abolition of capitalism. Socialist Industrial Unionism cultivates initiative in the rank and file, and develops the latent sense of class solidarity capitalist unionism would stifle. No wrecking of union headquarters or imprisoning of union officers could transfix this mighty class instrument. The union would exist not in its headquarters or in its officers, but in the organized mass of enlightened workers.

Craft and pseudo-industrial unionism is flabby and inert. Its motto is: “For ourselves first, last and all the time, and the devil take fellow craft unionists!”

Socialist Industrial Unionism is dynamic, conscious of its invincible power, unconquerable. Its motto is: “One for all, all for one!”

6. Poured Into the Industrial Mold

CHAPTER 1 described the goal of the Socialist Industrial Union. Chapter 4 set forth the tactics. Here we shall deal with the form or structure.

“Industrialism,” wrote Daniel De Leon, “is a trefoil that constitutes *one* leaf; it is a term that embraces three domains, closely interdependent, and all three requisite to the whole. The three domains are form, tactics and goal. The goal is the substitution of the industrial for the political government, another term for the Socialist Republic; the tactics are the unification of the useful labor of the land on the political as well as the economic field; the form concerns the structure of the organization.”

Socialist Industrial Unionism aims to achieve *solidarity of labor*. The AFL-CIO affirms that it, too, aims to achieve solidarity of labor. But “solidarity of labor” in the mouths of craft and pseudo-industrial unionists is an ironic travesty. Solidarity of labor presupposes classconsciousness, that is (on the part of labor), that it is conscious of the fact that the interests of the *skinnners* (the capitalists) are the direct opposite of the interests of those (the workers) who are being *skinned*. The AFL-CIO is avowedly and violently opposed to classconsciousness. Indeed, all existing unions are founded upon job-consciousness. They assiduously foster the baneful spirit of job-consciousness. Their appeal to the worker is on the basis of protecting his job — not against layoffs or displacement by machines, but against his fellow wage slaves who compete for the job! The AFL-CIO unions are, in fact, *job trusts*. It is this job-trust character that is the primary cause of the woeful disunity so apparent in the labor movement today.

JURISDICTION SQUABBLES

Unions that are job trusts are frequently riven by jurisdictional disputes. They vigilantly guard their own jurisdiction, but are ever on the alert for territory which can be invaded. Not only do they “protect” their jobs against the unorganized, but also against rival unions. As a consequence of jurisdiction raids, wars are frequent in which weapons of violence, even assassination at the hands of hired sluggers, are employed.

The victors in these feuds are frequently the unions that promise the exploiters more for their money. Samuel Gompers, one of the founders of the AFL, and long a

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leading capitalist labor lieutenant, once told a union convention:

“Jurisdiction controversies are unavoidable. They are, though, only a phase in the struggle for the survival of the fittest. The craft in whose membership the greatest amount of efficiency is crystallized will finally win out in the fight for jurisdiction and control of the job.”

A slave class torn by fratricidal conflict is an easy class to rule.

Jurisdictional disputes are not the only evils bred by the job trust. As most union members have learned to their dismay, no matter how determined the membership is to attain “rank-and-file” control, the real control over the jobs is vested in the officials. Closed shop or “union shop” agreements make this power of the officials absolute. Once the closed shop or union shop is granted, the rank and file must toe the mark or suffer the consequences, for the labor faker has devious methods for ousting malcontents from the union — and from their jobs. Control of jobs forms the base of the faker’s pyramid of power. All the way up it is cemented with jobs and patronage. With the passage of time the structure solidifies and the faker at the top acquires such broad authority that he can ignore the rumbling of discontent from below.

Before genuine solidarity of labor can be achieved, the workers must lose their job-consciousness and acquire *classconsciousness*. Then, and not until then, can they organize *as a class*, employed and unemployed, skilled and unskilled, office worker and factory worker. United, they will no longer be an easy class to rule. On the contrary, the exploiters and their labor lieutenants will learn to their sorrow that their ruling days are over.

THE STRUCTURE OF SOLIDARITY

It is self-evident that labor solidarity doesn’t mean bringing together all the workers into a loose, shapeless body. As the great De Leon, who, more than any other man, is responsible for the clear-cut principles of Socialist Industrial Unionism, said:

“The industrial principle of *one union* . . . excludes, as a matter of course, the jellyfish conception of oneness. The oneness of the high structure of the human being is a different oneness from that of the lower

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jellyfish. As the structure of the human being implies parts and coordination to parts, so does the structure of industrialism, a concept born of the higher development of modern society, imply divisions and subdivisions. The field upon which industrialism operates warrants the parallel with a modern army. One though an army is, it has its separate divisions. These are also imperative to the Industrialist Army — it also has and must have companies, battalions, regiments, brigades, divisions.”

The need for separate divisions in the Socialist Industrial Union is obvious. What, then, is to determine the line of demarcation?

The industrial setup is the mold into which must be poured the molten metal — an awakened classconscious working class. *Facts of production*, therefore, determine the divisions between the Industrial Unions and the subdivisions within the Industrial Union. Let us apply the principles of correct structure to the automobile industry.

Keeping in mind the central principle that the *form* must be in accord with the facts of production, we must first determine the external boundaries of the automobile workers' union. Obviously, neither the airplane workers, textile workers nor rubber workers belong in this union. Why? Because the *output* is the determining factor. In this case the output is automobiles. All the workers who fabricate parts and assemble automobiles, whether they work in the offices or shops, in parts divisions or on the final assembly line, belong in one automobile workers' industrial union — a union which must also embrace the *unemployed* automobile workers.

“In the first place,” said De Leon in his epochal address, *The Burning Question of Trades Unionism*, “the trades union has a supreme mission. That mission is nothing short of organizing by uniting and uniting by organizing the whole working class industrially — not merely those for whom there are jobs, accordingly not only those who can pay dues.”

In the automobile workers' industrial union will be found a great list of specialized occupations. There will be janitors, stenographers, tool and die makers, common laborers, nurses, chauffeurs, printers, draftsmen and dozens of others. Despite their specialized labor they help produce the “output” which determines the

boundaries of their union, viz., automobiles.

INTERNAL SUBDIVISIONS

Automobiles are produced in many cities: Detroit, Dearborn, Pontiac, Flint, South Bend, etc. *For purposes of organization and administration a local automobile workers' industrial union includes all the automobile workers in each community.* We have learned the fact of production which marks the boundary between this and other unions. Now we have to discover the fact of production that determines internal divisions within the local industrial union. It is the *tool that is used.* The subdivisions within the Local — shop units and plant unions — are determined by the tool.

Let us narrow our investigation down to Ford's plant at River Rouge. In this plant will be found many departments which require their own tools. There are a steel mill, a glass factory, a hospital, a tool and die department, etc. Hearths and rollers are the tools of the steel mill shop unit. They determine the boundaries of the steel mill shop unit, and all the workers who direct or run these tools, regardless of their degree of skill or the specific nature of their work, belong in this shop unit. A furnace and polishing apparatus are the tools of the glass shop unit. The ambulance, beds, operating tables, etc., are the tools of the hospital shop unit. The lathes, grinding machines, etc., are the tools of the tool and die shop unit. In every case the workers who direct or run these tools belong to the shop unit designated by the tools.

But the Ford River Rouge plant is a unit and as such it must be operated. The shop units, made necessary by the variety of tools, are united in the *plant union* which includes all the workers in the River Rouge plant.

Here, in short and in fine, are the subdivisions of the local industrial union. They are not disconnected parts, but integrated parts that function together. They make possible instantaneous action and solidify the workers for the great act of backing up the Socialist ballot by taking and holding the industries of the land. Lastly, they organize the workers into the only human machine capable of operating the industries without interruption as the changeover takes place and under the Socialist Industrial Republic of Labor.

7. What to Do Now!

HAS THE SLP organized a Socialist Industrial Union?

If this question has been asked of SLP members once, it has been asked a thousand times. Sometimes it is asked by sincere persons, but usually by wiseacres who wish to imply that the SLP is not living up to its convictions because, obviously, no such Socialist Industrial Union exists.

It is self-evident that workers cannot be organized to abolish the capitalist system and establish Socialism *until they want to abolish capitalism and establish Socialism*. The idea must precede the actuality. Workers who cling to the vain hope that somehow, some way, the predatory system of wage slavery can be made tolerable can no more be organized for their emancipation than Mohammedans can be organized to defend the sepulcher of Christ. But that vain hope is cracking under the impact of staggering events. It is no longer possible to conceal from intelligent workers the guilt of the capitalist system for the anarchy and chaos in the world today.

Human masses, like masses of matter generally, are subject to the force of inertia. They do not move until, in an hour of political and economic crisis, they are compelled to. It is not our purpose here to set forth the causal factors of the approaching crisis. Suffice it to say that we are hurtling toward it and that it will arouse the great mass of workers, as they have never been aroused before, to the imperious necessity for social change. The question then will not be: "Shall we organize to reconstruct society?" but will be: "*How* shall we organize?" To this question the Socialist Labor Party supplies the only satisfactory answer, viz., the program of Socialist Industrial Unionism.

What can you do *now* to enhance the success of this program for working-class freedom? You can do a great deal. You can prepare yourself to prepare others. You can equip yourself with a thorough understanding of the principles of scientific Socialism, and particularly its American expression, De Leonism. You can supply those among your fellow workers who are politically awake with this vital knowledge. You can secure from the Socialist Labor Party leaflets to distribute

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among them. You can read the WEEKLY PEOPLE and pass it on for others to read. In short, you can take an active and intelligent part in preparing the working class for its historic role, for the conquest of its final emancipation.

The period that lies immediately ahead is fraught with great peril and with great promise. Should the useful producers fail to organize their powers through the dereliction of those among them who see their duty but fail to do it, this period will be marked by violence and brutal suppression. Without industrial power labor is impotent. *With* industrial power it is omnipotent. And this industrial power *can be organized*. In the words of the eminently great American and social scientist, Daniel De Leon:

“First, its cost is trifling, positively within reach;

“Secondly, every scrap of information it gathers while organizing is of permanent value;

“Thirdly, it will be able to offer resistance to capitalist encroachments, and thereby to act as a breastwork for its members while getting ready;

“Fourthly, and most significant and determining of all, the day of its triumph will be the beginning of the full exercise of its functions — the administration of the productive forces of the nation.

“The fourth consideration is significant and determining. It is the consideration that social evolution points the finger to dictating the course that the proletariat must take, dictating its goal, dictating its *means*. The proletariat, whose economic badge is poverty; the proletariat, the first of all revolutionary classes whose badge is economic impotence — for the benefit of that class, apparently treated so stepmotherly by social evolution, social evolution has wrought as it has wrought for none other. It has builded the smithy of capitalist industrial concentration; and, in keeping with the lofty mission of the working class to abolish class rule on earth, social evolution has gathered ready for the fashioning, not the implements of destruction, but the implements of future peace, withal the most potent weapon to clear the field of the capitalist despot — the *industrially ranked toilers*. The integrally organized [Socialist] Industrial Union is the weapon that social evolution places within the grasp of the proletariat as the means for their emancipation.”

Let us seize that weapon! Let us inscribe upon our banner and raise high the demands:

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The workshops to the workers!

The product to the producers!

ALL POWER TO THE SOCIALIST INDUSTRIAL UNION!

Addenda:

A Note on Organization

The essential principles of correct organization have been treated. When these principles are adopted and incarnated in the Socialist Industrial Union the knell will sound to wage slavery and the race will enter a period of boundless cultural and material progress. But we do not assert that problems of organizing will not arise. They will, but with correct principles as guide they can be coped with. Although other questions may be anticipated, we shall mention only a few here. The first is:

Would not the employers seek to smash the union at the first incipient attempt at organization?

They would, and, judging from their past performances, their methods would not be gentle. They would, however, take on themselves the onus for employing lawless violence, and the effect would be much like the effect of the attack on Fort Sumter which lit the fuse of the Civil War — that is, its effect would be to fire with indignation those who were formerly apathetic and enlist them to active participation in the cause of working-class emancipation.

Moreover, it cannot be assumed that the revolutionary temperature will rise in one or two localities and leave the rest of the country immune. When conditions raise the revolutionary temperature, the movement to organize *will be general* and of such an imposing magnitude as to defy the puny repressive efforts of the ruling class. Those conditions are certain to develop as the contradictions which have produced the present world crisis become more acute.

A second problem of organizing arises from the complications of capitalist production. It is the question of jurisdiction of the various industrial unions. It will arise, however, not through a struggle for dues-payers or jobs as in the present job-trust unions, but in a revolutionary sense.

In the chapter, “Poured Into the Industrial Mold,” it was pointed out that the *output* determines the line of demarcation between unions. This is the general

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principle, but it so happens that some plants have two or more outputs which belong to unrelated categories. Some industries, such as meat-packing, produce many by-products through utilization of waste.

Inasmuch as the first job to be done is to “take over,” the workers engaged in producing these byproducts would, as a rule, organize with their fellow workers who produce the main product. Thus they are welded into a solid unit to take over operation of the entire plant. It is, therefore, not only the output, but the *principal* output, which determines the line of demarcation between National Industrial Unions.

There is also the question of jurisdiction over the unemployed, for bona fide unionism does not exclude them as dues-collecting “unions” do. In most cases the solution is simple, for unemployed workers, as a rule, will join with the workers in that industry in which they are normally employed. Thus, unemployed sailors will join the marine transport industrial union, unemployed textile workers the textile workers' industrial union, and so forth, down the line.

These and similar organizational problems can be solved and will be solved once the principles are grasped and the immediate problem is resolutely faced. If errors are made in jurisdiction, etc., they can be corrected without harm being done. Such errors are not fatal. Errors which are fatal are those which arise from wrong principles of organization, such as acceptance of the fatuous theory that capital and labor can be brothers. It is these errors which farsighted workers must seek to disperse. Then only will the soil be hospitable to the Socialist seed.

The End