



UNIONISM:

**Fraudulent
or Genuine?**

Unionism:

Fraudulent or Genuine?

By Nathan Karp

PRINTING HISTORY

First Printing	1958
Second Printing	1962
Third Printing	1975

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Website
of the Socialist Labor Party of America.

Uploaded September 2005

Cover illustration by Walter Steinhilber

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1. *The Union Question Still Burns*

That the trade-union question is a burning one is obvious from the space it fills in the public mind, the acrimony of the discussion and the wide divergence of opinion on the subject. Obvious also is the conclusion that a subject that can draw upon itself so much attention, that can produce so much acrimony, and on which opinion takes so many shades—running from extreme and unqualified support through all manner of gradations across the gamut, to extreme and unqualified opposition—cannot choose but be a vital one, and certainly must have a latent something about it that will not down. Finally, it is obvious that such a question deserves attention—close, serious and sober—and that the solution must be grappled with and found.—Daniel De Leon, in *Burning Question of Trades Unionism*.

As Daniel De Leon, America's foremost Marxist, emphasized over 53 years ago, trade unionism is indeed a vital subject—particularly to the workers of America. Recent events have once again brought it to the forefront of public attention. And, as usual, the discussions on this important subject have produced much more heat and acrimony than fact and logic, thereby emphasizing the need to give the union question close, serious and sober consideration once again. In fact, it is of the utmost importance that this be done, since the future welfare of the workers of America (and, in the final analysis, of the world) depends directly upon a proper and correct evaluation of the nature and character of the unions in existence today, a proper understanding of the historic mission of unionism and a knowledge of the correct principles of union organization. It is the purpose of this

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pamphlet to deal with these fundamentals.

WRONG PRINCIPLES SIRE CORRUPTION

Before dealing with these matters specifically, however, it may be well to point out briefly that the revelations made by the special Senate Rackets Committee investigating corrupt practices by various union leaders, etc., were hardly startling to anyone even superficially informed on the nature of the existing unions. Nor are future revelations likely to be any more startling. Unfortunately, however, more than anything else, these revelations have created the illusion that there is nothing wrong with today's unions that the removal of a few corrupt leaders would not rectify. Actually, the truth is that corruption among union officials is a result of, not the cause of, what is wrong with these unions, as we shall soon see.

It should also be noted at this point that the AFL-CIO "merger" has created no basic or fundamental change in what passes for the American union movement. It has not brought unity to the labor movement. All the evils that existed separately in the AFL and the CIO before the "merger" still remain. Jurisdictional differences, the emphasis on "job control" and the autocratic control of each union by entrenched bureaucrats still continue. In some instances, the jurisdictional disputes have become more bitter than ever. Though the national bodies of the AFL and the CIO have "merged," most state and local AFL and CIO units found that they had jurisdictional and bureaucratic differences that interfered with state and local level "mergers." As Stanley Levey expressed it in the *New York Times* (in discussing the failure of the New York State units of the AFL and CIO to "merge"):

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“The main obstacle to merger is a basic disagreement over organic structure—meaning jobs and power....”—*New York Times*, Feb. 10, 1957.

The Socialist Labor Party is, of course, directly concerned with all aspects of the union question. For the Socialist Labor Party is the strongest advocate of proper working class unionism in America, and always has been during the 67 years of its existence. But the Socialist Labor Party charges that the present unions—all of them—are not working-class unions. They are, instead, organizations dedicated to principles contrary to the best interests of the workers. As a result, they are in fact definite obstructions to the workers efforts to free themselves from the horrors of wage slavery and exploitation. And, as we shall see, the Socialist Labor Party has sound and logical reasons for this unyielding position.

The union question is, of course, a large one with many important ramifications. For obvious reasons, only the most essential facts and principles can be dealt with in this pamphlet. Briefly, they may be divided into the following four major points:

1. The purpose and mission of unionism.
2. The goal that a working-class union must aim for.
3. The structure and objectives of the present unions. (Including the role of the labor leader.)
4. The union organization the workers must establish in order to protect their interests and achieve their complete emancipation from wage slavery and exploitation.

2. Fraudulent Unions And the Class Struggle

The first question that must be answered is: What is the mission of unionism in a fully developed capitalist society? It would be well if we could explain in detail all the basic problems and contradictions that exist in a fully developed capitalist society such as we have in the United States. But this would be a major work in itself, far beyond the scope of this pamphlet. For our purpose here, however, it is necessary that we emphasize the all-important fact that capitalism is a class-divided society. One class, composed of a small minority, owns and controls all the socially required means of production and distribution. This class is the capitalist class. The other class, composed of the vast majority, is completely deprived of ownership and control of the tools of production and the instruments of distribution. This class is the working class. In order to live, it must sell its labor power, its ability to work, mentally and manually, to the capitalist class. The working class produces all social wealth and performs all necessary social services. In return it receives in the form of wages but a small fraction of the wealth it alone produces. The capitalist class, by virtue of its ownership of the tools, appropriates the balance (by far the larger portion) of this wealth. This process is called exploitation. The working class, driven by stark necessity, strives to increase its wages (its share of the wealth it produces), while the capitalist class, driven by the profit motive and related economic compulsions,

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constantly strives to increase the rate of exploitation. The result is an irrepressible class struggle for life in capitalist society.

These are social and economic facts, and not “Socialist propaganda.” Daniel De Leon summed up these facts succinctly and emphatically in his epic lecture, *What Means This Strike?* as follows:

“The pregnant point that underlies these pregnant facts is that between the working class and the capitalist class there is an irrepressible conflict, a class struggle for life. No glib-tongued politician can vault over it; no capitalist professor or official statistician can argue it away; no capitalist parson can veil it; no labor faker can straddle it; no ‘reform’ architect can bridge it over. It crops up in all manner of ways, as in this strike, in ways that disconcert all the plans and all the schemes of those who would deny or ignore it. It is a struggle that will not down, and must be ended only by either the total subjugation of the working class, or the abolition of the capitalist class.”

MISSION OF UNIONISM

When we recognize the fact of these social conditions and realize their import, the mission of unionism becomes clear. The union must be an organization that, first, enables the workers to resist the constant encroachments of the capitalist class. Secondly, it must recognize and accept the fact of the class struggle and, accordingly, educate the workers in their true class interests. Thirdly, it must drill the workers in the necessary self-discipline and organizational discipline that will enable them to act in harmony to administer and control their union organization democratically. Finally, it must organize the workers *as a class* to enable them at the appropriate time to assume control of the industries and to conduct production in their own interests, which

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are also the interests of society. This, in fact, is the supreme mission of unionism in a fully developed capitalist society. This fact further dictates the necessary industrial structure of a working-class union, as well as the tactics it must utilize in working toward this goal. But more on this later. First, let us look more closely at the unions we have today and see why they are not working-class organizations.

Originally, many of the present unions at least paid lip-service to the fact of the class struggle. For example, the constitution of the American Federation of Labor stated in part:

“...A struggle is going on in all nations of the civilized world, a struggle between the capitalist and laborer, which grows in intensity from year to year, and will work disastrous results to the toiling millions if they are not combined for mutual protection...”

Other unions went even further, not only paying lip-service to the fact of the class struggle, but also defining correctly the true mission of unionism. A case in point is the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, which said in the preamble to its constitution:

“The economic organization of labor has been called into existence by the capitalist system of production, under which the division between the ruling class and the ruled class is based upon the ownership of the means of production. The class owning those means is the one that is ruling, the class that possesses nothing but its labor power, which is always on the market as a commodity, is the one that is being ruled. *A constant and unceasing struggle is being waged between these two classes.* In this struggle the economic organization of labor, the union, is a natural weapon of offense and defense in the hands of the working class... The working class must accept the principles of Industrial Unionism or it is doomed to impotence... This will eventually lead to a universal working class

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organization, united along the entire line of the *class struggle* economically and politically, instead of being split up and divided against itself, as it unfortunately is at present, under the antiquated teachings and methods. For the consummation of this great end the education of the working class is most essential. This must, therefore, be a very important part of the mission of the labor movement. Every oppressed class in history achieved its emancipation only upon its attaining economic supremacy. The same law operates in the struggle between Capital and Labor. The industrial and inter-industrial organization built upon the solid rock of clear knowledge and *class-consciousness* will put the organized working class in actual control of the system of production, and the working class will then be ready to take possession of it.”—Cited in *American Labor Year Book, 1919-1920*. (Italics mine—N.K.)

WHY THE RANK AND FILE WAS VULNERABLE TO BETRAYAL

Yes, many unions paid lip-service to the fact of the class struggle and some even correctly proclaimed the mission and goal of unionism. But for the most part the workers who joined these early unions had no clear understanding of the import of the class struggle, although their militant class instinct enabled them to recognize the need to organize for the purpose of resisting the encroachments of the capitalist class.

Their lack of a clear understanding of the class struggle made them vulnerable to betrayal. As a result, it was not long before the careerists and opportunists among them began to dominate and control the unions. They exploited the workers' instinct for solidarity and their sentiment for unionism in launching their careers as union bureaucrats. Strike after strike, the declared objectives of which were higher wages, shorter hours and improved working conditions, was settled for “union shop,” “closed shop,” and “check-off” agreements with the

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bosses. And it was these very agreements that enabled the union leader to entrench himself and assume bureaucratic control over the union and its membership. Control of the jobs through collusive agreements with the employers meant control of the duespayers.

3. *Labor Lieutenants Of the Capitalist Class*

Once the union was “recognized” by the capitalist and accepted as the official job-filling agency in his industry the union was established as a going concern. The labor leader was now in the labor-merchandising business. The class struggle and the historic mission of unionism were quickly forgotten. Instead of emphasizing the class interests of the workers, the union leaders preached the “brotherhood of capital and labor.” Instead of advocating the emancipation of the working class from wage slavery they accepted capitalism as an eternal system, and “the best of all possible systems” at that. The unions became, in fact, pro-capitalist job-trusts. They concentrated on organizing the jobs. They appealed to the worker’s job-consciousness, describing the union as a means of protecting his job from other workers who might be competing for it.

Not only did the unions “protect” these jobs against the competition of unorganized workers, but also against rival unions. But while they vigilantly guarded the jobs within their own jurisdictions and control, they were ever on the alert for jurisdictional “territory” that could be successfully invaded.

UNION BULWARKS OF CAPITAL

The labor leaders’ biggest and most important job became *selling themselves to the capitalists as upholders*

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and defenders of the property and profit rights of the capitalist class, and as purveyors of docile labor ready and willing to be exploited without creating industrial strife. Mr. Julius Hochman, manager of the Dress joint Board of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, once put it this way:

“...Our job was to convince the employers that we didn't want to take away their business. You see we were in a paradox: we had to tell our membership a different story than we told the employers....Remove capitalism and the reason for the existence of unions [pro-capitalist unions, that is] is abolished. When you get to this point in your thinking, then cooperation with the employers becomes possible and desirable...” *New York Post*, Sept. 4, 1955.

And Philip Murray, late head of the CIO, once assured the capitalist class that:

“...the first thing a labor union does when it is established is to assume its share of responsibility for industrial peace....” (*Virginia Quarterly*, Spring, 1940 issue.)

The charter of the “merged” AFL-CIO completely ignores the existence of the class struggle. It completely and unqualifiedly accepted the false theory of the “brotherhood of capital and labor.” This fact did not pass unnoticed or unappreciated by the defenders of capitalist interests. The *New York Times*, commenting editorially on the merger, observed:

“The advance of labor has not been accomplished, without difficulty and struggle, but it has, fortunately, been struggle within the framework of our democratic institutions. It has given the lie to the theories of Marx and, as President Eisenhower noted yesterday, out of it has emerged the realization that theories of class warfare make no sense in our kind of community, but that the economic interests of employer and employee are in fact complementary....”—*New York Times*,

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Dec. 6, 1955.

While *Fortune* magazine, January, 1956, expressed pleasure that:

“...these echoes of Marx’s *Communist Manifesto* are happily absent from the new AFL-CIO charter...”

Actually, the new charter merely recognized officially what has been a fact for a long, long time. For the whole history of these pro-capitalist unions has been a history of the betrayal of working-class interests. Many of the labor leaders openly brag of their “proud record” of service to the capitalist class and their system of exploitation. The William Greens, Philip Murrays, and Sidney Hillmans did so in, the past. The John L. Lewises, Jacob Pototskys and Walter Reuthers continue to do so today.

THE CAPITALIST LABOR CHAMPIONS

Some of the present-day union leaders are downright blunt in their declarations of loyalty to, and defense of, capitalism. One such is Louis P. Marciante, president of the New Jersey State Federation of Labor, who once declared:

“When and if the profit system faces a showdown with Marxism, as I feel some day it must, it will need the support of labor...” (New Jersey State Federation of Labor Convention, December 1946.)

What Marciante meant was that the profit system would need the support of the labor leader, and he left no doubt that the support would be readily forthcoming, as it always has been when capitalist interests required it.

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Perhaps one of the best examples of the perverted reasoning and anti-working class attitude of these labor leaders is an open letter addressed to the members of his union by Walter Cenerazzo, president of the American Watch Workers Union. Cenerazzo, wrote:

“Dear Fellow Members:

“This is going to be tough. Some of you may get sore. But I’m a ‘labor leader.’ And what sort of leader would I be if I didn’t tell you what I see ahead? So here it comes straight.

“A few years ago our employers had it all their own way. Now the pendulum has swung toward us. Are we now going to be as unfair to our employers as they once were to us ? Or are we going show some sense? Not for their sake, but for our own. Because listen:

“Sales make wages. ‘Production makes sales, and low-cost, low-price production makes more sales. In the last 20 years our employers’ average profit per watch has been less than a dollar. Profits are necessary. Only out of profits can our employers give us better tools for better production, out of which we can get our cut in bigger wages. We’ve got to help our employers make good profits.

“Some guys will yell: So you’re ‘company-minded.’ Sure, I’m ‘company-minded.’ I’m ‘union-minded’ too. A man who is only ‘company-minded’ and who can’t see the union except as something to fight is a class struggle man; a man who is only ‘union-minded’ and who can’t see the company except as something to plunder is a class-struggle man. To prevent the class struggle from wrecking the country, America must be ‘union-minded’ and ‘company-minded’ both.

“You know our union is headed the right way. We’re for free enterprise and our employers know it. We’ve got only a few screwballs who get any kick out of shouting: ‘To hell with the boss!...’”—*Reader’s Digest*, December, 1946 (Italics mine—N.K.)

Here in their crudest form we have all the false economic theories with which the labor leaders have blurred the existing class lines and distorted the true interests of the workers. The letter also reveals the con-

tempt that these labor leaders have for the intelligence of the workers.

Other labor leaders have not hesitated to present their union's "credentials" as defenders of capitalist interests directly to the capitalists. A case in point is that of Jacob Potofsky, president of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America. (This is the same Jacob Potofsky whose name is one of the two that appear in the American Labor Year Book as signers of the Amalgamated preamble, from which we quoted earlier.) Some years ago when the Amalgamated was planning a department-store organizing drive, Mr. Potofsky was anxious not to have the department-store owners misconstrue the union's intent or become unduly alarmed. He asked Victor Riesel, then columnist for the New York *Post-Home News*, to—

"...tell this to the department stores. We would like the owners everywhere to go to the men's clothing industry or to the National Association of Clothing Manufacturers. Let them investigate: our record in the industry, our respect for contractual obligations. Let them talk to the firms with which we've dealt for 40 years' and which have made millions of dollars a year." — Quoted from the WEEKLY PEOPLE, Jan. 15, 1949

Note that Mr. Potofsky did not suggest that the department-store employees go to Amalgamated duespayers to find out what a "good union" the Amalgamated was, but rather that the department-store owners go to the clothing manufacturers and ask these capitalists how they had benefited from their relations with the union. Mr. Potofsky knew what he was about. He had every reason to believe that the capitalist recommendations for his union would be enthusiastic. He well knew' the Amalgamated's reputation for cooperation with the bosses. In fact, the Amalgamated has been pointed to as

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an example of a union that has brought about “industrial peace” and established excellent “labor-management” relations.

Here is an example of the reputation enjoyed by the Amalgamated:

“In the clothing industry . . . regional associations of employers dealing with a strong union have made strikes rare. Even more rare are violations of agreements with employers, and once when workers in Rochester, N.Y., got out of control, *the national Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union helped the employers lock the rebels out until they promised to maintain discipline.*....Although the Amalgamated dominated the clothing industry, it has always left employers a free hand and has encouraged introduction of new machinery and new methods....The Amalgamated’s production and financial experts have helped reorganize weak firms,, have helped tide over others by lending them union funds. The union once underwrote several hundred thousand dollars of securities for a Baltimore firm, *cut wages, and helped run the company until it was on its feet.*”—“Industrial Warfare” by L. Velie, *Collier’s* magazine, March 2, 1946. (Italics mine N.K.)

What more could the capitalists in the men’s clothing industry want? The union did and does more for them than they could or would do for each other.

What has been cited about the anti-working class nature of the Amalgamated is quite typical of the entire pro-capitalist union movement. The United Automobile Workers Union has earned the respect of the capitalists in the automobile industry. Mr. Walter Reuther, the “former Socialist,” has on frequent occasions proclaimed his loyalty to capitalism and capitalist class interests. As for proof that this allegedly “militant” union has served the interests of the automobile capitalists we have no less an authority than Mr. Charles E. Wilson himself. The former chairman of the board at General Motors has stated:

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“I am personally convinced that, if there were no unions and no labor contracts like General Motors has in the automotive industry, the increase in wages would already have greatly exceeded what has occurred. This increase to my mind would be much more comparable with the increase that has occurred in commodities, for if we had a completely free labor market with no unions and no contracts, labor would have been able to sell its services at a rapidly increasing price just as the owners of commodities have been able to do.”—New York *Herald Tribune*, Aug. 29, 1951.

Equally illuminating is the more recent testimony from another spokesman for plutocratic interests. In an address before the AFL-CIO Metal Trades Department, Mr. Harry Morton, attorney for the Henry Kaiser interests, stated:

“We did not get religion just because we like you people. I am speaking of management now [meaning the capitalist class]. We learned this: The cost per yard of concrete poured at Grand Coulee was less than it was of concrete in Boulder Dam. The cheaper job was the closed shop, the union shop. The more expensive job was the open shop job. This is your beginning and reason for us getting religion, and when we got it, we went all the way.”—Quoted in *Labor Economic Review*, January, 1956.

The conclusion is inescapable that the existing unions are allies and accomplices of the capitalist class dedicated to the proposition that the capitalist system be preserved and the working class kept in wage slavery. The labor leader himself is nothing more nor less than the labor lieutenant of the capitalist class in charge of the job of misleading I the mass of workers into meekly accepting capitalist wage slavery as the “best of all possible systems.”

4. *Labor Divided*

One more important point must be made in presenting the SLP's case against the present unions, though it is by no means the last important point that could be made. The present job-trust unions are instigators and promoters of organized scabbery. Their chief weapon in promoting this organized scabbery is the "contract."

UNION "CONTRACT" SCABBING

First of all, it must be remembered that in each industry the workers are divided by dozens of separate contracts. For example, in an article he wrote for the September 1952, issue of *Reader's Digest*, Charles E. Wilson revealed that in 1951 General Motors had nearly 100 separate union contracts with 17 separate unions. And, of course, to a greater or lesser degree the same was undoubtedly true of Ford, Chrysler, American Motors, etc. Under such circumstances, when the workers of one union go out on strike, workers who belong to the same or affiliated unions, but who have separate contracts, continue to work. Thus, they scab on the striking workers and not infrequently constitute a decisive factor in breaking strikes. If the non-striking workers, moved by their class instinct, show the slightest inclination to support the striking workers by joining the strike, their leaders immediately remind them that they cannot do so because they have separate "contracts." They are warned that they must respect their "contracts" and, in effect, scab on their fellow workers and union brothers. In

short, the collective interests of the workers are betrayed by the very organizations pledged to protect them. (When the rank and file take matters into their own hands and go on strike in defiance of their leaders' orders, the strike is labeled "wildcat." When this happens, union leaders join the capitalists and their mouth-pieces—press radio, TV, etc.—in hurling epithets at the striking workers, denouncing them for breaking "their contracts!")

The Becks, the Tobins, the Lewises, and other top-flight union leaders have referred to workers who have refused to cross picket lines on their orders in the vilest and most insulting terms, and have used every means at their disposal to force them to do so. Actually, more strikes have been broken by the "organized" crafts than by professional scabs. In recent years, in fact, the professional scab has become a rarity. As Daniel De Leon observed over 50 years ago:

"It is a fact, deep with, significance, though it seems to escape the observation of superficial observers, that it is not the unorganized scab who breaks the strikes, but the organized craft that really does the dirty work. . . all in fatuous reverence to 'contracts.'"—*Socialist Reconstruction of Society*.

JURISDICTIONAL DISPUTES

Another divisive factor is the jurisdictional fight. Every union is looking to control as many jobs as possible. Control of a job means the right to collect dues and assessments from the worker who holds the job, in addition to the per capita contributions made by the employer to health and retirement funds, etc. these jurisdictional fights for job control are frequent and bitter, and pit worker against worker, with the boss standing

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by waiting to see which union will be able to give him the best deal and the strongest control over the workers in his plant. Sometimes, when a union strikes in a given plant or industry, another union will move in and offer to supply “cooperative, workers” and maintain “industrial peace” in return for jurisdiction over the jobs. This practice caused New York *Post* columnist Murray Kempton to observe:

“In the old days, with minor exceptions, only scabs crossed a picket line. These days, the best way to break one union’s strike is to call in another union. . . .”—New York *Post*, Oct. 15, 1951.

Taking all these factors into consideration, it is not difficult to understand why so many capitalists support and defend the present unions and befriend and encourage the union leaders. They recognize in these unions and their leaders the instruments through which labor can be most readily regimented to wage slavery and, moreover, regimented in the name of labor. As Mr. Howard Chase, a Canadian capitalist, once put it:

“Labor unions are here to stay....The unions must be strong, in order to discipline their own members. Employers should help make them strong, so that any agreement they have with employees will be carried out. . . .”—*The Socialist Press*, December, 1945.

5. Unions As Big Business

The pro-capitalist unions have become big business—really big business. Thus they have a vested interest in the retention and perpetuation of the capitalist system of exploitation. They own millions of dollars worth of real estate of all kinds, and are daily acquiring more. They have used union wealth to establish banks, organize insurance companies, and even finance companies. They have millions invested in government bonds. Many of them have purchased large blocks of stock in the very corporations in which their union members are employed. Some of them have organized their own corporations or gone into direct partnership with other capitalists. For example, John L. Lewis is in partnership with coal operators and several railroads in a shipping firm capitalized at fifty million dollars. (*U.S. News and World Report*, June 29, 1956.)

In controlling and administering these businesses, the union leaders conduct themselves precisely like other capitalists. They have come to look upon this vast accumulation of wealth as their own private property, and they act accordingly. They employ thousands of workers. At times they have to negotiate with other unions just like other capitalists. It is not unusual for the workers employed by these unions in their various businesses to have to fight for a living wage and decent working conditions.

The accumulation of such vast amounts of wealth is bound to be a source of corruption. The individuals who

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hold office in these unions want to remain in office in order to control this wealth and reap the benefits that result from it. In addition to the possible material benefits, it gives them prestige and position.

Huge bureaucratic machines are built to perpetuate their control. Furthermore, the existence of such vast amounts of wealth inevitably attracts racketeers and gangsters who seek to share in the loot.

THE SENATE HEARINGS

Congressional investigations can do no more than emphasize the existence of this corruption. They can reveal the baneful results of pro-capitalist business unionism. They can reveal the contempt that many of these labor leaders have for their constituents, the workers, out of whose sweat and suffering their wealth has been extorted. But they cannot expose the basic fault of these unions: their failure to represent the true interests of the working class; their failure to perform the true mission of unionism. The Senate Rackets Committee's exposure of corruption in high union places merely feeds the illusion that with "honest men" in these offices these unions would be o.k. And this is to be expected. For while the capitalist politicians expose this or that labor leader, partly for political purposes and partly to lay the ground for the enactment of legislation that would make it more and more difficult for a bona fide working-class union to come into being and function without interference from the capitalist political State, these politicians will not do anything really to undermine the *influence* of the pro-capitalist unions generally. They are well aware of the capitalist tenet which *Business Week* magazine succinctly expressed more than ten years ago as follows:

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“... It has become axiomatic that an employer would rather deal with a strong union than a weak one. Hence, in facing the problem of regulating union activity an important consideration is getting it done while, at the same time, preserving the strength of the union institution.”—cited in WEEKLY PEOPLE, Jan. 25, 1947.

And *Business Week* added significantly:

“... It is in precisely those unions which are strongest, most responsible under their contracts, best disciplined, and best able to conduct an economic retreat peacefully, that the abrogation of the individual members’ rights has gone the farthest.”

It is hardly any wonder then that classconscious capitalist spokesmen often come to the defense of the union leaders. Many of them have recently pointed out that for every Beck there are dozens of “respectable” and “decent” labor leaders. As an example, the following is quoted from a New York *Times* editorial:

“Neither the committee [the Senate Rackets Committee headed by Senator McClellan] nor any enlightened employer will take a stand in these days against an honestly organized and scrupulously conducted labor union. Most large-scale employers indeed welcome the existence of unions so organized and so conducted. Without them labor-management relations would be chaotic.”—New York *Times*, Aug., 2, 1957.

Yes, indeed, the classconscious capitalists have good reasons for defending the present unions. For, in addition, to the more obvious reasons already cited, they know that if these unions are destroyed or completely discredited the workers would instinctively seek to organize new and perhaps classconscious unions. As the National Secretary of the Socialist Labor Party once put it:

“Capitalist interests require the existence of conservative unionism, not because capitalists love unionism per se, but

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because their instinct tells them that the alternative to capitalist-inspired unions and capitalist-minded union leaders is revolutionary Socialist unions and Marxian spokesmen of such unions.”—Arnold Petersen, in *Bourgeois Socialism*.

A number of years ago, the New York *Post* commented on an editorial that had appeared in the Des Moines *Tribune* that admitted this instinctive, capitalist fear. The following is quoted from the New York *Post*, Oct. 13, 1944:

“The *Tribune* defends high pay to union leaders. There is only one way unions can get top brains without paying for them, and that is to hire fanatics who will take out their pay in power. . . . Fortunately, labor is beginning to build up a corps of top men who are there because they have the executive ability and the business acumen which permit them to deal with employers and government officials on the same businesslike, basis.’ What the *Tribune* fears is that otherwise we would have ‘revolutionary’ unions instead of the ‘business’ unions that have now developed.”

Accordingly, the capitalist defenders of the existing unions will do everything possible to keep their allies, the present labor leaders and the pro-capitalist business unions in existence, instinctively realizing that “the impulse for labor solidarity is hamstrung, the path of labor’s emancipation is barred by the pure-and-simple craft unions.” (De Leon)

The state of the unions today can be summed up as follows:

1. They do not enable the workers as a class to resist effectively the encroachments of the capitalist class. Instead of uniting the workers, they divide them into separate units and utilize the “contract” effectively to prevent the workers from acting as one in their own interests. Thus, they promote organized scabbery and betray the

very interests of the workers {interests of the very workers} they are pledged to protect.

2. They do not educate the workers in their true class interests. Instead they conceal the fact of the class struggle and preach the false theory that “capital and labor are brothers.”

3. They do not prepare the workers to assume control of industry and conduct production for the benefit of all society. On the contrary, having blurred the class lines in the minds of their members, having divided them into competing units, they have committed themselves to the “principle of private ownership, private initiative and the protection of private property,” as the AFL Executive Council once put it.

4. The labor leaders have acquired wealth and prestige under this system. They therefore try to convince the workers that this capitalist system can be made to work in their interests. They foster the illusion that somehow the workers can improve their condition under the capitalist system, an obvious impossibility to anyone who understands the inherent laws of capitalist society.

5. In short, the present-day unions are not working-class unions but capitalist defense organizations. The labor leaders are the labor lieutenants of the capitalist class; and they are determined to perpetuate the capitalist system of wage slavery.

6. *Genuine Unionism*

This brings us to the very important question: What must the working class do? The answer is that the workers must organize a union of their class; a union that will accept as a fact the existing class division in capitalist society; a union, accordingly, that will recognize the need to abolish the class-divided capitalist system and that will organize, educate and drill the workers to that end. This calls for abandonment of the present unions and the complete rejection of the false premises on which they are built. In their place, the workers must build the Socialist Industrial Union.

THE CIO'S FAKE INDUSTRIALISM

Here we must digress for a moment and clear up an important point. The claim has been made that some “industrial unions” already exist. For years the CIO claimed that many of its affiliated unions were “industrial unions.” Furthermore, when the CIO and the AFL “merged,” they set up a so-called “Industrial Union Department,” the effect of which is to fortify the illusion that “industrial unions” exist. The “merged” AFL-CIO stated that the purpose of the “Industrial Union Department” was:

“...to promote the interests of industrial unions within the AFL-CIO consistent with the principle established in the AFL-CIO constitution that both craft and industrial unions are appropriate, equal and necessary as methods of union organization. . . .”—*New York Times*, Dec. 8, 1955.

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This is pure hogwash. For one thing, industrial unionism ipso facto eliminates craft unionism and its false principles. Secondly, the unions that today claim to be “industrial” have absolutely no resemblance to bona fide Socialist Industrial Unions. And no one can speak with greater authority on the subject of Industrial Unionism than the Socialist Labor Party. For Socialist Industrial Unionism is the epic discovery of Daniel De Leon and the Socialist Labor Party. It was De Leon, foremost American Marxist and for almost 25 years the Editor of the Socialist Labor Party’s official organ, the WEEKLY PEOPLE, who first discovered and formulated the principles of Socialist Industrial Unionism. And for the past fifty years, and more, the Socialist Labor Party alone has advocated the principles of Socialist Industrial Unionism. The falsity of the CIO’s claim that it was composed of “industrial” unions is readily exposed by citing a brief description of Industrial Unionism by De Leon. Said De Leon:

“Industrial Unionism does not mean a federation or confederation of the crafts engaged in the industry. It does not mean even the close blending of those several crafts into one organization. It means the integral organization of the working class.”

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, foremen, etc., are all or in part excluded from such plant unions. As we have already pointed out, in 1951 General Motors had nearly

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100 union contracts with 17 unions covering more than 300,000 employees, thus giving the lie to the United Automobile Workers claim that the automobile workers were organized into “industrial union’s.” 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 was 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. For Socialist Industrial Unionism differs fundamentally from the present unions in form, tactics and goal.

HOW THE SIU ORGANIZES

Specifically, Socialist Industrial Unionism aims to organize all the workers as a class. Accordingly, it will organize the skilled and unskilled, the employed and unemployed, all the workers of brain and brawn in all the industries and services of the land—the mines, the mills, the factories, the railroads, the hospitals, the schools—all the workers in all the industries. The form or structure of the Socialist Industrial Union will follow the lines of industry and production. The subdivisions needed for logical and efficient organization will be determined by the tool used and the product produced. But all these necessary subdivisions will be integrally united in one Socialist Industrial Union, with a common pur-

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pose and a common goal. All the officers of the Socialist Industrial Union will be democratically elected by the rank and file by direct vote. There will be no “appointees.” And all the officers of the Socialist Industrial Union will be directly and constantly responsible to their industrial constituents. They will be subject to recall at the will of the majority. Neither the Socialist Industrial Unions nor their elected officers will become involved in capitalist business. Their energies will be devoted solely to advancing the interest of the workers as a class. And the guarantee that this will be so is the fact that the Socialist Industrial Union must, and will, be composed of classconscious workers who will know and understand their Socialist goal and the correct structure and tactics that their industrial organization must embrace in order to achieve that goal. Classconsciousness is the only thing that will enable them to retain complete democratic control over their organization and to use it to serve their class interests.

THE SIU’S TACTICS

Tactically, the Socialist Industrial Union will operate squarely on the FACT of the class struggle. It will completely reject the false theory of the “brotherhood of capital and labor.” Rather, it will emphasize at every opportunity the fact that the working class and the capitalist class have absolutely nothing in common. Insofar as it is possible, at this late date in capitalist decadence, it will fight for the amelioration of conditions and against the encroachments of capitalism, but without losing sight of its real goal, which is: to effect the complete emancipation of the working class from wage slavery by abolishing the capitalist system at the earliest possible date.

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And, it should be emphasized that this class union will fight the encroachments of capitalism with the full weight of its strength. It will operate on the principle that an injury to one worker is an injury to all the workers. The workers in the Socialist Industrial Union will not be bamboozled and divided by meaningless contracts, nor forced or cajoled into organized scabbery. However, at all times the Socialist Industrial Union will understand and be guided by the fact that such battles are at best rear-guard actions forced upon it by economic conditions under capitalism and that nothing short of the abolition of capitalism can lead to freedom and affluence for the working class. As De Leon expressed it:

“...Industrialism [i.e. industrial unionism] is that system of economic organization of the working class that denies that labor and the capitalist class are brothers; that recognizes the irrepressible nature of the conflict between the two; that perceives that that struggle will not, because it cannot, end until the capitalist class is thrown off labor’s back; that recognizes that an injury to one workingman is an injury to all; and that, consequently, and with this end in view, organizes the whole working class into one union, the same subdivided only into such bodies as their respective craft tools demand, in order to wrestle as one body for the immediate amelioration of its membership [as far as that may be possible today] and for their eventual emancipation by the total overthrow of the capitalist class, its economic and political rule.”—DAILY PEOPLE, Jan. 23, 1906.

Furthermore, the Socialist Industrial Union will teach and proclaim the need for the political organization of the working class in order that they, the vast majority, may be able to establish via the ballot their democratic right peacefully to accomplish the Socialist reconstruction of society.

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THE SIU'S GOAL

The avowed goal of the Socialist Industrial Union is the Socialist Industrial Republic of Labor or the Socialist Industrial Commonwealth. It will be the power that will back up the political victory of the workers by taking, holding and operating the means of production and distribution in the interests of society as a whole. It will thereby become the instrument of Socialist Industrial Union Government.

“Industrial Unionism bends its efforts to unite the working class upon the political as well as the industrial field—on the industrial field because without the integrally organized union of the working class the revolutionary act is impossible; on the political field, because on none other can be proclaimed the revolutionary purpose, without consciousness of which the union is a rope of sand. Industrial Unionism is the Socialist Republic in the making; and, the goal once reached, the Industrial Union is the Socialist Republic in operation. Accordingly, the Industrial Union is, at once, the battering ram with which to pound down the fortress of capitalism, and the successor of the capitalist social structure itself.”—Daniel De Leon, *DAILY PEOPLE*, Jan. 20, 1913.

To repeat: it must and will be the industrial organization of the working class, and not the political organization, that takes over {the} reins of government in the Socialist Republic. And this government will, accordingly, be based upon industrial constituencies and will be administered by industrial representatives elected democratically by the workers in all the industries.

As De Leon described it:

“Civilized society will know no such ridiculous thing as geographic constituencies. It will know only industrial consti-

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cies. The parliament of civilization in America will consist not of Congressmen from geographic districts, but of representatives of trades throughout the land, and their legislative work will not be the complicated one which a society of conflicting interests, such as capitalism, requires but the easy one which can be summed up in the statistics of the wealth needed, the wealth producible, and the work required—and that any average set of workingmen's representatives are fully able to ascertain, infinitely better than our modern rhetoricians in Congress."—*Burning Question of Trades Unionism*.

And this brings us to the question: Where does the Socialist Labor Party fit into this picture?

The Socialist Labor Party is the political party of the working class. This is so because the Socialist Labor Party is the sole protagonist of the program and principles which the working class must adopt if it is ever to achieve its complete emancipation from wage slavery and, at the same time, save society from catastrophe. The Socialist Labor Party is the only organization demanding the abolition of capitalism and advocating the Socialist reconstruction of society. It has been doing so for over 67 years. It is, in short, the organization through which the workers can establish their majority right to reorganize society. At the same time, through its agitational and educational activities, it is the recruiting agency for the Socialist Industrial Union—The Workers' Power.

THE END