C.I.O. PROMISE or MENACE ?

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INTRODUCTION

To the virtually unanimous opinion that the Committee for Industrial Organization is a true organization of Labor and that John L. Lewis is a true leader of Labor, the Industrial Union Party offers vigorous dissent.

It is not gratifying that it finds itself compelled to adopt this position. Much rather would the I.U.P. concur in the generally prevailing view; much rather would it discover in the C.I.O. and in Mr. Lewis that spark of class conscious, organized rebellion which would indicate that the working class had at last discovered its historic mission—that long-awaited spark which the revolutionary movement could nurture into the flame that would consume the present decadent and abominable social system. Unfortunately, the facts deny these desires. Unmistakably and unerringly they show the C.I.O. to be the congenital sister of the invidious, labor-betraying American Federation of Labor, and Lewis a typical labor fakir of the Gompers-Green-Woll stripe.

This is a conclusion drawn after careful investigation by a working class organization which is serious in purpose, mature in experience, and scientific in method—an organization which bases its approach on the irrefutable principles of the greatest thinkers in the realm of economics and sociology, Karl Marx, Frederick Engels and Daniel De Leon.

Because the C.I.O. now occupies an important place in American capitalist-worker relations, and because it promises to become a great power in the field of politics, it is urgently necessary for workers to understand what the C.I.O. is and what it stands for. To arrive at this understanding, they cannot depend upon a ready acceptance of popular views, particularly when these bear, significantly and suspiciously, the stamp of approval of great numbers of capitalist spokesmen, including Myron C. Taylor of U.S. Steel, President Roosevelt, Governor Earle, General Hugh S. Johnson, et al. The working class can

reach a correct viewpoint only through turning an attentive ear to critical and dissenting opinion.

This pamphlet makes clear the strongly differing view of the Industrial Union Party. Comprising a series of editorials and articles which appeared in its official organ, the INDUSTRIAL UNIONIST, concurrently with the emergence and development of the C.I.O., it constitutes a step-by-step analysis of the characteristic features and purposes of that organization as they made themselves manifest. By placing the arguments and facts herein given in juxtaposition with those profferred by C.I.O. supporters, the average worker should be able to form an estimate of that organization.

Some unavoidable repetition occurs in the articles which follow, due to the individual necessities of each. For this pardonable characteristic, the reader's indulgence is requested.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
INDUSTRIAL UNION PARTY

July 28, 1937

I

AMERICAN CONVENTION OF FAKIRS

The fraudulent fuss being staged in the American Federation of Labor over what is purported to be the question of Industrial Unionism versus craft unionism should deceive no worker. The conflict does not touch the question but is a smoke screen under cover of which one labor fakir by the name of Lewis is endeavoring to gain control of the executive powers in that so-called labor organization from another labor fakir named Green.

In this struggle for power, Lewis is utilizing the support of alleged industrial union proponents such as Sidney Hillman and David Dubinsky. He is succeeding in marshalling a support behind him on the platform of Industrial Unionism because the term has become a common and favored one in the vocabulary of the American worker and because organizations recently formed have been compelled, by the industrial character of the producing plants of the nation, to adopt one of the characteristics of an Industrial Union while spurning or ignoring the essential quality that makes a bona fide Industrial Union—the goal of Industrial government—the Industrial Republic. Such "industrial unions" fall for Lewis' outcries.

The proof of Lewis' hypocrisy lies in the fact that the union of which he is president, under his regime, and with his approval, remained what it has been, an organization accepting capitalism and having as its goal the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow—"A fair day's wage for a fair day's work."

However, regardless of what the issue is between these two misleaders of labor, the American Federation of Labor will not turn to, nor can it ever become, an Industrial Union. The Industrial Union idea is foreign to its function and "you can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear."

The function of the American Federation of Labor has been to act as what Wall Street has so aptly described as—capital's

greatest bulwark against Socialism. It is an instrument devised by the capitalist class to keep the workers divided. The ideas it inculcates in the minds of the workers are false, misleading, and disastrous to their interests. Throughout its history it has attempted to create a job trust in which a selected few workers would hold a monopoly of certain jobs and regard other members of their class as interlopers, enemies and inferiors; it has at all turns frustrated, or attempted to frustrate, the uniting of workers in a common cause against capitalists, such as in times of strikes. It has taught the working class the brazen lie that the worker and the capitalist are brothers with common interests.

Out of such organization it is an illusion to believe can come an Industrial Union. The function for which the capitalist class created and supported it is as specifically predetermined as is a bayonet for its deadly purpose. The workers have a vastly different historic duty to perform than can be carried out by an A. F. of L., or even an A. F. of L. molded into the pseudo-Industrial Union favored by Lewis, Hillman, Dubinsky, the Communists and other reformers and opportunists.

The crisis existing in society today can be solved by the working class, and the working class alone. The tangle of contradictions in which the capitalist system is enmeshed cannot be unravelled. It must be cut by the lancet edge of social revolution. The system of private property in the means of production has produced the paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty, of unemployment in the presence of vast and widespread needs for the necessities of life. The capitalist system does not permit the use of its private industries without the expectation of profit, and profit is permitted to stand in the way of social welfare.

The American Federation carefully veers away from engaging in this vital question. As its recently closed convention reveals, it concerns itself with questions that do not vitally affect the working class, with questions that would leave the workers in the same or worse state, even if they were materially realized.

Too long have the workers looked to the American Federation of Labor for leadership. Their condition, both within that organization and without, has been drastically depressed. The time is long ripe for them to decide to act for themselves. The great problem posed by private ownership of industry is crying for this action. To carry out the needs of the day the workers must organize into *real* Industrial Unions.

Real Industrial Unionism differs from the fake variety in many vital characteristics.

Real Industrial Unionism recognizes that a class war between worker and capitalist rages in society. Fake industrial unionism denies this war and proclaims class brotherhood. Strikes, lockouts, the clubbing and shooting of workers are visible manifestations that prove the lying of the fakirs.

Real Industrial Unionism makes economic freedom, the abolition of classes, and ownership and control of industries by the workers, its goal. Fake industrial unionism stands for the continuation of wage slavery, the exploitation of class by class and private ownership of the tools needed to produce human needs.

Real Industrial Unionism stands for the economic and political unity of the working class in the interest of its liberation. Fake industrial unionism divides the working class into fragments, economically and politically.

The worker chooses the fake unionism of the American Federation of Labor in its present or proposed "industrialized" form with the certainty of greater suffering to himself and his family. He chooses the real Industrial Unionism if he would make a new and happier world for all. The alternative demands a quick decision!

—*Industrial Unionist, November,* 1935

II

CAPITALIST "INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM"

Since the beginning of the capitalist system, the working class has endured the sufferings of rigorous labor, unemployment, insecurity, malnutrition, and starvation, social symptoms that are the inevitable result of a system based on the private ownership of socially operated means of production.

While the working class has gone through these horrors, the capitalists, out of the sweat and marrow of the workers, have accumulated vast fortunes and have enjoyed the superabundance of products that the workers produced. But capitalism has already completed its historic task of developing and co-ordinating production so that an abundance could be made possible with little labor. At this late date it finds itself in an advanced stage of organic disintegration. Attempts at economic and political improvements to restore its early vigor have proven worthless. Unemployment is greater today than ever in the history of capitalism; malnutrition—slow starvation—is rampant throughout the country; general demoralization is setting in. The present order must be supplanted by one more suitable to the needs of the vast majority in society—the working people.

In accordance with the teachings of science, the Industrial Union Party maintains today, as it always has, that the new system must be Socialism. Only Socialism can remove the social maladies that have afflicted the workers for the past century and more. Socialism is that form of society wherein the social means of production, hitherto privately owned, pass into common, social ownership, control and operation. This necessary change can be achieved once the workers hearken to the program of De Leonism and proceed to carry it into effect.

De Leonism, the program of the Industrial Union Party, asserts that an irrepressible class struggle rages in present day society; that this struggle will not end until the workers, organized into a revolutionary political party for the purpose of

spreading the message of revolution and gaining control of the capitalist political state, and into Socialist Industrial Unions to supply the might behind the political party and to create the structure of the coming social order, take over the means of production for the benefit of all society. The program of De Leonism excludes political government from its concept of future society on the ground that the political state, being an instrument of class rule, will cease to be when social ownership of industry destroys class divisions in society. We declare that the Industrial Union, which must develop and grow under capitalism, will constitute the new structure needed to administer production.

Since the Industrial Union organizes the workers in the industries in accordance with their interconnected relations in the production of any given product, it is prepared to continue this interconnection under the new order, so that the necessities of life may continue to be produced uninterruptedly and efficiently when private ownership and control are destroyed. In this, the Industrial Union differs radically from the craft unions, such as the American Federation of Labor, which not only renounces a revolutionary goal, but organizes the workers into minute groupings disconnected from one another in industry, and hence unable to fulfill a co-ordinated productive function.

The Industrial Union organizes the shop, including all workers engaged therein, regardless of craft. It connects the shop with other shops of the same industry in the same locality, and then those regional groups are linked together in a national body which thus constitutes an unbroken chain of producing units, having the tools, the workers, and the accessibility to information as to how and how much can be produced within the given industry. The meeting of representatives of Industrial Unions of all industries will permit the exchange, collection and analysis of statistics and other data, and consequently the scientific planning of production.

Of course craft unionism does not fit into this picture. Not only is it unfit to operate industry in behalf of society, but it is a bankrupt institution now, under capitalism, as far as

the workers are concerned. Modern industry, with its automatic machinery, has all but abolished skill, and has eradicated to a large extent the "superiority" of particular crafts over the mass of the workers. The craft union as a "job trust" has failed to prevent the crash of wages among the former "superior" crafts. It is, so to speak, in the way of itself. Workers belonging to one union, in the course of their work constantly and unavoidably "trespass" on the "jurisdiction" of other crafts, bringing about friction instead of harmony. At the same time the labor "leaders" of the craft unions quarrel over the workers, claiming that workers in one union should rightfully belong to the union of another craft because occasionally they touch upon the precincts of the second craft in production. Thus recently in the A. F. of L. the spectacle was seen of the Radio Workers Union, which ignores craft boundaries, being absorbed into the Electrical Workers Union, a craft outfit, in many cases against the will of the rank and file radio workers. In short, craft unionism is in chaos, out of line with modern industry and the needs of the workers.

Because of the industrial, rather than craft basis of production, the workers, especially those previously unorganized, will tend to organize along lines which will embrace all the workers in an industry. Undoubtedly the workers in the existing unions will be compelled to follow suit. This will deal a deathblow to the American Federation of Labor as it is constituted at present.

The shrewder among the labor fakirs in the A. F. of L. readily appreciate the fact that craft unionism is passé, that its days of service in the interests of capitalism are numbered. They foresee the complete disintegration of the A. F. of L. They reason thus: "If we do not take the bull by the horns, by organizing our own kind of 'Industrial Unions,' we will sooner or later be faced by Industrial Unions organized by the workers themselves." Then the old game will be up. Hence we hear so much at this time of the proposals of John L. Lewis, the arch labor fakir, that the A. F. of L. build "Industrial Unions."

Let no worker be under the misapprehension that John L. Lewis has turned Socialist overnight because he argues feverishly in favor of "Industrial Unionism." Approval of the *form* of Industrial Union does not signify approval of Industrial Unionism. As has already been observed, the bona fide Industrial Union recognizes the undeniable fact that there exists in present day society a grim conflict between the workers and the capitalist class. The capitalists seek to wring greater profits out of the labor of the workers. On the other hand, the workers strive to gain a little more of the products they produce from their employers. The wage workers, therefore, have nothing in common with those who exploit them. The Lewises, the Howards, the Dubinskys and others who are now advocating the forming of "Industrial Unions" deny this class struggle and seek to achieve harmony between the two classes. Their "Industrial Unions" do nothing but deceive the workers into cowardly submission to the onslaughts of the capitalist class.

On the other hand, Socialist Industrial Unionism puts forward the momentous principle that the Union must ultimately capture the industries from the parasitic capitalists, and form the framework of Socialist society. Lewis' fake "Industrial Unionism" proposes the very opposite—to regiment the workers to do the bidding of their masters.

An examination of the speeches delivered by Lewis and his cohorts, at the last convention of the A. F. of L. and since, reveals clearly the reasons underlying their sudden and resolute passion for "Industrial Unionism." Lewis knows full well that craft unionism cannot cope with modern industrial production; that it is outmoded. It cannot long continue to serve the interest of capitalism. He exhorts his comrades:

> *"Why do we hesitate? We hesitate, perhaps, because there are men here representing great organizations that have rendered a splendid service to their membership,* [*sic!*] *formed on craft lines, who fear that such policy would jeopardize the interests of their membership and jeopardize the interests of their own positions. THEIR UNIONS*

ARE ALREADY JEOPARDIZED AND THEIR MEMBERSHIP IS ALREADY JEOPARDIZED BECAUSE UNLESS THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR MAY BE SUCCESSFUL IN ORGANIZING THESE UNORGANIZED WORKERS, IT IS EXTREMELY DOUBTFUL WHETHER MANY OF THESE ORGANIZATIONS NOW SO PERFECT, NOW SO EFFICIENT, WILL LONG BE PERMITTED TO ENDURE AND TO FUNCTION IN A MANNER THAT IS CONDUCIVE TO THE WELL-BEING OF THEIR MEMBERSHIP. (*Emphasis Lewis's.*)

And the followers of Lewis are no less positive as to why the American Federation of Labor must take up the question of Industrial Unionism seriously. Says Brother Chas. P. Howard:

"Now let me say to you that the workers of this country are going to organize, and if they are not permitted to organize under the banner of the American Federation of Labor they are going to organize under some other leadership or are going to organize without leadership. And if either of these conditions should eventuate, I submit to you that it would be A FAR MORE SERIOUS PROBLEM FOR OUR GOVERNMENT, for the people of this country and for the American Federation itself than if our organization should be so molded that we can organize them and bring them under the leadership of this organization." (*Emphasis ours*)

* * *

"I don't know, there is no one in this convention who knows, and I don't know that there is a one in the United States who knows how many workers have been organized into independent unions, company unions and associations that may have some affiliation with subversive influences during the past few years. However, I am inclined to believe that the number in these classes of organization is

far greater than any one of us would grant. If that be true I submit to you that there is a menace rapidly growing, a menace to the American Federation of Labor, because if someone or some agency is interested in creating a movement that is dual to the American Federation of Labor, they have a fertile field and a very fine basis upon which to work . . ."

From the above statements of John L. Lewis and Co., it is apparent that the "Industrial Unionism" they prescribe is unquestionably intended to head off the inevitable development of bona fide Industrial Unions, which, they can clearly see, are fraught with danger to the A. F. of L. and the existing order. Hence they revive a trick employed by the pirates of old. Pirates traditionally practiced the device of approaching commercial ships about to be raided, flying the flag of a friendly nation, instead of their own black flag with its skull and crossbones symbol. In this manner they could approach the unsuspecting merchantman and overpower it.

Just as experienced sailors, equipped with spyglasses, were enabled to penetrate the deception of pirates of the seas, and thus protect themselves, so will the workers of today, equipped with the scientific vision of De Leonism, shatter the masks of the labor fakirs, and bend their efforts to the only worthwhile course—the overthrow of capitalism.

—*Industrial Unionist, May,* 1936

III

THE UNITED FRONT AGAINST REVOLUTIONARY INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM

It was in the early years of the 20th century that the term "Industrial Unionism" became the watchword of the classconscious workers of America. Its principles, as formulated then by Daniel De Leon, and as they still remain today, are that the workers must organize upon the political as well as the industrial field, for the purpose of capturing the political state and destroying it, and in its place installing the Industrial Union, which is to take and hold the industries, as the government over production.

When the movement towards Industrial Unionism first appeared it was greeted with howls of rage by the labor fakirs of the American Federation of Labor, who recognized that such a movement, if successful, would mean their finish. Yet today we have the spectacle of these same fakirs, at least the shrewdest of the lot, headed by John L. Lewis, boldly appropriating the name "Industrial Unionism" and, by simulating its form, setting themselves up as leaders of the "Industrial Union" movement with the avowed purpose of *saving* Capitalism from the awakening workers.

The capitalist press, which heretofore had roundly denounced Industrial Unionism, has now opened its columns wide to Lewis's fake Unionism. Outstanding capitalist publicists, and "friends of labor" such as Professor Raymond Moley, editor of *Today*, and General Hugh S. Johnson, erstwhile Czar of the N.R.A., have come to the aid of Lewis, taking to task the conservative craft union leadership of the A. F. of L. for refusing to "industrialize" the A. F. of L. In a recent squabble between a number of craft unions claiming jurisdiction over the tobacco industry, and a "vertical" "industrial union," the Brown and Williamson Tobacco Company, manufacturers of certain popular-priced cigarettes, sided with the so-called Industrial Union.

Last, but not least in the array of defenders of this fake unionism, the Communist and the Socialist Parties have each made common cause with Lewis and his cohorts, and are vigorously assisting his Committee for Industrial Organization in its work of steering the workers into the shambles of capitalist, class-collaborationist, vertical unionism, now sailing under the false flag of "Industrial Unionism."

In so working hand in hand with the deadliest of working class enemies, the labor lieutenants of capitalism, the Communist and the Socialist Parties have now plumbed the lowest depths of depravity. To fully appreciate the enormity of the offense against the working class in this alliance between these two so-called working class organizations and the labor fakir Lewis, it is necessary to understand the reason for Lewis's sudden "militancy" and his eagerness to organize the workers of the vital mass production industries.

Lewis, unlike the Bourbon craft-fakirs who "learn nothing and forget nothing," is shrewd enough to read the handwriting on the wall. Capitalism has definitely been shaken. The old form of craft organizations can no longer serve the interests of the workers and they have been thoroughly discredited. Even before the debacle of 1929, social evolution (through technological development which allowed the displacement of skill in industry) had condemned the A. F. of L., and its membership and prestige were rapidly dwindling. The "depression" played havoc with craft unionism. It was President Roosevelt who came to the rescue of the fakirs. When the N.R.A. was launched in June, 1933, capitalism's faithful retainers, the labor fakirs, were not overlooked, and provision was made in the famous section 7A for encouraging the workers to organize.

The craft union leaders took new heart, loudly proclaiming section 7A to be the "Magna Charta" of labor's rights, and called upon the workers to organize under the banner of the A. F. of L. The response of the workers was overwhelming; hundreds of thousands answered the call. For the first time in its existence, the A. F. of L. gained a foothold in the vital mass production industries, such as automobiles, rubber, oil, etc. This

success was more than the craft union leadership had bargained for. The craft form of unionism proved inadequate to organize the workers in these mass production industries, and new unions, based upon vertical organization within a particular industry, were found necessary. After the first flush of triumph, the craft union fakirs realized that these new unions constituted a potential threat to their domination in the A. F. of L. Bent on preserving their power at all costs, the fakirs set about to dismember and distribute their membership among the various craft unions.

The disillusioned and enraged workers, smarting under this treachery of the craft unionists, were now ready to turn completely against capitalist unionism, but it was just at this moment that the Communist and Socialist Parties, the self-appointed agents of Lewis, got on the job, and by raising the terrifying cry of the fakirs, "dual unionism," were able to keep the workers in the A. F. of L.

Lewis, realizing that the bourbonism of the craft unionists was not only endangering themselves, but capitalism also, together with all of its faithful retainers, including of course John L. Lewis, definitely broke with Green, Woll and Co., and set out to head off the awakening spirit of solidarity among the workers, and to turn it into "safe" channels. The canny Lewis clearly saw that if the workers in the vital mass production industries were left free to organize along the lines of real Industrial Unionism, the inherent strength that comes with that form might prove a tremendous obstacle to the capitalist class. It was his job to head them off.

To meet the threatening danger, what was more simple than to place one's self at the head of the instinctive movement of the awakening workers towards Industrial Unionism, pirate its name, simulate its form, and, under this cover, carry on for the greater glory of capitalism? That is precisely what Lewis has done.

It is no mere accident that the term "Industrial Unionism," representing a revolutionary challenge to capitalism, is now being employed to deflect the workers from the revolutionary goal of Industrial Unionism. It is an age-old ruling class trick

to adopt the name and form of a threatening revolutionary movement and then proceed to emasculate its revolutionary content and substance. In the days of the ancient Roman Empire, when the revolutionary communistic Christian movement could not otherwise be stopped, the Roman ruling class finally adopted Christianity as the official state religion and that was the end of the Christian movement as a threat to the established order. In our own day, when Hitler set out to destroy the German working class movement, he adopted the name of "Socialist" and employed many so-called "Socialist" phrases, such as "demand," "struggle," etc. Of course Hitler's National Socialism had nothing in common with Socialism, but it served as a decoy to lure to their doom the unsuspecting German workers, who never understood the difference. Likewise, here in America, recognizing that craft unionism and its old shibboleths have outlived their usefulness as bulwarks for capitalism, Lewis has risen to the occasion by pirating the name of Industrial Unionism and employing it to deflect the awakening workers from the revolutionary path of real Industrial Unionism.

Already Lewis has succeeded far better than he had dared hope. Not only has he won the approbation of leading capitalist spokesman, including the covert support of President Roosevelt himself, but he has won the unqualified and even unquestioning support of the Communist and Socialist Parties which have thrown all their resources behind his Committee for Industrial Organization.

At first blush it may appear strange that these so-called working class parties, which claim to be opposed to capitalism, should see eye to eye on the question of unionism with Mr. Lewis, who is universally acknowledged to be one of capitalism's most faithful and devoted henchmen. However, in these days of United Fronts, the united front between Mr. Lewis and the Communist and Socialist Parties is perfectly natural and altogether fitting and proper. All three look upon the union principally as an instrument for ameliorating the condition of the workers. To them the concept of the union *as the government of the future society,* which is the very essence of Industrial

Unionism, is utterly foreign and unknown. It is true enough that whereas Mr. Lewis favors rule by the Republican and Democratic politicians, the Communist and Socialist Parties want to replace these by Communist or Socialist politicians, but in reality this is a distinction without a difference.

Despite their close affinity to Lewis, the C.P. and the S.P. cannot help but be acquainted with Lewis's black and infamous record of working class betrayal, and, when pressed, dare not deny that he is a deadly enemy of the workers. But, they contend, the fact remains that Lewis is building "Industrial Unions" and since this is a tremendous step in advance over craft unionism, all should support Lewis in this work. After the "Industrial Unions" are built up, then Lewis and the rest of the reactionary leadership will be discarded and the unions will be revolutionized.

This mode of reasoning may appear very convincing, especially to those who are not familiar with the history of the American labor movement, but even a superficial acquaintance with that history must reveal the fallacy of the theory. For most of the past 17 years the Communist Party has been boring from within Lewis's own organization, the United Mine Workers of America, and before them, the Socialist Party bored for over 20 years, and yet they are still far from dislodging the fakirs from their control. The fact of the matter is that John L. Lewis is more strongly entrenched today than ever before. At the last convention of the U.M.W.A. he was in absolute control and he secured the endorsement of President Roosevelt for re-election by an almost unanimous vote. Not one Communist or Socialist Party voice was raised in opposition. Our Communist apologists explain this betrayal of working class interests on the ground that Lewis rules the U.M.W.A. autocratically and there is no opportunity for democratic expression. Presumably after these "Industrial Unions" have been set up on the pattern of the U.M.W.A., the C.P. and S.P. members will become the official opposition to Lewis, and forty years from now will be giving us the alibi that the Lewises of that date are

the undisputed autocrats of their "Industrial Unions," because there is no opportunity for democratic expression!

Long ago Daniel De Leon pointed out that the United Mine Workers of America, and by the same token present day vertical unions, was not an Industrial Union, even as to form:

"So, again, with 'Industrialism.' It does not consist of the clubbing together of a few closely kindred trades into one industry. If that were 'Industrialism' then, indeed, Mitchell's [Lewis's predecessor as Czar of the U.M.W.A.—Ed.] organization which holds together several, not even all the crafts, that work immediately in and around the mines, but which is an autonomous body; which is a body that has its hands at the throats of all other crafts and industries, leaving them all in the lurch every time they are under capitalist fire; which is a body that holds that the capitalist plunderer and the plundered wage slave are brothers with reciprocal interests; and which, as a result of its inherent principles, is a body that aims at the preposterous task of establishing 'harmonious relations' between the Baers and their victims, the miners—then, indeed, would such a monstrosity as Mitchell's organization with its capitalist mine holders as secretary-treasurers for the Union, be a sample of Industrialism. That, certainly, is not Industrialism."

De Leon then proceeded to give a classic definition of Industrial Unionism:

"Industrialism 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 can not, 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, and for their eventual emancipation by the total overthrow of the Capitalist Class, its economic and political rule."

And finally, De Leon concluded:

"A being in a bonnet is not therefore a woman, a being with a beard is not therefore a man nor is a wolf in a sheepskin a lamb. The Socialist Industrial Union respectfully declines kinship with Belmont's labor lieutenant Mitchell's concern."

—*Industrial Unionism, p.* 35-36.

But not so with the muddleheaded Communist Party and Socialist Party. As far as they are concerned the wolf (Lewis) in a sheepskin is a lamb, and the United Mine Workers is an Industrial Union. With such invaluable allies, it is not at all surprising to find that Lewis has succeeded in deluding large numbers of workers into accepting him as the new messiah of "Industrial Unionism," and that under cover of this confidence, he is carrying on his dirty work of working class betrayal. To illustrate the extent of Lewis's influence, we may point to the recent convention of the United Automobile Workers of America, an A. F. of L. affiliate. The following dispatch from the New York Times of May 4th, 1936 speaks for itself:

"South Bend, Ind., May 3 (AP)—The convention of the newly formed United Automobile Workers of America, an A. F. of L. union, yesterday endorsed the candidacy of President Roosevelt without a single dissenting voice an hour after voting down, two to one, a similar resolution proposed by the Bendix local of South Bend.

"The convention reversed itself after Homer W. Martin, new international president, reminded the delegates that Mr. Roosevelt was the choice of the committee on industrial organization headed by the United Mine Workers president, John L. Lewis, and that the Lewis committee had offered to aid the automobile union in organizing the industry."

As a matter of fact, the convention had previously adopted a resolution calling for the organization of a Farmer-Labor Party. Thus, the delegates, while not altogether clear, were beginning to move away from the class collaboration policies of the A. F. of L. This instinctive groping of the workers toward class conscious revolutionary political action was nipped in the bud by Lewis's agents, not the least of whom were members of the Communist and Socialist Parties who were sitting as delegates in a convention which voted *unanimously* to endorse the candidacy of Roosevelt.

HERE WE HAVE THE TREASONABLE FRUITS OF SUPPORTING LEWIS, THE LABOR LIEUTENANT OF THE CAPITALIST CLASS, AS A BUILDER OF "INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM"!

Here we see plainly that Lewis is building up his "Industrial Unions" to serve as lightning rods to run into the ground the electricity of awakening class consciousness. Every union that Lewis, with the aid of the Communist and Socialist Parties, succeeds in organizing, is but another bulwark against working class interests, another fortress to be overcome and destroyed.

Revolutionary Industrial Unionism ALONE is the hope of the working class. All other unions, regardless of how closely they simulate Industrial Unionism in form, are capitalist institutions and cannot help but be the undoing of the working class.

Workers, do not heed the siren call of the United Front of the betrayers of the working class, Lewis and the Communist and Socialist Parties! Organize your might, not to support capitalism and its politicians, but to overthrow them. UP WITH REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM.

—*Industrial Unionist, June,* 1936

IV

OLD POISON IN NEW BOTTLES

A prenatal symptom of the kind of unionism which John L. Lewis and his fellow "insurgents" within the American Federation of Labor are attempting to bring into existence is already manifested. It has not taken long for the workers to be able to see that the advocates of the "new unionism" hold to, and will carry over, the whole array of contrivances with which craft unionism has hog-tied them these many years. The attitude of Lewisism toward the strike taking place in Seattle against the Hearst *Post-Intelligencer* confirms the position of the Industrial Union Party that the workers will merely leap from the frying pan into the fire when they pass from the camp of Green into that of Lewis.

The chief function of craft unionism—today it can be called official capitalist unionism—is to prevent the unity of the workers so that they will be ineffective in their struggles with the capitalist class. This is accomplished by the labor leaders in a number of ways. One of these is to divide the workers into a great number of relatively small autonomous unions, each of which has a specific jurisdiction. As crafts have become almost completely dissolved in the mechanization of production, the jurisdictional borders have become blurred, with the result that the workers in the various unions involve themselves in struggles with one another instead of with the capitalist class, as each craft union contends that this or that part of industry comes under its jurisdiction instead of some other craft organization.

With diabolical efficiency the labor fakirs long ago found another effective way of further binding the workers. That means is the contract—the agreement drawn up between the capitalist and the union in which the conditions for exploitation of the workers are laid down. Quite innocently, it appears, the expiration of contracts for the various craft unions in a

given industry often occur on different dates, so that workers find themselves either out on strike while their fellow workers in other craft unions, working in the plant, help the capitalist defeat them, or, they find themselves converted into scabs who help the capitalists defeat their fellow workers. At all costs the "sacred contract" must be honored.

As Daniel De Leon, America's foremost Socialist thinker, often pointed out, the contract between the capitalist and the worker is in reality a fraud. The essential principle of a contract is the equality of the contracting parties. The contract between labor and capital is invalid because the two parties to it lack the common characteristic. Labor is subservient to capital. The worker is whipped by the lash of necessity which the capitalist holds over him in his capacity as owner of the means of production. In order to live the worker must work, and he is compelled to enter into agreement at the peril of starvation. Such contract therefore is invalid.

However the labor fakir—capital's lieutenant in the unions—pursuing his function of misleading the workers, demands strict adherence to the document. "The honor of the Union is at stake," he cries. "Shall we violate our word?" And the deluded workers permit themselves to be tricked into becoming scabs, or be scabbed upon.

Industrial Unionism scorns and denounces such perfidy. Industrial Unionism condemns craft division of the workers. Its aim is to unite the whole working class into one integral organization for purposes consistent with working class interests. The Industrial Union emphatically rejects the contract as an instrument favorable to the capitalist, being in fact a deal between the exploiter and the labor fakir, in which the labor power of the worker is sold at a stipulated price for a certain period, regardless of cost-of-living changes which may produce suffering among the workers. The contract restrains the workers from striking when working conditions become intolerable. It produces certain proof of the inherent weakness of the craft union because a real union of workers would have the strength to dictate the conditions of their labor—within limitations of

economic law and the present social system—and holds itself free to attempt gains at any time.

This posture of Industrial Unionism on the contract provides the standard for a test of the "industrial unionism" which Lewis, Dubinsky, Howard, and other leaders of the Committee for Industrial Organization advocate. Testing the attitude of one of these leaders toward the workers on strike in Seattle it becomes evident that the "industrial unionism" being foisted by this group is spurious—a new form for misleading the workers along old paths. It remained for Charles P. Howard, President of the International Typographical Union, to throw ahead the shadow of coming events.

In Seattle, the editorial workers of the Hearst paper, in preparation for a rebellion against the low wages, long hours, and other unbearable conditions under which they had labored, started to form a union. They had succeeded in organizing a number of workers, when the management learned what was going on, and set about to put a stop to it. Two experienced newspapermen who had been employed by the *Post-Intelligencer* for many years, and who had received increases in wages not long before—a mark of their useful services—were unceremoniously discharged on the ground of incompetence and insubordination. This action of the company precipitated a strike by the workers of the editorial department, who demanded the reemployment of the two men.

As is usual in newspaper plants, the workers were divided into numerous craft unions, each of which was tied up with a contract. The workers in the pressroom, the composing room, and other departments of the paper were confronted with the prospect of now becoming scabs who would continue working and assist the arrogant Hearst to defeat the strikers. To their eternal credit, obedient to the urgings of class sentiment, and moved by a spirit of class solidarity, these workers downed tools, and shut down the plant completely.

These craft unions had contracts and they had to be reminded of it. Was it some reactionary who called it to their attention? Was it a Frey or a Green? No indeed! It was a

"progressive," an "industrial unionist," Charles P. Howard, of the Committee for Industrial Organization—John L. Lewis's group for promoting so-called Industrial Unionism. In a telegram to the local unions, he peremptorily ordered the workers back—to become scabs. He enjoined them to remain loyal to their contracts—and betray their fellow workers.

The kind of unionism the workers may expect from the camp of Lewis and Howard is clearly indicated by this incident. The ideology of deception and the ethics of thuggery are to be carried over into the newer form of craft unionism—Lewis's "industrial unionism."

It is another instance of a new, appealing, and innocent-looking bottle containing the same poison which has heretofore proved fatal to the workers.

—*Industrial Unionist, September,* 1936

V

THE REAL JOHN L. LEWIS

The split in the ranks of "organized" labor which has divided the forces of capitalist unionism into two warring factions has had wide-spread repercussions in the ranks of the unorganized. John L. Lewis and his Committee for Industrial Organization have secured the support of a large body of capitalist newspaper opinion in their fight against the A. F. of L. The Communist and Socialist Parties, with all their dissident factions, have given their unqualified endorsement to the Lewis movement. All are busily engaged in palming off the C.I.O. on the working class as a genuine Industrial Union movement.

Profiting by this widespread support and aid, Lewis and his lieutenants have initiated and are carrying on a vigorous and aggressive campaign among the unorganized workers of several vital mass-production industries. Taking a leaf from the book of Hitler, who did not scruple to employ the Socialist indictment of capitalism to woo the German workers for his special brand of "National"Socialism, Lewis has resorted to the crudest form of demagogy against his rival labor fakirs, denouncing the A. F. of L. for its scabbery, division and betrayal of the workers, its lack of democracy, and its anti-working class outlook in general.

These tactics have not been without their successes. And thus it has come to pass that John L. Lewis—than whom there has been no blacker figure, no more consistent betrayer in the whole sordid history of the working class betrayal — now emerges lilywhite, a great "democrat," the new Messiah who is going to lead the working class to the promised land of better wages and shorter hours, via the C.I.O.

Lewis's erstwhile bosom pals of the A. F. of L. have not been taking his demagogy lying down. As old comrades-in-fakirdom they know the real John L. Lewis with the glamor stripped away. In retaliation for his attacks they have brought

out the skeletons in the Lewis closet for public inspection. That arch-reactionary craft union champion, John P. Frey, President of the Metal Trades Department of the A. F. of L., was selected to open the counter-attack. In an address delivered before the recent convention of the International Association of Machinists at Milwaukee, he pried the lid off some of Lewis's past history. To the question, "Who is John L. Lewis?" Frey replied:

"Mr. John L. Lewis for many years was a cheap political hack horse for the Republican leaders. Mr. John L. Lewis traveled on the presidential campaign train with Mr. Harding, with Mr. Coolidge, and with Mr. Hoover. He may have had in mind that by doing so he could be of some service to the United Mine Workers, but the fact that he was ambitious to be Secretary of Labor has always led those of us who knew what was going on to believe he was more interested in his personal advancement than that of his organization.

"What kind of president is he today? Well, the United Mine Workers of America is composed of 30 districts. These districts have district officers and sub-district officers. One of these districts is the State of Illinois. One of them is the State where I lived for a good many years, Ohio, a State in which not an ounce of coal was ever dug by a non-union miner for over 30 years.

"Now, of the 30 districts, 20 of them are so-called provisional districts. That is, the right to elect their own officers has been taken away from them, and the district officers and the sub-district officers are appointed by Mr. John L. Lewis. Not only that, but the check-off, the money that the coal operator takes out of the pay envelope of the miner for his dues, instead of being sent to the district officers, goes to Washington to the national officers and Mr. Lewis sends back as much as he believes is necessary to conduct the affairs of the district. . . .

"Now, is Mr. Lewis sincere? Let us see. In the Atlantic City convention and since that time in his official

statements and releases from his committee he insists that in the large mass production and in other industries every one employed by the corporations must be members of one union; that there is no form of organization other than that which will meet the situation. . . . I asked him in the Atlantic City convention to tell the convention whether he was honest and sincere enough in his position to blaze the way and take the lead by saying: 'I not only believe in the industrial form of organization in the automobile industry, the rubber industry, and the steel industry, but I will lead the way by pledging the convention that I will see that the United Mine Workers working in the mines owned and operated in these industries shall become members of the industrial union of the industry.' Oh, no. The United Mine Workers will have jurisdiction over every man employed in and around coal mines in the United States and Canada. For the rest of us, he thinks we are not entitled to anything like that."

To this indictment of Mr. Lewis it is only necessary to add two additional specifications which Mr. Frey very conveniently neglected to include:

First: Freedom of political conviction is denied to the members of the United Mine Workers, Mr. Lewis's union. The miners' constitution, amended at the behest of Lewis, specifically prohibits members from belonging to the Communist Party. Of course, the term "Communist" is very elastic. In practice it has proven to mean any one who dares to oppose "our great leader" John L. Lewis.

Second: Lewis's choice strike-breaking record, which, even in the scabby A. F. of L. is equalled by few and excelled by none. Mr. Frey's reluctance on this score is only natural: he came to the Machinists' convention fresh from a little job of strike breaking of his own, performed in Butte in the best A. F. of L. and John L. Lewis tradition.

With these additions the picture of the United Mine Workers under the benign leadership of Lewis is complete. It is

this type of "Unionism" that the Communist and Socialist Party lickspittles of Lewis would foist upon the workers in the mass production industries in the name of Industrial Unionism. These muddleheads would have the workers forge the very chains that would make escape from capitalist slavery impossible.

What a world of difference there is between real Industrial Unionism and the caricature John L. Lewis would bring into being with his C.I.O. and his Socialist and Communist Party allies. Real Industrial Unionism has for its goal not the preservation of capitalism a la Lewis, but its *abolition*. Real Industrial Unionism is not the handmaiden of capitalist politicians a la Lewis, but would abolish politicians and the political state for ever, and in their stead establish the Union itself, as the government of the Industrial Republic of Labor. Finally, real Industrial Unionism, contrary to Lewisism, teaches that there can be no harmonious relations between capital and labor, that there is no identity of interests between the robbing capitalist class and the robbed working class.

Real Industrial Unionism teaches the workers to organize upon the political field to capture and destroy the capitalist political state; and to unite on the industrial field to supply the economic might to back up the fiat of the workers' ballots, as well as to constitute the embryo of the government of future society. Real Industrial Unionism is the highest form of democracy possible in society, industrial democracy, where every worker has a voice in the direction of industry, and where self-appointed leaders giving orders from above are unknown.

Workers of America, the choice between real Industrial Unionism and Lewis's fake imitation is clear. Organize into the Lewis C.I.O. unions for defeat and destruction; organize into Socialist Industrial Unions for victory and emancipation!

—*Industrial Unionist, October,* 1936

VI

THE SHIPWORKERS HAVE A CONTRACT

Large numbers of workers who have awakened to the anti-working class character of the American Federation of Labor are turning hopefully to John L. Lewis and his brand of "Industrial Unionism." Among these are the Camden shipworkers, whose heroic struggles against capitalist encroachments have been recorded from time to time in these columns. Lewis, a past master in the art of demagogy, has blinded these workers to the all-important fact that in principle there is essentially no difference between the scabby A. F. of L. and Lewis's fake industrial unionism. Both are dedicated to the task of preserving the capitalist system of wage exploitation. Both are grounded on the lie that the interests of capital and labor are identical and harmonious. Both accept the contract and arbitration as bona-fide and helpful to labor. Affiliation of workers to either the A. F. of L. or the C. I. O. is equally harmful to their interests.

The very experiences of the Camden shipworkers give the lie to the capitalist fiction that the contract and arbitration are beneficial to the workers. Back in 1933, driven to desperation by successive wage cuts and intolerable working conditions, the workers in the New York Shipbuilding Corporation yards spontaneously revolted and organized into their present union. When the corporation refused to grant the demands of the union, its first strike was called in 1934. The workers presented a solid front, and after a seven weeks battle brought the corporation to terms. Laboring under the delusions of capitalist unionism, the workers accepted a contract as a matter of course. They looked upon the contract as a source of strength which would keep the corporation in line. They were soon disillusioned.

No sooner had the men returned to work, than the corporation proceeded to tear up the provisions of the contract, one by one. It introduced the speed-up and various incentive systems,

and made new occupational classifications for wage purposes, which scaled down the earnings of the men and discriminated against union workers. In short order all of the gains of the strike were whittled away.

This discouraging experience was not sufficient to break the workers' superstitious faith in contracts. As a counter move to the corporation's scrapping of the terms of the contract, the union elected a committee from all the departments in the shipyard to collect data on the corporation's violations of the contract, with a view to plugging up these holes when a new contract was drawn. The men thus thought to checkmate the corporation.

Upon the expiration of the old contract the corporation refused to meet the new terms of the union, and a second strike ensued. Once more the yard was shut down 100%. During the second strike the workers were repeatedly warned by speakers from the I. U. P. not to rely again upon capitalist promises, but to depend upon their own economic strength, and to keep that strength unfettered with contracts.

The second strike lasted seventeen weeks. The Federal government became concerned, because of the continued tieup of new navy vessels under construction at the New York Shipbuilding yards. President Roosevelt intervened personally, and offered the union a settlement which recognized the union as the bargaining agent of the strikers and provided for arbitration of all the union demands. Our comrades and sympathizers in the union fought vigorously against this settlement, pointing out that arbitration, like the contract, is nothing but a capitalist swindle, a trick to break up the solidarity of the workers, when all other methods fail.

Arbitration and the contract are based upon the false premise of the equality of the contracting parties. The worker in capitalist society is a commodity, compelled to sell himself at the best obtainable price, while the capitalists monopolize all of the social means of production and have in their control the government and its machinery, to do their bidding. How can there be equality between the workers and their exploiters? All

the workers have is their economic power over production. Shorn of that power, which is precisely the object of arbitration and the contract, the workers are powerless and helpless before their masters. Despite the opposition within the union, the arbitration settlement was approved by the strikers and they returned to work.

An arbitration board, consisting of Rear Admiral Wiley, Retired, as "impartial" chairman, and one representative each from the union and the corporation, was set up. After a series of hearings, the impartial chairman rendered a decision finding in favor of the men, granting a wage increase and certain improvements in working conditions. The findings of the board were incorporated in a 2½ year contract signed by the union. Thus, in a period of rising living costs the workers now find themselves with a contract around their neck and their wages unalterably fixed for 2½ years. Already the rise in the cost of living has exceeded the increase the men received, and costs are still rising. But the men are without redress; they have a sacred contract!

With the signing of this new contract the workers took heart once more. Now, they thought, they had an impartial chairman to fight their battles and keep the corporation in line. The second contract, however, turned out to be but a repetition of the first. Union members active in the strike were openly discriminated against, transferred to night work, and otherwise shifted around. The contract provided for rotation of work, but the company saw to it that its company union rats got the work while the union members were overlooked. Once again the corporation began to reclassify jobs, with corresponding changes in wage rates, so as to nullify the wage award of the arbitration board.

The workers, stung again, appealed to the "impartial" chairman for redress. Then they learned about arbitration. An idea of how arbitration works out in actual practice is supplied by the following report of John Green, President of the union, and its representative on the board, which appeared in the March 1st issue of the *Shipyard Worker*:

"Since the publication of the last report of the activities of the adjustment board, the board has had before it four cases. The first of these cases involved the new rate of nine of our members in the painting department. These men were receiving either the second or third rate. It was the union's contention that these men had all of the qualifications and experience which were required of painters receiving the highest rate, and these men, therefore, should also have received the highest rate. . . . The decision of the impartial chairman was rendered on February 10th and read as follows: 'The position of the union is not sustained; the complaint is dismissed. . . .'

"The impartial chairman has subsequently, at a meeting of the Board, stated that in his opinion the award permits the corporation to classify a man, but that the board has a right to review this classification. Whether by this the impartial chairman means the Board, upon proper evidence, can also render a decision as to the proper rate of pay or classification of an employee, is, however, uncertain.

"This is a matter which goes to the heart of the whole award. As was pointed out by the union's representative to the Camden Board of Arbitration at Washington, if the corporation has the right to reclassify men or give new employees classifications irrespective of their ability and experience, the wage rate established in the yard by the award becomes meaningless. . . .

"Two of the four cases were also cases of classification, but involved only individual members of the union. The impartial chairman's decision was precisely the same as the one rendered by him in the case of the nine painters.

"The remaining case was surrounded by unusual circumstances. One of the counters had been laid off on the alleged ground of reduction in force. No attempt was made to give him a share of the available work, and there appeared to be nothing that would decrease the efficiency of the department if such a division of work was practiced in his case. Instead of presenting a formal complaint, how-

ever, as should have been done, the other counters, made very indignant by the occurrence, insisted upon the immediate reinstatement of the man. The case was immediately submitted to the board. The board sustained the union's position that the man had been improperly laid off and ordered his reinstatement. . . ."

In other words, the union lost three out of four test cases. In the bargain, the entire wage scale structure had been undermined, and the corporation encouraged to create new job classifications, cutting pay almost at will. It is to be noted that in the one case where the union was successful, the "impartial" chairman was confronted by a strike of the enraged fellow workers of the man who had been discriminated against. Perhaps this had something to do with the prompt and favorable decision of the chairman!

Here we see the fruits of arbitration. This is merely one report. Time and time again the union representative has reported to the membership at union meetings that he was being given the "run around" and could get nowhere with the chairman.

The workers have since taken the hint. They have met the corporation's discrimination and encroachments with a series of sit-down strikes. The most recent one occurred October 14th last, when 800 men, the entire second shift, refused to start operations after reporting for work, until specific grievances had been adjusted. Not a wheel turned during the entire shift; the sit-down was 100% effective. The next day the *Camden Post* carried the following account of this occurrence:

"Eight hundred workers at the New York Shipyards staged a 'sit-down' strike because the company is not abiding by an agreement reached with the shipworkers union following the strike of 1935, according to John Green, International President. Green heads the Industrial Union of Marine and Shipbuilding Workers of America.

" 'The strike was called because of grievances and we are not getting anywhere on adjustments,' Green declared

early today. The company is 'chiseling' by setting up new classifications not provided for in its agreement with the union. 'The company is also violating the rotation clause in the agreement. The foremen are not equalizing the spread of the work and rotating the men. Instead loyal company men are being given preference over union men. They are discriminating against the union and showing favoritism to loyal company workers. . . .' "

Bitter experience is teaching the Camden shipworkers the elementary truth that their interests and those of their employers are not identical and harmonious, but on the contrary are antagonistic. The corporation is determined to extract a higher and higher profit out of the hides of its wage slaves and this it can only do by slashing wage rates and speeding up and intensifying labor. The strength of the workers lies, not in contracts and arbitration agreements, but in their organized economic power to control production. The capitalist class and its lackey "impartial" chairmen will respect nothing else.

In resorting to the use of their economic power in the struggle against their masters, the Camden shipworkers are on the right track, but they must go further. All history since the capitalist system arose proves that the position of the working class becomes progressively ever worse and worse. The everyday struggles of the workers, necessary as they are, can at best only halt temporarily the encroachments of their employers. The only solution for workers, of Camden as well as of the rest of the earth, is the total abolition of the system of wage exploitation and its replacement by a sane order of society in which every worker can be assured of the full social product of his toil. That is Socialism. Unless the workers realize the necessity for this change, all their struggles are as the effort to sweep back the tides of the ocean with a broom—hopeless. Permanent improvement of their lot as long as capitalism lasts is impossible.

Spurning the corrupt A. F. of L. only to fall into the trap of Lewis's "industrial unionism" is likewise no solution for the difficulties of the Camden shipworkers. As pointed out above,

in all essential principles the two outfits are exactly alike. Both deny the antagonism between capital and labor which the Camden workers have only too sharply experienced. Both seek to prevent workers from asserting their class solidarity and using their economic strength, by accepting and advocating the use of such capitalist weapons as the contract and arbitration, both of which the Camden workers have found hurtful.

For the final victory over their capitalist exploiters it is necessary for the workers to organize both industrially and politically; industrially into ONE integral Industrial Union of ALL the workers with the purpose of taking and holding the industries of the land and administering them under the new society; and politically into a revolutionary political party with the mission of abolishing the capitalist government and substituting the Industrial Republic of Labor in its stead.

This alone constitutes Industrial Unionism. Anything else is a falsehood, a handmaiden of capitalist exploitation.

—*Industrial Unionist*, December, 1936

VII

LABOR LEADERS OR LABOR FAKIRS?

One of the tenets of the class conscious revolutionary movement in this country, ever since the days of Daniel De Leon, has been the teaching that leaders of unions based on the principle that capital and labor are brothers with identical interests, are in fact not leaders, but misleaders of labor. Consciously or unwittingly, they are agents of the capitalist class. Their aims are to dissipate feelings of class solidarity existing among workers, to run into the ground their maturing spirit of rebellion, and to hogtie the workers in such a manner that they can be delivered over to the capitalist class as a mass of tractible, easily exploited wage slaves, suitable for the production of wealth in such plentitude as will almost, if not fully, satisfy the greed of the owners of industry.

The passing of time has only added innumerable examples to bear out the truth of the contention. Workers organized by the labor fakirs have been intimidated, repeatedly betrayed in strikes, turned into scabs by order of their union officers, trussed into complete immobility by contracts drawn up between these "leaders" and the capitalists, and have been generally softened by these "labor lieutenants of the capitalist class." But if any worker is still inclined, despite the prodigious accumulation of past evidence, to doubt the accuracy of the term "misleader," let him scan the record of recent events as they are illuminated by two flashes struck in the struggle between "Brother" Capital and "Brother" Labor—flashes which reveal that it is only the capitalist and his labor lieutenant who are the brothers.

The first flash leaps from the pages of the *New York Times* in the form of some fearsome editorial comment and a question. Says the *Times*:

> *"It is against this background of threats and defiances that Governor Murphy's conference meets today, and one of the questions inherent in the present situation is*

WHETHER MR. LEWIS DOES NOT STAND IN SOME DANGER OF LOSING CONTROL OF HIS MOVEMENT . . . . In the automobile union it is the young hot-heads who have been coming to the front in recent weeks. These men have had comparatively little experience as labor leaders." (Our emphasis.)

Here it is in a nutshell. The accusation that labor "leaders" are the lieutenants of capital who must hold the workers in check finds its expression in the *Times* in the query as to "whether Mr. Lewis does not stand in some danger of losing control of his movement . . . . " Why should the *Times* be concerned over Mr. Lewis's control if it is not for the reason that it expects Lewis to utilize that control in the service of the class for which it speaks, the capitalist class? The accusation that the labor "leader" has as one of his insidious functions the thwarting of a growing spirit of rebellion in the workers is implicit in the worried comment of the *Times* editor that, "In the automobile union it is the young hot-heads who have been coming to the front in recent weeks." This is dangerous, suggests the *Times;* it looks bad indeed when the rank and file produces its own leaders who may challenge the supremacy or interfere with the work of the official, government-supported "leader," John L. Lewis.

Why this agitation on the part of the capitalist class? A second flash from the field of battle flares through the columns of the press and illumines the fear and the doubts felt by the capitalist class of the ability of Lewis to control his union.

Workers have been defying their union leadership and have participated in many unauthorized sit-in strikes. The capitalist class is waiting with apprehension to see whether its watchdog, Lewis, will be able to dissuade them from such conduct. It was none other than William Green, President of the A. F. of L., erstwhile colleague but now the bitter and implacable enemy of Lewis—an enmity which grows out of their competition for the position of General of capital's forces in the field of labor—who seized upon a weakness in the position of Lewis to deliver him a blow that shook the C. I. O. fakir from stem to stern.

At least in this case, the expression, "It takes a thief to catch a thief," applies. Green, aware of the necessity of proper service to capital, was able to discern readily a weak spot in the Lewis armor. With an elation more fiendish than human, he carefully shaped two horns of a dilemma and drove them into a portion of his enemy's psychological anatomy not calculated to further a sit-down technique. Issuing a statement to the press in which he denounced the use of the sit-down tactic in labor's struggles with the nation's industrialists, Green put on to the shoulders of Lewis the burden of proving that the C. I. O. was just as anxious to assist "Brother" Capital as is the A. F. of L.

Lewis's reaction to the statement of Green, outside of a few remarks expressive of his contempt for Green and a quotation from Shakespeare, was to adopt an attitude of injured silence. He chose the policy of evasion in an endeavor to sit between the two horns instead of on them. Nor could he do otherwise.

It is well-known that virtually all the sit-down strikes which have taken place have been over the opposition of the labor lieutenants of capital. The workers, acting according to their conviction that the sit-down method holds advantages over the traditional walkout form of strike, have relentlessly proceeded to follow their own views even over the objections of their leaders. That this is the case in many of the C.I.O. strikes has been openly declared from time to time in the press reports.

Green's charge placed Lewis in an embarrassing position. If he were to turn upon Green for his denunciation of the sit-down, which has proved a hot potato to the capitalist class because it has found no way as yet to handle the situation short of mass bloodshed, it would appear that he approves the sit-down, in which event the capitalist class would reject him as its labor generalissimo. On the other hand if he were to say, like Green, that he opposes the sit-down, he would make clear to the capitalist class that he does not, as the *Times* fears, exercise full control of the workers in the C. I. O., for how could the epidemic of sit-downs in the automotive factories be explained except that they were in defiance of Lewis? Such confession of

the weakness of his hold on the workers would likewise have turned capital's back on him. The dilemma left him with no choice but silence.

This situation, however, goes far beyond the question of Lewis's personal embarrassment. It provides proof conclusive that the function of the labor fakir is to organize the workers along lines and on principles opposed to their own interests, and then to place them at the disposal of the capitalist class under conditions conducive to the uninterrupted production of large profits. Not only that, but this situation also throws a strong light on the function of the conventional union of today.

Just as a burglar provides himself with tools appropriate to his trade—the jimmy, the blackjack, etc.—so does the labor "leader" equip himself with the implements he needs to gain the favor of the capitalist class—the craft or the vertical union (depending on the job he is to undertake), but in either case a union which is based on the lie that the capitalist and the worker are brothers with common interests.

It was thus that Samuel Gompers provided himself with the tool he required for the period in which he lived. In the interests of capital he imported the guild, or craft union, that had existed in England, and, having transplanted it here, succeeded in destroying the unity of workers by dividing them along craft lines. Today the crafts have been so obliterated in production that Lewis has had to contrive a new implement, the vertical union, which recognizes that modern industry has reduced all workers to virtually the same level of skill, but which seeks to perform the same end of misleading them. Essentially there is no difference between the two.

To the hundreds of thousands of honest, well-meaning workers now in the C. I. O., the A. F. of L. and other similar organizations; to the thousands of workers in the numerous independent unions which have recently sprung into being; and to all other workers, the Industrial Union Party says:

Take heed. The union which holds, and the labor leader who maintains, that capital is the brother of labor instead of his exploiter and robber, that union and that leader are your

worst enemies, constitute your greatest danger. While such unions apparently impart a sense of strength, of unity, of security, in reality they foster the destruction of all three and leave you easy prey for the capitalist class.

The time is here for the only unionism which unites the workers *as a class,* which realizes in its organization the highest potentialities of the economic strength of the workers, and which alone can insure genuine and enduring security—Socialist Industrial Unionism.

Workers, study the principles of Socialist Industrial Unionism. Read its literature. That is the first step toward emancipation from capitalism, with its labor fakirs, fraudulent unions, wage slavery, and the host of other evils which now beset you.

—*Industrial Unionist,* April 1937

VIII

JOHN L. LEWIS AND INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY

Tens of thousands of awakening workers, impressed by the sensational organizational gains of the C.I.O., and John L. Lewis's public statement in favor of economic freedom and democracy for the workers, are hopefully turning to him as a new Messiah. These workers, for the most part without previous experience in the labor movement, accept Lewis at face value. And, indeed, to a total stranger to the history of the American Labor Movement, Lewis, judged solely upon the basis of his present-day pronouncements, would appear to be a worthy and sincere advocate of labor's rights. However, it so happens that Lewis has been prominently identified with the labor movement for the past seventeen years in his capacity as President of the United Mine Workers of America. An intelligent attempt to judge Lewis must include an examination of his past record in the labor movement. The light of his past conduct and actions should throw a brilliant reflection on his present-day speeches.

Concurrently with the organizational campaign being waged by the Committee on Industrial Organization, Mr. Lewis, its Chairman and the moving spirit of the committee, has been conducting an educational campaign stressing the importance of industrial democracy and democratic methods.

In a characteristic speech delivered March 15, 1937, at a protest mass meeting held under the auspices of the American Jewish Congress, Lewis bitterly assailed the anti-democratic and union destroying policies of the Nazi government and called for economic freedom for the workers, and industrial democracy realized through union organization, as the only safeguards against Fascism in America.

In stressing the importance of democracy, Mr. Lewis is quite correct. Any individual or organization deficient in this elementary right should immediately forfeit any claim to consideration at the hands of sincere workers.

But democracy, like charity, begins at home. What is the record of Mr. Lewis on this vital issue? At the last convention of the United Mine Workers of America, one of the principal issues before the delegates was a question of autonomy. A number of resolutions were introduced upon the convention floor for the restoration of autonomy. The United Mine Workers is organically divided into thirty districts throughout the country. Its Constitution guarantees to each district the right of local self government and the control of the local organizational machinery, which is known as the right of autonomy. In the seventeen years that Lewis has been President of the United Mine Workers of America, twenty out of thirty districts have lost this right of autonomy and their leadership and officials have become provisional; that is, their constitutional rights have been suspended by Lewis and all their local officers are appointed by him and responsible to him alone. This carries with it the control of the local organizational machinery.

The pretexts for these suspensions have been many and varied, but invariably a rank and file rebellion against the autocratic policies of Lewis was the precipitating cause. These rebellions in many instances took on the form of outlaw strikes. Working conditions and rates of pay in the organized mine fields are determined by contracts mutually agreed upon. The mine operators, whenever it suits their convenience and interest, do not scruple to violate the terms of these contracts to the injury of the miners. At the 1927 and 1930 Mine Workers Conventions, Lewis reported to the delegates that many of the largest of the coal operators and corporations were brazenly breaking their contracts. Nevertheless, when the workers affected by these violations went out on strike contrary to the instructions of Lewis, he branded the strikes as outlaw strikes, denounced the strikers as "reds," etc., and sent in union scabs to break the strikes. All this in the name of living up to the sacred contracts, and keeping faith with the operators. When these workers remained obdurate Lewis simply revoked the charters of their local unions.

Districts that supported the men were made provisional and found themselves completely under the domination of the personal appointees of Lewis. Cecil Carnes, in his biography of Lewis, *"John L. Lewis, Labor Leader,"* referring to this period, writes:

> *"Revolt was everywhere against the name of Lewis. Outlaw strikes flourished like war-time cooties. Union locals were expelled because they had refused to disown members who joined a 'save-the-union' movement to oust the national leader."* (*p.* 226.)

It was from these disfranchised districts that the demand for the restoration of autonomy arose. These 20 districts, composing two thirds of the national organization of the United Mine Workers, desired democracy in a more substantial form than that supplied by the inspirational speeches of Lewis. They were, however, doomed to disappointment, for Lewis and his pay-roll brigade (of which more anon,) mowed down this mass demand for the restoration of the elementary right of local self-government. Thus these workers learned the bitter lesson that high sounding appeals for democracy in speeches, and actual democracy in the unions, were two separate and distinct things that did not necessarily coincide. Down to this very day, while Mr. Lewis is making beautiful speeches on democracy, two thirds of the districts of the union are by his autocratic methods reduced to the condition of paying dues and assessments but having no rights whatsoever as far as the conduct of their organization is concerned.

Closely related to the question of autonomy in the miners union is the issue of appointive power. The United Mine Workers constitution vests in the president the right of appointing all employees, including the editor of the official organ and the organizers of the union. Astutely utilizing this appointive power down through the years, Lewis has built up a well oiled, smoothly functioning political patronage machine which has given him an impregnable position in the union. The abolition of this appointive power has been a repeated rank and file demand in United Mine Workers Conventions. But Lewis, the great

"democrat," has always been able to defeat this step in the direction of elementary democracy.

Lewis's practical application of "democracy" is well exemplified by his control of the *Journal*. Lewis, as above noted, appoints the editor and exercises direct control over its contents. The following resolution concerning the *Journal* was introduced during the 1927 Convention:

> *"WHEREAS none except those favorable to the administration are able to get communications printed in the Journal of our union even on such subjects as nationalization of mines which was indorsed at several international conventions heretofore*
>
> *"BE IT RESOLVED that the 30th consecutive convention of the United Mine Workers of America declare for the principle of tolerance within our union and instructs the editor of the United Mine Workers Journal to publish communications from leaders and members of groups who are in favor of a new administration, because of the fact that if it is right for the administration to use the Journal to help itself at election, it is also right for the opposition to have the same privilege."*
>
> (*Minutes* 1927 *Convention*,
> Volume 2, Page 4, Resolution 65.)

John Brophy, who today is the Director of the C.I.O. and the right hand man of Lewis, led the battle for the passage of the above resolution and addressed the delegates as follows on the question:

> *"The Journal as it is, is a stiff one-sided organ. There is no opportunity for the expression of minority opinions and it seems to me if we are going to claim the credit of being a democratic organization there ought to be an opportunity for those who have views to express to get them into the official organ of the United Mine Workers of America.*
>
> *"That has not been the case for some years. The Journal has been closed to those who desire the pushing forward of*

policies that have been officially declared for. Those of you who have followed the Journal and the affairs of this convention know that the United Mine Workers of of America have declared for the nationalization of mines, but do you ever see in the official organ of the United Mine Workers anything that would indicate to any degree that the United Mine Workers considered that question an active policy? Those of you who have attempted to express opinions in the form of communications through the Journal. I would like to see the one that ever got in there. I have attempted it time and time again and there has been no opportunity to get an expression through the Journal. That goes for a number of other questions. It goes for the question of a labor party. Time and time again conventions have expressed themselves as favorable to that idea but there has not been anything editorially or in the news columns of the Journal that indicated that the mine workers were interested in the subject."

(*Minutes* 1927 *Convention,* Page 235.)

Lewis did not even take the trouble to deny Brophy's withering indictment. Brazenly and insolently he confirmed his charges.

It is interesting to note that today Mr. Brophy has seen the "light" and is taking orders from the "chief." However this in no manner affects the facts as he has stated them above. Down to this day Lewis continues in autocratic charge of the policies of the *Journal,* and not one word in opposition to his personal policies can penetrate its columns.

There is one point that Brophy neglected to make at the time which is of the utmost significance on this head. At the very time that the United Mine Workers as an organization was endorsing the principle of a labor party, Lewis in his capacity as President of the United Mine Workers was acting as a political hack for the arch reactionary, labor-hating Republican Party, supporting Harding, Coolidge and later Hoover. In other words, when the United Mine Workers of

America clearly expressed its preference, as a labor organization, for a labor party, not only did Lewis sabotage the expressed will of the membership by keeping anything relating to the matter of a labor party out of the official *Journal,* but, to add insult to injury, permitted the anti-labor Republican Party to use his official status as President of the Mine Workers as a labor front.

It is needless to add that the attempt to make the *Journal* expressive of the will of the membership, instead of being a personal puff sheet for Lewis, was defeated.

Since Mr. Brophy is today so devoted a follower and upholder of Lewis, it should be interesting to revert to his original evaluation of the 1927 Convention where Lewis finally stamped out all vestiges of opposition, and solidified his autocratic strangle-hold over the miners organization.

In a communication addressed to the *New Republic,* which was printed December 25, 1929, Brophy wrote as follows:

> *"At the Indianapolis convention* 1927, *it* [*the Lewis leadership*] *refused to admit the situation was bad. It concealed and denied loss of membership. From a packed convention it obtained a blanket endorsement of the policies that had contributed to weakness and losses. It demanded blind loyalty to the Lewis machine. Criticism of the machine was construed as evidence of disloyalty to the union. It suppressed free discussion at a time when there was the greatest need for it."*

True enough today Lewis, by the aid of, and in alliance with President Roosevelt, has succeeded in repairing the numerical losses of the U. M. W. A., and it is once more a powerful organization, but that can not wipe out the rape of democratic rights.

At the same 1927 convention Lewis was instrumental in forcing through a constitutional amendment barring all members of the Communist Party from membership in the union. The Industrial Union Party holds no brief for, and is in fact bitterly opposed to, the Communist Party and its principles. Yet our

conception of union democracy implies the right to full freedom of political conscience without penalty. The 1936 convention, again under the domination of Lewis, voted down an attempt to expunge this prohibition against membership in the Communist Party, and today a member of this allegedly democratic union can be denied the opportunity of earning a livelihood because of political convictions which are recognized as legal by the law of the land.

To symbolize Mr. Lewis's conception of democracy in actual practice we offer the following incident culled from the aforementioned biography by Cecil Carnes:

> *"At one of the numerous conventions, one of these men whose political complexion was a deep maroon asked permission to address the delegates. 'Bill,' replied the president, 'you can go out there and talk your head off, if you want to, but the minute that you start ripping the Constitution of the United States up the back, or start advocating the cause of the Soviet Government, in fact, the instant you start pulling anything with the slightest shade of red about it, I am going to interrupt you and chase you off the platform'."*

In other words, Mr. Lewis's conception of democracy resolves itself into this; perfect freedom for anyone to express the opinions that Lewis himself may be currently entertaining.

In the face of this devastating record, what becomes of Mr. Lewis's fine-sounding phrases about democracy and his pretensions to working class leadership?

Workers who have been inclined to accept Lewis at face value as a sincere and devoted leader of labor, and who were looking to him for deliverance from their economic cares, can now judge for themselves his true worth. Clear as crystal must be the conclusion that Lewis's promises and his performances are as far separated as the poles. The United Mine Workers of today, under Lewis's domination, does but mirror the future of the constituent unions of the C. I. O.

Lewis's promise of economic freedom has no more basis in fact than his pretensions to democracy. The C. I. O. organizes upon the basis of the identity and mutuality of interests between capital and labor—an economic and sociological falsehood. The C. I. O. accepts capitalism and its wage slavery as a finality, and is dedicated to perpetuating the special privileges of the capitalists who live by the exploitation of the workers. The continuation of the capitalist system of wage slavery must necessarily result in the ever worsening condition of the workers, in increased degradation and misery.

The only hope for economic freedom for the workers lies in the abolition of the capitalist system of production and its status of wage slavery. To accomplish this task the workers must look to themselves and not to false messiahs. The program of the Industrial Union Party points the way. All workers who are really interested in improving their condition permanently, owe it to themselves to study diligently this program and to adopt its principles as their own.

—*Industrial Unionist*, April, 1937

IX

THE C. I. O. — STRIKEBREAKERS!

The old English adage, "The proof of the pudding is in the eating," may well be applied to the case of John L. Lewis and the C. I. O. of which he is the Chairman, which now looms so large in the American labor movement.

Lewis, through the prestige of his leading position in the C. I. O., and with the aid of the opposition of the reactionary Bourbon section of the capitalist press, has been established in the minds of many workers as a progressive, a new Messiah who will lead the working class out of the wilderness of capitalism. Is this impression correct? Is Lewis a labor leader or is he a labor fakir? Let us examine the facts.

In our last issue we established, by irrefutable documentary evidence, that despite Lewis's loud proclamations of the right of workers to have "industrial democracy," his own union, the United Mine Workers of America, is one of the most autocratically-run and undemocratic labor organizations in the country. Unfortunately, with that characteristic faith and forgetfulness which marks the American worker, he is prone to wave aside past records in the face of today's events and say: "Well, all that is ancient history; Lewis has now turned over a new leaf, and he should be given a chance to prove his sincerity. And anyway, the C. I. O. is doing a good job in organizing the unorganized, as in the automobile industry."

It cannot be gainsaid that the United Automobile Workers of America has succeeded in breaking down the almost feudal barriers against workers' organization that have heretofore existed in the automobile industry. This is a step forward of the greatest significance and it constitutes a magnificent victory. BUT WHAT MADE THIS VICTORY POSSIBLE? In an effort to minimize the inherent power of working class solidarity and militancy, the capitalist press has credited John L. Lewis and other C. I. O. leaders with this victory, and many mis-

guided workers have fallen into a similar error. What made the victory of the automobile workers possible was their splendid spirit of working class solidarity as exhibited in the sit-down strikes, a spirit that did not waver in the face of the most bloodthirsty threats of the capitalist class and its political henchmen. Using this solidarity of the workers as a club over the heads of the auto factory owners, Lewis was enabled to negotiate contracts that have chained the workers to the will of the capitalists, and have deprived them of the right to use their economic strength, as will be shown.

But after due credit is given to the rank and file of the auto workers for breaking down the heretofore impregnable company unionism of their industry, the question arises, "Is the United Automobile Workers of America, and the C. I. O. of which it is a part, as now constituted, and on the basis of its present policies, an organization that is best calculated to serve the interests of the auto workers, and their fellow workers throughout the land, or is it an organization detrimental to the best interests of those workers?"

The answer to this question takes us back to the first principles of unionism. Unions, to begin with, are the first defense which the workers throw up against the aggressions of their capitalist exploiters. The capitalist's interest is to secure the greatest possible profits from the labor of his employees; the interest of the worker is to receive in the form of wages as large a portion of his product as he can. This conflict of interest is the fundamental cause of the constant industrial warfare between capitalist and worker. That this conflict does in fact exist, and that there can be no reconciliation of the differences between capitalist and worker are elementary truths. Does the C. I. O. recognize and act upon these principles? It does not.

Lewis, canny politician that he is, in attempting to take advantage of the resentment among awakening workers against the policies of working class betrayal of the corrupt A. F. of L., has sought to create the impression that the C. I. O. differs radically in its philosophy of unionism from the A. F. of L., but despite his pretensions to a "new" unionism, his conduct in

forcing an obnoxious contract upon the auto workers clearly reveals the essential oneness of the C. I. O. with the scabby A. F. of L. in its philosophy of capitalist unionism.

Both the C. I. O. and the A. F. of L. accept the capitalist system of wage slavery as eternal; both teach the falsehood that the interests of capital and labor are identical and that it is possible for the classes to co-operate with each other to their mutual advantage. Both seek to establish "harmonious" relations between capital and labor and to avoid industrial strife.

The philosophy thus expressed is concretely realized in the labor contract. The securing of a contract with the employer is the ultimate goal of capitalist unionism, both of the C. I. O. brand and that of the A. F. of L. The workers are educated to look upon the contract as the highest achievement of successful unionism. In the process, capitalists are divided into two categories: the "fair" employer, who signs a contract with the union, thus recognizing the labor leader and agreeing to deal with him as the representative of his workers; and the "unfair" or hostile employer who is termed a "vicious exploiter" of the workers. In return for his "fairness" in signing a contract with the union, the labor leader promises to keep the membership loyal and to protect the employer from all labor difficulties during the term of the contract, or so long as he is recognized by the capitalist.

An interesting sidelight on this question of "fair" employers was provided by Homer Martin, President of the Automobile Workers union, during the General Motors sit-down strike. In an interview published in the *New Republic,* Jan. 20, 1937, Mr. Martin classified the automobile corporations under the heads of "fair" and "unfair" to labor. General Motors and Ford were, of course, "unfair." On the other hand, Mr. Martin singled out as especially "fair" to his organization the Chrysler Motors Corporation. "The Chrysler relationship," Mr. Martin stated, "is very satisfactory." At this time, of course, there was no strike at the Chrysler plants; that occurred after the settlement of the General Motors strike.

However, only a few short weeks after Mr. Martin's designation of the Chrysler Corporation as "fair to organized labor," testimony before the U. S. Senate Sub-Committee on Civil Liberties revealed that Chrysler was one of the largest employers of the vicious industrial labor spies. James H. Smith, President of the notorious Corporations Auxiliary Corp., a labor spy outfit, testified that "the Chrysler Corporation was the best customer" of his company. During the negotiations to settle the Chrysler strike, Martin himself produced photostatic copies of records in the files of the company which established conclusively that the company maintained a blacklist against union members, who were hounded from their jobs. *And it was this outfit that Mr. Martin had designated as "fair" to labor!*

So much for "fair" and "unfair" employers.

Reverting to the labor contract, which the "fair" employer signs with the union, let us examine it a little further. Does it really benefit the workers, as capitalist unionism proclaims, or is it an "unmitigated FRAUD" on workers as Daniel De Leon and other class conscious Socialists often pointed out? A close analysis of the nature of the contract reveals that not only does it not aid the workers in the least, but that it may become a double-edged sword used against them by the employers.

In a period of rising living costs such as is now being experienced, contracts for any extensive period do not aid the worker since wage scales are fixed while prices are going up; on the other hand, while the workers are hogtied by the "sacred" contract, which their leaders teach them to revere and to uphold, there is no way for them to prevent the employers from violating the terms of the agreement with impunity. The history of the American labor movement is filled with broken contracts, broken, not by workers, but by the capitalists. Many union members have found to their sorrow that the contract is a scrap of paper which the employers do not hesitate to disregard whenever it serves their purpose to do so, while labor is compelled to stand by helplessly, utterly without redress.

The real object behind the contract becomes apparent whenever workers are compelled to strike to enforce its very

terms—or strike in violation of its express provisions, when it becomes necessary to demonstrate class solidarity with striking fellow workers and when to remain at work would be an act of treachery and betrayal. Then, all at once, the full weight of capitalist wrath descends on the heads of these courageous workers. They are denounced as contract breakers, enemies of society, outlaws, reds, communists and anarchists. All the agencies of capitalism are mobilized against them and the courts begin grinding out injunctions to herd them back to work. Foremost in the anvil chorus of hatred is to be heard the voice of the labor fakir, pleading the sanctity of the contract. Brandishing his whip of outlawry and deprivation of the means of employment, he seeks to browbeat the workers back to work.

Lest any worker question the accuracy of our evaluation of the contract and its anti-working class character, we offer in corroboration the statement of one of its most devout upholders, John L. Lewis himself, who was unwittingly compelled, by the logic of events, to lay bare the true nature of the labor contract.

During the recent period of "unauthorized" spontaneous sit-down strikes that followed the settlement of the General Motors strike, Lewis and his subordinate, Homer Martin of the United Automobile Workers, were severely criticized by the capitalist press and the General Motors Corporation for their failure to "deliver the goods" as promised, by keeping the workers docile and at work according to the terms of the contract. Lewis, considerably nettled at this criticism, lashed back, and in a public interview let the cat out of the bag about contracts. The *New York Herald Tribune,* April 15th, reported him thus: "The current idea that industrial corporations are liable for carrying out wage agreements, he argued, was a myth. The reverse was true. While he knew of no violation of a wage contract by a labor union, he said he could cite many repudiations of contracts by industrial corporations. *Moreover he added that the best legal talent has been unable to find a way to enforce a wage contract against a corporation."* (Our emphasis.) To which the *New York Times* of the same date added, "He in-

sisted that unions kept their agreements and that in the case of the miners organization, no agreement had been repudiated in 47 years, while the operators had broken contracts with the union, and the best legal talent had been unable to show how mining corporations could be held liable." Truly, when thieves fall out do honest men come into their own!

The question arises if, as Mr. Lewis here correctly states, corporations do not hesitate to break contracts with impunity, and the best legal talent has been unable to find a way to enforce a wage agreement against a corporation, then where is the rhyme or reason for labor to tie itself up with these contracts when it knows in advance that they are worthless and can serve only as a sword against itself in the hands of the capitalist exploiters? Mr. Lewis does not see fit to answer this question for very obvious reasons. The true answer is apt to be somewhat embarrassing to Mr. Lewis's pretensions to democracy and a "new" philosophy of unionism.

The experience of the General Motors workers after the recent settlement of their strike should demonstrate convincingly, if nothing else does, in whose interests contracts are entered into. The settlement of the strike was made the occasion of fond fraternizing between Mr. Lewis and his stooges in the United Automobile Workers, and the representatives of the finance-capitalist oligarchy that controls the auto industry's largest organization. In statements made at the time the settlement was affected, Mr. Lewis foretold a period of industrial peace which would prove mutually advantageous to the corporation's stockholders and to the workers, etc., etc., ad nauseum.

But no sooner were the formalities of settlement completed than the workers learned anew the elementary lesson that the capitalist leopard does not change his spots just because he has taken into partnership a set of labor lieutenants. The corporation began to violate the terms of the agreement, one after another. The rank and file of the union members and their immediate representatives, who had not yet been trained to a proper appreciation of the "sanctity" of contracts, reasoned that since the company was violating the express terms of the contract

it had signed, the truce entered into was at an end, and that war was resumed. The workers thereupon sat down again to bring the recalcitrant corporation to terms. And then they learned about contracts from Lewis & Co.

Out of a clear sky, these militant workers, most of whom were devoted upholders of capitalism and supporters of President Roosevelt, found themselves denounced as "reds" and "communists." The top union leaders gave interviews to the capitalist press denouncing the new sit-downs as unauthorized and the work of communist agents acting at the instigation of the Communist Party. Martin assured the frightened capitalists that he had the situation well in hand and that a purge was being made of "communist" and other "radical" elements "whom union leaders blame for some of the delay in evacuating Chrysler strikers last week and for the recurrence of G.M. troubles." The newspapers reported that Mr. Martin and other union leaders went to Flint to persuade the strikers to leave the plants. But these officials did not meet with very encouraging results and it was found necessary to call upon the high priest of the C. I. O., Mr. Lewis, to come to the rescue of General Motors and to uphold the sacred contract.

In a statement issued April 9th, Lewis denounced contract violators in these words: "The C. I. O. stands for punctilious contractual relations. Where strikes are illegally called, those responsible will be summarily dealt with by their discharge and their expulsion from the union."

Only one week before, the union leadership had charged that it was General Motors, and not the workers, which was violating the contract. As reported by the *New York Times*, April 2nd, "Mr. Martin said today that there were many instances where the local management of the General Motors had 'refused to realize that there is a union in their shops that must be dealt with sincerely.' 'They must realize,' he said, 'that the agreement places responsibilities on them as well as on us. While it is true that there have been stoppages of work, the local management have been openly guilty of breaches of faith with union members and representatives of the union' . . . ."

But this aspect of the matter did not trouble Mr. Lewis. It is perfectly all right for Brother Capital to break contracts, but Brother Labor must observe them faithfully at all costs.

Mr. Lewis's task of subduing the rebellious workers and rendering them fit for further General Motors depradations received aid from a most unexpected source (that is, unexpected as far as the workers were concerned.) The story that the new sit-downs were the result of the agitation of reds and communists was denied by, of all things, the Communist Party! This unspeakable crew of labor vultures actually fell so deep into the abyss of class collaboration as to denounce the sit-down strikers in almost the same language as the capitalists and their labor lieutenants. The Communist Party spurned with righteous indignation the imputation that it was in any manner responsible for or approved of the sit-down strikes conducted by the rank and file.

Deprived of their rank and file leaders who had beer "purged" out of the organization; faced with the threats of Lewis of the dire consequences that would ensue if the contract was not adhered to; and opposed by a united front of the General Motors Corporation, their own union and C. I. O. leadership, and, yes, the Communist Party, the workers were compelled to yield in the uneven struggle, and to submit to the yoke of the contract.

It was previously prophesied in these columns that the C. I. O. would very soon become nothing more than a magnified mirror of the United Mine Workers, with its dictatorial one-man rule, that of John L. Lewis, who suppresses all minority opinions, who has brazenly defied and disregarded the expressed will of international conventions, who has revoked the charters of 20 out of 30 union districts and deprived the membership of these districts of their right to choose their local officers because they dared to criticise and disagree with his policies. To what extreme lengths the C. I. O. leadership is prepared to go to acquire a stranglehold on the organization and thus suppress any attempt at opposition on the part of the rank and file mem-

bership, is eloquently revealed by the following report from the *New York Times* of April 20th:

"After the stormiest session in the history of the Flint local, which nearly approached physical combat, Homer Martin, President of the U.A.W.A., succeeded in throwing out a primary election which would have resulted in the selection of new officers of the Flint union. Outmaneuvering his opponents, Mr. Martin made two plane trips to Flint Sunday to accomplish his purpose. Defeated in early attempts to prevent the election, Mr. Martin succeeded in having the balloting invalidated when it appeared that the results favored a slate opposing Mr. Martin's leadership.

"All indications were that the anti-Martin group was winning an easy victory in the election, but the union President maintained the upper hand by having the voting thrown out."

Thus the auto workers of Flint and elsewhere are learning to their sorrow that the pretty speeches about "Industrial Democracy" and the rights of workers, such as Mr. Martin and his boss, John L. Lewis, are wont to deliver, are not meant to be taken too seriously by the union membership. Theirs is not to reason why, but to do their "leader's" bidding uncomplainingly.

To the workers of the C. I. O. and to all who may be interested in its progress, the Industrial Union Party says: Be on guard to protect the elementary democratic rights of your organization, the right of rank and file rule! Throw off the fake pattern of Industrial Unionism that Lewis is foisting upon you, and prepare to organize with the entire working class into ONE integral union, properly subdivided according to industry, with the aim and goal, not of preserving the capitalist system with its degrading wage slavery, but of abolishing it and instituting in its stead the Industrial Republic of Labor, where the union will be government! This program, embodying the revolutionary organization of the working class politically as well as industrially is alone the hope of the workers.

—*Industrial Unionist*, May, 1937