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STRIKE STRATEGY

by

W^m Z. Foster

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Published By
THE TRADE UNION EDUCATIONAL LEAGUE
156 W. Washington Street, — Chicago, Ill.

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Organize Your Struggles!

Left Wingers and Progressive trade unionists who know what they want and how to get it are organized in the Trade Union Educational League, a non-partisan organization of informal committees covering the entire trade union movement, whose purpose is to infuse the mass with spirit and understanding for struggle against the employing class.

The Trade Union Educational League asks all workers, regardless of political belief, to join it to realize the following program: 1. Organization of the Unorganized. 2. Amalgamation of craft unions. 3. Class struggle against class collaboration. 4. Fight against company unionism. 5. The formation of a Labor Party based on the trade unions. 6. Elimination of corruption and gang rule in the unions and for democratic rule by the membership. 7. No racial, sex or age bar to admission of workers to unions. 8. For Recognition of the Soviet Union. 9. Support of all workers' struggles and all workers' organizations, economic, political, co-operative, etc., against capitalism. 10. An alliance of American labor with peoples oppressed by American imperialism in a common fight for mutual interests. 11. Trade Union Unity, nationally and internationally.

The Trade Union Educational League is in no sense a dual union or affiliated with dual unions. It is opposed to such movements as take militant workers out of trade unions and form "perfect" little so-called unions with few members as rivals to large trade unions. The T. U. E. L. is an educational body seeking to develop the trade unions into more effective organizations for the workers. For further details apply to the

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Foreword

THE reactionary officialdom of the trade unions travels constantly to the right. In following out its policy of "co-operation" with the employers, through the B. & O. plan, trade union capitalism, etc., it is rapidly casting aside even the last semblances of struggle against the employers. It rejects and condemns the strike as a weapon. Consequently, the masses of workers, abandoned and betrayed by their old leadership, are being compelled to turn more and more to the left wing in the unions for leadership in their inevitable fight for better conditions.

A whole series of strikes (Passaic, Furriers, I. L. G. W. U., etc.) and of opposition movements in the unions (Machinists, Miners, etc.) indicates this tendency. As a result, the left wing has an urgent need to acquaint itself with the principles and practices of strike strategy, of the science of effective struggle by the trade unions.

The general question of strike strategy has received very little concentrated attention until within the last few years, that is, since the formation of the Red International of Labor Unions. Prior to that time the reformist trade union leaders, whose attention was fastened, not on making an effective fight against the employers, but on coming to agreement with them, gave very little thought to the development of a scientific strike strategy. In fact, the first real discussion ever held on the matter in an international labor gathering took place in the 1924 congress of the R. I. L. U.

In the United States the principal phase of strike strategy emphasized by the left wing for many years was the superiority of the industrial union and industrial strike over the craft union and craft strike. The many other

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aspects of the subject were practically ignored. There has been no systematization of strike experiences into a definite strike strategy.

The question is highly complex. There is very little literature upon it in this or any other country. This pamphlet, which is a companion volume to my booklet entitled, "Organize the Unorganized," is a modest beginning of such a literature in this country. It should be followed by more elaborate and detailed studies.

At the R. I. L. U. 1924 congress, Losovsky defined the three elements of policy, strategy and tactics as follows:

"Policy lays down within the limits of the program the basic direction which the class must follow in order that its fighting capacity may be enhanced and in order to prepare it for the overthrow of the other class. Strategy determines the direction of the operation and the choice of the point to be attacked as part of the achievement of the chosen aim. Tactics provide the answer as to how to direct the battle at definite sections of the front."

In the present work this distinction is not made. The three elements of the subject are covered under the general head of strike strategy. The pamphlet is somewhat comprehensive, dealing with various aspects of the left wing trade union program, but all linked up with the central question of how to wage strikes successfully.

Strike strategy varies widely from country to country and period to period. Its specific character depends upon the degree of economic development and of the sharpness of the class struggle in a given situation. The strike strategy necessary in a country in a revolutionary crisis differs very materially from that required in one with a flourishing and expanding capitalism. The strike strategy herein sketched is that best calculated to defend and advance the interests

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of the working class under present-day conditions in the United States.

Today, capitalism in the United States is strong and growing. It is able to furnish work for the masses; it can concede such conditions to the upper layers of the working class, the skilled workers, as to keep them pretty well contented with the present capitalistic order of society. But this is a passing phase. Just as British capitalism, which was also once powerful and able to still the demands of the skilled workers with concessions, is now on the decline, so will American capitalism, however strong it may be now, go the same way downward because of the contradictions inherent in capitalist production and distribution.

The industries will shut down, great masses of workers will become chronically unemployed, their standards of living will be reduced; the concessions won from or given by the employers in the present period will then prove illusory and be swept away. The workers will be compelled to turn against capitalism, to organize their forces to put an end to the capitalist system and to establish the new proletarian order of society.

In the bitter struggles of that inevitable era the strike strategy will have to be quite different from and will be based upon a far more militant offensive than that possible in the workers' fight today. It is not within the province of this booklet to detail the strategy of those critical times, but to lay out practical lines for the conduct of our strike struggles now.

Chicago, October 20, 1926.

Wm. Z. Foster

Strike Strategy

By Wm. Z. Foster

Chapter I.

STRIKES.

STRIKES, even when small and weak, constitute breaks of the workers with capitalism. They are living refutations of the time-worn conservative trade union slogan that the interests of capital and labor are identical. They are expressions of the irreconcilable quarrel between the workers and the employers over the division of the workers' products. They are skirmishes in the great class war, foreshadowings of the final struggle which will abolish capitalism.

During strikes, workers are in an especially militant and rebellious mood. They are then highly receptive of revolutionary ideas. It is then above all that they can and must be taught the full implications of their struggle. To rouse the class consciousness of the workers and to educate them to understand the class struggle and the historic mission of the working class is always a first consideration in strike strategy.

Strikes are of many kinds and characters. Losovsky lists 13 types, as follows: Spontaneous, organized, offensive, defensive, solidarity, intermittent, local, district, industrial, general, international, economic, political. Others might be mentioned. The character of the strikes in a given country or period is determined by the state of its capitalist system.

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Three broad types of strikes are to be noted in the course of development of a capitalist system. The first is the series of desperate upheavals, animated by confused objectives, typical of countries in which capitalism is just beginning to grow, such as the Chartist movement in England, the early French strikes, the strikes in modern colonial countries, etc.

The second type is the organized craft or industrial strike, typical of the period of strong capitalist growth and development (pre-war Europe and present day United States), when the workers strike for modest demands in the vain hope of permanently improving their conditions within the framework of the capitalist system.

The third type is the revolutionary mass strike, typical of a declining capitalist system, such as the post-war strikes in Germany and the British general strike, when the workers, more or less clearly, seek to destroy the capitalist system and to set up a proletarian order of society. The first period produces semi-revolutionary unions, the second period reformist unions, and the third period revolutionary unions.

1—ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL STRIKES.

Marx says, "Every economic struggle is a political struggle." This is profoundly true, for even the smallest strikes have their political causes and consequences. But the degree of the political character of strikes varies. Whereas strikes in the period of a declining capitalism are highly political (such as the German general strike during the Kapp Putsch), those in the present day United States, though fast taking on a political complexion, still are predominately economic.

The employers are more and more giving a political character to strikes, especially those in key industries and during crises by using all branches of their state power against the workers. Thus an imperative phase of our

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strike strategy must be to develop a political consciousness and activity among the workers in their struggles.

A prime objective of ours is to clarify the aims of the present scattered, blind strikes of the workers, to raise them above purely economic ends, and to unite them all into a broad political attack against the entire capitalist system. Consequently, we must fight for a break with the old capitalist parties and utilize every strike to further the movement for the creation of a mass political party of the workers, the labor party.

This course brings us into violent conflict with the conservative trade union bureaucracy, who refuse to recognize the growing political character of strikes, and to arm the workers with the necessary consciousness and political organizations for the struggle. The policy of the right wing union leaders to keep our strikes on a purely economic basis disarms the workers and is fatal to success in the struggle.

The experience in the British General strike, where the leaders stubbornly refused to recognize the political character of the strike even when the capitalists were using the whole governmental power against the workers, sufficiently signalizes this danger and the necessity for arousing the workers to conscious political action and organization.

2—THE GENERAL STRIKE.

The bitter experience of the British workers in their recent general strike raises sharply again the question of the part to be played in working class strike strategy by the general strike. The reactionaries, who flagrantly betrayed the British strike, are shouting in all keys that the general strike is useless, that it cannot be employed effectively in the struggle against capitalism.

But such reasoning is fallacious. These reformists, who are opposed on principle to directly attacking capital-

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ism, have always rejected such a drastic weapon as the general strike and are only too eager to seize the slightest pretext to discredit it. In reality, the general strike is one of the most powerful of the workers' weapons. But it must be used judiciously and courageously.

The first necessity for its correct use is an understanding of its full revolutionary implications. When the workers of a given country in a deep crisis, as in Great Britain, declare a general strike in all the key and basic industries it constitutes a direct challenge to the ruling class and its state. Inevitably the latter will use against it all its armed forces: the army, the police, the fascist organizations, etc.

Those at the head of the general strike must realize beforehand that the capitalists will employ these violent methods to break the strike, and they must be prepared to counter such methods by mobilizing the full political power of the workers for the struggle. Especially they must seek to win over or neutralize the army.

GENERAL STRIKE DANGERS.

Woe be to the general strike if it is headed by reformist leaders who refuse to recognize its political character, or by syndicalist visionaries who believe it can be won simply by the strikers folding their arms. In either case the capitalists will tear the strike to pieces and administer a crushing defeat to the workers. The general strike is no toy. It is a revolutionary weapon of the first order.

Working class strategists, including those of the most courageous type, must learn to use the general strike judiciously. The danger when conservatives head a general strike movement is that they will first choke back its development and then betray it when it occurs in spite of them. A danger in the use of the general strike weapon by left wing leaders is that they in their eagerness to fight

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capitalism, will call the workers out when the latter do not understand the issues at stake or are not prepared to fight to the end for them.

Many examples could be cited of the latter tendency. In France, for example, during the heyday of French Syndicalism (1910-14) several general strikes were called in support of trade demands of individual unions. At first the workers struck fairly well, more as a matter of discipline than anything else, but after a few experiences of this kind they became "strike-tired" and refused to respond to the periodic general strike calls, with disastrous results to the unions. The I. W. W. has made similar mistakes in this country, by calling out the workers in support of demands which they did not understand or feel keenly interested in.

Another left wing mistake is to call indeterminate general strikes when strikes for a specified term would be the proper policy. Typical examples of this error were the Seattle general strike and the national strike to free Tom Mooney. In both these cases highly successful protest or demonstration general strikes for a certain period of time could have been carried through. But the mistake was made of calling the strikes for an indefinite period, with the result that they collapsed, the workers not being interested enough to put up such sustained struggles.

3—CRAFT AND INDUSTRIAL STRIKES.

A major consideration of strike strategy is the broadening out of strikes and trade unions from the traditional craft basis to that of industry. Even as the ideological conceptions of the workers must be raised from the purely economic and opportunistic to the political and revolutionary, so must their organizations and struggles be expanded.

Craft unionism and craft strikes can no longer cope with American capitalism. The workers' fighting front must be broadened out to cover an industry or whole group

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of industries. Such a situation as that in the railroad shop mechanics' strike of 1922 when nine of the sixteen railroad craft unions stayed at work and helped to break the strike of the seven which struck, is a crime against the working class.

In the competitive state of industry the workers can and do use the craft strike effectively, at least so far as the skilled trades are concerned. But with the concentration of capital, the centralization of industry, and the elimination of skill, craft strikes become obsolete, even to protect the interests of the skilled workers. The question of organization by industry, which is emphasized by the growing demand of the unskilled unorganized for labor unions, becomes a burning necessity for skilled as well as unskilled. In American industry the craft strike is almost obsolete. It has been rendered doubly out of date by the tremendous enriching and strengthening of the employers through the development of American imperialism.

In the clothing trades, which are still competitive, and in localized trades such as building and printing, where the fact that all or most of the work has to be done on the spot gives the unions a special advantage, the craft strike still lingers and has some effect. But even in these industries it is fast becoming useless. In the big, highly organized industries it is almost a thing of the past.

The modern, effective type of strike is the national industrial strike. Even the conservative trade union leaders are forced to recognize this at least partially and they adopt some sort of an industrial organizational front by patching up various types of federation. Recent examples of national industrial strikes are those of the steel workers in 1919, the coal miners in 1920 and 1922, and the packing house workers in 1921. Many of the railroad strikes and wage movements show the same tendency.

Such wide struggles supersede the narrow, localized

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strikes which were formerly the type in these industries. The tendency is to counter the growing power of the employers in all the industries by involving greater numbers of workers of the most varied trades and callings in single actions against the employers.

The left wing organized in and around the T. U. E. L., must intensify this broadening out tendency, which is now being checked by the reactionary trade union leaders with their program of class collaboration and no fight against the employers. An important point in our strike strategy must be the elimination of the craft strike and the development of the national industrial strike.

This requires a corresponding broadening out of the workers' unions from a craft to an industrial basis and the mobilization of the unorganized millions into the trade unions. The realization of the two left wing slogans, "Amalgamation" and "Organize the Unorganized" is a vital pre-requisite for a successful strike strategy under present day conditions in the United States.

Chapter II.

PROBLEMS OF SOLIDARITY.

A FIRST consideration in strike strategy is the development of unity and solidarity among the workers involved in a given action against the employers. Potentially the workers constitute a tremendous force. The 26,000,000 or more organizable workers, when once united, will be irresistible. They will eventually sweep away the capitalist system.

But the obstacles to this unity are many and deep-seated. It is more than a problem of simply bringing the masses into the unions and strikes. There are fundamental divisions in the ranks of the workers themselves that have to be overcome. The working class is far from being a homogeneous mass. It is divided against itself in regard to race, nationality, color, creed, age, sex, skill, etc.

The differences among the workers in these matters are of themselves great obstacles to the complete unification of the working class in its struggles against the employers. But the problem is still further complicated and rendered more difficult because the employers have learned skillfully to play upon these differences and to split up the workers disastrously on the basis of them.

Moreover, the employers are ably assisted in this policy by the reactionary trade union bureaucracy, who divide the workers' ranks by cultivating craft interests, betraying the unskilled, playing one nationality off against another, excluding from the unions Negroes, young workers, and women, etc. All these tendencies are fatal to success in strikes.

Our strike strategy must be skilled in checking and counteracting all such splitting tendencies and in uniting

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the workers, in spite of race, creed, color, nationality, skill, etc., into one unbreakable proletarian mass. To do this we must, briefly stated, have a three-phased policy, as follows:

(1) Education; we must carry on an intensive educational propaganda among the strikers or prospective strikers to acquaint and convince them of their common interests and to infuse them with a fighting solidarity against the employers. (2) Organization; we must insist upon a labor organization broad enough to take into its folds all the various working class elements involved in the struggle. (3) We must have a policy in the struggle which protests the interest of all these elements and which does not allow of any of them being sacrificed for the benefit of the others.

1—SKILLED AND UNSKILLED.

Employers are widely awake to the tremendous advantage to them of playing off the skilled workers against the unskilled. Especially during these days of a flourishing American Imperialism, when they are flush with super-profits wrung from exploited peoples all over the world, are they able and willing to bribe the skilled workers with a few concessions in order to have them betray the unskilled.

The reactionary labor leaders are willing tools in furthering this employer strategy. Indeed, their traditional policy is to support the interests of the skilled labor aristocracy at the expense of the great masses of unskilled. This is their program before, during, and after strikes. They refuse to organize the unskilled; they refuse to support their demands in strikes; they systematically sell them out at the settlement conference table to the advantage of the skilled workers. Such an organized system of betrayal is the very essence of craft unionism. The left wing, on the other hand, must base its main strategy upon the unskilled and semi-skilled.

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This betrayal of the unskilled by the skilled (and of one group of skilled workers by another) is an ever-present and menacing danger at all stages of a strike struggle. It must be combatted by applying the above-stated three-phased policy of education, organization, and a defense of common interests.

The skilled workers must be taught the utter folly of their short-sighted policy, for the history of the American labor movement goes to show that this policy in the long run also sacrifices the interests of the skilled workers. They must be shown their identity of interests with the unskilled. The masses of unskilled must be brought into the unions in spite of the opposition of the right wing bureaucrats. Their interests must be loyally defended.

The demands of the strikers must fit the needs of all groups, and this must be adhered to at all costs. Uniting the skilled and unskilled workers, under present conditions in American industry, into an unbreakable unit of strikers is one of the greatest tasks of our strike strategy. But it must and can be accomplished by systematic application of the foregoing principles.

2—AMERICAN AND FOREIGN-BORN.

To unite the many nationalities employed in American industry, with their maze of different languages, religions, national prejudices, etc., into a solid, rebellious proletarian mass, constitutes a major problem in strike strategy. The most difficult phase of it is to unite the American-born workers with those who are foreign-born. (For practical purposes we will state the problem thus although, to be more accurate, it is to unite the Americans and the foreign-born workers of the earlier immigrations with those workers of the later immigrations).

The Americans are mostly skilled workers. They commonly hold the best jobs and are favored in many ways by the employers. They are the element most bribed by

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imperialism. They are hard to organize. They strike badly and they scab easily. Their role in the struggles in the basic unorganized industries has been to shamelessly betray the militant foreign-born workers. This is the history of many great strikes in the textile, rubber, steel, packing, and other industries.

The Americans rationalize their class treason by a nationalistic contempt for the foreign-born, by charges that the latter are maneuvering to get the Americans' jobs, etc. The employers do all possible to intensify this nationalistic scabbery, and the ultra-patriotic trade union bureaucrats feed its chauvinistic maw.

This grave problem is a diminishing quantity. The barriers between the foreign-born and native workers are breaking down. Immigration is practically shut off and few new foreign-born workers are coming into the industries. Those there now are learning the language and winning their way to the skilled jobs. In many cases Americans are entering the industries en masse as unskilled workers. Still more important, the children of the immigrants are growing up and going into the industries. Thoroly Americanized, they are a real bridge between the American and foreign-born workers.

But the problem is still an exceedingly difficult one. It must be boldly met and solved. Educational propaganda and a loyal defense of the economic interests of the various language groups are the foundations of a successful policy. While adopting every technical device for meeting the special needs and difficulties of the respective nationalities among the strikers, such as language speakers and publicity, nationalistic demagoguery must be ruthlessly eliminated and the whole strike shot through with a true spirit of internationalism capable of shattering all national antipathies and prejudices and of uniting the strikers into an ideological whole so far as the strike aims are concerned.

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The splendid international spirit of the Lawrence, Paterson, Passaic, and many other strikes conducted by the left wing show that the language and nationality difficulties can be overcome.

The strike strategist must especially understand the role of the young workers in great struggles in present-day American industry. As stated above, they are the bridges between the American and foreign-born workers. They are destined to play a continually more important role in mass strikes. In the strikes of the Passaic textile workers and the New York furriers they were the deciding factor. A successful strike strategy must include the systematic development of the youth as strike leaders.

3—WHITES AND BLACKS.

The unification of the Negroes and white workers into common struggles against their employers is an urgent task of our strike strategy. The Negro workers are a growing factor in the industries. In the packing industry they are a decisive element, and they are fast becoming so in many other industries.

The policy of the employers is to develop the Negroes as a great reserve army of strikebreakers. They refuse to give the Negroes employment in many industries and trades unless they come in as strikebreakers. They force them to accept the lowest wages and the most terrible working conditions. They leave no stone unturned to exploit the deep race antagonism between whites and blacks in order to force the Negro to scab. And in many great strikes, such as for example the 1919 steel strike, where at least 50,000 Negroes were brought into the mills during the strike, they are only too successful.

The Negro intellectuals work hand in hand with the employers in carrying out this policy. So do the reactionary trade union leaders. Their policy of excluding Negroes

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from the unions, of barring their advance to better jobs in industry, and of generally feeding the race prejudices of the whites, dovetails exactly with the aim of the employers to drive the Negro worker into scabbery.

This program of the employers, the strike strategist must relentlessly combat. At all costs the Negro workers must be united with the whites to make common cause against the exploiters. But this can only be accomplished by complete suppression of race antagonism in the trade unions and by a loyal defense of the Negro workers' interests. This is easier said than done.

The whites are stubborn in their prejudices, and it is not surprising that, after innumerable betrayals by reactionary trade union leaders and in view of the oppression they suffer from the whites on all sides, the Negro workers are suspicious of even the most sincere white union leaders and slow to hearken to their words. But this is no insuperable obstacle. More and more the Negro workers are realizing the necessity for trade union organization. The formation recently of the Brotherhood of Railway Porters is only one sign of many. Negroes are splendid strikers, as has been demonstrated time and again in the Miners' and other unions where the whites have given them half a chance to function as unionists. When the white unions refuse to admit Negroes separate organizations must be built for them.

The problem of uniting them firmly with the white workers will never be accomplished until they are admitted freely to all the unions, until the organized white workers remove every bar against their securing the better grades of work, until they are whole-heartedly received by the white workers as loyal proletarian comrades in the great struggle for working class emancipation. The strike strategist must never lose sight of the problem of the Negro worker in American industry.

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4—UNEMPLOYED AND EMPLOYED.

The question of the unity of the unemployed with the employed, especially during periods of deep industrial depression, is a matter of the most vital consequence in the working out of a successful strike strategy. The policy of the employers in this respect is simple and brutal. They try to drive a wedge between the unemployed and the employed, to make the unemployed a hunger-driven mass ready to take the jobs of the employed when they venture to strike in defense of their standards of living.

As usual, the reactionary trade union leaders, with their traditional policy of abandoning the unemployed to their own devices, assist the employers in using them as a weapon against the employed workers. Many a strike has been lost from this cause.

A task of the strike strategist is to unite the unemployed and the employed in a common fight against the employers. But as in the case of so many problems of strike strategy, work on the solution of this task must be started long before the outbreak of a particular strike, and even before the growth of the industrial crisis produces its vast army of unemployed. It must be a settled policy in the unions to identify the interests of the employed with those of the unemployed. There must be a whole series of measures fought for, such as the shorter work-day and work-week, equal division of work, etc., which tends to eliminate the number of unemployed.

The unions must never drop the fight for state relief for the unemployed. And when the industrial crisis comes and mass unemployment develops, the unemployed must be organized to fight for relief. Their organization must be saturated with a no-scab ideology. The trade unions must stay in the closest co-operation with these organizations of the unemployed, joining in their demonstrations and fighting for their demands.

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In Great Britain it has been demonstrated how, by the use of this policy, the fight of the unemployed can be linked up with that of the employed, the army of unemployed made "blackleg proof," and the employers thus robbed of this great weapon in the class struggle. American strike strategists must not neglect to learn this valuable lesson.

5—RELIGIOUS PREJUDICES.

True to their policy of leaving no means unused to divide the workers and array them against each other, the employers make free use of the religious differences amongst their employes. They play off Catholic against Protestant, Jew against Gentile. This seldom leads to actual strike-breaking but it always weakens the workers' forces. The reactionary labor leaders actively assist the employers in these machinations. Ku Klux Klanners and Knights of Columbus, they carry their quarrels into the unions. The willingness of the trade union leaders to further the policies of the employers and the various churches is a chief reason why separate unions along religious lines have never been formed in this country.

The employers use not only the religious antagonisms among the workers to divide them, but they also use the church as a whole against them. In all serious strikes these institutions will be found fighting the strikers in some form or other. The churches are most dangerous when they take a "neutral" or even "friendly" attitude. It is then difficult to make the workers see through their schemes to assist the employers. But when the churches come out squarely against a strike, as they often do, then even the most religious immigrant workers will rebel against them. Many strikes have demonstrated this. In its strikes the left wing must learn to sound such a militant note of solidarity that the unity of the workers rises superior to all religious considerations, whether these are presented under "benevolent" or "hostile" aspects.

Chapter III.

MILITANT LEADERSHIP.

A FUNDAMENTAL necessity to a successful strike strategy is the building and functioning of an effective trade union leadership. The workers' necessity for a firm, courageous leadership is a burning one. The very nature of their struggle against the capitalists and the state demands centralization and discipline, which involves the transference of great power into the hands of those who stand at the head of the unions. One cannot fight the class war on the basis of referendums.

Even as a military army, the workers' organizations must be headed by a capable general staff. Because of their capitalistic environment, the workers are afflicted with many destructive illusions, political, economic, patriotic, religious. These make them a prey of various breeds of misleaders. Hence, the tremendous importance of developing an honest, well-knit, and thoroly capable leadership, able to point the way ideologically to the workers as well as give them organizational direction in times of strikes.

The problem of leadership may be considered in two phases. There is the basic question of group leadership, and then the subsidiary question of individual leadership. Let us approach the subject thru the latter phase.

1—INDIVIDUAL LEADERSHIP.

The present-day leaders of the trade unions are cut of one pattern in their colorlessness and insipidity. They are dry-as-dust bureaucrats, ignorant and unimaginative. They are almost totally without idealism and true proletarian fighting spirit. They receive no inspiration from the

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masses. They are altogether unfitted to lead the American working class in the great struggles lying ahead of it. This is because they are wedded to the capitalist system and are in reality the agents of the capitalists in the ranks of the workers. They are poisoned with graft and petty bourgeois selfishness.

Our strike strategy must aim at the elimination of these misleaders and the creation of a body of militant, fighting leaders. These must be able to sway the masses, to develop their fighting spirit. They must be honest, courageous, resourceful. Especially they must be honest and courageous. Nothing inspires the workers so much as loyal and brave leaders. Note the wonderful popularity of Alexander Howat among the miners because of his unwavering devotion to their interests under any and all circumstances. Though such leaders may make a hundred mistakes the workers will trust them and follow them.

But in developing such a body of militant fighters a menacing danger exists in the tendency of budding left wing trade union leaders to lose themselves in the maze of everyday detail work and to neglect to give themselves the necessary theoretical training. This must be checked at all costs. Only those who understand and apply Marxian and Leninistic principles can hope to be trade union leaders of the highest type.

The future great task of the left wing lies primarily in mobilizing the masses of the now unorganized workers and leading them into battle against the employers. And it is exactly in this work among the unorganized that the greatest demands are made upon individual leadership. Leading strikes of long-organized, highly-disciplined workers is quite a different matter from leading strikes of the unorganized.

In the first case the workers tend to look more to the organization than to individual leaders to conduct the struggle (although the recent spectacular rise of Ben Gold among

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the New York fur workers illustrates again the power of the militant, dynamic leader even in hide-bound trade unions). But when the unorganized go on strike, untrained and inexperienced, they look especially for inspiration and guidance not so much to their weak union nucleus as to the personalities at the head of their movement.

Usually they dramatize their hopes, aspirations, and fighting spirit in the personality of one man. The case of Weisbord in Passaic is typical. And woe to the situation if the man at the head of their movement is not a real leader. In struggles of the unorganized this tendency must be borne in mind.

The left wing must carefully cultivate and develop the strong, dynamic personalities who are capable of inspiring the unorganized masses in the struggle. The problem of developing the strongest qualities of such individual leadership must occupy our close attention.

2—GROUP LEADERSHIP.

An effective strike strategy demands not only strong individual leaders, but especially a firm and well-organized group leadership. Whether the left wing is actually in control of a given strike, or whether it is a minority force seeking to influence the general course of the strike, it must pursue a policy of combining in the Trade Union Educational League and the various other types of left wing organizations, for relief, defense, etc., and knitting together in an effective group leadership, all those militant elements willing to conduct a real struggle.

This, of course, requires as much preliminary organization of these bodies as possible before the actual strike takes place. This organized left wing must be the steel backbone of the strike. Upon it falls the burden of educating, encouraging, and inspiring the masses, of fighting off the many enemies, internal and external, of the strike, and

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of performing the bulk of the multitudinous detail work of the battle.

The organized left wing must make a scientific study and application of strike leadership. It must study carefully every mass strike or other movement of the workers and learn their lessons. It must be courageous, militant, and flexible in its policies. It must know how to struggle for power in the unions, before, during, and after strikes. It must work consistently for the building up of an energetic and capable trade union leadership, defeating on the one hand, tendencies towards a merely opportunistic scramble for union office, and on the other hand, the ultra-leftism which looks upon all office holders in trade unions, whether good or bad, as parasites and grafters.

It must combat the anarchistic conception that the workers need no leaders and that union officials shall serve not more than one term—an illusion cultivated by the I. W. W. which has effectively prevented the growth of a real leadership in that body. It must colonize with militants those industries and plants entering into strike conditions which are not producing leaders capable of handling the approaching strikes.

It must know how to practice the principles of democratic centralism: that is, while keeping a firm grip on the strike situation and preserving an iron discipline, at the same time maintaining close contact with the masses and securing their support for every move that is made. Such an organized left leadership must act as a real general staff, conceiving and working out its problems largely in the sense of military strategy.

3—THE FIGHT AGAINST THE RIGHT WING.

The present dominant trade union leaders ideologically and organizationally constitute a definite group, a conservative machine that is controlling the labor movement.

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They are unwilling and incompetent to practice an aggressive and effective strike strategy. They are reactionary, corrupt, and ignorant. They refuse to fight the employers. Their conception is not to build the trade unions into fighting organizations, but to reduce them through the B. & O. plan and similar schemes into mere instruments to increase the capitalists' profits by the speeding up of the workers in industry. And the Socialist trade union leaders are hardly one whit better than the old line Gomperites. The bureaucracy tends to discard the strike weapon altogether.

More and more this reactionary leadership is proving its incapacity to lead the workers' struggle. It cannot organize the unorganized, it cannot conduct strikes successfully. It betrays and sells out every real fight made against the bosses. Under its control the trade union movement loses strike after strike, its membership falls, its morale declines, and the workers are in retreat before the attacks of the militant employers.

A real strike strategy must succeed in defeating this treacherous and incompetent leadership and in replacing it by a militant, fighting left leadership. This means a fight for control all along the line, during, before, and after strikes, by the organized left wing against the organized right wing. This fight manifests itself in a maze of forms and presents the greatest difficulties. How to conduct it constitutes a whole section of the general left wing strike strategy. Let us, for brevity sake, confine ourselves to that part of this fight which actually takes place during strikes.

A DANGEROUS ILLUSION

First, let us dispel the illusion that the left wing cannot and must not fight the right wing during strikes. There are some left wingers who, victims of this illusion, claim that "the workers cannot fight on two fronts at the same

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time;" that is against the employers and the right wing simultaneously. Hence, when they fight the employers they refuse to struggle against the reactionary bureaucracy, and vice versa.

These workers make the serious mistake of not realizing that the employers and the right wing constitute pretty much one front against the rebellious masses of workers and the organized left wing. If there are two fronts, they are two fronts of the employers' forces. In the needle trades, for example, when the left wing gets into a violent clash with the reactionary officialdom the latter never fails to call the employers to their support in blacklisting militant workers.

The bureaucracy in the Miners, Machinists, and many other unions use the same tactics. And by the same token, when strikes take place, the employers may always depend upon the active support of the right wing bureaucrats against the "unreasonable" demands of the masses. Indeed, it is during strikes that the right wing is most dangerous in its treachery and it is exactly then that it has to be fought most skillfully and resolutely. The treason of Thomas and others in the British general strike demonstrates this fact. Failure to fight the right wing during strikes amounts to giving the reactionaries a free hand to betray the workers.

The left wing must always carefully and skillfully expose the machinations of the right wing in strikes. This is strikingly necessary in the present strike of the New York Cloakmakers, when the right wing has carried out the hypocritical policy of going to the masses with revolutionary phrases and more radical demands than the left wing controlling the strike, while at the same time privately knifing the strike and working for a treacherous settlement. The "cannot fight on two fronts" theory is a dangerous illusion which has no place in a militant strike strategy.

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The strategy of the right wing is to break up all militant attacks against the employers and to reduce the struggle to a class collaboration basis. The strategy of the left wing must be to make the struggle militant in spite of the counter efforts of the right wing.

The strike sabotage of the right wingers manifests itself in various ways. First, let us consider their attitude towards strikes conducted by independent unions under control of the left wing. In such cases no treachery is too extreme for them. Take the I. W. W. strike in Lawrence. In this historic struggle the leaders of the United Textile Workers did not hesitate to furnish strikebreakers to the employers. Or take the more recent case of the Passaic textile strike. This was one of the bitterest ever waged in the history of American labor. But the A. F. of L. leaders openly played the employers' game and denounced it, using the charge of dual unionism as a blind for this attack. They sabotaged the collection of strike relief and they attempted to demoralize the strikers.

In such cases the left wing must maneuver carefully to kill the dual union charge by moving for affiliation with the A. F. of L. In Passaic, affiliation was actually brought about in the midst of the struggle and the A. F. of L. was compelled to endorse openly the strike which for seven months it had shamelessly sabotaged. But in carrying through such affiliation maneuvers the left wing must be careful to maintain its ideological and organizational control over the striking masses and to prevent a sell-out settlement by the right wing, for which the left wing would be held responsible by the workers. This can be accomplished by an intelligent and determined left leadership.

In established unions, where the left wing is in a minority or where its control of the official machinery is weak, the fight against the right wing takes on other forms. The general policy of the right wing leadership is to use

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its control of the union to dampen the fighting spirit of the workers and to sell them out over the conference table. Hence, the policy of the left wing in strikes of organized unions must be to spur on the masses to fight and, by mobilizing them against the reactionary leadership, prevent the latter from betraying them in the settlement.

This policy proved successful in Illinois during the 1922 national strike of the bituminous miners. The union was in a desperate struggle, fighting for a national agreement. And just at the most critical moment, when its very life was at stake, President Farrington of the Illinois union, who has since gone openly into the service of the mine operators, declared that he would make a state agreement for the Illinois miners.

If he had been able to accomplish this it would have broken the strike. But the left wing, by holding a series of mass meetings of strikers throughout the state, so aroused the membership that Farrington could not go through with his betrayal. This saved the entire union from disaster. What would have happened had the left wing in the Illinois miners been afflicted with the "cannot fight on two fronts" theory?

MOBILIZING THE MEMBERSHIP

The recent strike of the New York Furriers was another instance of a successful mobilization of the membership by the left leadership to balk a menacing right wing treachery. The local Joint Board which actually conducted the strike was in the hands of the left wing led by Ben Gold. But the machinery of the International was controlled by the right wing. All through the strike the fight was sabotaged by the head of the International, Schactman. Finally, believing his opportunity had arrived to deal a decisive blow, he, in close combination with Presi-

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dent Green of the A. F. of L., made a tentative agreement with the employers, the famous "eight points."

But the left wing leadership rejected this agreement, mobilized the strikers against it and carried on the struggle till a much better settlement was arrived at. This was a major defeat for the arch-reactionary, Green. Powerful enemies of his among the upper bureaucracy of the A. F. of L. are now using it against him, claiming that he compromised the A. F. of L. badly by permitting himself to be so badly out-manuevered by the Communist trade union leader, Gold.

If treacherous strike settlements are special danger points that the left wing strategists must guard against in their fight against the right wing, so also are those situations when the masses are in a state of great foment and the right wing leaders refuse to mobilize them for the struggle.

Cases in point were the failure of the Brotherhood chiefs to strike their men in common cause with the railroad shop mechanics in 1922; and the failure of Lewis to call out the bituminous miners in 1925 in conjunction with the strike of the anthracite miners. Both these failures, which amounted to treason to the workers, were disastrous. In one case the great shopmen's strike was lost and the backbone of railroad trade unionism broken, and in the other the very life of the Miners' Union has been threatened by the disintegration of its bituminous section.

FORCING THE ISSUE

The left wing strategists must find ways and means to force the hands of the right wing leaders in such critical situations by mobilizing the membership against them. This is a real test of our strike strategy, especially where the left wing has but little organization. In the past, in such

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instances, there has been too much recourse to the unauthorized, or "outlaw" strike, and, dual unionism.

Sometimes, in especially desperate circumstances and after carefully weighing the situation, the unauthorized mass strike may be used with success, but in American labor experience it has been mostly a failure. In nearly every case where there is sufficient sentiment to call an effective unauthorized strike the same sentiment could be better utilized through the regular union channels to set the organization as such into motion.

A case in point was the so-called outlaw railroad switchmen's strike of 1920, which completely paralyzed the railroads over great sections of the country. There was a tremendous volume of rebellious sentiment behind this ill-fated national struggle. With intelligent left direction the movement could have forced the Brotherhoods officially into action and probably would have driven numbers of the bureaucrats from power. But the leadership of the "outlaws" was afflicted with utopian dual union illusions and the great movement went down to crushing defeat.

In the coming Spring the left wing will have a severe test of its strategy against the right wing in the Miners' Union. Its task will be to force Lewis to call out all the bituminous miners and then to hold them out till a victorious settlement has been secured. At every step in the struggle it will have to defeat the most ruthless and corrupt bureaucracy in the American labor movement, the John L. Lewis machine.

Chapter IV.

ORGANIZE THE UNORGANIZED.

THE most fundamental phases of our strike strategy relate to the mass of workers now unorganized. Great battles will be waged by these workers in the future, and in the process of which they will be mobilized into labor unions. This will have the most profound effects upon the trade union movement. It will proletarianize and revolutionize it. It will shift its leadership radically to the left. It will transfer the center of gravity of the movement from the skilled trades and light industries to the unskilled and semi-skilled in the key and basic industries. It will strengthen the position of the union movement by stripping the employes of their great weapon against it, the masses of unorganized workers. Hence the whole question of the organization of the unorganized is of the most vital concern in the development of our strike strategy.*

The left wing must consciously and aggressively take up the task of organizing the unorganized, which is the major work now confronting the labor movement. There is no other group in the unions other than the left wing that has the understanding and initiative to do this basic task. The right wing, which represents the interests of the skilled workers, is opposed to the organizing of the unorganized unskilled masses, and the so-called "progressives," although they do lip service to the necessity of organization, are too spineless and wavering to really do anything about it except under the general leadership and stimulus of the militant left wing.

*In my pamphlet, "Organize the Unorganized," published by the Trade Union Educational League, I have dealt in detail with the many phases and problems connected with the organization of the unorganized masses.

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1—A FORERUNNER OF BATTLE.

The left wing must carry on this work in the keenest realization that organizing campaigns are the preliminary phases of strikes. Such campaigns in American industry under present conditions are not only in themselves more or less open fights against the employers, but they are also efforts of the workers to mobilize their forces and to secure advantageous strategic positions for the bigger strike battles that loom certainly ahead.

Employers in the big industries will not permit their workers to peacefully organize and then negotiate trade union agreements. They will and do fight all along the line, against the organization of the unions, and against conceding their demands. Hence, when the left wing embarks on organization campaigns in the big industries, whether under the auspices of the A. F. of L. or independent unions, it must carry on its organization work as part of its strike strategy based on the strikes that are just ahead.

2—HOW AND WHEN TO STRIKE.

Before going into a major organizing campaign, which means, if it is successful, an eventual hard-fought strike, the left wing strategists must first make a careful survey of (1) the state of the industry, (2) the strength and disposition of the enemy's forces, and (3) the general political situation. In short, they have to make a complete Marxian analysis of the whole problem. This is fundamental. It has to do with the vital strategical questions of how to hit the enemy at his weakest point, and at the time when he is least able to stand the blow.

(1) It is of real importance to the success of strikes that they be waged at periods of the greatest industrial activity. This means that we must always know accurately the state of production and the prospects for the immediate future. It is the policy of the employers, when they

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foresee unavoidable strikes, to force them to take place in the slack seasons. Their policy in this respect is embodied in the agreement in the bituminous coal fields, which the employers have arranged to end in April, when the demand for coal is light and when they can best stand a strike. By the same token, the employers try to force premature strikes in organizing campaigns during slack periods by terrorizing and discharging their workers.

The left wing strike strategists must know how to defeat such tactics and to make strikes occur in the busy seasons. They must learn how to speed up their organizing campaigns, by the adoption of drastic measures of stimulation, when this is necessary to catch the busy season; or to slow them down in order to avoid the struggle at an inopportune time. Often the latter policy demands the greatest courage from the leaders and the greatest sacrifices from the workers who are harrassed and victimized by the employers. But the left wing strategists must try to carry it through. They must avoid fighting at the inopportune time. In this they cannot always succeed. Often the employers, in spite of all, will force the workers into untimely struggles, when, of course, the challenge of battle must be accepted and the fight waged aggressively.

(2) The workers must know exactly with whom they are fighting. This involves a close study of the employers' organizations, including the degree of trustification, of the given industry, the relation of the various companies to each other and to outside combinations, the financial condition of the companies, etc. This study will enable the working class strike strategists to gauge the strength of the enemy, to know where and when is the best place to hit him, and to learn, in the course of a strike, whether he is being seriously weakened or not.

In organizing campaigns and strikes the workers must carry out many flank attacks against the big capitalist

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combinations of the industry by the organization of the independents, etc., but they must also know when and how to deliver the real thrust at the heart of the opposition. The employers are careful to protect themselves against such deadly thrusts by splitting up the workers' army and making it waste its forces in isolated engagements, a policy in which they are helped by the craft and localist conceptions of the reactionary craft union leaders.

In the steel campaign of 1918-19, for example, the Cambria Steel Company, working no doubt in close understanding with the United States Steel Corporation, tried to force a strike in its big Johnstown plants by ruthlessly discharging some 3,000 of its workers for belonging to the unions. The workers, 22,000 strong, under local leadership (which later proved to be permeated with company agents) voted almost unanimously for a strike.

But the national leadership knew that a strike in Johnstown must fail and that it would ruin the whole national campaign. We realized further that the real enemy to be defeated was the United States Steel Corporation and that the battleground had to be in its mills all over the country. Therefore, we refused to take up the gage of battle offered us at Johnstown. We ordered the Johnstown workers to take the company's blow, to hold their ground at all costs for a few months until we could mobilize the steel workers nationally, who were then rapidly organizing.

This they did heroically in a most difficult situation and in the face of the bitterest opposition from the company. Thus we avoided this threatened serious breach in our ranks, and we were enabled, shortly afterward, to throw our whole army in one grand offensive against our real enemy, the United States Steel Corporation.

(3) The working class strike strategists must always bear in mind the existing or prospective general and local political situations. They are often decisive in strikes. In

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general forward movements of the working class, when the workers are in a deep-going state of political foment and in an expanding opposition to the employers, the left wing must be keen to take advantage of the favorable situation by militantly pushing its organizing campaigns and strike movements.

Often national election periods present favorable opportunities that must not be neglected. At these times the employers are seeking to mobilize the masses of workers, through various types and shades of political misleaders, into voting them full control of the government. Therefore, the slogan being to soft-soap the workers, the capitalist politicians seek to slough off the rough edges of the class struggle by slackening somewhat in the state pressure against the workers.

Movements culminating in such periods, if aggressively handled, have relatively favorable fighting chances. On the other hand, after the elections are over when the politicians no longer have the immediate thought of asking the masses for their votes, the capitalists are especially ruthless against striking workers. There are many complex features of the varying political situations that an intelligent strike strategy must take cognizance of and utilize to further the workers' struggles against capitalism. Here I barely indicate the problem.

3—THE QUESTION OF DEMANDS.

Organization campaigns and strikes must center around basic demands of the workers. Only the more advanced elements of the workers fully appreciate the value of organization as such. As for the great unorganized mass, they are interested in unions primarily for what they can get out of them immediately in the shape of real gains from the employers. They want to strike immediately they organize. Conservative labor organizers fail to accept

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this fact. There is too much fight involved in it to suit them. Hence their organizing campaigns are mostly abstract and lifeless. In a situation demanding the quick building of a skeleton of a union and the early launching of a strike they waste their efforts trying to perfect an organization in detail before beginning the wage struggle. They overstress mere organization and understress the thing that labor organization is built for, the fight to defend the workers' interests. To quote from my pamphlet, "Organize the Unorganized:"

The future trade unions of the great unorganized industries will be born in the heat of the struggle against the employers over the demands of the workers. The organization campaign which does not voice the demands of the workers and envisage an early struggle in defense of them is doomed beforehand to failure.

Programs of demands for organization campaigns and strikes must be concise, expressed in simple, understandable slogans, and must touch the burning grievances and necessities of the workers' life in the industries. There is enormous organizational and inspirational power, for example, in such graphic and vital slogans as the 8-hour day and the 5-day week. As stated above in our discussion of the general strike, the workers, especially the backward American working class, will not fight militantly for far-fetched demands that they do not understand or do not consider practical.

REALIZABLE DEMANDS

The workers have a sense of realism which must always be taken into consideration. While they must be taught the necessity for the eventual complete expropriation of the capitalists, and although they will accept this idea readily, it is no sign of good leadership to put forth as immediate demands propositions outside of the realms of possible

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achievement under existing conditions. The workers will give no serious support to a group, whether it be in control of the union or a minority fighting for control, which makes its appeal for their backing on the basis of immediate demands that are manifestly unrealizable under the given conditions.

The character of the workers' demands is determined by the state of industrial activity, the power of the employers, the strength of the workers' organization, the mood of the workers, the degree of their ideological development, etc. In time of industrial activity the workers ordinarily go into a more or less general offensive, demanding more wages, shorter hours, better working conditions, and the right of organization. But in slack periods they usually have to face an employers' offensive, and their chief fight is to preserve existing standards: to defeat wage cuts, to prevent lengthening the working day, and to maintain their unions.

Under present conditions in the United States, with the final capitalist crisis still far off, the workers make their hardest fights when they are defending standards that are already in existence. The most desperate strikes in American labor history have been against sweeping wage cuts and other attacks upon the workers' standards. Strikes for higher standards are ordinarily much less militant in character.

DEMANDS UPON THE BUREAUCRACY

In organizing campaigns and strikes the workers should make demands not only upon the employers but also upon the reactionary bureaucrats where these control the unions. This is a very important consideration for the strike strategist to bear in mind. When unions are about to plunge into a great struggle or are already in the midst of it, their weaknesses are apparent and demands for the strengthening of the organization by amalgamation, by taking in

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the unskilled, by democratization, or by the elimination of corruption, are especially forceful.

For example, just on the eve of the great national strike of the railroad shop mechanics in 1922, the T. U. E. L. raised the demand for amalgamation of all 16 railroad unions. The need for such a consolidation of forces in the face of the bitter attack from the companies was manifest. The rank and file understood it at once. The sentiment for amalgamation swept the ranks of the railroad workers like a prairie fire and it also became a great living issue in the whole labor movement. Only the autocratic control of the unions by the bureaucrats defeated the movement.

Another example, when the 24 unions were embarking upon the big campaign to organize the steel workers in 1918, it was easy to get them to join hands in a gigantic federation and to adopt many measures undoubtedly leading in the direction of an industrial union of metal workers. In such cases the demand for the strengthening of the unions is linked up so closely with the actual struggle that it becomes very powerful. The present struggles in the needle trades, for example, should be utilized to bring about the amalgamation of those unions.

In times of great struggle the real strike strategist will not fail to press home demands upon the bureaucrats for the building of the unions into real fighting bodies. Then these demands have greatest force among the masses, and it is then that the reactionary officials are least able to withstand them.

4—PRELIMINARY ORGANIZATION.

An important question of strike strategy is that relating to the matter of preliminary organization of the workers in the now unorganized industries before the precipitation of strikes. This raises the problems of how much we

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can depend upon the spontaneity of the workers and how far we can and must stimulate and organize them before they can go effectively into action against the employers.

Less and less can the strike strategist depend upon the spontaneity of the masses to bring them into revolt against their exploiters, more and more he has to figure on substantial preliminary organization, conceived planfully and carried through almost like a military strategy. Within the past 15 years American employers have become very able and skillful in checking spontaneous mass revolts amongst their workers. To this end they have developed a whole arsenal of weapons which may be summed up under the general heads of concessions, of duplicity, and terrorism.

Today, when the powerful employers see a threatening discontent among their workers, which manifests itself by a spreading spontaneous strike or an active organizing campaign, they commonly seek to check the agitation by granting concessions to their workers in wage increases, welfare systems, etc. This they are able to do because of the enormous super-profits of imperialism which they are reaping of late years. Only a few years ago the employers were financially unable to bribe such movements into stillness, consequently they often developed into big struggles.

HOW EMPLOYERS FIGHT STRIKES

The way the Steel Trust combatted the big campaign of 1918-19 was typical of the new tendency. This gigantic corporation, seeing that the organizing work was succeeding, granted four large increases in wages and the basic 8-hour day to its workers in the course of the campaign in order to block it. The "independents" followed suit. This naturally made the work of organizing incomparably more difficult. The spontaneity of the workers was weakened.

When the strike came it followed closely the lines

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where intense organization work had been done. In those mills, such as the Duluth plant of the U. S. Steel and the Aliquippa plant of the Jones & Laughlin Co., where it had been impossible to carry on any agitation or organization, no strike whatever took place in spite of the gigantic character of the national movement.

Duplicity and terrorism. In the old days when an employer proceeded to cut labor costs radically he did it openly and brusquely, usually in the form of a sweeping wage cut going into effect on a certain date. Result, always a universal protest and indignation on the part of the workers and often a bitter strike. But now the employers cut their labor costs in much more and subtle ways. Often they accomplish the same ends as a wage cut by speeding up their workers, which is easy for them to do in present-day industry. And where they actually do put a money wage cut into effect they commonly do it piecemeal, instead of sweepingly as before. They cut department after department, spreading the wage cutting campaign over months. Or else they discharge a steady stream of workers and then hire them back at reduced rates.

Such methods dissolve the opposition of the workers. They prevent the sudden outbursts of discontent and the rapid intensification of working class solidarity that used to be caused by the sweeping wage cuts of pre-war times. And in addition to these methods of duplicity and concessions the employers carry on a stark terrorism against all workers who dare to make a protest, discharging and black-listing them in a way unknown in previous times.

USING ALL ADVANTAGES

This policy of concessions, duplicity, and terrorism, coupled with the fact that the industries in general have been active for the past few years and have provided at least a modicum of work for the workers, weakens the fac-

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tor of spontaneity. Determined, organized effort becomes increasingly more necessary, altho an occasional spontaneous strike still occurs. Hence our strike strategy must contemplate the carrying on of militant and aggressive organizing campaigns, carefully planned and skillfully executed.

In my pamphlet "Organize the Unorganized" I have described in detail the manner of conducting these campaigns by "open" methods in those industries where it is possible for the unions to function publicly; and in "closed" industries (by utilization of workers' clubs, shop committees, Workers Party shop nuclei, company unions, etc.) where the militant "open shop" attitude of the employers prohibits preliminary open union organization.

Advantage must be taken of the company unions. The employers have established these organizations to increase the workers' efficiency and to check the growth of class consciousness and trade unionism among them. Nevertheless the workers' impulse to organize and struggle often manifests itself in these boss-controlled bodies. Our policy must be to stimulate these tendencies by precipitating the demands of the workers in the company union committees, by putting up in the company union elections lists of candidates who are committed to the formation of trade unions, etc.

Our ultimate aim must be to set movements on foot, both inside and outside of the company unions, which will shatter these organizations and result in the establishment of trade unions. A skilled leadership will often be able to utilize the company unions for the launching of effective strikes.

HOW MUCH ORGANIZATION

The question of how to secure preliminary organization of the workers in the great unorganized industries and to determine just how much organization is necessary in a

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given situation before the strike should begin constitutes one of the real problems of strike strategy.

In impending strikes of unorganized workers, conservative labor leaders habitually overestimate the importance of organization and underestimate the spontaneity of the workers. They smother the fighting spirit of the workers by a dry-as-dust campaign for excessive organization. On the other hand, a common tendency of left wing leaders is to underestimate the necessity for a certain degree of preliminary organization and to depend too much upon the spontaneity of the workers. The result is abortive strikes. The history of the I. W. W. is full of such mistakes.

Our problem is to know just how to combine the two, spontaneity and organization; to learn to strike the blow when the workers' spirits are at their highest and when they have enough organization to effectively mobilize them into the strike.

Chapter V.

IN THE STRIKE STRUGGLE.

UNDER present conditions in the United States strikes are the very heart of the class struggle. They are brutal and open fights between exploiters and exploited. It is in strikes that the conflicting interests of the two classes are most manifest. The employer in his limitless greed and desire to exploit the workers even more intensely than the present unexampled rate, seeks to break their spirit and to force them to work upon his terms. To this end he employs a formidable array of weapons: hunger, terrorism, duplicity, illusory concessions.

On their side, the workers have as their great weapon the cutting off of the employer's supply of labor-power. They seek to keep his plants shut down until his greed for profits, or the pressure from other capitalists who need his products, compels him to come to terms. But in order to do this they must be able to maintain an unbroken solidarity in the face of all the employer's many attacks, open and insidious. This is the chief objective of strike strategy during the heat of the open struggle.

1—THE QUESTION OF MORALE.

In all situations where the fighting qualities of human beings are called into play the question of morale assumes great importance. Military leaders understand this thoroly. They know that the strength of an army is not to be measured simply by its numbers, or even by its favorable strategic situation. The question of the degree of fighting spirit among the troops, their morale, is a factor of decisive weight. Hence, during wars, strategists devote the closest attention to this matter of morale.

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Never was this better illustrated than during the world war when, not to mention the oceans of propaganda that were poured out, whole military campaigns were carried through with the special plan of improving the morale of the respective armies and home populations and of weakening that of the enemy. The leaders knew that if the fighting morale broke, the war would be lost.

Strike strategy, no less than military strategy, must give close concern to the question of morale. This is because strikes, like military campaigns though in a lesser degree, are tests of the courage and endurance of their participants. The tenacity, durability, discipline, and general effectiveness of a strike largely depend upon the morale of the workers involved. The power of resistance of a body of strikers, like that of an army in the field, can be measured pretty much by the state of their fighting spirit.

The question of morale is especially important among inexperienced, unorganized workers where the discipline bred of trade union experience is weak. "Soulless" strikes such as conservative leaders conduct among the organized crafts, when morale is at a low ebb and chiefly the organization sense of the workers holds them together, would be absolutely fatal among the great masses of unskilled now unorganized.

The question of morale is, therefore, a fundamental one in strike strategy. Our problem is how to create and maintain it. This determines the whole character of our strike strategy. Propaganda is not enough. True, it is a very vital means to give the workers hope, inspiration, and understanding. But more is necessary. The whole strike strategy must be so calculated as to infuse the strikers with courage and an indomitable fighting spirit. Everything that tends to make the strike effective tends also to raise the spirits of the strikers. A good morale is not a

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thing by itself; it is the product of a generally successful strike direction.

2—FIGHTING ON THE OFFENSIVE.

For the building of a strong strike morale we must base our strike strategy on the theory of fighting upon the offensive. We must attack always, or at the worst be preparing to attack. This theory applies as well to the class war in industry as to military war on the battlefield. The workers, like soldiers, (and they are the same human beings and subject to the same psychological laws) fight best on the offensive. They are then fired with a sense of power and victory; defensive fighting demoralizes them and fills them with defeatism. Every good striker leader, like every good general, must take this basic fact into consideration.

This contention that workers fight best on the offensive is no contradiction to the statement previously made that most of the desperate strikes in American labor history have been to ward off attacks of the employers. The general aim of the war or strike may be defensive, such as a defense of the homeland or against a wage reduction (when soldiers and workers both fight the best) but the tactics in the struggle itself must be based upon the theory of the offensive.

Conservative labor leaders habitually follow the wrong policy of surrendering the initiative to the employers and of backing up before their attacks. They fight on the defensive. Their cowardly retreat in the British general strike was a classical example of this false strategy. A real strike strategy must pursue the policy of the offensive. When the employers take the initiative from us we must take it back with a counter-offensive. If they force a lock-out upon us we must turn it into a strike, placing counter-demands and involving more workers.

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The offensive does not mean a reckless attack, but a calculated increase in our fighting tempo and a sharp assault upon the enemy's weakest point. It may take many forms, such as a strike of additional workers, an intensification of picketing, a greater stimulation of support from the labor movement at large, aggressive publicity maneuvers, calling out of maintenance men in coal strikes, etc., based upon whatever means are in hand and what opportunities are present.

The nature of the offensive will change with the varying conditions in the strike. An offensive by the workers in Passaic now, after nine months of bitter struggle and when they are so much weakened, is a very different thing than it was in the opening months of the historic struggle when they had their full resources in hand. But the theory of the offensive is just as valid now in Passaic as it ever was.

From time to time our forces will be so defeated that we will be confronted with little Brest-Litovks. But we must understand them as Lenin did his, as offering breathing spells during which we shall rally our shattered battalions for the next offensive.

AN EFFECTIVE FIRST BLOW

Especially must the strike strategist understand how to apply the theory of the offensive in the early stages of a struggle that has the earmarks of becoming far-reaching and bitter. We must learn how to start strikes successfully. In strikes, as in many other things, "Well begun is half done." In all kinds of fights an effective first blow is often decisive. Hence, an initial shattering attack must be a fundamental part of our strike strategy.

When workers are about to strike in a plant, a sort of strike fever runs among them from department to department. They are carried away with this overmastering spirit of revolt and class solidarity. They strike enthus-

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iaistically in a body. In the early stages of great struggles (such as those of the railroad shopmen, Lawrence and Passaic textile workers, etc.), something of this same burning wave of solidarity sweeps through vast categories of workers not directly in the fight. The dramatic struggles going on in their industry inspires them with a sense of their own wrongs, fires them to fight to redress their own grievances and those of their class brothers already in the fight. It is a strike contagion, a spreading revolt of the workers.

SPREADING THE REVOLT.

Our strike strategy must know how to mobilize these active reserves in such times and to throw them into the struggle. If such a situation occurs among organized workers, (as in the case of the railroad workers at the time of the national strike of the railroad shop mechanics in 1922) we must draw the various industrially related unions into the strike wave-fashion, one after the other or in groups, pooling their demands against the companies and breaking the resistance of the conservative leaders.

If the spreading revolt is among unorganized workers it must be extended rapidly from mill to mill and city to city along the lines of the industry or industries. This does not mean that formless masses of workers of all industries shall be drawn helter-skelter into the struggle. This may be necessary in certain deep-going struggles, but ordinarily our aim should be to bear closely in mind the economic relationship of the groups we strike, with the plan of bringing the real pressure towards our given objective.*

A great danger during such psychological upheavals

*Strikes of related groups of unions present many difficult problems which must be studied and borne in mind in our strike strategy. For example, the I. L. G. W. strike in New York weakened the Passaic strike in one respect by shutting off the market for dress goods, thus relieving somewhat the pressure on the Passaic manufacturers.

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among the workers is a tendency of the leaders, including left wingers, to fail to realize the importance of quick action in order to swing the masses into a general offensive against the employers. The workers must be definitely committed to the active struggle in this first flush of revolt and solidarity by bringing them out on strike.

Once on strike they will fight loyally. But if they are not mobilized immediately and led into the struggle they grow cold. Their desire for action evaporates. They finally refuse to strike. Time and again in great upheavals amongst the unorganized in a given industry the left wing leaders (and of course the reactionaries) have failed to take advantage of it by organizing these masses into the first shattering offensive against the employers. Consequently their strikes have paid for it in their later stages.

3—THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE.

A strike strategy based on the theory of the offensive often gives the workers the advantage of the element of surprise. Military strategists are keenly aware of the value of surprising their enemies. They are constantly seeking to catch them napping, and to deliver attacks against them when they are unprepared. Strike strategists must bear the same principle in mind, for the class struggle offers many opportunities to the workers to strike unexpected blows against the employers. For example, the rapid extension of a strike along the lines above indicated often produces social conflagrations entirely unlooked for by the employers.

A good illustration of how the employers can be taken by surprise was seen in the campaign to organize the steel workers in 1918-19. From long experience Gary had gained a justified contempt for the organizing ability of the A. F. of L. leaders so far as the steel industry was concerned. Hence, when another campaign was announced in 1918 he

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paid little attention to it. But this campaign was carried out on new lines, the effect of which he completely underestimated.

The original plan of the campaign was to make a swift organizing drive simultaneously in all steel centers. The situation was such that, with just a few weeks of work as proposed, such a grip could have been secured on the mass of steel workers that Gary, taken by surprise, would have been unable, when he did realize the effectiveness of the new tactics, to take any counter measure sufficient to defeat the campaign.

But the trade union leaders, partly through ignorance and partly because they were opposed to organizing the steel workers anyway, refused to support such a swift, national offensive against the Steel Trust, which they had every means in hand to carry out. They confined the opening of the campaign to the Chicago district. There it proved highly successful. In two weeks of actual work the masses were either in the unions or under their direct influence. The same thing that was done in the Chicago district could have easily been done all over the country, had it not been for the reactionary leadership of the unions.

Gary quickly woke up after he saw what had happened in the Chicago district. His company gave the workers the basic 8-hour day and checked the movement. Thus we lost the advantage of surprise in this case where it would have been decisively favorable for the workers. The real working class strike strategist will always keep this question of surprise in his mind when working out his policies.

4—DRAMATIZING THE STRUGGLE.

An essential of good strike strategy under present day conditions in the United States is to lend a dramatic character to strike and organization campaigns, especially those among unorganized workers. These see in a dramatic strike

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a living strike, and they are not far wrong. This dramatization may be accomplished in many ways, such as mass picketing in the face of police terror, mass violations of injunctions, free speech fights, marches such as those of the Kansas and West Virginia miners, spectacular exposure of the workers' poverty and the employers' riches, militant resistance to violence, transfer of strikers' children from the strike district, nation-wide relief campaigns, national and local protest meetings, state investigations, parades, pageants, tag-days, etc., etc.

Good strike dramatization is closely related to militant fighting on the offensive. Classical examples of dramatic strikes were those of the steel workers in Homestead in 1892, of the Colorado coal miners and Lawrence Textile workers in 1912, and the present struggle in Passaic.

Dramatization is equally as effective in organizing campaigns as in strikes. Often it can be strikingly accomplished by the simple expedient of transacting with a fanfare of trumpets and mass participation union business and maneuvers which, were no dramatic effects desired, could be handled easily and shortly in committee, such as the formulation of demands, election of negotiation committees, taking of strike votes, etc.

For example, in the steel campaign of 1918-19 one of our best organizing strokes was the holding of a national conference of steel workers in Pittsburgh for the express purpose of considering and acting upon the critical situation in the industry. The actual legislative business of the conference we could have transacted, had we been so minded, in 10 minutes in committee. But we advertised the conference so widely that the workers of all the industry had their eyes focussed upon it. It dramatized their hopes and inspirations in the struggle. It had splendid organizing results.

Likewise, when we came to decide on the question of

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a strike, which we could also have done in committee, we did it dramatically by taking a spectacular mass strike vote all over the country. This exercised an enormous effect in acquainting the steel workers with what was going on and in rallying them into the struggle.

Just another example from the 1917 campaign to organize the packing workers: The campaign, in its early stages, had come to a halt. It threatened to collapse. The workers, discouraged from long years of oppression and union misleadership, refused to respond to ordinary organizing methods. They wanted a definite sign from us that we had some power and that we meant business.

We sensed this, and in response announced the holding of a national conference of packing house workers in the near future to formulate demands to be presented to the packers. This was blazoned in the capitalist press as presaging a national general strike in the industry. The effect upon the workers of this dramatic maneuver was electrical. They poured into the unions in tens of thousands. It was the turning point, the thing that made this historic campaign a success. It was also a good example of effective offensive tactics.

Strike dramatization, when skillfully carried out and not of a character which merely provokes capitalist counter-attacks, is highly beneficial in many ways. It enormously stimulates the morale of the strikers. It tends to rally masses of other workers to support the strike morally, financially, and otherwise by making the class character of the struggle stand out in graphic clearness. It often checks the attacks of the employers who, preferring always to work in silence and darkness in crushing the revolts of their workers, usually shrink back from the blaze of publicity, unless they are of the most powerful capitalist combina-

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tions. Strike dramatization is a necessary feature of our strike strategy.

5—STRIKE ORGANIZATION.

It is not within the province of this booklet to outline a complete system of the special organization machinery necessary for the carrying on of strikes successfully. Nevertheless it is timely to state a few of the general principles of organization and to indicate some of the more urgent necessities.

The strike committee, whether the regular executive board or a special body, is the general staff of the strike and it must be properly organized to carry on its work. It must be divided into sub-sections to correspond with its various tasks. If the strike is national in scope the strike committee must contain various departments, Finance, Relief, Legal, Publicity, etc. The local strike committees must have sub-committees on Policy, Picketing, Publicity, Defense, Halls, Speakers, Finance, etc.

In the case of unorganized workers every effort must be made to establish a real basis of trade union organization. Too often the only organization of the masses in such strikes is in the strike meetings. This is a mistake. The masses must be brought into active strike work. It gives them a sense of responsibility and a feeling that the strike is really their own. To thus draw them in, the numerous committees should be built on a broad scale, T. U. E. L. formations of various sorts may also be used to actively enlist the livest elements in the conduct of the strike.

The picket committee, in most industries, is the very heart of the strike. It is the cutting edge of the workers' organization. It is the first line of defense and attack. It must be developed to the highest degree of militancy and efficiency. It should be made up of the very best fighters among the workers. The left wing will do well,

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in the organization of its picketing, to beware of employing professional gangsters. The right wing leadership has thoroly discredited this system. The gangsters not only tend to move in and capture the unions after the strike is over, but they poison it to the heart with their very presence. They are a constant source of corruption.

The legal committee is also essential, but the left wing must always be careful to hold the lawyers in check. They have a rather fatal habit, once they are engaged, of trying to run the whole strike as well as their legal department. If they succeed in this they soon strip it of all militancy and reduce it to a state of impotent legalism. They are also notoriously poor fighters at the conference table.

The publicity committee is very vital. To give out the news of the strike is fundamentally important, not only for the information of the workers at large, whose support is wanted, but also for the strikers themselves, whose solidarity must be maintained. Yet in almost every strike, whether conducted by rights or lefts, the publicity arrangements are primitive and inadequate in the extreme.

6—DISCIPLINE.

Good discipline is as necessary in a strike as in a battle. It is the task of the strike committee to maintain this discipline. To do this it must carry on its work in a spirit of firmness, decision, and resolution. It must give careful attention to detail work as well as general policies. Violations of instructions and failures in duty must be swiftly punished. Incompetent corruptionists and weaklings must be eliminated from official positions.

The whole strike organization must be shot through with a spirit of determination and seriousness. Bosses, strikers, scabs, and all others connected with the strike directly or indirectly must be given to understand unequivocally that they have to deal with a body of real fighters.

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Then the vital, necessary discipline will prevail among the strikers. The workers will respect their leaders and follow their directions in the battle.

7—MOBILIZATION OF THE RESERVES.

The strike strategist, in an important strike, must look upon labor's forces pretty much as a military strategist does his army; that is, as active fighting troops and various classes of reserves. It must be his aim at all times to maintain his active fighting force at its maximum strength and to utilize his wide variety of reserves to the utmost.

Considered from this angle, strike reserves are of several classifications. First, there are those active reserves, the workers who are economically most closely related to the strikers and who can often be drawn directly into the struggle. In previous pages we have said much about the mobilization and activization of this class of reserves, so nothing further is necessary here. Then, there is another great class of reserves, less fluid and less available, the broad masses of organized and unorganized workers, economically not closely related to the strikers, who cannot be got to actually take part in the struggle, but who, nevertheless, can be made to help in various ways.

The strike strategist must know how to draw fully upon these important strike reserves. This he can do through financial contributions, protest meetings, the boycott, etc. If the strike is of especially great importance or is of the highly international type, such as of seamen, miners, etc., he must undertake to draw similarly upon the strength of the world labor movement. The left wing must understand always to utilize these demands on the labor movement at large for the purpose of establishing itself ideologically and organizationally among the masses.

An important class of strike reserves which must be

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utilized to the utmost are the womenfolk of the strikers. Ordinarily conservative leaders pay little or no attention to this element. But the left wing must enlist the women. The womenfolk in a strike can be either a great help or a great hindrance. Strikers' wives out of sympathy with the struggle and ignorant of its significance can destroy it. Or, militant supporters of it, they can be its very soul.

Hence, in all strikes our strike strategy must aim at enlisting the co-operation and active participation of the women. They must be inducted into the strike machinery and the general strike activities; they must be organized into housewives' unions. Thoroly aroused women possess an indomitable spirit. They make strikers unconquerable. Innumerable strikes among the miners and textile workers testify to their splendid fighting qualities. No strike can afford to dispense with this important reserve.

The co-operatives must also be considered and utilized as strike reserves. In European countries the co-operatives are many and large and powerful. They are often important depots of supplies for strikers. In this country, however, the co-operative movement is very weak and conservative. Nevertheless it must be utilized in support of strikes wherever the opportunity presents. Likewise, the labor banks, although not real co-operatives, should also be called upon to assist in strikes by making loans to the embattled unions.

8—PUBLIC OPINION—ITS LIMITATIONS.

Finally, there is a certain element of strike reserve in the lower middle class elements; farmers, professionals, petty business men, etc., which must not be neglected. Ordinarily these groups, under present conditions in the United States, look rather askance at the organized workers and their struggles. Often they are frank supporters of the "open shop" campaigns of the employers. But in cases of bitter and spectacular conflicts, especially where

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the striking workers are desperately poor, where the employers ruthlessly violate the so-called civic liberties, or where a gigantic and hated trust is involved, they are often moved somewhat in sympathy for the strikers. Their petty bourgeois sentiments of humanitarianism, legalism, and competition are touched. But even in such strikes they give little or no active support. Their chief contribution is to help create a "public opinion" favorable to the strike.

Right wing trade union leaders enormously overestimate the value of such a sympathetic public opinion. In order to secure it they always cut the heart out of their strikes, catering to every petty bourgeois conception. The left wing will make no such mistake. While realizing that a favorable public opinion is a valuable asset and while maneuvering skilfully to create it, the left wing must never forget that the strike can only be won by a successful fighting policy. It will not sacrifice the substance, a real fight, for the shadow, a favorable public opinion.

In their anxiety to pursue this shadow of "public opinion" right wing leaders make a fetish of legalism, and cringe before this fetish, apologetic and timid, often even joining the capitalists and their controlled press in attacking the workers' disregard of the property rights of the employers. The workers, however, when aroused to struggle in strikes, often take little account of capitalist-made legal "rights," and American labor history is filled with instances of militant action of strikers. More than in any other country, perhaps, has sabotage been used by American strikers in their bitter battles with the employers.

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Chapter VI.

IN THE STRIKE STRUGGLE (CONTINUED).

1—THE FIGHT AGAINST HUNGER.

The most powerful of all the weapons employed by the capitalists in ordinary strikes is that of hunger. They seek to starve the workers, their women and their children; to shut off their supply of life necessities until their courage is broken and they come back to work upon the employers' terms, defeated. It is a cold and brutal business, but it is one of the many barbaric means the employers use to maintain their power to rob and exploit the workers. Starvation in all its forms in strikes is a morale breaker, a scab breeder.

There are many kinds of scabs, each of which has to be dealt with in its own way. There are professional scabs, there are good-job scabs who fear the loss of their preferred positions, and there are weakling scabs who simply have not the courage or intelligence to fight. But the most menacing and terrible scabs are hunger scabs, those sincere workers who are driven back to work because they lack the physical necessities of life to continue the fight.

This is the form of scabbery that breaks strikes, especially among the unorganized and unskilled, and this danger the strike strategist must find ways and means to prevent. To do so confronts him with a maze of very difficult financial problems. Here only a bare outline of a general policy can be indicated.

2—THE QUESTION OF FUNDS.

This problem raises the general question of the role of the workers' funds in strikes. The question has often been put thus: Can the workers win strikes with money?

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Can they pit their pennies against the capitalists' dollars and defeat them? The right wing leaders' policy constitutes practically an affirmative answer to this. They place great reliance on huge strike funds and large strike benefits. The ultra-leftists, typified by the I. W. W., give a negative answer. They scorn the power of the workers to finance their own strikes. They will have nothing to do with strike funds or regular benefits.

Both of these policies are wrong. Ample experience teaches us that by depending on money alone we cannot win, except in the case of a few highly skilled and thoroly organized trades, especially in these days of an enormously enriched and strengthened capitalism. It is altogether impossible to win through strike funds when great masses of the unorganized are on strike. Take for example, the strike of 400,000 steel workers. What chance was there to pay benefits in such a situation? Millions would have had to be poured into the strike weekly. Or, consider a national strike of coal miners or railroad workers. Manifestly such strikes, for winning must depend chiefly upon their shattering effects on the industrial system and upon their profound political consequences. Nevertheless, the ultra-leftist I. W. W.'s, by rejecting the strike benefit system altogether and by generally minimizing the importance of money in the fight, make a mistake in the other extreme from the right wingers who depend too much upon money.

The issue is not money (as the right wing proposes) versus militancy (as the ultra-leftists advocate). The solution of the problem comes from a correct combination of the two, militancy and money. Extra high dues, such as exist in many unions of skilled workers, and great strike and other funds prevent amalgamation, check the organization of the unorganized, and spread a general spirit of conservatism through the unions. Besides, they are no

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specific protection in far-reaching struggles against the employers.

On the other hand, the low dues and cheap financial systems of the I. W. W. and other radical independent unions keep these organizations so impoverished that they are virtually helpless. Militancy alone is not sufficient to meet all the needs of a labor movement under capitalism. The left wing must stand for relatively high dues, based on the ability of the various categories to pay it. It must also make provision for strike funds in established unions, especially by strike assessments levied in the months prior to an expected strike.

PRACTICAL FINANCING

To finance strikes of long organized workers presents considerably different problems from those in the financing of unorganized workers' strikes. If the former strikes are not too large, in all probability some form of regular benefits must be paid, particularly if the groups of workers have been accustomed to the benefit system. Failure to do this may result in the collapse of the strikes. On the other hand, when large masses of unskilled are on strike they cannot be paid benefits, nor are they accustomed to look very hard for them.

Then the policy must be to take care of the most needy cases with cash and to establish commissary systems to furnish food supplies to the rest. Where the workers are strong enough they should enforce the "pay-no-rent" rule until the strike ends. Skilled workers and others who have been long organized do not take kindly to the commissary system under present conditions, unless they are driven against the wall by a desperately fought strike, such as those that often take place among the miners. The skilled nearly always demand and insist upon cash. Always we should fight for the pooling of funds and benefits where

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several unions are engaged in a joint struggle against the employers. Nothing is so demoralizing to a strike as to have certain categories of workers receive regular and large strike benefits while others get few or none.

In any event, whether a given left wing strike be of organized or unorganized workers, it is certain that there will be a most urgent need of money in large quantities. Hence, the strike strategy must develop the most effective ways and means of mobilizing the financial reserves of the workers in support of strikes. This involves problems of publicity, of dramatizing the strike, of spreading a network of relief committees throughout the local and national labor movement, of insisting that other unions regularly assess themselves for the strike, of floating rank and file strike loans, etc.

Strike relief work, which offers a splendid means for the left wing to establish its organization and prestige in the unions, must be accompanied by a penetrating propaganda carefully calculated to drive home to the workers the real economic and political significance of the struggle and to awaken their class consciousness. Ordinarily the strike relief committees can best be organized under the auspices of either the strikers' unions or of the sections of the labor movement being appealed to. In several strike situations in this country the International Workers' Aid has done good service.

3—COMBATTING THE TERROR.

The employers use many weapons to crush strikes; starvation, demoralizing propaganda, playing off one section of workers against another, bribing of leaders, etc., and to all these methods and interspersed with them they add sheer terrorism. With plain force they seek to break the workers' ranks and drive them back to work. They always have their own private armies of plug-uglies and provoca-

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teurs who systematically terrorize strikers. But their great reliance is on the state.

The state is the strong right arm of the capitalist class, the great guardian of their class interests. They control and dominate it from top to bottom. It is ever at their service, with its hostile anti-labor legislation, its injunction breeding courts, its army, its state police, its deputy sheriffs, etc. The degree to which the employers use this great instrument of legalized violence against the workers depends upon the urgency of their need.

If the strike is a small one they may confine their violence to the thuggery of their private plug-uglies and local police. If the strike is more important they will call in the courts, with their train of injunctions, jails, and the rest of it. And if the strike is a great one of far-reaching political significance they will use the troops if need be to crush it. Ever and always when they need it they use the state against the workers. Their use of its armed force is limited only by the extent of their necessity.

The question of fully stopping the use of the state power by the capitalists against the workers in strikes and other labor struggles raises the central problem of the whole labor movement, the problem of the overthrow of the capitalist system. So long as the capitalists control the state just that long will they use its forces militantly against the workers in defense of their profit-making system. Hence, the workers, to finally solve the problem, must break the grip of the capitalist class and set up their own state. This will inevitably involve a bitter struggle for power between the two classes. But a fundamental discussion of this basic problem lies beyond the scope of this booklet, which is to elaborate a system of strike strategy applicable under present conditions.*

*Worker students, to learn the role of the state in the class struggle, should read "The State and Revolution," by N. Lenin.

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Although the complete solution of the use of the state and the employers' private forces against the workers awaits conquest of power by the latter, nevertheless much can be done under present conditions to ward off, counter, prevent, and weaken such attacks of the employers. The strike strategist must learn to move courageously and intelligently in this most crucial matter. The history of the American labor movement is replete with the militant defense made by workers driven desperate by fierce employers' attacks, such as in Homestead, Colorado, West Virginia, McKees Rocks, Herrin, etc.

When dealing with such open ruptures, the left wing must stir the whole labor movement to its depths to lend its maximum support, moral, financial, industrial, and political to the attacked workers. If this is done the capitalists will often find the game not worth the candle, to provoke a costly upheaval among the broad masses for the sake of brutally oppressing one small section. A skillfully cultivated "public opinion" will, under existing American conditions, aid in meeting such situations. Liberal organizations will help to create this. The employers in Passaic, for example, learned that their tear bombs and police clubbings, in the face of a thoroughgoing exposure, an aggressive attitude by the workers, and a determined strike leadership, were not breaking the strike but putting life into it.

4—INJUNCTIONS AND NO-STRIKE LAWS.

Arbitrary restrictions upon the right to strike, such as the issuance of injunctions, adoption of Industrial Court no-strike laws, etc., the workers can break down by a display of militancy. They are nettles. Touch them lightly and they stick you, but grasp them firmly and they lose their sharpness.

The hesitating way the conservatives handle these is-

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sues only strengthens the evils. Mass violation of such anti-strike legislation and ukases is the way to deal with them. No injunction denying the right of picketing can stand in the face of a rigid determination of strikers to picket notwithstanding. The collapse of the Kansas Industrial Court when Howat's miners struck in spite of it was typical of what happens to such tyrannical laws generally when confronted by a militant labor movement. The breakdown of the injunction against the New York cloak-makers as a result of their mass violation of it is another case in point, several thousand workers being arrested in the fight.

The time was when the A. F. of L. advocated officially the application of such aggressive tactics in cases of injunctions. But in these days of intensified class collaboration the bureaucratic policy grows weak and insipid. Now its fight against injunctions amounts to little more than sentimental protests and fruitless attempts to line up "Labor's friends" in the two old parties to vote against the right of the courts to issue injunctions in labor disputes.

.5—FREE SPEECH FIGHTS.

Similarly, militant tactics can be used with good effect when the companies, through their city government agencies, attempt to prohibit free speech and the holding of public meetings during strikes or organizing campaigns. The thing to do is to hold meetings anyhow and go to jail if necessary. A well-waged free speech fight is never lost. Not even in the black steel districts of Pennsylvania, where the town officials are usually also steel company officials or stockholders, could they prevent us from having meetings in the campaign of 1918-19. They barred meetings in Homestead, Braddock, Rankin, McKeesport, Duquesne, and other cities, but in each case we defeated them by taking to the streets in spite of their official ukases.

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Free speech fights are an excellent means to unite and inspire the workers in such situations, provided the campaigns are conducted so that the workers realize their direct connection with the wage struggle. Care must be taken not to precipitate such free speech fights prematurely, before the workers realize what is at stake, else they will not support them.

The employers have a keen sense of the importance of militant working class leaders in the struggle. Hence, a settled policy of theirs is to arbitrarily remove these militants wherever they get a chance. The railroading to jail of such labor fighters has long since been a favorite weapon of American employers. The frame-up and the fixed jury are their means to this end. The cases of Tom Mooney, W. K. Billings, Sacco, Vanzetti, Cline, and Rangel are only a few of scores who have paid the penalty.

This line of attack, the crippling of our leadership, is one that must not be allowed to go on unchecked. Under existing circumstances the best protection that can be thrown around them is a wide and bitter fight to arouse the working class in their defense when any are taken. This agitation must not flag until they are finally released. These outrageous arrests and imprisonments can be made the occasions of such great upheavals and protests among the workers, that the capitalists will often be compelled to slow up if not abandon altogether their persecution plans. The labor movement must militantly defend its fighting leaders. It must be organized definitely to this end. The organization best fitted for such purpose is the International Labor Defense.

6—UNDER-COVER MEN.

American employers make more extensive use of under-cover men than any capitalists in the world. They plant large numbers of detectives and stool pigeons among the

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workers to betray and defeat them. These under-cover men constitute a real problem in all important organizing campaigns and strikes. Strike strategy must include ways and means to uncover these traitors and to defeat their treacherous activities.

In all sections of the labor movement the under-cover men are a deadly influence, but nowhere so much as in newly-formed organizations of the unskilled. In established unions the employers, to control the masses, depend largely upon the corrupt and conservative bureaucrats. But in new unions and movements of the unorganized, the employers, having no such body of reactionary officials to rely upon, flood them with their under-cover men and try to capture them entire.

In all great movements of the unorganized in American industries under-cover men work their way into the leading committees. Often the leadership is saturated with these betrayers. In some cases, as in the I. W. W. a dozen years ago, the rubber strike in Akron, under-cover men actually made up a majority of the leading union committees. The invasions of new mass unions by large numbers of detectives and spies is a settled employer policy.

Under-cover men are obstructionists, provocateurs, spies, and disrupters. When many of them are working together in a new union they may engage in all these activities, simultaneously, but generally they are to be found performing one particular, organized role, the character of which is determined by the state of the movement. The employers carefully fit their policies in the shops to harmonize with those of their under-cover men in the unions.

STRANGLING STRIKES.

Under-cover men appear as obstructionists especially when an organizing campaign is just beginning, or is only weakly going ahead. Then the employers may find it

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more advisable to try to choke out the movement quietly than to smash it in open struggle. Therefore, they set their stool-pigeons, well-organized and strategically situated, at a policy of systematic obstructionism. These worthies oppose the honest leaders, spread defeatism among the workers, and block every effort to build or vitalize the movement. In this way many a promising movement has been killed.

The employers, to facilitate the slow strangulation of the movement, do not discharge or otherwise victimize leading workers, fearing thus to galvanize the whole body of workers into action. Under these circumstances, the left wing must carefully analyze and militantly expose the harmful tactics of the detectives. It must fight for the democratization of the leading committees. Upon every possible occasion it must force the doubtful characters before mass meetings of the rank and file to defeat their reactionary policies. When the leading union committee is controlled by under-cover men, as will often happen, ways must be found to crystalize the honest forces in the union to drive them out or to gradually build a substitute leading body out of some other committee.

PROVOKING PREMATURE STRIKES

Where a movement is going ahead effectively and the choking process can not succeed the employers may decide to kill the union by a premature strike. Then the under-cover men become provocateurs, demanding a strike to adjust some discharge case or other grievance carefully rigged up by the employers. As strike provocateurs, the under-cover men are especially dangerous. They pretend to be the defenders of the rank and file. But the left wing must learn to keep its head and not allow the workers to be stampeded into hopeless strikes.

In flourishing organization campaigns, such as those

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in the packing and steel industries in 1917-19, the role of the under-cover men is reduced pretty much to that of the spy and informer. The under-cover men must then pretend to go along with the movement in order to secure strategic positions and to win some influence over the workers. Consequently, in the packing and steel industry campaigns, some of the most effective organizers later were discovered to be detectives. In the steel campaign one of the most effective of the 200 organizers was Jack Peters of the Wheeling district. It turned out later that he had been a detective for 22 years. Similar cases could be cited galore.

In strikes, notably of the unorganized, the under-cover men blossom forth primarily as disrupters and betrayers. Especially is this the case in the later, more difficult stages of these struggles. They then spread defeatism among the workers.

They head "back-to-work" movements, frame up acts of violence to jail the leaders or discredit the strike, and in numerous other ways seek to break the ranks of the workers. The policy of organized under-cover men in an organization of the workers may vary from time to time. But it is always based on the methods most likely to break up the movement in the given circumstances.

Left wing leaders must learn how to combat the menace of the under-cover man. This is not to be done by inaugurating alarmist spy-hunts such as have occurred in some unions. The best way to approach the problem is by a careful study of the given situation, and to systematically isolate those doubtful individuals who are manifestly carrying out the under-cover policy of the employers. Thus much can be done to neutralize these traitors and often they can be exposed and driven from the unions.

The essence of good leadership in strike situations is to conduct a successful fight to establish and maintain the

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unity of the strikers in the face of innumerable splitting and disintegrating tendencies. The fighting policy of the employers against the workers is well-expressed by the time-honored axiom of all strategists, "Divide and Conquer." And their ways to divide and weaken the workers are many, devious, and difficult to defeat.

In the foregoing we have indicated some of the more important of these ways and how to checkmate them. The employers play skilled against unskilled, native workers against foreign-born, whites against blacks, unemployed against employed, adults against youth, men against women. And in all these maneuvers they receive practical assistance from the reactionary policies of the present trade union bureaucracy.

The employers seek to demoralize the workers intellectually by injecting the poison of patriotism in their ranks and by cultivating religious prejudices among them. They starve the strikers and their women and children; they terrorize them with the courts, the army, the police, and various kinds of private thugs. To all these methods they add bribery, in the shape of cash payments to leaders, and of illusory concessions to the workers, such as company unions, welfare systems, temporary wage increases, etc.

They plant their provocateurs and detectives in the ranks of the workers to mislead and betray them. They try to force them back into the mills or shops with "Citizens' Committees" and "Back-to-Work" organizations. Their nondescript politicians and go-betweens try to poison the strikers' spirit in a hundred insidious ways. In their quiver the employers have many deadly arrows of disruption to shoot into the ranks of the workers.

To defeat the employers' many-phased policy of driving wedges between the different categories of workers, of starving, terrorizing, demoralizing, and bribing them; to

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maintain a solid, unbreakable unity of the strikers in spite of all these attacks, is the prime task of working class strike strategy. It is the *sine qua non* for winning strikes. And this can be accomplished by intelligent and loyal application of the general line of strategy above outlined.

American capitalism is strong but the workers can thwart it with correct policies and proletarian determination. The pressure of capitalist exploitation forces the workers to unite regardless of all obstacles. They tend to forget their differences and to see clearly the powerful enemy, who can be defeated only by united action. It is our task to speed up these unifying tendencies, to help the workers to rise superior to every difference and weakness among them. It is a battle for unity and it will be won.

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Chapter VII.

ON ENDING STRIKES.

THE class war between employers and workers over the product of Labor goes on without letup. "Settlements" in wage movements, whether these are accompanied by strikes or not, are at best only truces in the ceaseless struggle, only turning points where the struggle takes on new forms. The employers will continue to try to destroy the workers' standard of living and break the unions; the workers will continue to build their unions and to advance their interests. Organization campaigns, strikes, settlements and their aftermath, are but various phases of the one great process of class struggle under capitalism.

In making strike settlements this key fact must always be borne in mind. Such must be handled in the sense of preparations for new campaigns in the class war. The right wing reactionaries have a wrong conception of the whole Capital-Labor controversy. They believe that the normal relationship between employers and workers is one of harmony and collaboration. They look upon strikes as deplorable misunderstandings. Hence, they consider strike settlements as real settlements. Thus they disarm the workers for the intense struggle that goes on in many forms after the settlements.

1—POLICIES OF SETTLEMENT.

A comprehensive strike strategy must include not only effective means for carrying on strikes, but also for settling them. Fundamental it is for the left wing to learn when and how to settle, no less than when and how to strike. Settlement proceedings, whether before or after strike

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movements, constitute real danger spots, genuine tests of leadership. It is then that the employers are keyed up to the highest pitch with their policy of splitting the workers' ranks; it is then they have the closest working alliance with the right wing labor leaders.

The settlement policy of the left wing clashes directly against that of the right wing. The right wing wants to agree with the employers to establish peace in the industry, which means that the workers shall give up the struggle. But the left wing maneuvers in settlement conferences in order to secure better positions from which to go on prosecuting the class war more vigorously than ever.

The left wing must become a past master at conference strategy. Many a battle, industrial as well as military, has been well-won in the field and then lost at the conference table by inexpert, corrupt, cowardly negotiators. A prime essential to successful conference strategy is exact information as to the balance of forces. The workers' representatives must know the actual state of both the employers' and the workers' organizations and resources.

This is of decisive importance. The workers are always confronted with the practical question, "Are we in a position to strike successfully, or must we settle?" This vital question can be answered correctly only if they penetrate the employers' elaborate system of bluff, get a line on their real position, and thus base their policy upon actualities. A correct grasp of the forces at play is the foundation of strategy, no less at the conference table than in actual strikes.

2—CONFERENCE STRATEGY.

The workers' negotiators must be honest, informed, experienced, determined, and flexible. They must be on watch against a maze of dangers, and yet be prepared to utilize every possible advantage. They must know the

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relative value of their own demands and also those of the employers. They must understand which are "bargaining points" and which are fundamental in the given situation. They must learn how to advance their main demands by sacrificing non-essentials, and how to prevent the employers from doing this. They must avoid secret negotiations and understandings, which betray their case to the employers and compromise them in the eyes of the rank and file workers. They must take the masses into their confidence as to the progress of events.

Where the right wing is in control, the left wing must insist upon open negotiations and frank publicity. And when the reactionaries try to sell out the workers at the conference table, as Lewis did the heroic Connellsville miners at the close of the 1922 strike, the masses must be mobilized, through referendum votes, protest meetings, etc., against the settlement to prevent its endorsement. And naturally, where the employers seek to bring about strike settlements through the company unions, as the meat packers did in 1920, the left wing must fight against it to the last ditch.

In strike settlements it is necessary to guard against the right danger of grossly over-estimating the employers' strength and consequently of weakly abandoning the struggle, and also against the ultra-leftist danger of over-estimating the workers' forces and thus leading them into hopeless struggle when much could be saved by a settlement.

Then there is the grave danger of "second" strikes. Often these occur immediately after formal settlements. They are usually brought about by misunderstandings at the conference table, sudden provocative attacks by the employers, or over-militancy on the part of the victorious strikers. Such "second" strikes rarely get the hearty support of the masses of workers. They nearly always result in failure. The fatal national packing house strike of 1904

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was typical. The employers, knowing the weakness of such strikes, sometimes deliberately provoke them.

3—PARTIAL SETTLEMENTS.

An important question in connection with strike settlements is whether or not partial settlements shall be made; that is, whether it is a good policy in strikes to make settlements with those employers who are willing to "sign up." For many years the left wing gave a categorical "no" answer to this question. It advocated the policy that all employers must settle at once or none can be signed up. It declared that partial settlements are organized scabbery.

In arriving at these conclusions the left wing was moved principally by (1) the disastrous effects of the policy of craft treachery of the reactionary labor leaders, (2) the fact that the left wing based its policies chiefly on the big trustified industries where partial settlements are manifestly impossible.

But the general conclusion that there shall be no partial settlements under any circumstances is wrong. It is ultra-leftist. In certain situations the workers find it advantageous to make such partial settlements. The problem is to find out when and under what circumstances they may be made profitably.

EFFECTS OF PARTIAL SETTLEMENTS.

When partial settlements serve the general strategical aim of splitting the ranks of the employers and enable the workers to play off one section of them against the others they are tactically advisable. Then it is a case of making one group of capitalists scab on the rest. But when these settlements weaken or divide the workers' ranks, or compromise the political purposes of a great strike they must be rigidly avoided.

Industries still in a highly competitive state, such as

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clothing, building, printing, etc., are the ones in which the method of the partial settlement is applicable. Often in such industries, by signing up individual employers, independent associations, or split-offs from the main employers' organization, the balance are so fearful of losing their present trade and permanent markets that they abandon their resistance.

Partial settlements at critical moments in competitive industries also sometimes stampede the main bodies of employers and break their associations. And by the same token, often the workers involved, seeing the employers' ranks thus crumbling and receiving financial aid from the workers who have settled, are encouraged to fight the harder.

But partial settlements carry with them many dangers which must be carefully guarded against. There are dangers of scab work being done in the settled shops in spite of all precautions; of lockouts of their workers when the main association remains undefeated; of so supplying the burning needs of the market that the hardest pressure is taken off the employers generally, of weakening the picket committees by making it difficult to tell which are really settled employers and which not; of robbing the strike of its mass character and thus its throbbing solidarity spirit; of creating an antagonism of interest between those workers who have gone back to work and those who remain on strike.

But even in the competitive industries, because of the generally growing strength of the employers, the value of the partial settlement is a diminishing quantity. More and more it is becoming necessary to defeat the employers en bloc, and to do this must ever be the left wing's chief aim.

In industries which are thoroly trustified or in which a few large combinations of capital dominate, such as steel,

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packing, rubber, textile, automobile, etc., the value of the partial settlement has vanished. It is virtually out of the question to play off one set of employers against the others. They are too firmly united together, financially and industrially, for this. The workers must win against them as a whole, either upon a local or national scale, mostly the latter.

An impermissible form of partial settlement is that often practiced in the coal industry, where the reactionaries sign up some of the mines of certain companies and let the rest remain nonunion. This puts a premium upon nonunionism and gives the employers in question a terrible weapon to use against the organization. All they have to do in the slack seasons or other periods of active offensive against the workers in order to defeat the union, is to transfer production from their union to nonunion mines. This they have done many times with disastrous results.

IMPERMISSIBLE PARTIAL SETTLEMENTS.

Likewise, in great strikes of workers in basic and key industries, such as the railroads, coal mining, etc., partial settlements are usually unwise and often disastrous. They destroy the political effect of such strikes. They are a confession of weakness, of failure to achieve the original aim of the strike, which was to defeat the government, or, the whole body of employers.

Had Farrington succeeded in his previously mentioned plan of signing up a state agreement for Illinois in the midst of the 1922 strike it would have ruined that great struggle, not merely because of the flood of Illinois coal thrown on the market, but especially because the settlement would have signalized the failure of the union to get control of the whole central competitive district. The employers very much favored Farrington's treacherous maneuver. As a rule, in strikes of a broad and marked

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political character partial settlements are only justifiable in case of bad defeats, when it is a case of merely trying to save the pieces.

A form of partial settlement that the employers often favor follows along craft lines. These settlements enable them to pit the skilled workers against each other and against the unskilled. Right wing leaders habitually make partial settlements of this character. The left wing must resolutely oppose them. They are fatal to the growth and progress of the labor movement.

4—TRADE UNION AGREEMENTS.

Strike strategy under present conditions in the United States must include definite policies regarding the making of trade union agreements. For many years the ultra-leftists, best typified by the I. W. W., have emphatically opposed in principle the signing of any trade union agreements whatsoever. They maintain that such documents constitute agreements of the workers to abandon the class struggle for the periods they are in force. They advocate merely oral agreements.

This incorrect attitude, which is one of the many forms of the ultra-leftism which has prevented the I. W. W. from expanding, is a reaction against the wrong policies of the right wing trade union leaders in making trade union agreements. The latter, with their class collaboration conceptions, believe that such agreements actually end the struggle for the while. They hold trade agreements to be sacredly inviolable. By signing up their various craft contracts to expire at different dates they use them as justification for one union scabbing upon another. Thus they have tended to discredit trade union agreements in principle.

But the strike strategy must not be determined by such flimsy arguments as those of the I. W. W. Trade

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union agreements do not and cannot put an end to the class struggle, not even temporarily. The struggle between workers and employers goes on under such agreements, although it takes different forms than strikes. We must realize this fact and learn to fight effectively under these agreements. Under present conditions trade union agreements are technically necessary to the maintenance of organized relations with the employers.

It is idle to speak of mere oral agreements in connection with such vast and complicated industries as railroads, coal mines, and many others. What the left wing must learn is how to prevent the many evils often connected with trade union agreements and how to fight the employers successfully even while in contractual relations with them.

The A. F. of L. upper bureaucrats make a fetish of the sacredness of trade union agreements. They never cease harping upon the solemn obligations of the workers to live up to their contracts scrupulously. Nor do they stop at open strikebreaking where the workers goaded by the employers, strike before the official expiration of their agreements. Some of the worst betrayals in American labor history have taken place this way. Recent cases in point were Berry's furnishing men to take the place of the striking New York union pressmen, and Lewis' treachery in driving the Nova Scotia coal miners back to work to scab on the striking steel workers of the British Empire Steel Corporation.

THE EMPLOYERS' REALISTIC VIEW

The contract policy of the reactionary trade union leaders plays directly into the hands of the employers. It keeps the workers bound hand and foot by the union agreements, while the employers violate them whenever the opportunity presents itself. The employers consider trade union agreements cold-bloodedly from the sole standpoint

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of expediency. They are not swayed by the sentimental rubbish about the sacredness of contracts, which our conservative leaders eternally make so much of.

When the employers find it profitable to fulfill the terms of such agreements they do so. If not, they break them and the union too, if they can. Their present widespread violation of the so-called Jacksonville agreement in the bituminous regions is typical. In the deep-going coal crisis of the past couple of years the operators have seen an opportunity to get rid of both the Jacksonville agreement and the miners' union, and they are doing so brazenly and unashamed. They are entirely unmoved by Lewis' interminable and impotent pleas that they live up to their promises solemnly made to the union.

The workers must become equally "practical" in their attitude towards trade union agreements, and realize that such agreements are not worth more than the paper they are written on unless the workers have powerful organizations to enforce their fulfillment. As for the "sacredness" of these documents, the workers, taking a leaf out of the book of the employers, should never let them stand in the way of the advancement of their own interests. Agreements must never be allowed to keep workers on their jobs to scab upon strikers; they must never be used to drive strikers back to work.

PROVIDING ELBOW ROOM

The left wing must always fight for elbow room in trade union agreements by insisting upon "no-scab" clauses of various kinds. Wherever several unions are involved, we must demand joint agreements or, at the least, the expiration of all agreements at the same time. The experience in the British general strike, when vast groups of workers struck in spite of their agreements, proves that a militant working class will never let such faint treaties

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with the enemy stand in its way of fighting this enemy effectively when the opportune time arrives.

In the question of whether there should be long or short term agreements the workers and employers have different interests. Ordinarily employers propose long term agreements (three to five years or more) when they are dealing with strong unions, except when there is a near prospect of a rapid fall in wages because of industrial depression.

Such long term agreements favor the employers in several ways. They make for "peace" in the industry, and the checking of the workers' developing offensive and growing class consciousness, which are vital considerations. Moreover, they enable the employers to figure further ahead about their costs, and also give them opportunity to make better preparations to defeat their workers in the next wage movement. For the workers, short term agreements (one or two years in length) are the best. They make for struggle, for the development of the workers' consciousness, for the strengthening of their unions. They also result in winning more concessions from the employers.

Reactionary labor leaders, who always want to avoid the struggle, support the employers in demanding long term agreements. The abandonment by the United Mine Workers of its old-time militant policy of yearly agreements and the acceptance of long term agreements in both the anthracite and bituminous fields was a surrender to the operators. It was a startling symptom of the deep crisis in which the U. M. W. of A. now finds itself.

The left wing must always fight for the best terms possible in its agreement with employers but it must never rely upon these pieces of paper. It must ever and always place its reliance in powerful trade unions, clear-seeing

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and militantly led. These are the workers' only guarantee for the fulfillment of the employers' contracts.

5—ARBITRATION.

Strike strategy must deal with the question of arbitration. Arbitration in strikes is almost always a weapon of the employers against the workers. Only in rare cases can the workers make effective use of it. Arbitration is a cornerstone in the general structure of class collaboration. It is based upon the anti-working class principles of class peace and a harmony of interest between exploited and exploiters. It kills the spirit of struggle among the workers. This is to the employers' advantage. It also saves the employers from making concessions which they would otherwise have to give up in open strike struggle.

Employers capture the "odd" or decisive man on arbitration boards with almost uncanny regularity. Conservative labor leaders are nonplussed by this, to them an inexplicable phenomenon. Time after time they place "friends" of labor on arbitration boards, only to have them turn tail and support the employers. The reason for this is simple. These "friends" are always members of either the middle or capitalist classes (for the employers will not accept workers) and they have class and personal interests more closely allied to those of the capitalists than to those of the workers. Hence, when the test comes they simply support the interests of their closest class affiliates, the employers.

This process goes on continuously, with the reactionary trade union leaders being constantly disillusioned by their "friends" on arbitration boards. Yet their hope springs eternal. A typical situation exists on the railroads, where the workers' leaders have accepted Edgar C. Clark as one of the two "odd" men (the other "odd" man is a capitalist)

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on the board to arbitrate the demands of the conductors and trainmen on the eastern railroads. Clark was formerly Grand Senior Conductor of the Order of Railroad Conductors, but now he is a railroad corporation lawyer. The railroad union leaders believe Clark is their "friend," but the railroad company officials know he is in their service.

A favorable outcome of this arbitration is already assured for the companies. And so it is always. This certainty of controlling the "odd" men, whether selected by agreement with conservative union leaders or appointed by the government, makes the employers ardent advocates of arbitration, voluntary and compulsory.

Employers usually offer arbitration to strong unions in key and basic industries, and refuse it to unions which they believe they can defeat in strikes. An offer of arbitration from the employers is always an evidence of the strength of the union involved.

Employers are anxious to establish arbitration in such industries as coal mining, railroads, etc, especially when the workers have secured good unions. Such strategically placed unions are capable of delivering heavy blows. These the employers are keen to ward off by arbitration. It is in such situations that the "odd" men on the arbitration boards are most reliably active in protecting the interests of the employers, which they conveniently identify with the interests of society as a whole.

THE RIGHT WING AND ARBITRATION.

The right wing trade union leaders commonly support the employers' policy of foisting arbitration upon the workers. They accept it as a vital part of their general class collaboration program. But the experience of the American labor movement with arbitration has been so bad and there is such a widespread opposition to it among the workers that these leaders are careful about too openly endorsing it.

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In industries such as printing, building trades, etc., where the unions are strong and where their strikes usually have no sharp political character, the reactionaries often make a show of opposing arbitration, but wind up by accepting it. But in key industries they actively advocate arbitration, and for pretty much the same reasons as the employers. Typically, Lewis co-operated with the coal operators in forcing the anthracite miners to accept arbitration in their present agreement.

The latest act of treason of the bureaucrats in this respect was the passage of the Watson-Parker railroad law, brought about by them in open alliance with the great railroad magnates. This law, which practically saddles compulsory arbitration upon the railroad workers, is a menace to the progress of the entire American labor movement.

LEFT WING ARBITRATION POLICY.

The left wing opposes arbitration in principle as well as in practice. It stands for a policy of open negotiations with the employers. This makes for the best clarification of the issues involved, for securing the most material concessions from the employers, for the greatest stimulation of the workers to struggle, and generally for the best development of the trade union movement.

In some cases, however, even the left wing will find it expedient to arbitrate. This is when the workers are especially poverty-stricken (which sometimes favorably affects "odd" men) or when their weak unions, hopelessly outmatched by the employers' organizations, must grasp at any straw. Thus it is conceivable that the left wing might refuse arbitration offers from the employers at the beginning of a strike when the union is strong and yet accept arbitration at the end of the same strike when the union is practically defeated. In such desperate circumstances something may sometimes be saved by arbitration.

When going into arbitration, it is of great importance

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to try to have basic points in controversy, such as recognition of the union, etc., agreed to beforehand, and only points of lesser importance referred to arbitration.

6—AN ORGANIZED RETREAT.

Military strategy would be a futile thing if it took into consideration only the factor of victory. It must also contemplate the policies to be followed if defeat occurs. And so it is with strike strategy. Lenin said:

“You must know how to retreat. It is necessary to understand, and the revolutionary class learns to understand through its own bitter experience, that we cannot have victory without knowing how to advance and how to retreat carefully.”

When the unions are heavily defeated and broken up by the employers in an industry, as often happens, the conservative labor leaders commonly abandon the field in hopeless rout. They leave to their fate the workers who have loyally supported the strike, with the ultimate disastrous effect of alienating these workers completely from the unions. Such precipitate, disgraceful retreats the left wing must avoid. It must, when compelled to retire before superior forces, strive to make its retreat systematic and organized. Thus it will be possible the sooner to renew the offensive against the employers.

CALLING OFF LOST STRIKES

A common mistake of reactionaries, in case of a lost strike, is not to officially call off the strike. They usually let it drag along interminably, long after it has ceased to exert real pressure against the employers. The consequence is that many loyal workers, who have fought valiantly while there was even a slight chance to win the strike, are forced back to work with the odium of scab upon them. They then are largely lost to the trade union movement.

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A far more intelligent course is to call off the strike officially when it is manifestly lost, and let the fragments of the defeated army go back to work with honor. This was the course pursued at the end of the 1919 Steel Strike. It facilitates greatly the reorganization of the workers. It is an important detail in developing an organized retreat.

In cases of lost strikes a first duty is to take care of the wounded, that is, the jailed, the blacklisted, and the hungry. Legal and other assistance must be extended to the militants who have been arrested during the fight; efforts must be made to find work for the strikers left jobless because of their loyalty to the strike; relief must be continued to the most needy cases. To do these things is not beyond the power of a trade union movement with 3,500,000 members.

For example, when the steel strike of 1919 had been officially called off we kept the great commissary system going for another three weeks to take care of the thousands of workers left hungry and workless after the strike. This simple act of solidarity (which was sneered at and opposed by conservatives) did more to endear the unions to the immigrant workers than almost anything that had occurred in the whole strike.

MAINTAINING A BASE

Another thing deeply appreciated by the defeated and victimized strikers of the steel strike was the distribution of "Honor Cards" to all those who had remained on strike from the beginning to the end of the bitter struggle. The distribution of these cards after the strike was made the occasion of great, enthusiastic mass meetings, which were held in spite of the Steel Trust's terrorism.

Besides saving whatever organization there is to be saved in such disastrous situations, including remnants of

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the trade unions, and of such other bodies, political, T. U. E. L., defense, etc., that were built up before or during the strike, it is fundamental, in organizing the retreat, to maintain organized ideological contact with the defeated strikers.

It was to organize our retreat that we elaborated an enormous propaganda organization after the ill-fated steel strike to keep in touch with and influence the ex-strikers. The plan was to publish a weekly bulletin and distribute 150,000 copies of each issue, for which a crew of a dozen organizers was to be kept in the field stationed in the important steel centers. Money sufficient to finance the campaign for at least three years was in hand, left over from the strike fund.

The plan was adopted and the campaign started. But the reactionaries killed it by deliberately breaking up the committee in charge. With such a gigantic propaganda campaign in effect the steel workers would have realized that the unions had not abandoned the struggle, the fighting spark among them would have been kept burning and, at the end of a year or two of systematic effort, eventually fanned into a great flame of organized resistance.

7—CONSOLIDATING THE VICTORY.

To consolidate the victory in case of success is no less urgently necessary for the workers than to organize their retreat in the event of defeat. It is not enough simply to win good settlement terms from the employers at the final conference table. Such terms amount to little unless they are followed up by the thorough organization of the workers involved and the systematic utilization of their victory to stimulate vast masses of other workers into action.

More than once the left wing has won major strikes only to find later that they have degenerated into little

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more than Pyrrhic victories. In a few months hardly anything of them but the memory remained. This was because of failure to consolidate the victory.

The great I. W. W. strike in Lawrence, Massachusetts in 1912, was a classical example of such failure to make the best of the victory. This historic strike, brilliantly fought, resulted in a great success. Hundreds of thousands of workers in New England were deeply stirred by it and made ready for action. But almost nothing was done to swing them into strikes against the employers. Indeed, not even the Lawrence workers themselves were organized solidly in a union. Consequently, in a very short time the I. W. W., in spite of its great victory, lost not only its small traces of organization in Lawrence but also its influence throughout New England. It was a golden opportunity lost.

NECESSITY FOR OFFENSIVE.

Our strike strategy must guard against such disastrous anti-climaxes. This can be done by a proper understanding and systematic application of the theory of the offensive. Two special periods in big struggles, particularly of the unorganized, offer exceptionally good opportunities to draw masses into the struggle. These are: just at the beginning of great strikes, when the workers everywhere are inspired by the fight, and just after a big victory has been scored. The left wing must understand how to take complete advantage of these favorable opportunities. Then, above all, is the time when it must carry through militantly the offensive against the employers.

The first element in consolidating the victory in a given strike situation is to solidly unionize the workers involved. Often this is a difficult task because unskilled and inexperienced workers have very little understanding of the value of permanent trade union organization. Nevertheless, the union must be built and maintained at all costs, otherwise,

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disaster is certain. The union building must be carried on energetically during the strike. No matter how bitter or difficult the strike, this basic task cannot be neglected.

The next element is to firmly establish among the workers the left wing organizations necessary for their ideological development, political, industrial, cultural, etc. And finally, there is the urgent necessity of systematically exploiting the victory by initiating great campaigns of organization among workers in the same or allied industries.

An example of how to consolidate the victory by applying the theory of the offensive is seen in the big organization campaigns in the meat packing and steel industries in 1917-19. The movement began in the packing industry. Here we won an important victory, establishing the 8-hour day and greatly increasing wages. This defeat of the rich packing trust enormously stimulated the workers everywhere, organized and unorganized.

PURSUING THE DEFEATED ENEMY

We followed up the victory systematically throughout the entire packing industry by firmly organizing the unions, not only in Chicago but also in every packing center throughout the country, big and little. Next came successful campaigns to bring in the workers in subsidiary branches of the general packing industry, such as those in butcher shops, soap works, butterine factories, fertilizer plants, etc.

Then we further followed up the packing house victory by extending our offensive into the steel industry. We inaugurated our big organizing campaign there. This was facilitated greatly by our success in the packing industry. The steel workers were stimulated to fight; the progressive trade unionists felt that if the Packing Trust could be defeated why not also the Steel Trust.

It was the plan, in the event that the steel strike had succeeded, to immediately capitalize this victory by setting

STRIKE STRATEGY

up a great organizing committee to carry on a national campaign to mobilize the workers of all industries into the unions. Victory in the steel industry, by tremendously heartening every section of the working class, would have given life and success to this gigantic organization campaign.

In military strategy it is a basic principle to follow up the victory by pursuing and destroying the defeated and disorganized enemy. All great generals of history have been masters of this strategy of the militant offensive. Working class strike strategists, patterning after the brilliant Lenin, must also learn to apply its general principles in the class struggle. It will be by the supreme application of this strategy some day against a weakened and demoralized employing class that the American workers will take their first great step toward emancipation, by abolishing the capitalist system.

THE END.

Lenin and the Trade Union Movement

By A. Losovsky

This book, written by the secretary of the Red International of Labor Unions, tells the intensely interesting story of how Lenin, by study of the trade unions, developed those ideas and conclusions which served him so well and which guide the left wing in its struggle throughout the world. No militant can afford to be without this book, which is as interesting as any story can be of a great personality in growth.

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