DUAL UNIONISM

Outmoded Strategy or Useful Tactic?

Walter Linder and Martin Stevens

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Lessons of trade union history:

DUAL UNIONISM: OUTMODED STRATEGY OR USEFUL TACTIC?

by Walter Linder and Martin Stevens

The U.S. trade union movement is in a crucial period today. In a time of increasing crisis in the U.S. empire, American workers are daily faced with rising prices, suppression of militancy by the government, and wage freeze. They can't beat these attacks because of the corrupt business unionists and piecards who rule the roost in the labor movement today. These piecards consistently sell out the workers to government commissions and "neutral boards" which serve monopoly capitalism in driving down wages and working conditions. They tie the unions to a two-party system controlled completely by the ruling class. They leave 75% of the working class unorganized, feeding the profits of industry. The misleaders are, in short, the main obstacle preventing the workers from acting in their own class interests.

A central problem facing the working class today remains how to break the misleaders' grip on the unions. Some suggest a second federation of labor to counter the corruption of the AFL-CIO. Others propose, and some have carried out, plans for independent unions, free from the sellout artists. But others oppose "outside" or "breakaway" or dual unions which, it is felt, tend to divide rather than unite the working class.

It is important to examine past experiences of the U.S. labor movement. Examining solutions that have been arrived at historically by workers in our country will shed light on what can be done in the immediate future. Here we will try to trace the rise of craft unionism, the quest for industrial unions, and finally the formation of so-called revolutionary and/or dual unions, established in opposition to the craft unions at the turn of the century.

We recognize that general topics discussed here may need full articles by themselves. This article is intended as a general view of these main trends and theories and the lessons that can be drawn from them.

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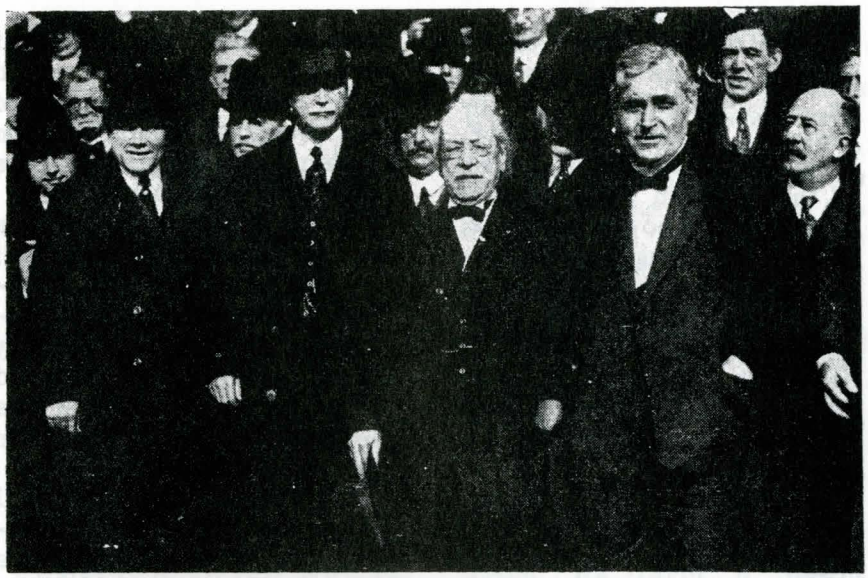


Samuel Gompers (3rd from left), AFL's first president

U.S. capitalism entered one of its greatest expansionist periods after the Civil War. Great national industries—and corresponding fortunes—were established: steel, railroad, mining, oil, etc. It was during these last four decades of the 19th Century that the necessary capital was accumulated for imperialist expansion: the export of capital for profit-making in foreign countries.

In this accumulation U.S. capital brooked no opposition. It used the most open forms of terror to subdue workers who offered the most minimal opposition. They were shot, hanged, and jailed. The burdens of capitalism's recurring economic crises were shifted onto their backs. Most major battles fought by the working class were defensive: they were immediate reactions to offensive actions by the corporations. The railroad strikes of 1877, the Homestead Steel Strike of 1892, and the Pullman Strike of 1894 all began as fights against wage cuts, not as organized efforts demanding higher wages or changed working conditions.

Three major union movements were created in the 25 years following the Civil War, in answer to the rapacity of capital: the National Labor Union (NLU), the Knights of Labor, and the American Federation of Labor (AFL). The first two were not trade unions as we define them today. The NLU was a loose formation of existing—mainly localized—crafts unions and "assemblies," and included one or two national craft unions. It "organized" workers into local groups around national political issues—the 8-hour day, currency reform, etc.—but apparently not to win collective bargaining contracts with employers. The Knights of Labor likewise appeared to favor state and federal struggles: for political reforms, cooperatives, etc. Although many of the members were involved in strikes—mostly defensive in nature—this was not part of the announced goals of the Knights of Labor. Both the Knights and the NLU officially "deplored" strikes, which were to be used only as a "last resort," if at all. Both called for the ultimate liberation of the toiling masses from wage slavery through cooperative movements. Neither achieved any lasting success in winning contractual agreements for wages or working conditions, nor in developing permanent trade union strength directed against the bosses. (What they did achieve is the subject for an article in itself.)

Alongside these two organizations, the clamor for increased wages, better shop conditions and greater job security had created a few growing national craft unions, such as the cigarmakers, iron molders, carpenters, glass workers, and iron, steel and tin workers. They were mainly skilled workers who, because of their ability to effectively hurt their employers by withdrawal of their labor power—to strike, that is—were actually able to win collective bargaining contracts covering wages, hours, and other purely economic issues. The craft form of organization gave these workers sufficient strength to win some gains against the employers because manufacture at that time (after the Civil War) was still organized mostly in small industries depending on the skills of these craftsmen.

Leaders of these unions, such as Samuel Gompers of the cigarmakers, didn't like the "hodge-podge of mixed assemblies" of the Knights of Labor. They feared mass conflict with the ruling class and rejected violent demonstrations for longer-range political demands. They felt powerless against the troops used by the employers and their government. In order to limit struggle to purely trade union issues and narrow the conflict to a particular boss, they formed craft unions. These groups grew nationally, and by 1881 six such unions were able to join up to form the AFL.

Unlike the Knights of Labor and the NLU, the AFL had no goal of a utopian liberation

of the working class from wage slavery. Nor did it pose a revolutionary solution. Its fight was strictly for immediate trade union gains within the capitalist system. It therefore advocated strikes, and it limited membership to workers only—two distinct advantages over the other two movements. It grew rapidly: by 1886 it counted over 300,000 members. During the next 18 years it increased five-fold: by 1904, 1,676,000 workers were affiliated.

However, this success was small compared to the total work-force at the time: 30 million. The AFL was based on narrow craft concepts and specifically excluded the unskilled and Black workers. It rejected independent political action, and developed firm ties with the two-party system which have lasted to this day. In exchange for ignoring the mass of unskilled workers, it got a larger portion of the pie from the capitalist class. This led to corruption, especially of its leadership, which, in effect, sold out the interests of the mass of the working class. It developed an outright class collaboration policy; as early as 1893 the AFL co-sponsored—with big business—the National Civic Federation, devoted to "better relations between capital and labor." It had found a home, a nest, under capitalism's wing, and abandoned the rest of its class to a profit-hungry system.

By the 1890s the craft unions had lost much of their potential as an effective workingclass instrument. When craft unionism first appeared, it had challenged capital effectively. But capital was changing. The depressions of the 1880s and 1890s facilitated monopolization: the strong absorbed the weak. Capitalist industry had grown and begun to centralize. Many crafts were fragmented or destroyed by mechanization and increased division of labor. "Big Bill" Haywood, leader of the Western Federation of Miners, tells how miners lost their jobs through mechanization and the introduction of the steam drill. The craft unions' specialized ability to deal with the capitalist class now, at a later stage, turned into a source of disunity and weakness.

One of the first to recognize this was Eugene V. Debs, organizer of the first national industrial union in the U.S. Debs had been a railroad fireman and officer of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen. He knew of the failure of the spontaneous uprising by the railroad workers in 1877. He saw how, time and again, the craft division of the railroad unions (there was one union for the engineers, one for the firemen, another for the brakemen, and none for most of the unskilled) had hamstrung the workers, preventing a united front against the railroad bosses. He witnessed one craft scabbing on another striking craft union because they had different contracts. Against the strength of the robber baron owners of the country's transportation system, such unions won little more than death benefits.

Debs realized the answer lay in industrial unionism: one big union for ALL railroad workers. He began organizing the American Railway Union (ARU), which included all crafts on all roads. It was the first industrial union in the railroad industry.

On June 26, 1894, the ARU struck in solidarity with railroad car builders, who were facing a wage cut at the Pullman plant near Chicago. The strike spread rapidly to many Western roads and eventually involved one-third of the country's 850,000 rail workers. Because of its militant, industrial nature, it met fierce opposition. Martial law was declared almost immediately, and the order to fire on the strikers was given. In Nevada(1) the militia stuck their bayonets into the ground rather than shoot the railroad workers. But generally the repression was intense and many workers were massacred, especially around Pullman

Eugene V. Debs campaigns as Socialist Party presidential nominee

where 120 were killed or wounded.

Debs called on the AFL for support, but Gompers refused. The AFL already had craft unions on the railroads, so the ARU was a dual organization. The ARU was a better union, more militant and better suited to struggle against the railroad capitalists. This didn't interest the AFL, which strove to keep its members in craft unions and stop the growth of this new industrial union. When the ARU needed the complete solidarity of all rail workers, the AFL leadership said "No!" This broke the back of the ARU.

Although the ARU died, the idea of industrial organization took hold and spread from coast to coast. From its earliest beginnings, it posed a threat capital could ill afford. From the Homestead Steel Strike in 1892 through World War I, the ruling class used every instrument in its power to stifle the workers' attempts to win a decent standard of living through industrial unionism. The class struggle during that period reached an intensity of ferocity, terror, determination and all-out war rarely matched in U.S. labor history.

In 1892, the steel workers struck in Homestead, Pa., and in other towns in the Pittsburg area, expanding their old craft unions to include all the workers in the steel plants. In Homestead itself over 100 Pinkerton gunmen were used. When they were defeated by the armed defense of the steel workers, the militia was dispatched. The result, as steel moguls Carnegie and Frick had hoped, was to destroy the union.(2)

In Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, also in 1892, the miners organized and struck. The employers refused to negotiate. During the impasse, a mine was blown up. The ruling class tried to pin it on George Pettibone, well-known head of a western section of the Knights of Labor. The story was too preposterous, and he was never brought to trial. But the mine owners used the explosion as an excuse to call in the militia. Thousands were arrested and thrown into bullpens where they remained up to six months.*(3)

The Western Federation of Miners grew out of the struggles at Coeur d'Alene.(4) From its birth it fought throughout the Rocky mountains for industrial organization among the miners, for an 8-hour day, and for the rights of workingmen. Where the WFM struck, martial law was immediately declared, bullpens built, and masses of strikers shot down or deported out of the state in cattle cars.

The western miners were noteworthy, however, in their determination to defend their union, and to fight back against the military units of the ruling class. The miners armed themselves: during 1902 and 1903 they fought continual skirmishes with sheriffs, local police and state militia. Their readiness to do battle guaranteed the development of the union: the WFM grew to be one of the strongest, most militant unions in the country.

Samuel Gompers of the AFL had witnessed the brutal beating of the unemployed by the police in Tompkins Square, New York City, in 1884. His reaction was that the ruling class was too dangerous to fight.(5) Thus, he became one of its most trusted allies. The miners in the early 1900s, on the other hand, seeing their brothers shot down by the militia, picked up guns to fight back, and became the ruling class' most effective enemies.

Similar repression occurred wherever workers used industrial organization. Clearly, capital could not tolerate the effective organizational strength of the industrial unions. Its profits were at stake.

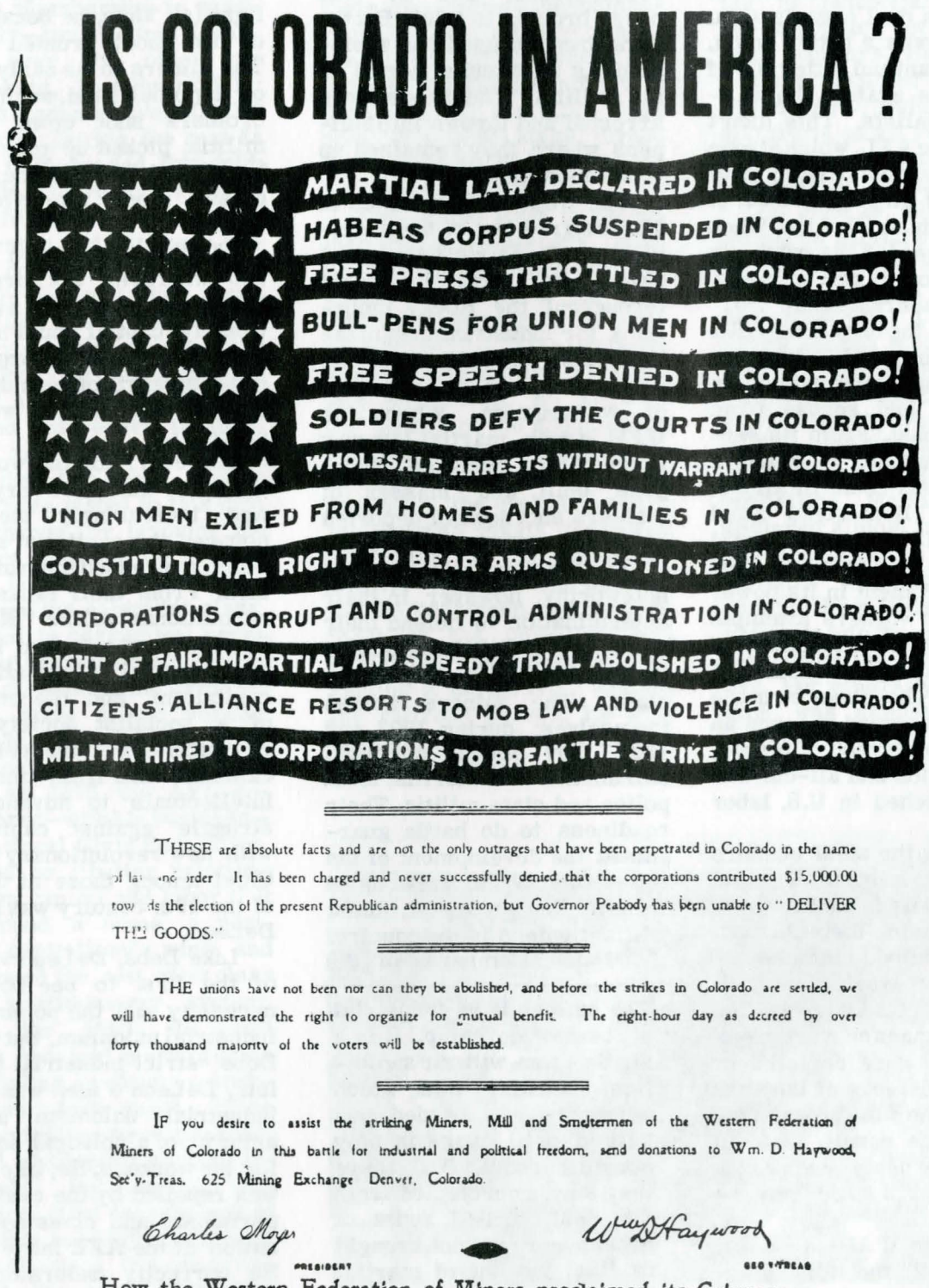
However, for the workers, the stake was their very lives. And increasingly they denounced the capitalist system which oppressed them at every turn. From their ranks came revolutionaries like "Big Bill" Haywood, who looked toward the eventual elimination of capitalism, and the creation of a socialist society. And revolutionary theoreticians came forward from among the intellectuals to advance the struggle against capitalism with new revolutionary ideas. Chief among those at the end of the 19th century was Daniel DeLeon.

Like Debs, DeLeon was one of the first to see both the necessity and the potential of industrial unionism. But unlike Debs' strict industrial unionism, DeLeon's idea was to use industrial unionism as the embryo of a political solution for the workers. He, like Debs, was repelled by the crass opportunism and class collaboration of the AFL leadership. He correctly understood the reactionary role of the AFL leaders. It was DeLeon who coined the accurate descrip-

* The bullpen is an industrial concentration camp. It is a single room without sanitation facilities into which prisoners are herded and packed until there is only standing room. And there they stay, unprotected from the cold, denied writs of habeus corpus, not brought to trial by dint of martial law. There has never been a bullpen in which many did not die.

tion of these sellout artists as "labor lieutenants of the capitalist class."(6) But from this he drew the incorrect conclusion that socialists must withdraw from the AFL and build a truly socialist labor movement on an industrial basis. (For the objective conditions that led DeLeon to these conclusions, see article on "Socialists of the 1890s," p. 123.)

DeLeon then led the only party in the U.S. that openly



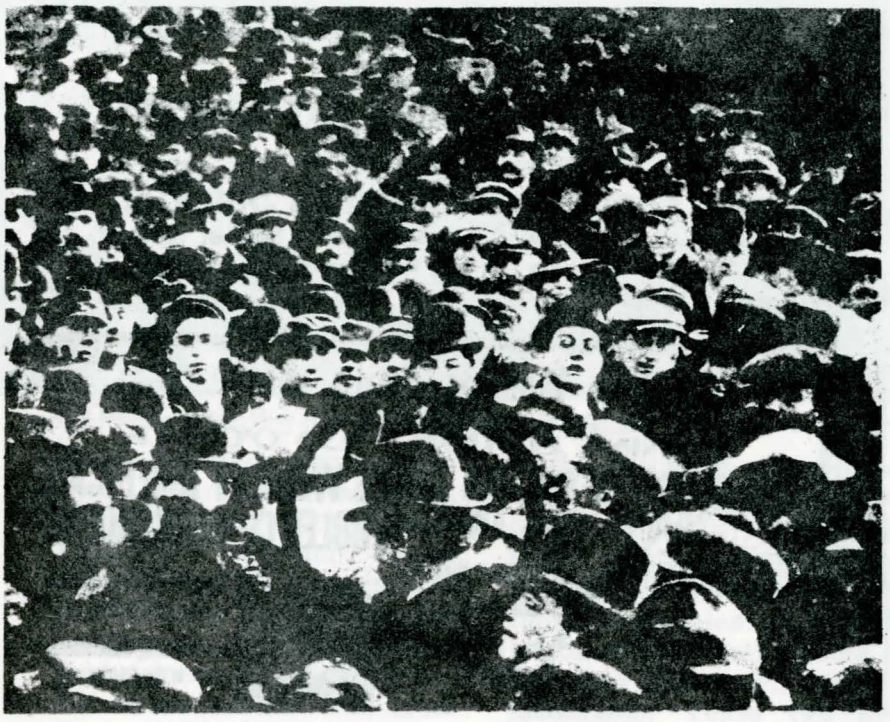
How the Western Federation of Miners proclaimed its Grievances

espoused socialism: the Socialist Labor Party. While DeLeon agreed with many of the precepts of Marxism—historical materialism, surplus value, and the class struggle—he had a syndicalist approach to the question of how workers could take power. He saw the working class winning, without resistance, through trade union action. The cornerstone of his program for U.S. workers became industrial unionism, both during and after capitalism. In the formation of industrial unions he saw not merely the advance of workers against bosses, but rather the overthrow of the capitalist system itself:

"Industrial Unionism is the Socialist Republic in the making, and the goal once reached, the Industrial Union is the Socialist Republic in operation." (7)

On the one hand DeLeon saw industrial unions as the mechanism by which industry could be taken over and the capitalists could be "locked out" (after the SLP had gained a majority at the polls). On the other hand, while viewing these unions as mainly administrative organs after the overthrow of capital, he vaguely suggested that they would be able to "take care of" any violent resistence by the opponent capitalist class. (8)

The ideas of DeLeon and other socialists like him had a vast appeal among the workers during that period, and became fairly wide-spread. And for good reason. Workers, locked in a life-and-death struggle with the ruling class (as the miners were in 1902-3), began to see an end to that war only in the total destruction of capitalism itself—a system of bullpens, militia, gunmen, and oppression—they looked to socialism as the answer to their needs.



"Big Bill" Haywood (circle) greeted by Lawrence, Mass. textile strikers

At its 1902 convention, the WFM, comprising 27,000, "resolved to adopt the principles of socialism without equivocation." As Brissenden points out, the WFM was "Forced by the obvious connivance between the state and city governments and the mine operators, by the use of militia for suppression of strikes... to consider the possibilities of political action along socialistic lines." (9) The preamble to their constitution read:

> "There is a class struggle in society and this struggle is caused by economic conditions... we say that the producer... is exploited of the wealth he produces... that the class struggle will continue until the producer is recognized as the sole master of his product,... that the working class and it alone, can and must achieve its own emancipation... and finally, that an industrial union and concerted political action of all workers is the only method of attaining this end." (10)

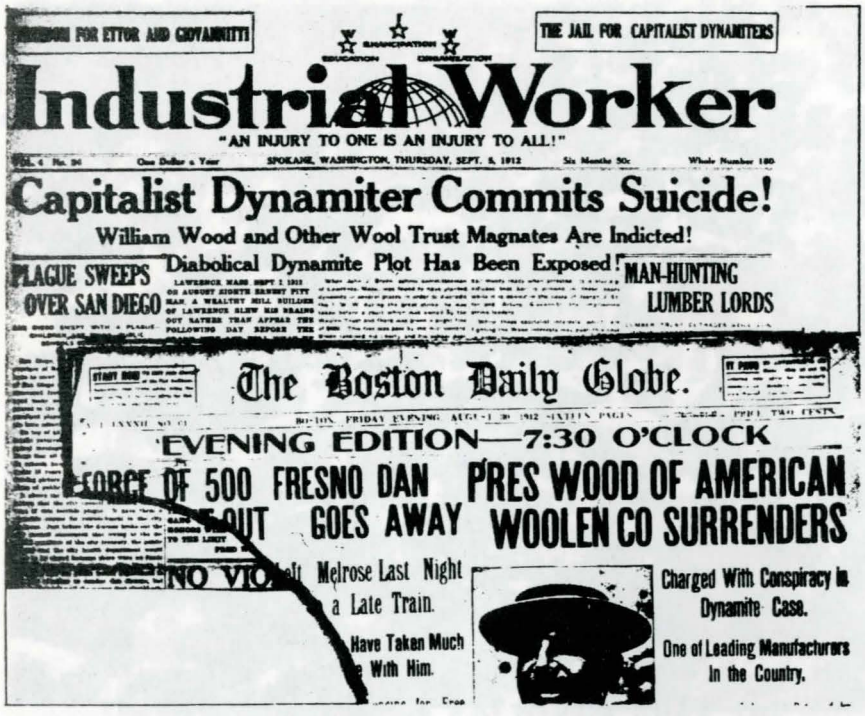
(Political action was then considered to mean electing working class friends and representatives into government office. This activity was later repudiated by the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). The IWW rejected electoral politics and held that an industrial strike was in itself a political act.)

The WFM adopted as its slogan "Labor produces all wealth; Wealth belongs to the producers thereof." (11)

Thus was born the revolutionary union, as it has been called. Faced with the massive repression of the ruling class toward their attempts to organize industrially for their demands, masses of workers turned to revolution and the ideas of socialism. Such ideas found root from coast to coast among miners, brewery workers, railroad workers, textile workers—wherever workers were involved in similar battles.

However, not only the capitalist class was hostile to the industrial unions; sharp division and conflict also arose between them and the AFL leadership.

Debs' ARU was just one



FREEDOM FOR ETTOR AND GIOVANNITTI

THE JAIL FOR CAPITALIST DYNAMITERS

EMANCIPATION EDUCATION ORGANIZATION

Industrial Worker

"AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL!"

VOL. 4 No. 36 One Dollar a Year SPOKANE, WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, SEPT. 5, 1912 Six Months 50c Whole Number 180

Capitalist Dynamiter Commits Suicide!

William Wood and Other Wool Trust Magnates Are Indicted!

PLAGUE SWEEPS OVER SAN DIEGO

Diabolical Dynamite Plot Has Been Exposed!

MAN-HUNTING LUMBER LORDS

The Boston Daily Globe.

EVENING EDITION—7:30 O'CLOCK

FORCE OF 500 GOES AWAY

FRESNO DAN PRES WOOD OF AMERICAN WOOLEN CO SURRENDERS

Melrose Last Night a Late Train.

Have Taken Much With Him.

Charged With Conspiracy in Dynamite Case.

One of Leading Manufacturers in the Country.

Provacateur exposed during Lawrence textile strike

example. There were many more.

Everywhere, industrial unionists, many of them revolutionaries, went into industries to carry their message of industrial unionism. And almost everywhere they were fought by craft union leaders who wanted to keep their own grip on the workers in the AFL. The militants' answer was to organize industrial unions anyway, but dual to the AFL. That is, outside the AFL, and in competition with the AFL locals.

Thus a struggle arose between the two forms of unions for the support and participation of the working class. The industrial unionists based themselves upon the more militant skilled workers, the unskilled, and the unorganized. Their goal was a determined struggle for workers rights. They sought economic gains for the entire working class, and declared for the class struggle against capitalism. The AFL leaders, on the other hand, based themselves on the skilled workers, the labor aristocracy, and, arrogantly interested only in maintaining their position as privileged wage-earners, preached the common interest of the workers and the bosses.

But it wasn't the attitude of the AFL that infuriated militant workers so much as the AFL's actual treason against working class solidarity. Said Bill Haywood:

"In the packing plants, the butchers' organization was one of the best in the country, reputed to be 50,000 strong. They were well-disciplined, which is shown by the fact that when they were called to strike, they quit to a man. That is, the butchers quit. But did the engineers quit? Did the firemen quit? Did the men who were running the ice plants quit? They were not in the union, not in that particular union. They had agreements with their employers which forbade them quitting. The result was that the butchers' union was practically totally disrupted, entirely wiped out."(12)

Often during mine strikes in the Rockies, the United Mine Workers (UMW) in the east, an AFL union, would mine coal to be carried west by AFL railroad workers. To the striking miners in the West this was scab coal, even though it came from union labor; it greatly weakened their strikes.*

Treachery followed treachery. In 1903, Haywood recounts:

"The strike of the Denver smelter men was extending to the workers in other industries, and for a time it looked as though the city of Denver would be involved in a general strike, but the development was squelched by the typographical union, which, as a result of the disturbances, secured for themselves a seven-hour and twenty-minute day. They callously left the smelter men alone, to fight against eleven and twelve hours a day."(14)

The attacks on the AFL at that time reflected the true struggle, and indeed have great meaning for today.

In 1905, Debs told the IWW founding convention:

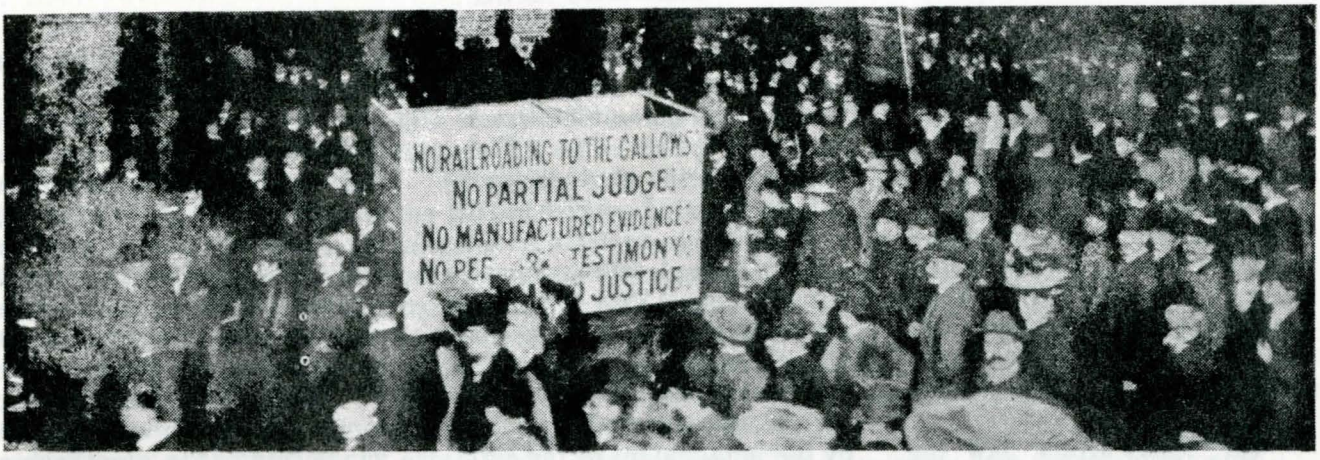
"The trade union movement is today under the control of the capitalist class. It is preaching capitalist economics, it is serving capitalist purposes. Proof of it, positive and overwhelming, appears on every hand. All of the important strikes during the last two or three years have been lost.

There is certainly something wrong with that form of unionism which has its chief support in the press that represents capitalism; something wrong in that form of unionism that forms alliances with such capitalist combinations as the Civic Federation, whose sole purpose is to chloroform the working class while the capitalist class goes through their pockets..."(15)

Debs might well have been talking to us.

The treachery of the AFL reached such a peak that most

* Interestingly enough, in 1902, when the UMW was on strike in the East, the WFM members sent moral and financial support and offered to lay down their tools should the UMW wish to make the strike general.(13)



20,000 mass at New York's Grand Central Palace protesting frame-up of leaders of Western Federation of Miners

militant industrial unionists came to feel the AFL was the main enemy. The leaders of the AFL were the right hand of the ruling class. But the conflict convinced militant workers to write off the entire craft federation, rank and file and all. Said Haywood during the 1905 founding convention of the IWW:

> "I do not care a snap of my fingers whether or not the skilled join this industrial movement at the present time. When we get the unorganized and the unskilled laborer into this organization the skilled worker will of necessity come here for his own protection. As strange as it may seem to you, the skilled worker today is exploiting the labor beneath him, the unskilled man, just as much as the capitalist is. To make myself better understood, the skilled worker has organized for himself a union, recognizing that in unity there is strength. He has thrown high walls around that union which prohibit men from joining the organization. He exacts that a man to become a member of the labor union must of necessity serve an apprenticeship to develop his skill. What for? For the benefit of the union? No, but for the benefit of his employer who is a member of the Citizen's Alliance and who is trying to crush out of existence the same union."(16)

But Haywood was wrong, as were many other revolutionary trade unionists who followed the line of withdrawing from the AFL to build a truly socialist labor movement on an industrial basis. They didn't see that the revolutionary movement would founder precisely because of the disunity created in the working class by the policy of dual unionism; by the separation of the new militants from the rank and file in the old conservative trade unions. With this lack of understanding, dual unionism became a dominant trend in the labor movement of that period.

The war between classes, the struggle of labor against capital for the world which labor built, was a war that inspired many men. Heroes arose, and workers united in struggle against inhuman enemies. The war between industrial unions and craft unions, on the other hand, was a story of treason, backbiting, and sellout. It disoriented the workers, disunited them, had them at each others' throats. It was the greatest boon to the ruling class in suppressing the working class.

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Two trends grew and gained some measure of mass acceptance in the U.S. at the turn of the century: syndicalism and dual unionism. Syndicalism was brought to the labor movement by revolutionary intellectuals looking for a solution to the problems of capitalist society. Dual unionism grew out of the trade union struggles themselves, when the working class found it had to fight two enemies: the capitalist class and their agents in the labor movement, the AFL leadership. These two new trends arose together, affected each other, and indeed, conditioned each others' existence.

Syndicalism was anarchism applied to the trade union field. The anarchists had long held that government, in and of itself, was the source of all evils. All government therefore must be destroyed. At first they thought insurrection could accomplish this. Once the state was destroyed everything would be all right. They had no view of the future society, and didn't consider economic structure beyond some general idea of cooperatives, or Proudhon's glib "free association of producers." The anarchist influence was small as long as it remained an independent movement.

Realizing the power that could be generated through working class organization, some anarchists conceived of using industrial unions as organs to destroy the capitalist system. They thought that if all workers were organized,

they would have the power to sweep the government, the politicians, the army, the militia and the bosses into the sea. And, unlike earlier anarchists, they had a vision of the future society which included change in the economic relations, i.e., that the workers would seize all industry and run it in their own collective interests.

The syndicalists saw the unions themselves, rather than any state form, as the organizational bodies of the future society. Administrative divisions would not be by boundaries or geographical lines, but along industrial lines—steel, coal, grain, etc. They felt certain that industrial administration would be the only "political task" necessary after the class struggle brought the seizure of industry. Syndicalism claimed that once the working class, organized on industrial lines, seized the country's industry and began to run in its own interests—the ruling class would automatically be powerless.

Therefore, the syndicalists set out to develop an industrial union movement strong enough to carry out this program, and within which they could begin to educate workers about the administration of industry. Unable to counter the tremendous corruption in the AFL by working inside it, the syndicalists started organizing "perfect" revolutionary unions, completely independent of the AFL. Thus, the syndicalists became the main advocates of dual unionism.

The industrial unionists, driven toward dual unionism by the antagonism of the AFL, and toward revolution by the repressions of the ruling class, grasped onto syndicalism. The success of industrial unionism in fighting capital, and the power it obviously displayed, led the unionists to regard the unions as the answer to all their problems. They looked no further. This became the basis for their complete acceptance of the syndicalist theory of revolution.

A similar error is often made today. Relative ease or success in organizing certain sections of the people around radical issues has led some radicals to view these sections of the people as inherently the most revolutionary. Instead of attempting to analyse and organize on a class basis, some modern "theoreticians" will point to the neighborhoods, others to the campus, still others to the middle class intelligentsia, or the technicians and engineers as being the only groups capable of bringing about social change. Too often they reject the basic working class role. Instead of persisting in a full analysis of society, and the forces in it, they stop where things look rosiest, and then advance this as the latest fashion in "revolutionary" thinking.

The organization of the IWW in 1905 marked the unity of syndicalism and dual unionism. Here the two major trends in the labor movement of the time, the theoretical and the practical, were brought under one roof.

The IWW realized syndicalist theory. It recognized the class struggle, and declared as its aim the overthrow of capitalism and control by the working class of its total product. Its program included organization of industrial unions in every industry and the training of workers to administer these industries after the bosses were thrown out. It organized itself into industrial departments, all united under a central leadership, which would form the

Cops disperse striking steel workers in Pittsburgh during 1919 strike led by William Z. Foster

political-administrative units after the revolution.[17]

The IWW, throughout most of its history, displayed internal dissensions and factional struggles. It fell prey to impossible sectarian policies. Internal dispute and ideological conflict prevented it from dealing effectively with the practical aims of building either a union or a revolutionary movement. (Short of a comprehensive discussion in this article, we will touch on a few of the main issues, and refer the reader to Paul Brissenden's book, The IWW: A Study of American Syndicalism, for an excellent discussion of the IWW.)

One of the IWW's worst sectarian mistakes was its complete rejection of contracts. It advanced the view that there could be no truce between labor and capital (a contract was such a "truce"), and that gains could be maintained only by the continual struggle and vigilance of the organized workers. There is certainly some truth in this. The entire struggle for the 8-hour day had shown that the bosses were ready to go back on agreements and even violate labor legislation at the drop of a hat, if not watched and contested right down the line.

Nevertheless, the IWW carried the point to a one-sided conclusion: a local could not enter the IWW if it was "bound" by a contract. This had two bad effects. First, locals that wished to enter the IWW were forced to wait until their contracts ran out: often by that time they either wanted to renew them or forgot about the IWW altogether. Second, locals within the IWW too weak to hold together under constant siege, fell apart without contracts. The IWW's rejection of contracts was almost the sole reason for their failure to make any inroads into the UMW in the eastern mines.[18]

At its founding convention, the IWW declared itself the undying enemy of the labor bureaucrats who controlled the AFL: the AFL had to be destroyed as a tool of the capitalist class. It forbade its members from working within the AFL, and thus unalterably established itself as a dual union.

Much debate raged throughout the IWW on the question of dual unionism. Many politically-minded workers fought for a "boring-from-within" approach: working inside the AFL unions to bring the skilled workers' consciousness to an industrial union level, winning the rank and file over, and kicking out the sellout leadership.

However, the IWW rejected this tactic (as indicated previously by Haywood). It decided to concentrate on organizing the unorganized, and building strength among the unskilled workers first. The IWW also felt that working within the AFL was nearly impossible. The AFL initiation fees were exorbitant, the union rolls in many locals were closed, and unskilled workers were excluded from membership.

In 1911, when William Z. Foster was nominated for the post of editor of the IWW newspaper, The Industrial Worker, he again raised the issue. Foster had just returned from a European trip as an IWW representative, and had learned of the European socialists' experience in applying the "boring-from-within" approach to their own unions. In an open letter to the membership he presented his views, and some very important criticisms of the IWW:

> "The question, 'Why don't the IWW grow?' is being asked on every hand, as well within our ranks as without. And justly, too, as only the blindest enthusiast is satisfied at the progress, or rather lack of progress, of the organization to date. In spite of truly heroic efforts on the part of our organizers and members in general... the IWW remains small in membership and weak in influence. It is indeed time to examine the situation and discover what is wrong.
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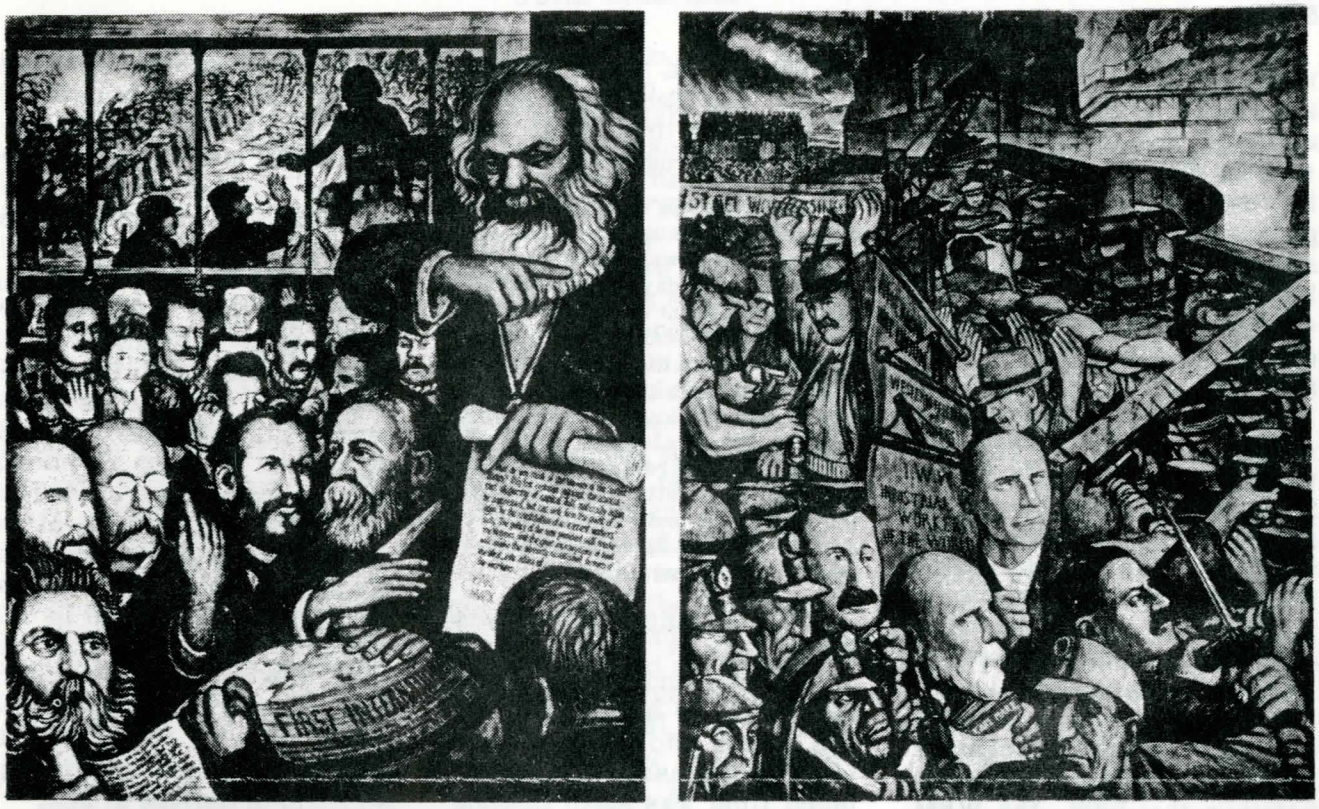
> "The founders of the IWW at its inception gave the organization the working theory that in order to create a revolutionary labor movement, it was necessary to build a new organization separate and apart from the existing craft unions which it considered incapable of development. This theory and its consequent tactics has persisted in the organization, and we later comers have inherited them and, without any serious investigation, accepted the theory as an infallible dogma. Parrot-like and unthinking, we glibly re-echo the sentiment that "craft unions cannot become revolutionary unions," and usually consider the question undebatable. Convincing arguments in favor of the theory I have never seen nor heard—I used to accept it without question like the vast majority of the IWW membership does now, and in practice it has achieved the negative results shown by the IWW today with its membership of but a few thousands. The theory's strength is due to its being the one originally adopted by the founders of the IWW and to me this is but a poor recommendation, as these same founders in addition to giving us a constitution manifestly inadequate to our needs and the changing or the ignoring of which occupies a lot of our time, made the monumental mistake of trying to harmonize all the various conflicting elements among them into one "Happy Family" revolutionary organization—a blunder which cost that IWW three years of internal strife to rectify and one that gives these founders, who have mostly quit the organization, anything but an infallible reputation. And if we look about us a little, at the labor movements of other countries in addition to considering our own experiences, we will be more inclined to question this theory that we have so long accepted as the

natural one for the revolutionary labor movement. It has been applied in other countries and with similar results as here.

"The German syndicalist movement, with a practically stationary membership of about 15,000, is a pigmy compared to the giant and rapidly growing socialist unions with their 2,300,000 members. The English IWW is ridiculously small and weak; the German syndicalist organization tactics in the three greatest capitalist countries, are all afflicted with a common stagnation and lack of influence in the labor movement. On the other hand, in those countries where the syndicalists use the despised "boring-from-within" tactics, their revolutionary movements are vigorous and powerful. France offers the most conspicuous example. There the CGT militants—inspired by the tactics of the anarchists who years ago, discontented at their lack of success as an independent movement, literally made a raid on the labor movement, captured it, and revolutionized it, and in so doing developed the new working class theory of syndicalism—have for one of their cardinal principles not to introduce competition in the labor movement by creating dual organizations. By propagating their doctrines in the old unions and forcing them to become revolutionary, they have made their labor movement the most feared one in the world. In Spain and Italy, where the rebels are more and more copying the French tactic, the syndicalist movements are growing rapidly in power and influence. But it is in England where we have the most striking example of the comparative effectiveness of the two varieties of tactics. For several years the English IWW with its dual organization theory carried on a practically barren agitation. About a year ago, Tom Mann, Guy Bowman, and a few other revolutionaries, using the French "boring-from-within" tactics, commenced in the face of a strong IWW opposition to work in the old trade unions, which Debs called impossible. Some of the fruits of their labors were seen in the recent series of great strikes in England. The great influence of these syndicalists in causing and giving the revolutionary character to these strikes which sent chills along the spine of international capitalism, is acknowledged by innumerable capitalist and revolutionary journals alike.

"Is not this striking success of "boring-from-within" after continued failure of "building from without" tactics, which is but typical of the respective results being achieved everywhere by these tactics, worthy of the most serious consideration on the part of the IWW? Is it not time that we got up off our knees from before this time-honored dual organization dogma and give it a thorough examination?" 19

IWW 1906? No; UE 1946--Cops overwhelm electrical striker after tear-gassing U.S. Motors' pickets, Los Angeles



MARXISM IN MURALS by Diego Rivera—at left Karl Marx, founder of scientific socialism, holds scroll bearing forecast of U.S. class struggle. Below him co-worker Frederich Engels faces early U.S. radicals. At right is depicted Daniel DeLeon (bearded), Eugene V. Debs (clean-shaven) and "Big Bill" Haywood (with moustache).

But Foster's "boring-from-within" approach was also rejected. Foster then broke with the IWW and formed the Syndicalist League of North America. This group attempted to apply the "boring-from-within" tactic within the AFL to realign it along industrial lines. The SLNA lasted only two years. It failed, Foster said, because of the widespread acceptance of dual unionism by militant workers.[20]

The main ideological conflict, which arose at almost every IWW convention, concerned the question of political action. "Political action" meant running candidates to represent the working class in the bourgeois government. One of the main exponents of this political action was DeLeon, although many felt he was just trying to gain votes for his own party, the SLP. He was expelled from the IWW in 1908, and established a rival group in Detroit. (The original was centered in Chicago.) The IWW then adopted the direct-action approach, limiting its activities to trade union battles and free speech fights.

The most emphatic rejection of both political action and "boring-from-within" was given by Joseph Ettor in 1913. He was answering Tom Mann, who had said on a national tour that "If the fine energy exhibited by the IWW were put into the AFL or into the existing trade union movement... the results would be fifty-fold what they are now."[21] Ettor replied:

"The theory that what is needed to save the Federation (AFL) is the energetic and vigorous men who are now in the IWW is on a par with the socialist advice of how to save the nation; but we don't want to save the Federation any more than we want to save the nation. We aim to destroy it. The Socialists advise us to roll up our sleeves and become active politically within capitalism—"We must capture the government for the workers," etc. We tried, but the more we fooled with the beast the more it captured us. Our best men went to "bore-from-within" capitalist parliaments, and city councils, only to be disgusted, thrown out, or fall victims of the gain and environment in which they found themselves... We learned at an awful cost particularly this: that the most unscrupulous labor fakers now betraying the workers were once our "industrialist," "anarchist," and "socialist" comrades, who grew weary of the slow progress we were making on the outside, went over, and were not only lost, but... became the greatest supporters of the old and the most serious enemies of the new."[22]

Continual splits and factionalism resulted in inevitable administrative inefficiency. While many workers

were attracted to the IWW, and locals were organized in almost every industry at one time or another. But inability to consolidate these shop organizations and tie them strongly to the parent body left them to drift and eventually fall away. The turnover in membership was tremendous. [23]

There were some notable exceptions to the IWW's dual unionist practices. In Goldfield, Nev. in 1907, the town's miners were all in the WFM, which had been in and out of the IWW. The carpenters were in the AFL, and almost all of Goldfield's other workers (waiters, painters, etc.) were in the IWW. When a struggle developed for job control in the mines an alliance was formed between the IWW, the WFM and the AFL. The AFL local was dragged into the alliance by its rank and file. This "mass union" became so strong that it practically ran the town.

Vincent St. John, a WFM leader and Secretary of the IWW at the time, later said about this struggle:

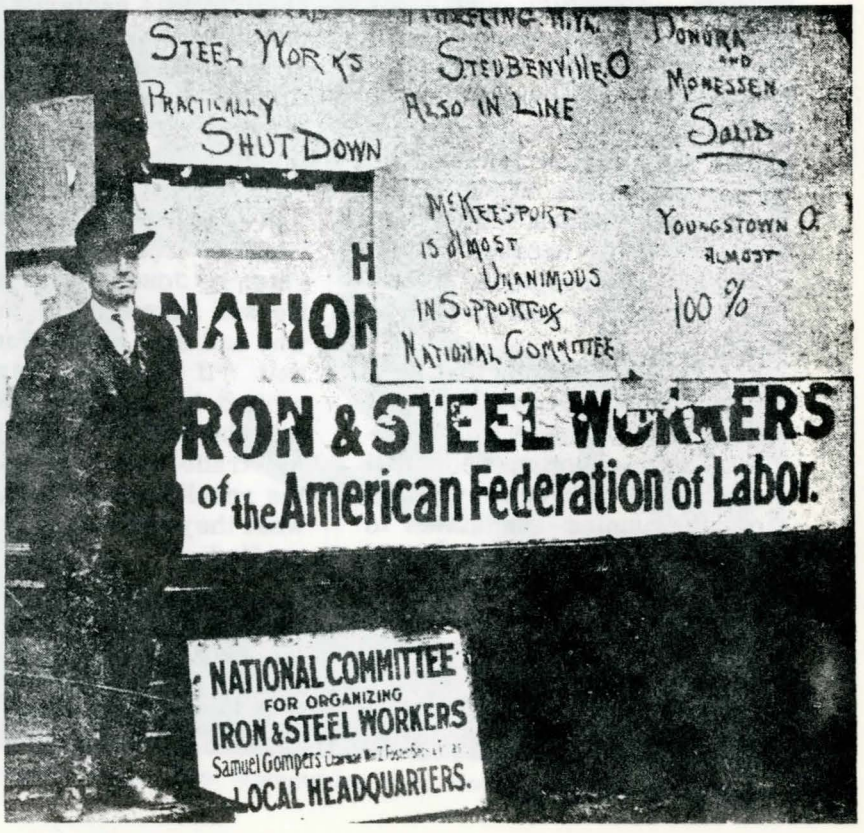
> "Under the IWW sway in Goldfield the minimum wage for all kinds of labor was $4.50 per day and the 8-hour day was universal. The highest point of efficiency for any labor organization was reached by the IWW and the WFM in Goldfield. No committees were ever sent to any employers. The unions adopted wage scales and regulated hours. The secretary posted the same on a bulletin board outside the union hall, and it was LAW. The employers were forced to come and see the union committees."

This alliance lasted less than a year. [24]

Colorful and heroic as the IWW was, as a labor union it has passed into oblivion, leaving only its lessons behind. So much time was spent fighting and squabbling with the AFL during its organizational campaigns that it was prevented from really organizing and educating the workers. The IWW fought and won many notable strikes—the Lawrence strike and the Patterson strike (both in textiles), and others—but it was still unable to consolidate these victories or deal with the AFL, its implacable enemy.

The IWW declined during and after the First World War, and the post-war Palmer Raids helped finish it off. Disorganized and demoralized, the leadership fell apart, and the movement was, for all intents and purposes, destroyed. This marked the end of syndicalism or dual unionism as serious, conscious components of the trade union movement in this country. The demise of the IWW was caused more by its own internal weaknesses and faulty view of the society it sought to change than by the strength of outside attack.

The syndicalists' most serious weakness was their lack of understanding of the state. They really did not know what the U.S. government was all about. Syndicalism failed



William Z. Foster applied "boring-from-within" technique in 1919 steel strike under the noses of AFL leaders, organizing 300,000 into union before movement was crushed.

to realize that the state could not be rendered powerless simply by the workers seizing the industries. Rather, as Marx had long ago pointed out, the state existed precisely to prevent them from seizing the means of production and even to prevent them from organizing to do so. It had been precisely this state—which the syndicalists thought would be rendered powerless by the seizure of industry—that had declared martial law on so many strikes, and killed, wounded and imprisoned so many workers to forestall the 8-hour day. It was this state that banned even talking about, much less organizing, unions—provoking the free speech fights. It was this state that carried out the Palmer Raids after World War I and decapitated the movement.

Actually, it was precisely when the workers fought back against the state that they were able to maintain and build their organizations, as with the WFM in 1902.

But these lessons were ignored. Syndicalism taught that trade union strength was sufficient to throw all the bosses, politicians, lawyers, cops, and soldiers into the sea. For the syndicalists, the main struggle was not for political power, but rather for "control" of industrial wealth.

Not understanding the nature of the state, they separated political struggle from economic struggle. This led them into a triple error in strategy. First, thinking that the unions were sufficient to seize power, they would not develop political action paralleling the economic. Second, no preparations were made to defend themselves against the attacks of the state, much less take the offensive against it. They had no political or military means of gathering and rallying support for their cause, or even consistently defending themselves.

As a final consequence, they saw no need to develop a political organ or revolutionary party to carry the revolutionary offensive forward. A party was and is essential for coordinating economic and political struggle, for carrying on ideological conflict with, and military defense against, the ruling class, and to develop revolutionary tactics. The absence of such a revolutionary party explains the failure to utilize simultaneously both tactics of "boring-from-within" and "building-from-without." Without such a party, it was impossible to actually capture political power, the prerequisite for the seizure and holding of industry for which they thought they were organizing.

Under these circumstances it made very little difference whether the movement endorsed political action or not. Proponents of both approaches proceeded from faulty concepts. Those who favored political action (as did the Socialist Party and the SLP in the decades before the war) did so under an illusion that through elections they would be able to capture the state—a peaceful transition to socialism. (DeLeon takes that view in his pamphlet, As To Politics, 1908.) Those (as in the IWW) who rejected political action and emphasized direct action (not wanting to participate in a government they saw controlled by the bourgeoisie) were convinced that by their neglecting the state it would "go away." They were going to "scare" the government into playing ball; it would accede to demands presented through free speech fights, packing the jails and strike action. Essentially this view overestimated the role and strength of the trade unions. It did not see the trade unions as a base for class struggle in the political sphere, to be carried out by as many different tactics as possible: ideological, economic, electoral and—inevitably—armed struggle.

Not seeing the state as an organ to consolidate and guarantee class rule, the syndicalists saw absolutely no necessity for a "state of the working class" to consolidate workers' rule after the seizure of power: a dictatorship of the proletariat. After all, if the ruling class could be rendered powerless by seizure of its industry, there would be no need to defend this seizure against a counter-revolution.

This question of counter-revolution is crucial. Anticipation of political tasks and social organization after the revolution is often the clearest indication of a revolutionary's strengths or weaknesses and ability to actually carry the revolution out. History shows that no revolution has ever occurred without sharp, many-sided counter-revolutionary struggle by the deposed class, including political and ideological facets. Thus, the syndicalist notion that future political struggle against counter-revolution would be unnecessary strongly reflected a refusal to engage, in the present, in real revolutionary struggle to bring socialism to power. And similarly, the syndicalists' complete failure to see the need for ideological struggle against the remnants of bourgeois ideology reflects their most important weakness in building a revolutionary movement: neglect of revolutionary ideology in organizing the working class.

Lenin criticized dual unionism at the Red International of Trade Unions (1921). While

this criticism was directed mainly against European dual unionists, its principles are general:

"Because of the reactionary and counter-revolutionary character of the trade union top leadership, they (the German "Left" Communists) jump to the conclusion that we must leave the trade unions!! that we must refuse to work in them!! that we must create new and artificial forms of labor organization!! This is such an unpardonable blunder that it is equal to the greatest service the Communists could render the bourgeoisie.

"To refuse to work in the reactionary trade unions means leaving the insufficiently developed or backward masses of workers under the influence of the reactionary leaders, the agents of the bourgeoisie.(25)

"To fear this "reactionariness," to try to avoid it, to leap over it, would be the greatest folly, for it would be fearing that function of the proletarian vanguard which consists in training, educating, enlightening and drawing into the new life the most backward strata and masses of the working class and the peasantry."(26)

Thus, the whole strategy of dual unionism negates the primary function of the revolutionary: to educate the working class and develop it ideologically, through both theory and struggle. For, indeed, the true evil of dual unionism, apart from the disunity visited upon the labor movement, was its wholesale abandonment of the workers in the AFL to the reactionary ideology and leadership offered by that organization.

Many of the criticisms that the dual unionists put forth about the AFL were true; organizing the unorganized and the unskilled was indeed one of the main tasks of that day (and still is). But it was still possible to develop a base among workers in the AFL, as some of Foster's experiences showed. Yet, as long as the dual unionists did not view the ideological development of the working class as primary, and were bound unalterably and exclusively to the program of dual unionism, all these experiences among the AFL rank and file were barred for them.

It is a profound testimonial to the narrow-mindedness and short-sightedness of revolutionaries of that period that a dispute between dual unionism and "boring - from - within" should occur at all. Anyone looking first and foremost to the ideological development of the working class through struggle against the ruling class, and not against the AFL leadership (although that is necessary also), could not help but view both tactics employed simultaneously, as necessary to break the grip of the reactionary AFL leadership on their own rank and file.

The essence of the dual unionists' error lay in viewing dual unionism as an element of strategy, instead of as a tactic. For revolutionaries in this country it became an end in itself. The IWW proved that sufficient reason existed for building a large federation of militant industrial unions. One of the tactics to accomplish this aim would surely have been to create unions dual to the AFL. But the other necessary tactic was to work within the AFL to neutralize its efforts against the dual union, and eventually to unite the AFL membership with the rest of the class, thereby overcoming the splitting effects of dual unionism. The main strategic task of revolutionaries is to develop greater unity around a higher political consciousness, but by using any and all tactics.

Foster himself didn't see past the one-sidedness of the dual unionist approach, and fell prey to it from the other side. In organizing the SLNA he sought to work only within the AFL, and fought against dual unionist tendencies. Yet, in his autobiography, From Bryan To Stalin, he admits that militant workers in the AFL sought only to leave it. This failure to grasp both sides of the contradiction lay behind the eventual decline of the SLNA.

The fruits of the syndicalists' mistakes were reaped in the post-World War I period, when the working class was reduced to its lowest organizational state in 30 years. Revolutionary leadership was isolated from the masses, and militant unionism was greatly reduced compared to the days before the war, while revolutionary activity fell even lower. These syndicalist errors were no minor mistakes. They were, indeed, very damaging to the labor movement.

Syndicalism misled the working class ideologically on the nature of the state, leading it to think that industrial unionism was the answer. Dual unionism, on the other hand, failed to consider at all the ideological development of the working class as a whole. It separated the more advanced workers in the dual union from the more backward workers in the AFL. The marriage of syndicalism and dual unionism was catastrophic.

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The ideology of syndicalism has faded since the first World War, having been discredited by the demise of the IWW, and by the success of the Russian Revolution with the proof in practice of Lenin's concept of a revolutionary party. But the specter of strategic dual unionism has continued to haunt the labor movement in many different forms, while

many lessons of the past go unlearned.

In 1921 the long struggle to build a revolutionary party in the U.S. began in earnest with the formation of the Communist Party. With the memories of dual union struggles and their destructive effect on labor unity still fresh in their minds, the founders of the C.P. declared war on dual unionism. For them, it was nothing but treason to the working class. And they set out to work only from within the established unions.

Although their initial drives toward industrial unionism within the AFL met with a good response, they ran into some very real problems. First, the majority of industrial workers were unskilled and unorganized, and thus still outside the AFL. Second, they found it very hard to deal with the bureaucratic AFL leadership, and were often defeated by them.

For instance, in the 1920s the Communists won de facto leadership of the UMW away from John L. Lewis. But Lewis managed to overturn the election and keep himself in office in the UMW through various deals with the government and the mine owners.

It was not until 1929 that the C.P. realized the necessity for some kind of independent trade union force outside the AFL to work among the unorganized. Thus, they took a leading role in creating the Trade Union Unity League (TUUL) in 1929.

The purpose of the TUUL was to form independent industrial unions, among the unskilled and in the mass production industries. The need for such a group was so great that in the four years following its formation, the TUUL organized more than 400,000 workers, mostly unskilled, into independent industrial unions. In industries like auto, steel, rubber, and the needle trades, contracts were won for tens of thousands of these workers. During this period, when the C.P. worked both within and without the AFL, the initial push was given to the tremendous drive for industrial unions which occurred in the 1930s.

But the more these independent industrial unions looked successful, the more they looked like dual unions, and the C.P. backed away from them. Unable to break away from its narrow, one-sided rejection of dual unionism, it was unable to coordinate both endeavors. In 1933, it led the TUUL back into the AFL, together with the hundreds of thousands of workers it had organized.

Although it declared that this move was made to carry on industrial organizing inside the AFL, it failed to see that the whole campaign for industrial unions could have been aided from the outside as well, using the independent unions as a tactical beacon. On the other hand, by taking the TUUL-organized unions into the AFL, the C.P. lost ground to those labor leaders like Lewis, Sidney Hillman, and Phillip Murray who were talking industrial unionism inside the AFL (and were later to lead the CIO out of the AFL). The contradiction between the Party's one-sided rejection of dual unionism and the tactical necessities of doing some work outside the AFL led the C.P. to take a zig-zag path that ultimately weakened it and cost it much of its leadership in the drive to build industrial unions. Although the main tactic may have been to work within the AFL until a split occurred—growing out of the struggle itself—to abandon the independent union tactic (even if a subsidiary one) was a mistake.

In failing to push for industrial unionization outside the AFL also, the Party lost the opportunity to create a revolutionary leadership for the workers in the mass production industries. While doing a good job in the next five years within the AFL and (later) the CIO, it left the Lewis, Hillman and Murray reformist forces to capture the sentiment for industrial unionism spreading among millions of workers and thereby seize the top leadership of the CIO.

The struggle to build the CIO under the leadership of Lewis and Murray came close to rectifying many of the mistakes of the old syndicalists. Militant unionists and revolutionaries recognized that the main enemy was the employer, and not the AFL. They fought the AFL by sidestepping it as well as working within it. Thus, in the late thirties, they combined the tactics of independent industrial unions with "boring-from-within" to bring over locals from the AFL and prevent a split of the workers within these industries.

But by this time further weaknesses in the Communist Party left this entire trade union effort ideologically devoid of any revolutionary content, and easy prey for the Reuthers, Lewises and Dubinskys. Thus, one result of the unionization of the 1930s was industrial organizations led by the "labor lieutenants of the capitalist class" to replace the old similarly-led craft unions. Again the ideological development of the workers had been sorely neglected, this time by the Communist Party.

Not only had the C.P. failed to arm the workers with an

ideology that would lead them away from support of Roosevelt and the Democratic Party, it never really showed any firm intention to carry through a revolution against the Roosevelt-led ruling class. Instead of driving during the depression years toward a clear goal of revolution, it backed off from a confrontation with the ruling class. Thus the C.P. tailed more than it led, and eventually fell into an ideological as well as practical alliance with the New Deal and the Roosevelt Administration. This laid the groundwork for the Party's temporary dissolution (under Browder) in 1944-1945, and left it defenseless in the face of imperialism's post-war anti-labor and anti-communist offensive.

The post-war offensive, launched to make the home front secure while U. S. monopoly capital pursued its aggressive wars and economic penetrations internationally, included passage of the Taft-Hartley Law in 1947; the ousting of Communists and militants from official union positions through the non-Communist affidavit; the guarantee of consistent anti-labor decisions from the NLRB; the Smith Act trials; and the whole McCarthyism era which equated militant, class-conscious trade unionism with treason.

Within the trade union movement itself it meant the ousting from the CIO of those unions led by Communists or radicals, and the ultimate merger of the AFL and CIO under a united reactionary leadership. These left-led unions included such giants as the United Electrical Workers (UE); Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers Union (the descendent of the old WFM); Fur and Leather Workers; the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) and others. Eleven industrial unions in all suddenly found themselves outside the CIO.

In the wake of the expulsions, new CIO unions were artificially formed to replace those ousted. Thus to replace the UE, the IUE was created. This time it was the reactionaries creating the dual unions. The IUE embarked upon a campaign of raiding, aided by the bosses, the government, and a huge red-baiting campaign, to destroy the UE. The once-proud UE, which had brought Morgan's huge electrical trust, General Electric, to its knees in 1937, was reduced during the 1950s from a membership of 600,000 to its present membership of around 50,000.

At the time of the expulsions in 1949 the 11 expelled unions were at the height of their strength. Had they consolidated their strength they might have withstood the attacks of the 1950s. But again the spectre of being branded dual unionists rose up, and these unions retreated before both that spectre and the red-baiting by the ruling class and its AFL-CIO agents. Thus the 11 unions were picked off and weakened one by one.

The whole situation of continual retreat finally reached the ludicrous conclusion in 1957 when the CP's national secretary urged local UE leaders to take their entire locals into the IUE, to be placed under the reactionary leadership of James Carey, in order to get back in the "mainstream" of the labor movement. Thus, they reversed the efforts of all militant trade unionists before them, to get workers out from under the control of the reactionary leaders.

The consolidation of reactionary control over the entire labor movement during that period is the logical conclusion of the early vacillation of revolutionary elements in the unions, and their inability to break out of a one-sided approach to dual unionism. At the same time, dual unionism itself, once used as a lever to create revolutionary leadership for the working class, was turned into its opposite. It became a tool in the hands of the ruling class to destroy revolutionary or militant leadership of the trade unions.

The UE has no long-range strategy to overcome its dualism to the IUE. In attempting to rebuild its strength, it concentrates on trying to win back the plants lost to the IUE, but fights on strictly "bread and butter" issues. Neglecting to point out the role of the government in the gang-up against the workers' conditions (it supported Johnson in 1964), it leaves the workers defenseless against attack. Meanwhile the government, refusing to allow the most minimum threat to its war protection plants in the electrical industry, won't even allow a plant-by-plant bargaining election in the two giants, GE and Westinghouse, units of which the UE could conceivably win. The National Labor Relations Board has ruled that elections must take place on a chain-wide basis, making it much more difficult for UE to regain its losses.

UE has, in effect, become just another business union in the field, competing for the workers' allegiance with only a slightly more militant program. It has lost touch with its own rank and file and has begun to use members of SNCC and SDS to help in its organizing and to revitalize its re-

lations with its rank and file. What is apparently needed in this sorely split industry is a long-range revolutionary strategy: militants to work from below within the IUE shops to press for a class-struggle policy, and their counterparts in UE to push that union to take a leading, left-progressive line within the industry. In this way, the work of those within the main union (IUE) could merge with those in what could become the "beacon" (UE) and result in the unity of all the workers around a militant program: anti- boss, government, and piecard, better prepared to meet the attacks that will inevitably come from their enemies inside and outside the labor movement.

Another dualism exists between the Teamsters and many AFL-CIO unions. Having been expelled from the "house of labor," the Teamsters consider any other union or group of workers fair game. In many cases, because of their reputation for bringing home the bacon, they have succeeded both in organizing unorganized workers (where passive policies of AFL-CIO unions have failed) and in raiding AFL-CIO affiliates. However, the Teamsters' reputation was built on two factors: their (essentially defensive) militant reaction to the Kennedy attack, and their work in an expanding industry —trucking—in which the bosses' leeway in granting concessions was more than in such contracting industries as railroad. As the Teamsters enter such industries (as they are doing now in the railroad shop crafts in New York), they will find it increasingly difficult to pursue an aggressive policy UNLESS their program begins to point out the relationship of the state to the bosses (especially with all the regulation that exists in an industry such as railroad). Such a program is less likely while the Teamsters remain a haven for gangsters of all sorts. Today any two-bit mobster looks to the Teamsters to help him set up shop. Since these characters are simply a different variant of the sellout mis-leaders who rule the main sections of the labor movement, to expect the sporadic aggressiveness of the Teamsters to win out requires, again, a revolutionary force working from below to give the workers class-conscious leadership. Otherwise, a change to the Teamsters just means exchanging one form of business unionism for another.

Finally there exists the dualism of those workers who have broken away from the AFL-CIO to form independent unions, such as the New York City Welfare Department caseworkers who organized into the Social Service Employees Union (SSEU). The SSEU began as a rank and file rebellion against the sellout leadership of District Council 37 of the American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees (AFSCME), AFL-CIO. Organizing within Local 371 of AFSCME, SSEU won bargaining rights for the caseworkers and carried on a very militant struggle against the City, the State and various anti-strike laws. They won the first binding contract New York City ever signed. (Previously the City had only signed non-binding "letters of intent" to which the unions were not signatories. Groups like the Transport Workers and the Teachers union don't deal directly with the City.)

As an independent union SSEU represents an excellent example of one way in which the grip of corrupt trade union leaders can be broken. It therefore could serve as a beacon, a way out, for other workers everywhere. But the SSEU has not accepted this role nor carried all the way the challenge it took up. Having split from the AFL-CIO, the SSEU faced the necessity of organizing other welfare job categories, particularly the clerks, so the initial strength gained through its new, militant leadership would not turn into a source of weakness. This has not been done. Instead, SSEU has gone the other way; it speaks of the professionalism of social workers, of their special interests above and beyond the average secretary or clerk on the City payroll. Thus, SSEU has begun to fall back into the narrowness of craft unionism. Such an approach can only weaken the union and bring inevitable capitulation to the City on many gains previously won, as shown in the recent contract dispute.

In spite of the pitfalls, independent unions seem to offer a powerful tool with which to break the grip of corrupt union leadership on the working class. The problems and tasks faced by the workers in past periods are still with us. The vast majority of the working class is as yet unorganized. The organized workers are still controlled by reactionary leaders who parrot the entire Cold War line of the State Department and kneel before the anti-labor actions of the government. The unions are still tied to the two-party system, negating working class independent politics.

Independent unions organized as strong rebellions against sellout leadership can help overcome this mis-leadership. To reject independent unionism would be a serious

mistake, for it would throw away a tool that can be successfully used against the ruling class. But the dangers of dual unionism are real. Therefore independent unionism must always be accompanied by a further intensified drive within the corrupt unions and among the unorganized, to unite the workers' ranks, and to prevent isolation. These tactics must be coordinated. This can only be accomplished by a working class political party. The further struggle to end capitalist exploitation forever becomes the task of a revolutionary party.

Revolutionaries must learn from these past experiences of labor struggles. One-sidedness must be overcome, and the multitude of tactics available to the working class be considered in their entirety in the fight to rid humanity of its last oppressors. Be these tactics dual unions, "working from within," political strikes, inter-industrial federations aimed at defense against political attacks, etc.—whatever the struggle, the main questions that must be asked are: do the tactics allow and enhance the development of revolutionary ideology in the working class? Do they lay the groundwork for further unity of the working class to carry out its short-range tasks and promote long-range revolutionary ideology?

Beyond the level of trade union battles against the bosses is the ultimate political fight to win state power. Therefore, the tactics of struggle and organization must always prepare for this eventual goal. For this a revolutionary party is absolutely essential: to bring about the greatest diversity of tactics against the ruling class and simultaneously coordinate them in a single struggle to win. Work without such a perspective will keep the working class on a treadmill by forfeiting the essential socialist solution in the creation of a workers' society. Many-sided tactics, a revolutionary perspective—these are the needs shown by U.S. trade union history.

Footnotes

1. Bill Haywood, Autobiography ("Bill Haywood's Book"), p. 52
2. See account of this strike in Lockout, by Leon Wolfe, Harper and Row, 1965
3. Haywood, p. 62
4. Boyer and Morais, Labor's Untold Story, p. 143
5. Fonor, History of Labor Movement, Vol 1., p. 513
6. DeLeon, Two Pages from Roman History
7. DeLeon, Industrial Unionism, p. 48
8. DeLeon, Socialist Reconstruction of Society
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