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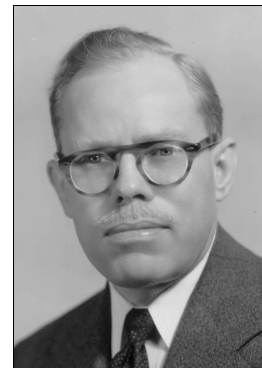
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ERIC HASS (1905–1980)

Introduction

Quoting Hegel in his celebrated monograph, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon*, Karl Marx observes that all great historic facts and personages recur twice, and he adds, “Once as tragedy, and again as farce.” The launching of the Industrial Union movement in this country in 1905—glorious as was this great historic event, and important as are the lessons that revolutionists may draw therefrom—was essentially a tragedy, or at least it terminated as such. We witness the recurrence, in its farcical aspect, in the Lewis fake industrial union movement, the so-called C.I.O., many of whose supporters and leaders were instrumental in corrupting and eventually wrecking the original Industrial Union movement, the Industrial Workers of the World, organized in Chicago thirty-two years ago. The C.I.O., offered as industrial unionism, and hailed as such by the fakers and muddleheaded reformers and “liberals,” is so obviously a caricature of genuine Industrial Unionism, that only the present period of amazing chaos, confusion and social disintegration can account for its acceptance as the genuine article by so many otherwise honest and intelligent people.

As all great cartoonists know, caricature (in itself a great art) must present its subject with an element of truth, or essential likeness of the original, however purposely distorted. And deliberate intent to distort, for some ulterior objective, good or bad, is the essence of all caricature. The serious student of historic facts, and of social phenomena generally, will without difficulty perceive that the so-called industrial union movement as launched by Lewis is a monstrous distortion, a vicious misrepresentation, of genuine Industrial Unionism as fathered by the great American Marxist, Daniel De Leon.

Many years ago De Leon, in an oft-quoted passage, pointed out that Industrial Unionism could be distorted to serve the most reactionary purposes—purposes that run directly counter to the very aim which they are designed to serve. With prophetic insight, De Leon said:

“Caution must be observed lest one attach to the term Industrial Unionism more than there is in it. Industrial Unionism does not of itself mean the economic body necessary for the revolutionary act. The form of Industrialism may subserve the most reactionary of schemes. It is with Industrialism as with the alphabet. Without the alphabet there can be no good literature; but the alphabet may also furnish vulgar words.”

Can anyone, having the cause of working class emancipation at heart, doubt that the C.I.O. is a body, the form of which enables it to serve (as it does serve) “the most reactionary of schemes”?

As usually is the case with respect to all questions of this kind, the ruling class, the plutocracy of America, is not deceived by the name, or the bluster, of Lewis’s fake industrial unionism, as Eric Hass so ably and thoroughly demonstrates in his exposure of John L. Lewis. To add to the evidence on this head compiled by Hass may seem like painting the lily white. Yet, it may be profitable to cite a few of the latest manifestations that prove plutocracy’s recognition of Lewis as an ally rather than a foe. If the labor faker, the modern plebs leader, is to, serve his purpose in the scheme of things capitalistic, he must be painted as a “friend of labor,” and as an enemy of the employing class. The decoy duck must, of course, be fashioned and painted to look exactly like a real duck, and not like a hunting dog. When, however, the plebs leader, the labor faker, sometimes is carried away by his own pretensions, when he acts the assumed part too well, capitalists not trained to think in terms of capitalist collective interests are apt to become apprehensive, and begin to doubt that the labor faker is really their friend, their lieutenant, and plans may go awry, despite the valiant efforts of the J.P. Morgans and the Myron Taylors. Then the expert capitalist apologists, the trained sophists of the plutocracy, rush to the rescue, as witness a recent column by that outstanding servant of nascent industrial feudalism, Walter Lippmann. Referring particularly to the resistance offered Lewis and his lieutenants by the Republic Steel Corporation, and other independent steel companies, he says:

“For this reason the position taken by the independent steel companies seems to me altogether shortsighted, capable only of embittering the

industrial conflict and of delaying a constructive solution. The more they treat Mr. Lewis and the C.I.O. leaders as public enemies to be resisted at all costs, the more impossible they make it for Mr. Lewis to develop discipline and a sense of responsibility in the ranks of his young and inexperienced followers. The more they compel Mr. Lewis to lead strikes to obtain recognition for organized labor, the more they compel him to depend upon his most militant followers. The more they keep him occupied on the picket lines, the less time and energy and opportunity they leave him for training responsible lieutenants and developing discipline in the rank and file.”

What does Mr. Lippmann mean by “developing discipline in the rank and file” of labor? Obviously not revolutionary self-discipline. He means the “discipline” ever imposed upon the rank and file by the labor fakers—the shackling of labor by means of the “sacred contract,” “collective bargaining,” the securing of his own position as capitalist labor lieutenant through the “check-off,” and the suppression of that revolutionary spirit which springs as naturally from exploited labor as smoke emanates from fire.

But plutocracy’s spokesman wants to leave no doubt in his masters’ minds as to the essential “sanity” of capitalist labor lieutenant Lewis. Continuing his analysis of Lewis and the C.I.O., he says:

“Now, of course, there are many who believe that Mr. Lewis is a revolutionist. . . . I do not believe it. What is more, I do not think that is the opinion of those who are best qualified to judge, and so far as I can see, the record does not bear out that opinion. Mr. Lewis has been a union [plebs] leader for a long time, and those who have dealt with him testify that he tries to carry out in good faith the agreements he makes [with the exploiters of labor] . . . *and I think it impressive and significant that in the automobile industry Mr. Lewis and Mr. Martin have tried as earnestly as they have tried to suppress unauthorized strikes.*” (Italics mine.)

This is fair and just recognition by plutocracy’s spokesman of the valuable services rendered, and capable of being rendered, by the trusted labor lieutenants of the plutocracy.

Pleading with his masters to be reasonable, and to help Mr. Lewis to maintain “order” and capitalist discipline in the ranks of labor, he concludes on this revealing note:

“They [the exploiters] will negotiate with Mr. Lewis because Mr. Lewis has to be negotiated with, and, as they do that, they will perhaps find it

pleasanter *to work with* Mr. Lewis than to fight him.” (My italics.)

Could anything be clearer? What Mr. Lippmann in effect is saying is something like this: Masters, Lewis is your servant and friend. The old craft union labor faker is too stupid, too unimaginative, too inefficient to serve your interests. For God's sake, come to your senses, and try to understand that Mr. Lewis, and his type of plebs leader, is needed by you, desperately needed, if you would preserve and strengthen your capitalist system, and if you would tighten the chains you have placed on labor!

Echoing, as it were, Mr. Lippmann's eloquent plea, the *New York Herald Tribune*, plutocracy's organ, editorially hails Homer Martin, one of Lewis's chief lieutenants, for the exercise of “labor statesmanship not hitherto associated with his [Martin's] name.” And applaudingly it quotes the following from Homer Martin's instructions to his followers:

“You will have to follow the direction of your international officers.”

Follow me, said the bell-wether to the sheep, and I shall lead you to your logical destiny, the slaughterhouse!

*

Despite the obvious reactionary capitalist character of the C.I.O., or perhaps I should say because of its obvious capitalist character, it is hailed by the nitwit Thomas-Browder-Foster reformers as a mighty mass movement of labor! A mass movement, indeed, for the enslavement of labor in the mass rather than as separated craft groups! The utter stupidity of the Anarcho-Communist and S.P. politicians is incredible, unless one views them as conscious servitors of the plutocracy in the same sense and degree as Lewis. They are doing everything possible to aid the J.P. Morgans, the Myron Taylors, and the Walter Lippmanns, to run the revolutionary Industrial Union movement into the ground, and to consummate the complete economic peonage of American labor. To them Marx, and even Lenin, mean less than the Marx Brothers. Even if they read Lenin's works, they would have neither the intelligence to understand them, nor the intellectual honesty to apply them to American conditions. Otherwise they might realize that the very tactics they pursue with respect to such unmistakable capitalist schemes as Lewis's fake industrial unionism were condemned again and again by Lenin. In his famous, *What Is to Be Done?*, Lenin criticizes the stupid reformers of his day in

language that reads as if it were directed against the Socialist party and burlesque bolshevik reformers. Criticizing a Russian Social Democratic (really petty bourgeois) paper for its bourgeois attitude and reasoning, Lenin says:

“And yet, with only a little reflection, it [the paper] would have understood *why subservience to the spontaneity of the mass movement and any degrading of Social Democratic [meaning here revolutionary Marxist] politics to trade union [read “Lewis C.I.O.”] politics means precisely to prepare the ground for converting the labor movement into an instrument of bourgeois democracy.*” (My italics.)

Illuminating, is it not? And as if addressed to the Browder-Foster crowd!

Again quoting Lenin, we note this trenchant, and, to the present situation, relevant observation:

“The fact that the working class participates in the political struggle and even in political revolution does not in itself make its politics Social Democratic [i.e., revolutionary Marxist] politics.”

This is a pretty severe blow at the pet schemes and slogans of the Anarcho-Communist and Social-Democratic reformers, by the man whose name (ironically enough) is so often invoked by these reformers. Nor is it at all strange that these inane and witless fellows embrace with such avidity labor-enslaving enactments such as the Wagner Act and the “wages and hour” act, for these are all phases of the same movement for reducing the workers to absolute economic serfdom under a thoroughly entrenched feudo-capitalist system of society.

The plutocracy knows the value (to capitalism) of these labor-enslaving legislative enactments, even if the stupid reformers and “liberals” do not. The plutocratic spokesman quoted above comments on these as inescapable measures in the efforts made to save, if possible, the capitalist robber system. Arguing that the Wagner Act, and similar legislation, clears the road for holding labor unions legally responsible, Mr. Lippmann says:

“Many correspondents have written to me recently saying that if employers are to deal fully with organized labor, then the unions must be made responsible under the law and that the right to strike must be regulated as it has been in England. I agree entirely. That is, I believe, the certain and necessary development of the Wagner Act and of the C.I.O. movement. If the union officials are to bargain for all employes, are to

collect large funds, and are to have a determining voice in fixing the conditions of labor, then they must be made to accept legal responsibility, they must become publicly accountable for their funds, they must subject themselves to a code which outlaws unfair labor practices on their part.”

Only at its peril may organized labor submit to such State control and regulation as suggested by the crafty Lippmann. For once the workers submit to such regulation and control, they will have prepared the road for a “labor front” a la Hitler. Such control and regulation by the executive committee of the capitalist class (i.e., the political government) implies turning the labor unions into annexes of the capitalist productive machine, and would spell the end of independent labor unionism, not to speak of revolutionary working class unionism. And again it is important to note that plutocracy’s spokesmen recognize this vital fact, as evidenced by Mr. Lippmann when he refers to the “real recognition of unions as established factors in industrial management.” Translated, this means that the plutocracy is ready to recognize the labor faker, the plebs leader, as its agent—as the “lieutenant” who will handle its “labor troubles” for it, precisely as managers, engineers, accountants, etc., handle for it other departments in the productive machine. The day the workers agree to incorporating unions, and to accept State control and regulation, compulsory arbitration, etc., etc., that day will see the beginning of the end of independent working class unionism in this country. That day an important step will have been taken toward out-and-out fascism, or Industrial Feudalism.

The exposure of Lewis by Eric Hass is an important contribution to the contemporary literature of American Marxism. Thoroughly documented, based upon undeniable facts, it leads inescapably to the conclusion that Lewis and the C.I.O., and all who support them, constitute the greatest menace to working class emancipation in recent times. The Socialist Labor Party, the Marxian party which for half a century has held high the banner of proletarian emancipation in the United States, must, as it will, continue its exposure of labor fakers, bell-wether reformers, and all the enemies of working class freedom. In exposing these fakers we shall encounter tremendous opposition and abuse, even by the misled workers themselves. We shall be treated to the accustomed conspiracy of silence, but even this studied silence by the enemy is a very definite form of recognition, as Joseph Stalin rather wittily suggested last November, when he said:

“It may be said that silence is not criticism. But that is not true. The method of hushing up as a special form of ignoring things is also a form of

criticism. It is true it is a silly and ridiculous form, but it is a form of criticism nevertheless.”

Quite so, and we may well give that as our answer to the fakers and reformers, including Stalin’s American pets—and for that matter to Stalin himself.

The workers, to achieve their emancipation, and even to keep from being submerged, must organize industrially, ON SOCIALIST LINES, the only way in which they can build power and render their just claims effective. For, as we know, it is not enough that the workers have solid, moral ground to stand on; that they have a just quarrel—that is important. They must organize, organize and organize! They must be ready to strike the first blow, to strike before the reaction (as in Italy and Germany) prevents them from striking at all. As our own Artemus Ward said:

“Thrice armed is he who hath his quarrel just’—And four times he who gets his fist in fust!”

Speaking of getting one’s “fist in fust” brings to mind the fact of Mr. Lewis being as much the bully, the ruthless physical forcist, as are Mussolini and Hitler, et al. His slugging of Hutcheson of the Carpenters’ Union at the A.F. of L. convention, 1935, exhibited Lewis as a typical denizen of the capitalist jungle. But let us not forget also that the bully is at heart ever a coward.

This pamphlet, by an able organizer, lecturer and spokesman for the Socialist Labor Party, should be studied carefully, and should be distributed far and wide, so that its important lessons may be learned by the class (the exploited wage workers) which must, soon, take over the management of production and distribution, lest society become engulfed in anarchy, or that other possible alternative to Socialism—Absolutism in government, or Industrial Feudalism.

Arnold Petersen

New York, N.Y., June 14, 1937.

I.

History of the American Federation of Labor

THE HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR is an unbroken record of tragedy and farce, betrayals and retreats, soaring hopes and shattered lives. Dominated and completely controlled by vast-bellied, diamond-bedecked officials whose salaries range from \$5,000 to \$20,000¹ per year “and expenses,” the A.F. of L. has served capitalism with unswerving devotion. Every spark of classconsciousness manifesting itself in the rank and file has been smothered, every attempt at class unity frustrated.

By dividing the organized workers into autonomous unions, craft is made to scab upon craft, and internecine strife is fostered by a hopeless snarl of jurisdictional disputes. At its annual powwows labor fakers fire oratorical broadsides at “entrenched greed” and “predatory interests,” pass countless innocuous resolutions and speak solemnly of “exploitation” and labor’s wretched state. Meanwhile the membership is mulcted, bound hand and foot with “contracts” and turned over to the tender mercies of the “Interests” so eloquently denounced.

Early in the century, the *Wall Street Journal* described the A.F. of L. as a bulwark against Socialism. But mass production methods have cut from under its feet the very basis of craft organization, i.e., craft skill. Now it is ready for the embalming fluid. Despite William Green’s² assurances to the contrary, its fitful tremors may be ascribed to *rigor mortis*. Futile were the combined efforts of industry³ and the New Deal to galvanize the corpse.

Unrest among workers in steel, automobile, rubber and other mass production industries was aggravated by the speed-up, general intensification of labor and a rapidly rising cost of living. Company unions failed to check it and, inasmuch as mass production methods do not lend themselves to craft organization a la the A.F.

¹ The equivalent of \$70,312 and \$281,230, respectively, according to the Consumer Price Index posted to the website of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis.

² William Green (1873–1952), president of the American Federation of Labor from 1924 until his death.

³ “Side by side with this development [postponing labor trouble] is the growing realization among business chiefs that the Federation of Labor is their staunchest bulwark against the dangerous growth of radicalism among the workers. So word has been passed that the Federation should be patted on the back whenever this can be done without weakening industry’s position in future controversies.”—*Sacramento Bee*, September 6, 1935.

of L., a new method had to be devised through which unrest could be diverted harmlessly. Should discontent find its revolutionary channel, capitalism would be swept into limbo and with it would go the evil genius of American labor—the ubiquitous labor faker.

No one knew better than John L. Lewis, international president of the United Mine Workers of America, that, if his own skin and that of the capitalist System were to be saved, the workers in the mass production industries had to be organized along lines similar to those of his own union. At the 1935 convention of the A.F. of L. he pleaded with the simon-pure craft union leaders:

“The American Federation of Labor stands for that [the protection of “our form of government and our established institutions”]. How much more security would we have in this country for our form of government if we had a virile labor movement that represented, not merely a cross-section of skilled workers, but that represented the men who work with their hands in our great industries, regardless of their trade or calling.”

The craft union leadership, with the exception of those already aligned with Lewis, remained unmoved. They had precious few dues-payers in any of the unorganized industries but they feared that to permit the skilled workers of their respective crafts to be organized “industrially” would set a dangerous precedent. The goose that lays the golden eggs had to be protected even though her eggs were smaller. Paper claims of jurisdiction were raised.

But the die was cast and, when the A.F. of L. executive council met in August, 1936, ten autonomous unions were suspended. The Committee for Industrial Organization had already launched its organizing drive. It was to be a crusade for “collective bargaining.”

II.

John L. Lewis, Plebs Leader

WHEN OCCASION SERVES, few men can inveigh against the “economic royalists” with more studied fury than can John L. Lewis. Thus does he “daub his vice with show of virtue.” This faculty of appearing as an enemy of certain groups of capitalists captures the imagination of the credulous and gullible.

Liberals “steeped in the dew of sickly sentimentalism” hail him as a “militant.” Would-be Communists unblushingly hitch their wagon to his ascending star although, as late as 1934, they printed an unflattering caricature of Lewis in their official organ, the *Daily Worker*. Beneath it were inscribed the words, “Veteran labor betrayer, wheel horse of N.R.A.” The Socialist party, which has flirted around the shirt-tails of the A.F. of L. for nearly two score years vainly seeking recognition as the “Labor party,” transfers its affections to Lewis and the C.I.O. with the fickleness of a gold-digger. Lewis accepts the support of both Communists and S.P.ites with the laconic comment: “It’s a good idea to work with anyone who will work with you.”

No other labor leader, unless it be Matthew Woll, has a record for red-baiting comparable to that of John L. Lewis. In 1923 the Lewis machine in the U.M.W.A. released six articles charging that the United States was threatened with being converted into a colony of Moscow and alleging that \$1,100,000 of Bolshevik gold was financing the movement. The sixth article stated that the situation challenged not only organized labor “but every employer as well.” It invited the cooperation of capital in combatting the menace. “This is one occasion when labor and the employer might very well join hands and fight together instead of fighting each other.”

Lewis was charged with using information gathered by the Burns Detective Agency, the Department of Justice and the National Civic Federation. The charge was partly substantiated in 1925 when Lewis proudly boasted that “The United Mine Workers once cooperated with the State Department in making an investigation of Communist propaganda. . . .”⁴

To reporters he expressed his concern over the growth of “radicalism” and

⁴ *John L. Lewis—Leader of Labor*, by Cecil Carnes.

warned employers that they could destroy the U.M.W.A. at their peril,

“Grind men under the employers’ heel,” he said, “and you invite Communism. Give men a square deal and you take out an insurance policy against it. That’s one reason our American workers have not been susceptible so far. *Our living conditions are fairly good.* Keep them good and we’ll have no radicalism in this country.

“Of course some coal operators would be glad to see the United Mine Workers broken up. . . .

“On the other hand, there are big, broad-minded operators who understand economics and social science and who realize that were the United Mine Workers to crumble, they would be replaced by something far more sinister and radical.” (*Italics mine.*)

At the time these words were uttered, tens of thousands of coal miners were idle, their “fairly good living conditions” indescribably wretched. Others were working one, two or three days per week for miserable pay at one of the world’s most dangerous occupations. Only two out of every three coal miners die in bed.

Lewis took great pains to impress upon the employers the importance of his union as a defender of private property. “The policy of the United Mine Workers is neither new nor revolutionary,” he wrote. “It ought to have the support of every thinking business man in the United States.”⁵

If John L. Lewis had no love for Socialism and “radicals,” his admiration for capitalist institutions knew no bounds. When his book was published in 1925, reviewers on conservative newspapers were astounded to note that the miners’ leader “speaks as one capitalist to another.” Repeatedly he rhapsodizes over the magnanimities of capitalism.

“Today it is the proud boast of great captains of industry and the triumphant shout of economists that modern capitalism is enriching the worker, as much as the proprietor, multiplying instead of diminishing the so-called middle classes, and converting the one-time proletarian into a capitalist, participating in the enterprises which he serves.”⁶

“ . . . Scores of great industries have found in the increased wages of the workers and the savings that they have accumulated, the source from which they have obtained immense amounts of capital for extensions and betterment of plant. The public utility companies have fairly swamped us

⁵ *The Miners Fight for American Standards*, by John L. Lewis.

⁶ *Ibid.*

with accounts of how they have converted thousands of workingmen into capitalists by selling them stocks or bonds.”⁷

A professional capitalist apologist could scarcely do better than this.

Lewis’s liberal and pinkish satellites are willing to admit that his record is “spotty,” but today he is a “militant” and “progressive” labor leader. They offer as proof the fact that some industrialists have resisted efforts at organizing their employees. Indeed there are employers who look upon Lewis’s growing power with apprehension. Others, among whom are to be found the most crafty and astute of capitalists, recognize in the C.I.O., under Lewis’s leadership, a new and modern bulwark against Socialism.

One of these is Myron C. Taylor, chairman of the board of U.S. Steel. After a “man-to-man” chat with Lewis, Mr. Taylor signed up with the C.I.O. Why? Mr. Taylor is nobody’s fool. He holds a responsible position in one of the world’s largest and most powerful corporations. He is also a student of labor relations.

Dictatorships of the past have maintained themselves by censoring the press, curbing free speech and banning public assemblages. But capitalist production is impossible unless the workers assemble within the factories. “The advance of industry, whose involuntary promoter is the bourgeoisie, replaces the isolation of the laborers, due to competition, by their revolutionary combination due to association.” (*Communist Manifesto*.) The factory, therefore, becomes the potential center of revolutionary activity. Modern dictators, unable to prevent assemblages within’ the factory, must find means of controlling them. Mussolini was confronted with such a problem. Its solution was to be found in Fascist unions which are industrial in form, and, like the *genus Americanus*, based on the fatuous belief in “brotherhood between capital and labor.” “The Fascist unions,” said Mussolini in 1926, “form a great mass completely under the control of Fascism and the government: a mass that obeys.”

Myron C. Taylor is one who has observed, and marveled at, Fascist methods. At a dinner tendered Fulvio Suvich, Italian Ambassador to the United States last November, Mr. Taylor assured him, according to the *New York Times* report, that “all the world has been forced to admire the success of Premier Mussolini in ‘disciplining the nation.’”

⁷ Ibid.

In view of this expressed admiration for the loathsome Duce, John L. Lewis's tribute to Myron C. Taylor is both sinister and significant. After the agreement was signed, Lewis graciously averred, "It has been made possible by the *far-seeing vision and industrial statesmanship* of Mr. Myron C. Taylor." (Italics mine.)

Instead of exhibiting fear and trepidation at Lewis's much advertised "militancy," financiers are commending him. According to the *New York World-Telegram*, March 4, 1937, "two financiers closely identified with Morgan interests" said "they had only praise and admiration for Mr. Lewis."

"Supplementing each other's statements," the report continues, "but apparently thoroughly in accord on the main theme that complete industrial organization was inevitable, they hinted that other industrial leaders may be just as receptive to unionization of their plants as is Myron C. Taylor, chief of Big Steel."

"'After all,' said one, 'why shouldn't industry be thoroughly organized in this country? *It has proved successful in Great Britain* where union recognition has been effective for twenty years. . . ." (Italics mine.)

There is no denying the fact that "it has proved successful in Great Britain"—AS A LIGHTNING ROD TO RUN THE REVOLUTIONARY CURRENT INTO THE GROUND! As for the condition of the British wage slave class, a review of "Metropolitan Man" appearing in the *Daily Telegraph*, February 18, 1937, tells the shocking story:

"It is a startling book, but for every startling statement official authority is given. . . . One in every three Londoners dies in a workhouse or a rate-aided hospital. . . . Five out of six London children are not adequately nourished; one in seven is verminous. . . . Some Londoners are certified every year as dying of starvation."

Of course, the Morgan financiers view the question of unionization from another angle and to them it is "successful" only if it succeeds in focusing the worker's attention on bargaining for improvements within the present system of private property. It is not surprising, then, that they "upheld the right of the man on the line, at the loom and in the mine to bargain collectively with his employers."

The workers "demand the right to bargain collectively" bellows labor lieutenant Lewis!

The "battle" is on!

III.

The Treachery of “Collective Bargaining”

“COLLECTIVE BARGAINING” IS THE BATTLE-CRY. Never was a more sinister phrase used to seduce and dull the wits of Man. What does it mean?

“John L. Lewis said in 1922 that the labor of men is not a commodity.” (*Fortune*, October, 1936.) In this opinion he does not have the support of his pal and admirer, General Hugh Johnson, who, in his *Saturday Evening Post* series, “The Blue Eagle From Egg to Earth,”⁸ observes:

“It is meaningless for Congress to say, in the Anti-Trust Acts,⁹ that human labor is not a commodity of commerce.

“Of course it is an article of commerce. The moment it develops a surplus, the price goes down. When there is a shortage, the price goes up. It is imported, exported and shipped from spot to spot.”

The phrase “collective bargaining” proves Lewis to be wrong and General Johnson to be right! How, pray, could there be “bargaining” without buyers and sellers? And how could there be buyers and sellers without something to be bought and sold? All denials to the contrary notwithstanding, labor power is a commodity to be bought and sold like any other commodity. Under capitalism the worker is in the same category as bacon, beans and pumpernickel bread. A surplus of pork on the pork market causes its price to sag. By the same token a surplus of labor on the *labor market* effects a reduction in the price of labor power, i.e., wages. Once the worker is alive to this significant fact, he realizes that, as the machine displaces ever more workers, recruiting them permanently into the army of unemployed, his wages are depressed, and he rids himself of the illusion that the condition’ of the working class can be improved within the present system. Whatever momentary upturn in business may *seem* to contradict this, the records of any decade prove it to be true.

“The modern laborer . . . instead of rising with the progress of industry, sinks deeper and deeper below the conditions of existence of his own class. He becomes a pauper, and pauperism develops more rapidly than

⁸ Doubleday, Doran & Co. published Johnson’s articles in book form in 1935 under the same title.

⁹ A rider attached to the Clayton Act, 1913, states that, “The labor of a human being is not a commodity or article of merchandise.”

population and wealth.” (*Communist Manifesto*, by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels.)

Collective bargaining can only mean to sell ourselves in a group instead of singly. To organize for collective bargaining, and to fight for collective bargaining, is to organize and fight for the right to retain the status of commodities and deny the right to be human beings!

Furthermore, the fact that the employers and their wage slaves are arrayed against each other as buyers and sellers of commodities knocks into a cocked hat the myth of “mutual interests” between the two. The interests of buyers and sellers being, by the very nature of things, antagonistic, the interests of capital and labor can only be diametrically opposed to one another. This being the case, the labor leader must serve either one or the other. He can no more serve both than ride two horses going in opposite directions. If he prates of “harmony between capital and labor,” “mutual interests,” etc., it is to inject his followers with the virus of capitalist ideology, and render them submissive to capitalist exploitation.

John L. Lewis has repeatedly asserted that there exists a community of interests between the exploiters and their victims, pleaded for “unity between capital and labor” and said that “a full partnership alone could save our economic system.” In his book, *The Miners Fight For American Standards*, Lewis wrote:

“It [the U.M.W.A.] has from the first realized that the welfare of its own members is inextricably bound up with the prosperity of capital. . . .”

Which is as much as to say, “The more brother capital skins brother labor the better for both of us.”

Collective bargaining must end in a “sale” if it is to be accounted successful. The “delivery” of the merchandise (labor), the “price” to be paid (wages) and all the conditions of the transaction must be clinched by the signing of a “contract.”

Later we shall show how Lewis, by signing separate contracts for the U.M.W.A., has frustrated all attempts at unity on the part of the rank and file. Now it is our purpose to demonstrate that *every contract between capitalist employers and their wage slaves, without a single exception, is a fraud.*

In his epoch-making address, *Socialist Reconstruction of Society*, Daniel De Leon, Socialist pathfinder, founder of Socialist Industrial Unionism, and

distinguished authority on constitutional law, said:

“What is a ‘contract’? I am not going to give you any Socialist definition of the term. The term has nothing to do with Socialism. It is a term the meaning of which has grown up with the race’s experience. The definition I shall give is the law-book definition. It is the definition accepted and acted upon in all the Courts of Equity. A contract is an agreement entered into by two equal parties; a contract is an agreement entered into between peers; a contract is an agreement entered into by two freemen. Where the parties to a thing called a contract fall within these categories, they are said to be of contracting mind and power, and the document is valid; where that which is called a contract lacks any of these essential qualities, especially if it lacks them all, the thing is null, void and of no effect; it is a badge of fraud of which he is guilty who imposes the contract upon the other.”

In the light of this comprehensive definition let us examine the so-called labor contract.

The commodity labor-power resides in the blood, bones, muscle and brain of the worker. It is, therefore, a perishable commodity. Unlike the capitalist who can store his merchandise until prices rise, the worker must sell—or starve. No matter how determined he may be to “hold out” for a better price, self-preservation drives him to the market. In the language of De Leon:

“The workingman does not stand upon a footing of equality with the capitalist; he is not of contracting mind with the employer. The latter holds over him the whip of hunger that the capitalist system places in the hands of the master, and with the aid of which he can cow his wage slaves into acquiescence. Why, among themselves, and even in their public utterances, when anger throws them off their guard, the apologists for capitalism blurt out the fact that ‘only the lash of hunger’ can keep the workingman in the treadmill. At the bar of man and of justice the ‘contracts’ that labor signs are null, void and of no effect.”

The employers’ labor lieutenants must, if they are to continue their parasitic existence, sing hosannas to the “holy, inviolable and sacred” time contract. Moreover, whenever workers evince a desire to strike in sympathy with their brothers on the firing line, they are reminded of their “solemn agreement.” “These,” stated the report of the Executive Council to the 1934 A.F.of L. convention, “represent solemn covenants that cannot be disregarded and violated without sacrificing reputation, standing and honor.” If verbiage fails to halt them and the

workers persist in reacting to their class instinct, their strike is declared an “outlaw” strike, strike funds are withheld, charters are revoked and the fakers join openly with the employers in beating the workers into submission.

A labor movement with collective bargaining as its end and aim begets organized scabbery. It cannot be otherwise.

As the class struggle sharpens, employers feel the need of a disciplining agency to tame and bridle the workers who might otherwise organize, not for collective bargaining, but for their emancipation. “Union-busting” plutocrats are pausing to reflect and many have already committed themselves to collective bargaining in order to make themselves invulnerable to unseasonable strikes.

General Motors Corporation succumbed but, less than a month after signing an agreement with the United Automobile Workers of America, thirty sit-down strikes disrupted production. G.M.C. executives demanded to know of the “militant,” “rank and file” leaders whether they intended to live up to their “sacred agreement.” Ignorant of the fraudulent character of the labor contract, this “militant rank and file” leadership collapsed, pleaded guilty and promised to “discipline” their followers.

Observing the haste with which former “union-busters” are signing agreements with Lewis and the C.I.O., Raymond Clapper, capitalist commentator, wrote in the March 24, 1937, issue of the *New York World-Telegram*:

“Some of them looked forward longingly to a time when labor would be completely organized into responsible unions so that management could reach agreements which permit it to plan production free from the shadow of being tied up by labor trouble at any moment.”

An inestimable amount of energy is being wasted today in building unions whose central principle hobbles labor with contracts and places in the hands of reaction a weapon with which to beat labor to its knees. To read the future of the C.I.O. one has only to examine the history of the U.M.W.A., after which it is patterned, and the record of its central figure, John L. Lewis.

IV.

History of Lewis and the United Mine Workers

IT IS NOT A RECORD TO INSPIRE PRIDE AND ADMIRATION in his followers. The build-up given him by the capitalist press to the contrary notwithstanding, it is essentially one of treachery and treason to the working class, and particularly to the members of the U.M.W.A. Shallow-minded liberals may color the record as they please, would-be Communists and Socialists may close their eyes to it, blind worshippers may sprinkle it with attar of roses, it still reeks of venal fraud and cowardly betrayals.

Lewis rose via a succession of offices, most of which were appointive, to control the U.M.W.A., when President Frank J. Hayes made him acting president in 1918. He was already a “seasoned” labor leader. Samuel capital-and-labor-are-brothers Gompers was his mentor. Under Gompers’s direction he spent more than five years as an organizer for the federation.

Lewis did not have to wait long after stepping into the president’s shoes before he had an opportunity to show the cut of his jib.

The coal mining industry was suffering from a disease called capitalism. The symptoms were overproduction, over-expansion and unemployment.

In October, 1917, the United States Government, acting through its Fuel Administration, the mine owners and the miners’ representative (Lewis) entered into a tripartite agreement to insure production of enough coal to “win the war.” The miners agreed not to strike under penalty of fine. But the cost of living rose rapidly in 1918 and remained high in 1919. Consequently the 1917 wage scale was pitifully inadequate. The agreement was to run until March 31, 1920, or *until the end of the war*.

The war ended “officially” in December, 1918, and the War Fuel Administration was dissolved. By withdrawing, the government had invalidated the agreement.

Meanwhile dire want among the miners was accompanied by seething unrest. A rash of “wildcat strikes” broke out. Forty thousand Illinois miners struck on July 4 as a protest against the persecution of Tom Mooney. They were “fined,” the “fine” being checked off their pay. Infuriated, they struck again, this time against their officials as well as the operators. Twenty-seven thousand dollars of union funds was spent on finks and deputy sheriffs to break the strike. Lewis, in violation of the

international constitution, delegated power to Frank Farrington, president of District 12, to revoke the charters of the striking locals. Other “Illegal” strikes broke out. Desperate, the Lewis machine shouted “Breach of contract! Breach of contract!” and expelled an entire district in Canada for joining a One-Big-Union strike.’ Thousands of striking anthracite miners in Pennsylvania were ordered back to work on penalty of expulsion.

This was the general situation when John L. Lewis called the Cleveland convention of the U.M.W.A. to order September 9. Never before, nor since, has he faced more determined delegates, for this was an “oddity,” a rank-and-file convention, the overwhelming majority coming directly from the pits. It was an elemental force, charged with anger and righteous indignation.

“We mined the coal to transport soldiers,
We kept the home fires all aglow,
We put old Kaiser out of business;
What’s our reward? We want to know!”

the miners sang. Toward the Fuel Administration, President Wilson and their own officials who had signed the government-enforced agreement their attitude was one of bitter impatience. Illinois delegates offered a resolution which began, significantly:

“Whereas we deem it necessary to call a strike *to get action from our national officials, etc., etc.*”

Then they proceeded to vote unanimously on demands that made the fakers wince. Sixty per cent increase in pay, abolition of “fines,” six-hour day, five-day week, and nationalization of the mines. The fakers were cowed. A spirit of revolt against their domination pervaded the miners. Lewis was ordered to issue a strike call for November 1, 1919.

It was then that the government, the capitalists’ executive committee, resurrected the defunct Fuel Administration to get a plausible background for drastic measures against the miners. The war had not “ended” after all.

On October 25, President Wilson declared that the miners were calling a strike “at a time when the war itself is still a fact.” He upbraided them for their lack of “patriotism.”

Five days later a resolution, introduced by United States Senator Thomas, of Colorado, providing for the use of federal troops, was passed by Congress. Here and there soldiers were despatched to the mines. Attorney General Palmer secured a sweeping injunction from Federal judge A.B. Anderson of Indianapolis ordering the U.M.W.A. officials to call off the strike by 6 p.m., November 11.

Four hundred thousand men responded to the strike order despite the injunction and the threat of militia and federal troops.

It was Lewis's golden opportunity. His niche in the hall of fame was cut out for him. And how did this "hero" behave? Did he disregard the injunction and manfully stand by the embattled miners? Did he accept the challenge and go to jail? Like a pusillanimous poltroon he betrayed the rank and file, obeyed the injunction and cowered behind the skirts of "Americanism." On the day of the injunction's deadline he said: "We are Americans. We cannot fight our government." It was the wail of a craven traitor.

The ultra-capitalist *New York Times* gloated editorially on November 12: "That is Americanism, it is a conclusion stated in an American way."

In the face of the vicious attitude of President, Congress, courts, and the use of militia and federal troops, all wet-nurses to capitalist interests, Lewis had the unbelievable gall to describe a ruthless instrument of class oppression as "our government."

Subsequently, Lewis consenting, the whole controversy was given into the hands of a government ("our government") board of arbitration, euphemistically called a "commission."¹⁰ After some delay the miners were granted a pay boost of twenty-seven per cent. Twenty-seven per cent! When the cost of living had risen by seventy-five per cent!

About a year later John L. Lewis had his salary raised from \$5,000 to \$8,000¹¹ per year "and expenses."

Space prevents treating any but Lewis's most glaring perfidies. But, although it affected only one district directly, the Lewis-Howat controversy deserves mention.

¹⁰ Lewis usurped the power of the rank and file by committing the union to the acceptance of the commission's award. Chairman Robinson of the commission asked if the miners would accept its award. Lewis replied, ". . . We submit our interests to the commission without reservation and shall abide by the judgment of the commission." Later he ruled a motion to submit the award to a referendum vote out of order at the convention of the U.M.W.A.

¹¹ The comparable figures for October 2006 would be \$50,625 and \$81,000, respectively.

Alexander Howat was president of District 14, which comprised the State of Kansas. In 1920, Governor Allen, of Kansas, established an “Industrial Relations Court” to force arbitration and prevent strikes. The miners vigorously opposed the law, and later the court. In the course of the conflict several thousand miners struck. Howat and another official, August Larchy, refused to order the men back to work and were sent to jail for six months. Their willingness to go to jail was in sharp contrast to Lewis’s eagerness to dodge the same opportunity months before. Upon hearing of the jail sentence, although no strike order had been issued, 12,000 Miners stopped work by common impulse.

The moment had arrived to pull the “sacred contract” out of the bag of tricks. Labor lieutenant Lewis was there to do the job. Charging that the Kansas strike violated “the joint agreement between miners and operators in the State of Kansas,” that, therefore, “the laws of the international union were being flagrantly disregarded,” the Lewis machine suspended the entire Kansas organization and proceeded to set up another that, by the very nature of things, had to bow in obedience to the Industrial Relations Court.

Thus did Lewis come to the assistance, of his masters, running the lightning of labor’s wrath into the ground, dispersing labor’s forces, and dragooning the miners back into their somber shafts.

The condition of the miners, both anthracite and bituminous, grew progressively worse. Instead of a “six-hour day, five-day week,” they were scarcely able to average two days per week. But coal miners are a sterling lot. The nature of their calling infuses them with courage and character. In 1922 they had lost little of their spirit. The class instinct was present, but the Socialist was prevented from touching that chord—prevented by the labor faker.

As April 1, 1922, drew nigh (the old agreement expired on March 30, all the tremendous forces of capitalism were gathered for an assault. “Bravely” they came upon the battlefield to pit their full stomachs, troops, press, police, courts, militia and *labor fakers* against the empty stomachs of the workers. The operators refused to discuss a new agreement. They had a large surplus, which, together with the tonnage from non-union mines, was sufficient for eight weeks or more. Men get pretty hungry in eight weeks.

On April 1, for the first—and last—time, the anthracite and bituminous miners struck together. True to that latent sense of class solidarity, some 75,000 non-union

bituminous miners in fief to the United States Steel Corporation in Western Pennsylvania joined their brothers.

Lewis sounded the “war-cry,” a curious one for workers who are destined to regenerate the world. It was, “No Backward Step.”

Five months dragged wearily by. Coal stocks dwindled and the miners faced actual starvation. There was little violence except in Herrin, Illinois, where thirty miners were massacred and a score wounded in one battle. In August, Lewis met with the operators of the union mines in the bituminous field and signed an agreement. Seventy-five thousand non-union strikers not included in the agreement were treacherously abandoned and union-mined coal was used to break their strike! Lewis’s cap-in-hand, obsequious biographer, Cecil Carnes, explained, “He could not, as a business unionist, risk a good contract by insisting upon ‘too much.’”

Left to fight alone, 155,000 anthracite miners waited anxiously for the first opportunity to end hostilities. It came in a few weeks. Lewis negotiated a new contract at the old scale but *expiring at a different date than that of the bituminous miners*.

Divide et impera (divide and rule) was the Roman maxim. John L. Lewis, in collusion with the operators, succeeded in splitting the miners’ ranks. In future controversies anthracite and bituminous miners were not to be permitted to strike together, which meant, of course, that they would scab on one another to the greater glory of the contract.

The never ending encroachments of capital resulted in a series of “outlaw” strikes. It was the only method of resistance the workers knew. But, although one could depend on labor to throw up its arm to ward off the blow, the employers could depend on their labor lieutenants to attack from the rear.

In 1922, a strike was called against the British Empire Steel Corporation in Nova Scotia. With shameless haste Lewis invoked the “sacred” contract and revoked the charter of District 26. The district officials were suspended and charged with being “reds” under orders from their “revolutionary masters in Moscow.”

In order to demonstrate his sweet reasonableness Lewis communicated with the company struck against, advising it that the international union was anxious to be “just” to capital and that the union had assumed the existing joint wage agreement. The strike, he said, was “unauthorized.” It was as though he were to say: “Please don’t blame me! See what I’m doing? I’m furnishing

strikebreakers—*union* strikebreakers!” The strike was broken.

The next year Mr. Lewis toured Europe.

On February 18, 1924, Lewis negotiated a three-year (Jacksonville) agreement for the bituminous Central competitive field (Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Pennsylvania). It provided for a continuation of the old wage scale. The ink was barely dry when operators began posting notices of drastic wage cuts at the pit-mouths. In August, 1925, the Pittsburgh Coal Company openly violated and repudiated the agreement. Lewis bellowed threats of a general strike but, by this time, the operators knew “John L.” and flagrant violations continued.

The stage was being set for the anthracite strike of 1925. The bituminous miners, bound by the “sacred” Jacksonville agreement, would, of course, scab in the name of union solidarity. And, although they bristled with anger and were galled by the position they had been maneuvered into, they mined the coal that was used as a substitute for anthracite.

The strike was called September 1, 1925. It lasted five and a half months. The suffering among the miners was indescribable. Operators sold the surplus (which had been mined furiously by the strikers before they stopped work) at fabulous prices.

The bone of contention in the conferences between operators and union officials was not the demand for wage increases, for which the rank and file clamored, but the question of the “check-off.”

The “check-off” is a method of collecting dues and assessments by having the employers check them off the worker’s pay. Hence when a mine is signed up, the worker becomes a member of the union when he goes to work. By the same token he ceases to be a member when he quits or is laid off. He can take out a “transfer card” which exempts him from payment of another initiation fee when, and if, he gets another job. Lewis devoted an entire chapter in his book, *The Miners Fight for American Standards*, to defense of the check-off.

“The U.M.W. of A.,” writes Lewis, “has never dictated to the operator of any coal mine, whom he should employ. The union has insisted that any men employed by the operators should, upon employment, become members of the union.”

Here we have the perfect example of the job-trust, a union in which workers

pay, not for the privilege of belonging, but for the “privilege” of working—and, at times—for the “privilege” of scabbing on their brothers in the same union!

“It [the U.M.W.A.] has,” Lewis explains, “insisted on the check-off, because it is the most efficient instrument by which industry can be kept functioning at the maximum efficiency. Under such conditions, the check-off *becomes the very essence of cooperation and mutuality*. The history of the industry shows that it is as essential *to the continuous prosperity of the operators* as of the men. [Read “fakers.”]

“Under the stress of war, the American government extended the principle of the check-off to provide for pecuniary penalties for abstention from labor. That extension was made at the request of the operators and *with the consent of the union* [officials]” (Italics mine.)

Fines levied for striking “illegally” and for loading dirty coal are likewise checked off the miner’s pay. Although the rank and file has protested vehemently, the “fines system” persists because of the obvious advantages for both the employer and labor leader.¹² The fines thus levied are divided equally between the operators’ association and the union.”¹³

It is pertinent to note that no such penalty is exacted from the operator for breach of contract. Nor could the penalty be collected from the miners were it not for the check-off.

With his customary brilliance, Daniel De Leon stripped the question of all its farcical pretensions:

“How can a union, which has recently been giving signs of progress, adhere to so hoary-headedly vicious a method as the old ‘check-off’?”

“The ‘check-off’ turns the employer into a union officer. Seeing he checks off from the pay envelope the dues, assessments and other money obligations of the men to the union, and turns the same over into the union treasury, the employer is turned into a sort of financial secretary of the union, a self-elected one at that.

“The ‘check-off’ is the trick by which the labor faker of old recruited his victims. Of their own free will the workers would not place their heads into the faker’s yoke, called A.F. of L. ‘union.’ In order to compel them to do so,

¹² “It was impressive that most of the union officials interviewed in this study, like the operators’ representatives, were in favor of the automatic penalty clause, while most of the miners seemed decidedly opposed to it.”—Louis Bloch, in *Labor Agreements in Coal Mines*, Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 1931.

¹³ From January 1, 1919, to January 1, 1924, \$53,651.78 was paid into the treasury of District 12 in fines, the same amount going to the Illinois Bituminous Coal Operators’ Association. (Ibid.)

the faker schemed with the employer the ‘check-off’ scheme whereby, whether the worker chose or not, he became a member of the union, his dues being checked off by the employer. The ‘checkoff,’ accordingly, was a confession that the union had to resort to the crack of the capitalist’s whip so as to make the rank and file swallow the faker’s iniquities; it was a confession of the fraternal relations between faker and capitalist.

“Finally, the ‘check-off’ is a declaration made as clearly as it could be that the ‘check-off’ union cares not for men; all it cares for is its dues. In other words, the ‘check-off’ union did not fulfill, or attempt to fulfill, its historic mission of drilling the working class for their emancipation. It only plucked them.” (*Daily People*, March 7, 1912.)

Why, then, seeing that the check-off was “essential to the continuous prosperity of the operators”—why did they wrangle with Lewis over it? BECAUSE IT WAS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT TO THE CONTINUOUS PROSPERITY OF JOHN L. LEWIS—AND THEY KNEW IT! They used it to dicker with. They would give Lewis his check-off if Lewis would not press demands for pay boosts.

On February 12, 1126, the anthracite strike ended. A five-year agreement, which had been proposed by Governor Pinchot, was signed. The old starvation wages were unchanged but the check-off was granted! Lewis shouted “Victory!” It was a “victory” for Lewis—but his big words buttered no parsnips for the miners whose real wages had been “cut” by the rising cost of living.

“Strikes being virtually excluded,” commented the *New York Times*, “the operators have no objection to the check-off; throughout they have shown a willingness to strengthen and build up the union in all its legitimate activities.”

“Strikes were virtually excluded” by a joker in the agreement which did not escape the rank and file. The miners knew, as most workers should know, that “arbitration is a fumigated word for execution” and they would have none of it. Nonetheless, although the new contract did not mention the word, it stipulated that wage adjustments were to be made once a year by a board which had a strong odor of “arbitration” about it. Heatedly asserting that the agreement “contains not one whit or jot of arbitration,” Lewis described the arbitration clause as “machinery for the exercise of reason in industry.” For this bit of scoundrelism the operators expressed their gratitude. On the morning following the conclusion of the strike the *New York Times* carried the following delicious item:

“Philadelphia, Feb. 12.—A huge basket of roses was sent tonight to John Lewellyn Lewis, President of the United Mine Workers, by Major

W.W. Inglis, chairman of the Anthracite Operators Negotiating Committee. With the flowers was a card which pointed out that, besides marking the end of the strike, it was the birthday of the miners' leader and of 'another great American, Abraham Lincoln.'"

From February 12, 1926, to April 1, 1927, the miners "enjoyed" a respite. Not that poverty and unemployment had ceased to stalk among them, but for the public it was comfortably out of the headlines.

Chaos reigned in the coal mining industry. Instead of explaining to the miners that the cause of their misery was private ownership and the wages system, and urging them to organize for an assault on the citadels of capitalism, Lewis was wrapped up in the operators' problems. No operator was more zealous in his efforts to "stabilize" the industry, even though it meant casting 300,000 miners on the rubbish heap, than was John L. Lewis.

A staunch advocate of labor-saving (labor-displacing) machinery, Lewis claimed that "The policy of the U.M.W. of A. [Lewis's policy] will inevitably bring about the utmost employment of machinery of which coal mining is physically capable."¹⁴

"Machinery should replace hand loading," Lewis told reporters. "There should be distribution of (coal) cars. There should be improvement of the work of the individual miner through standardization of equipment."¹⁵

Mechanization should be pushed in order to eliminate "uneconomic mines" because, argued Lewis, "only solvent companies can undertake improvements that are necessarily different in each mine."¹⁶

Small wonder that he was publicly commended by Herbert Hoover, then Secretary of Commerce. Gratified by Lewis's interest in the owner's problems, Hoover said:

"Mr. Lewis is more than a successful battle leader. He has a sound conception of statesmanship, a long-view interest to the people and the industry he serves."¹⁷

A U.M.W.A. convention, composed largely of Lewis toadies, voted "good old

¹⁴ *The Miners Fight for American Standards*, by John L. Lewis.

¹⁵ *John L. Lewis—Leader of Labor*, by Cecil Carnes.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

John L.” a salary boost from \$8,000 to \$12,000 per year. A resolution supporting recognition of Soviet Russia was voted down.

When the Jacksonville agreement expired on March 31, 1927, the tables were turned on the bituminous miners. This time the anthracite miners were to do the scabbing in the name of the “sacred” and “inviolable” contract.

The operators pressed for a wage cut from \$7.50 to \$5.50 per day and threatened to run open shop. Many had already suited the action to the word. Formerly less than thirty per cent of the soft coal came from non-union mines. Now sixty-five per cent came from non-union mines.

Lewis was faced with the unhappy prospect of losing his reputation for “winning” strikes, and he tried his best to divert attention from himself to “unfair transportation costs” which he said were ruining the industry. Pressure from the rank and file forced him to call a strike in the Central competitive field. Outlying and contiguous districts did not strike, for the Lewis “policy” is to lead one squad to slaughter at a time.

Not 400,000 as of yore, but a scant 150,000 answered the strike call. They were all who were left in the U.M.W.A.’s Central competitive field. Desolation among the strikers can better be imagined than told.

On October 2, 1927, Lewis completed his task of splitting the miners’ ranks. For the first time since 1898 a separate agreement was signed for District 12 (Illinois) without a national or interstate agreement as its foundation. It provided for wage reductions from \$7.50 to \$6.10 per day. While negotiations were in progress, Lewis authorized officials in Ohio to sign up with a few small operators for a wage scale of \$5. The once powerful miners’ union lay prostrate, dismembered, a victim of collusion between capitalist and labor faker. District was to be pitted against district in future controversies, all in the name of union solidarity and the “sacred” contract.

Meanwhile, one of the most disgraceful chapters in American labor history was being written in blood, for the strike in Western Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia continued with unabated fury. On December 31, 1927, the *New York Daily News* editorialized:

“This Pennsylvania conflict . . . combines the worst features of Passaic, West Virginia and Colorado. It has gone on for six months. Coal and iron police, commissioned by the state but paid by the coal companies, terrorize

whole counties. Families are kicked out of company shacks for nonpayment of rent. Children slowly starve. . . .
“All this is hell if anything is.”

It *was* hell. Hardened newshawks were nauseated. Scenes of destitution that horrify and beggar description abounded in every coal camp. It was an industrial war to the teeth and no quarter was given. A Senate investigation netted the usual headlines which aroused as much resentment as interest in the miners' plight. In time the strike petered out, non-union mines became the rule. Except for the anthracite area and the soft-coal fields in Illinois the U.M.W.A. was a skeleton, its bones picked clean. According to the unions' official report there were 515,243 members December 1, 1921. By December 1, 1928, this number had dwindled to 172,632. Although the U.M.W.A. constitution orders an annual publication of the membership, Lewis tried to conceal the effects of his treachery and the union's further decline by suppressing the reports for succeeding years.

Between the years 1928 and 1932, strikes were more numerous in the non-union than in the union mines. Being “without benefit of clergy,” the non-union miners had no faker's to hold a club over their heads and no contract to shackle their limbs. Furthermore, the strikes were spontaneous, didn't occur conveniently on April 1 (when union contracts expire) and didn't give the operators time to pile up surpluses.

Some of the “union-busting” operators began to miss the “advantages” of so-called unionism. In June, 1931, Mr. J. McQuade, of Pittsburgh, president of the Ben Franklin Coal Company, invited his West Virginia employes to form a local of the U.M.W.A. The union will “be a great step toward stabilization,” he said.

Upon the most flimsy excuses Lewis has usurped the power of the rank and file. One of these occasions illustrates his methods.

When the Illinois agreement calling for a basic scale of \$6.10 per day expired March 31, 1932, the union scale committee met with the operators and announced that the best offer they could get was one of \$5. This would mean that the mine slave would pocket from \$3 to \$4 after the cost of smithing, lamps, explosives and union dues were checked off, and rather than accept they struck. “Might as well starve loafing as starve working,” they said. By an overwhelming majority they rejected the proposed scale. Whereupon two well known labor skates, District President John L. Walker and John L. Lewis, toured the state to urge the miners to

reconsider. Local politicians and businessmen cooperated, closing their stores and lining the streets with loudspeakers. The miners were not so hospitable. They greeted their officials with boos and catcalls. At Johnston City, July 30, Walker's car was stoned and his broadcast had to be discontinued. Lewis argued that if the \$5 offer wasn't snapped up, the business would go to the Indiana, Kentucky and Ohio mines. The operators couldn't pay more and make a profit, he said. Trust Lewis to look out for the employers' profits.

Finally the question was resubmitted for a referendum vote. It was an open secret that it was rejected almost to a man.

The tally sheets were sent to Springfield when, lo and behold—they disappeared! It was claimed they were “stolen.” Now who would want to do a thing like that? Who, but that precious pair, Walker and Lewis!

Instead of once more submitting the question to the rank and file (as they would have done had they not been working cheek by jowl with the operators) Lewis proclaimed an “emergency”—and signed the \$5 scale agreement. Confused and disheartened many miners returned to work.

This was the direct cause of a split in the Illinois U.M.W. and the Progressive Miners of America was launched by the insurgents. Like its parent, the P.M. A. aspires to nothing better than collective bargaining and its constitution is almost identical to that of the U.M.W.A. It does business with the smaller mines where much of the work is still done with hand labor. Big business goes to Lewis.

V. Efforts to Oust Lewis

DURING THE PERIOD OF DISINTEGRATION several efforts were made by the miners to oust their faker leadership. A “National Miners Union” (Communist) was launched in September, 1928, but like other Communist unions it existed largely on paper. Its organizing convention was disrupted by Lewis’s “beef squad.” Among those remaining in the U.M.W.A. there were few to whom the name John L. Lewis was not a stench in the nostrils. A group of lesser fakers, including John Brophy (today a Lewis lickspittle), called a convention for the purpose of deposing Lewis. It met in Springfield, Illinois, on March 10, 1930. A report submitted to the convention stated:

“The history of the United Mine Workers of America under the regime of John L. Lewis has been an unbroken series of defeats. The regime has thrown hundreds of thousands of our members and their families into the depths of poverty and destitution. Election stealing, convention packing and slugging of delegates have reduced the old-time democracy of the union to a ghastly farce.”

Lewis retaliated by revoking the charter of the Kansas miners.

He was worried, not only by defections within the union, but by a dwindling national treasury. Literally millions of dollars had slipped through his fingers. Now the income was negligible. It was alleged by Illinois officials that Lewis “was compelled to borrow \$50,000 to pay the office rent at Indianapolis.”

The treasury of the Illinois U.M.W., on the other hand, was estimated in the millions. The state constitution gave them complete control of this treasury which Lewis eyed hungrily. He tried to get his fingers on it by revoking the district charter and appointing provisional officers, but failed.

An article in the *Illinois Miner*, October 12, 1929, charged that Lewis had driven out of the organization every man who “had brains enough to see through him and guts enough to oppose him, and now all he wants is our home and our treasury . . . ,” and the article winds up by saying, “Let’s give it to him. He needs it. He has no other home, no other treasury, no other constituency to exploit. The man is a bankrupt, a moral and mental bankrupt. LET’S GIVE IT TO HIM—GOOD AND HEAVY!”

It must not be construed that the Illinois officialdom had clean hands. As unscrupulous and unprincipled as Lewis, they quarreled with him over the spoils. It was a case of swine rending swine. However, this much must be said: They proved their charges while Lewis resorted to pompous bombast.

On his visits to the coal camps Lewis took the wise precaution of surrounding himself with bodyguards and deputy sheriffs. When he attempted to address a strike meeting in West Frankfort, Illinois, he was, according to newspaper reports, booed and hissed for nearly an hour. His speech was not delivered.

Save-the-Union movements, which had the direct or moral support of the vast majority who despised Lewis, failed to dislodge him from the presidency. Why?

Nearly everyone is familiar with the farce of fascist “elections” or “plebiscites.” To abstain from voting or to vote “no” in Italy or Germany, when the regime demands an affirmative vote, is extremely dangerous. But were a majority to vote “no,” it would not alter the situation. There is only one set of candidates to “choose” from.

Similarly with “elections” in the U.M.W.A. Usually Lewis is unopposed, for obviously no one without a national reputation could hope to win. Those who have national reputations are nearly always in the Lewis machine. Consequently Lewis is “reelected” year after year. Every miner must vote, or pay a fine. Thousands of the rank and file who have soured in the fight to oust Lewis return their ballots on which they have scrawled a flippant “nuts to you” or “boloney.” These are solemnly tabulated as “Lewis” ballots.

Should the vote in a district be so overwhelmingly against Lewis as to make a fraudulent count difficult, the method is to suspend the entire district, thus nullifying the vote.

Lewis has introduced a new governing rule in the union which is not sanctioned by the constitution, namely, “Provisional government” and “provisional officers.” In case a district or sub-district opposes him, Lewis simply revokes the charters of these bodies and appoints provisional officers. The officials who have been removed do not lose their membership and can appeal. But here is the rub—if they appeal as *members* their cases are heard by the new provisional officials (Lewis’s lieutenants) and if they appeal as *officials* the decision rests with the international executive board, i.e., the Lewis machine. Thus Lewis can act as judge, jury and executioner.

Matters are facilitated by the fact that there need be no formal charges, no trial, and, consequently, no need of defense.

There is nothing fastidious about Lewis's methods. When he is opposed for the presidency, as was the case when John Brophy ran against him in 1926, ballot box stuffing, slugging, and other corrupt practices nullify all pretense of democratic rule. In 28 locals in District 1 (Pennsylvania) Brophy received but 1, 2, 3, 4, and in one case, 47 votes. Lew's polled 1,049. In District 30 (Kentucky) sixteen locals at Ashland cast 268¹/₂ votes for Lewis, none for Brophy, according to the official tabulation. The cream of the jest is that *there were no coal mines within forty miles of Ashland!* Frank Farrington, himself a past master at election stealing, said, "If a candidate were as pure as Christ and as wise as Socrates—and Lewis is not that kind—the miners would not vote for him with the unanimity shown by this record"—an observation that certainly sounds plausible in view of the known record of Lewis's elections.

Section 7, Article 9, of the miners' constitution, gives its president sweeping power to "interpret the meaning of the International Constitution, but his interpretation shall be subject to repeal by the International Executive Board." The "board" is, and always has been, a rubber stamp. It is composed of individuals who have been admitted—to the fleshpots. The entire machine is well lubricated with jobs and patronage, and would-be fakers swarm for sinecures as organizers, lobbyists, etc.

Lest it be argued that present-day conditions show an improvement, the point should be emphasized that in more than half of the thirty-one districts of the U. M.W.A., there is no pretense at democracy. They are ruled by "provisional governments," Lewis's own device for crushing incipient rebellion.

At the 1933 convention of the A.F. of L., Dan Tobin charged Lewis with being a "dictator of sorts," to which Lewis impudently replied:

"The United Mine Workers are not apologizing for the provisions of their constitution to my friend Dan Tobin or anyone else. We give him the right to interpret his own constitution in the Teamsters' Union and to run his organization any way he wants to run it—and we understand he runs it. *Frankly and confidentially we do the same.*" (Italics mine.)

When one has waded through this mess of arrogance, usurpation, corruption and treachery the question still persists: How can a union composed of half a

million men allow itself to be dragooned, betrayed and mishandled by a coterie of fakers?

The answer is that the rank and file is not classconscious. If the miners (and all “organized” workers) understood their class position with its implications—if they were imbued with a revolutionary spirit—it would be impossible to hoodwink them as they have been and are being hoodwinked and outraged today.

VI.

Spoils System and the Labor Lieutenants

THE DUTIES OF THE LABOR FAKER do not end with dividing labor on the economic field. He is also a political bell-wether who needs must lead labor into the capitalist political fold. The rule “no politics in the union” means no *working class* politics and is invoked only when discussions veer to strictly working class questions. Candidates of both the major capitalist parties are regularly endorsed as “friends of labor.” It was Lewis’s mental progenitor, Samuel Gompers, who coined the phrase, “Reward your friends and punish your enemies.” The “friends” were the hopeful politicians who bid highest. Few indeed are the fakers who are not rewarded with fat political plums for their “endorsement.” If the “friends” of labor have vicious anti-labor records, what matters it?—they have the blessing of the labor skate.

Lewis has been singularly gifted in picking winners. At least this is true of national candidates. In 1924 he was the only labor lieutenant of prominence to “pick” that “friend of labor” of Boston police strike renown, Calvin Coolidge.

Four years later he “picked” another winner. For Herbert Hoover he had nothing but fulsome praise. Speaking on the radio in behalf of the candidacy of this plutocratic specimen Lewis, with customary effulgence, intoned:

“Labor and industry require his services and genius for constructive industrial statesmanship, so that the unprecedented industrial and business prosperity which he inaugurated may be properly, developed and stabilized and the way which he has opened to human and social betterment may be widened and made certain for coming generations of our people.”

He was fishing for the post of Secretary of Labor, but this time he was not the only labor lieutenant of prominence on the Republican bandwagon.

In 1932, for the fourth consecutive time (he chose Harding in 1920), Lewis had his money on a winner. Not only the U.M.W.A., but the country itself, was threatened with imminent collapse and revolution. Lewis did his part in shoring up the crumbling structure. Article 7a of the N.I.R.A. incorporated his ideas. It was widely advertised in the capitalist press as labor’s Magna Carta.

On June 16, 1933, the National Industrial Recovery Act became operative.

Desperate, Lewis gambled the union treasury (\$75,000) with which he hired organizers, bought beer, sound trucks and radio time. With fanfare and fireworks the miners were enticed into the fold. Stubborn operators were reminded of the “benefits” of unionization. In some cases wage cuts were bartered for “recognition.”

When, for example, the miners in the state of Washington were reorganized, several strikes for “recognition” were called which culminated in a “bargain.” Fakers, jubilant over the check-off, told the men they could “take it or leave it.” They could, in short, accept the agreement and work or seek jobs elsewhere. The union (meaning officialdom) now had a corner on the jobs.

Local 6349, at Bellingham, Washington, struck in 1936. Before the strike was called the miners received \$1.10 per ton. Under the “brilliant” leadership, of the U.M.W.A. they “won” recognition, the check-off and a new scale of \$1.02 per ton, a net *reduction* of eight cents or about \$1 per day. Day men who form a minority secured a fifty-cent increase.

In addition to the pay cuts, the men “won” other concessions. Formerly they paid \$2.50 per ton for their own coal—now they pay \$5. It was “progress” all right—the progress of a cow’s tail—downward.

But the miners are back in the fold, their dues checked off and remitted regularly to the national treasury—and Lewis has a milk cow come fresh. Does he need \$500,000 for Roosevelt’s political war chest? He can assess the membership and—presto—thanks to the operators’ cooperation, it clinks into his lap.

In 1936 Gompers’s tactics were altered and, in company with Major Berry and a choice group of fakers, Lewis launched “Labor’s Non-Partisan League,” its immediate purpose being the reelection of Roosevelt. With the same enthusiasm with which he had supported Hoover eight years before, Lewis was unsparing in eulogy and lavish with praise. To the miners’ convention he said:

“By its endorsement, the union is allying itself with a virtuous statesman who has given to the fullest degree of his great strength, his marvelous ability and his brilliant courage to protect the common people of this country from continued exploitation by predatory financial and industrial interests.”

Thus is the non-classconscious worker led from mumbo-jumbo to jumbo-mumbo.

It was bruited about that Lewis was “just like that” with Roosevelt. He is much closer to General Hugh Johnson—the same General Johnson who spoke provocatively in Berkeley during the San Francisco general strike and threatened to “wipe” the strikers out “as you clean off a chalk mark on a blackboard with a wet sponge.”

Lewis won Johnson’s admiration by averting a national coal strike. His rough, tough and dirty methods intrigued the tub-thumping general, and they became close companions. So close, in fact, that the La Follette civil liberties committee uncovered a bit of handholding under the table.

During a strike at the Camden plants of the Radio Corporation of America, David Sarnoff, president of the Radio Corporation of America, asked General Johnson for his advice. An item in the *Capitol Daily*, March 12, 1937, tells the story:

“ . . . Johnson, the committee learned, advised Sarnoff to confer with John L. Lewis, chairman of the Committee for Industrial Organization, with which the striking union was affiliated.

“*Both Lewis and Sarnoff later joined in asking Johnson to act as R.C.A. counsellor.*” (Italics mine.)

Johnson’s fee was a round \$40,000.

Lewis’s biographer, Cecil Carnes, speaks of General Johnson as Lewis’s “closest friend” and relates how these two “colorful cronies” entertain one another.

In view of General Johnson’s well known leaning toward a “disciplined capitalism,” i.e., fascism, how does one explain his fraternal relationship with Lewis? Could it be that he sees in Lewis an American Duce? Certainly Lewis is not overburdened with moral sensibility; he is ruthless, bold and a virtuoso in demagoguery. His vituperative attacks on “predatory interests” have won for him a reputation for “militancy.” On the other hand the “predatory interests” seem not to be trembling or displeased. At the moment Lewis is Washington society’s pet lion, and he lunches and sups with such plutes as Mrs. Daisy Borden Harriman and Mrs. Evalyn Walsh McLean. Recently he purchased the palatial colonial mansion in Alexandria, Va., in which General “Light-horse Harry” Lee delivered his famous oration on Washington’s death. A twelve-cylinder Cadillac driven by a liveried chauffeur totes his bulky frame about the capital.

The “predatory interests” (employing class) know, as the *Weekly Observer*, March 15, 1937, expressed it, that “While Lewis is fighting for recognition,

militancy will be in order. Once he is recognized by employers as the leader of labor, his policy must be to maintain his prestige as an industrial statesman. He will have to temper militancy with moderation while trying to maintain control of the momentum and direction of the American labor movement.”

His attitude toward sit-down strikes would indicate that “moderation” is already the watchword. Lewis has carefully avoided any direct condemnation of labor’s new and elemental weapon. As organizing strategy, sit-downs have been fruitful. Once organized and “recognized,” workers are prone to “sit down” without the fakers’ sanction, and Lewis has already launched an educational campaign among newly organized workers to teach them that agreements are “sacred.” Lewis’s subaltern, John Brophy, director of the C.I.O., made the following significant and politic statement to author Louis Adamic:

“We do not condemn sit-down strikes per se. We consider that various kinds of labor activity will be used to promote organization of workers and establish collective bargaining. Sit-down strikes, under some of these conditions, may be a very necessary and useful weapon. In the *formative and promotional* stage of unionism in a certain type of industry, *the sit-down strike has real value. After the workers are organized and labor relations are regularized through collective bargaining, then we do urge that the means provided within the wage contract for adjusting grievances be used by the workers. . . .*” (Italics mine.)

More recently, with its recognition assured, the C.I.O. has publicly offered to discipline the workers and prevent sit-downs. According to a United Press despatch in the *Seattle Star*, April 6:

“John Brophy, in behalf of the Committee for Industrial Organization, offered today to aid in, ending all sit-down strikes.

“Brophy’s offer was conditional. He said the C.I.O. would do its best to *stamp out sit-down strikes in industries where satisfactory agreements have been obtained.*” (Italics mine.)

Sit-downs being, as a rule, spontaneous, the faker is deprived of much of his authority, and, therefore, usefulness to the employers. But the workers, although rebellious, are not classconscious, and can be checked by seasoned fakers. The ease with which Lewis evacuated the Chrysler plants *without a single concession being granted* was impressive. The strikers grumbled. They sensed a “sell-out” but they were confused.

When, on April 6, Lewis and Walter P. Chrysler reached an accord, Lewis once more claimed a “victory.” A month before, Chrysler workers had struck for recognition of the U.A.W.A. as the sole collective bargaining agent for all Chrysler employes. They “won” the right to bargain for their own members. But Chrysler had granted this right before the strike began!

Another aspect of this “victory” is even more amazing. Lewis agreed “to prevent U.A.W.A. sit-down strikes in the corporation’s plants while the agreement is in effect”! A victory, indeed!

Lewis can, as “Unofficial Observer”¹⁸ expressed it, “back down more aggressively than any man in the country.”

For his part in pulling labor’s teeth, Lewis was praised by Chrysler:

“I have enjoyed meeting Mr. Lewis. He contributed a great deal to the *successful* outcome of these negotiations.” (Italics mine.)

It would be interesting, indeed, to read a transcript of the private conversations between Chrysler and labor lieutenant Lewis; interesting and perhaps eye-opening to those who have been double-crossed and duped. But Lewis has promised to tame the slaves of other masters to the yoke of wage slavery. Brophy, according to the United Press despatch, promised:

“That the wave of sit-down strikes will be eliminated if the Lewis program of organizing mass production industries is successful.”

Which is as much as to say: “Trust us. We will shackle labor with contracts; render rebellious workers tractable and still the revolutionary pulse.” All this in the name of “industrial unionism”!

¹⁸ Pen name of John F. Carter, author of *New Dealers: By the Unofficial Observer*.

VII.

Goal of Socialist Vs. Fake Industrial Unionism

THE QUESTION OF INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM IS A BURNING ONE. It is also a question upon which there is much conflicting opinion and impassioned debate. Some hold that the experience of the U.M.W.A. proves that, like the A.F. of L. crafts, the Industrial Union is the rear-guard of a labor movement in a grand retreat toward cooliedom. Others maintain that Industrial Unionism is the instrument whereby the working class may emancipate itself, abolish the capitalist system and erect a new social order in which the worker, bowed by slavery, may rise to his full dignity and stature, free and unshackled. The two opinions seem to clash. This is an illusion. Cool, calm judgment, and a careful weighing of pros and cons demonstrate that both are right. He who holds that Industrial Unionism is, at best, a rear-guard to a retreating army has in mind a fake industrial unionism, a decoy under whose aegis labor must inevitably sink to lower levels; while he who claims that Industrial Unionism is the emancipatory instrument has in mind Socialist Industrial Unionism for which the Socialist Labor Party has agitated tirelessly for more than three decades.

The C.I.O., a self-appointed committee, with unlimited funds and a build-up in the capitalist press, has set up a decoy to draw the workers away from that which they instinctively seek—a union which unites. Lack of clarity on the part of the workers is responsible for their being caught by a name, “industrial unionism.”

“The form of Industrialism,” De Leon warned, “may subserve the most reactionary of schemes. It is with Industrialism as with the alphabet. Without the alphabet there can be no good literature; but the alphabet may also furnish vulgar words.”

By examining the form, tactics and goal of fake industrial unionism and Socialist Industrial Unionism and by contraposing the two, the views of the anti-industrial unionist and the pro-industrial unionist are conciliated.

1. Socialist Industrial Unionism organizes the working class as a class, employed and unemployed, office and factory workers, without distinction of race, skill or sex.

Fake industrial unionism organizes only those who have jobs and can pay dues, and even among these “foremen, assistant foremen, timekeepers, plant protection

employees and confidential (office) employees” are excluded. *Vide* Chrysler agreement. It thus accomplishes a division in labor’s ranks not only by pitting the employed against the unemployed, but by keeping alive the fiction that foremen, office workers, etc., have interests separate and apart from those of the rest of the workers.

2. Socialist Industrial Unionism holds that the line of demarcation between Industrial Unions is determined by the “output.” If the output is automobiles, all workers engaged in production of automobiles, parts, materials, in the office, on the line and in the mill, *including unemployed auto workers*, should be included in an automobile workers’ Industrial Union. Likewise with construction, transportation, textiles, etc.

Fake industrial unionism apes this form while actually effecting a division as detrimental as actual craft division. It accomplishes this by signing separate agreements with separate employers. Moreover, the C.I.O. has no intention of molesting the craft union set-up where it now exists. In the *American Spectator* (February-March) Lewis writes:

“As a matter of fact, the members of the Committee for Industrial Organization have never expressed opposition to established craft unions. Craft Organizations *have their appropriate place* in the organized labor movement and are essential ‘to its success.’ (Italics mine.)

3. Socialist Industrial Unionism holds that the workers must organize into a political party of their class: (a) to avail themselves of the peaceful method of settling social disputes; (b) to utilize the political rostrum in organizing and welding the workers into a classconscious aggressive body; (c) to make the single demand that capitalism surrender unconditionally; and, finally, (d) to capture and destroy the capitalist robber burg, the Political State.

Fake industrial unionism herds the workers into the capitalist political fold and infuses them with a feeling of dependence on someone “higher up,” someone who has promised to “do something” for them.

4. Socialist Industrial Unionism is an invincible force with which to back up the RIGHT of the revolutionary ballot with the MIGHT capable of taking and holding all the means of wealth production and operating them for the use of the producers. Its method is to occupy industry and LOCK OUT THE CAPITALIST CLASS.

Fake industrial unionism contends for improvements within the system of wage slavery exclusively. “They [C.I.O. unions] are grounded on the rights of private property. They exist in response to the wages system.” (John L. Lewis, radio speech, September 7, 1936.) Accordingly, fake industrial unionism asks for more padding under the harness; it does not ask for freedom. Hence its methods—strikes, sit-downs, behind-the-scenes confabs between faker and employer—do not dispute the capitalist’s claim to ownership.

5. Like the sun in the heavens, Socialist Industrial Unionism spurns formal “recognition.” It moves in its orbit relentlessly enforcing its decrees.

Fake industrial unionism seeks “recognition” by the employer, i.e., the faker seeks the cooperation of the employer in keeping a noose around labor’s neck.

6. Socialist Industrial Unionism holds that all power must be vested in the rank and file and that “leaders” are merely spokesmen to articulate the demands and aspirations of an enlightened working class. It sends the fakers running to their holes like poisoned rats.

Fake industrial unionism invests its leaders with power to act independently for the union, and against the union, making decisions, agreements, etc. *Vide* Chrysler agreement. It breeds the labor faker who sells labor down the river and clings tenaciously to his sinecure.

7. Most important of all is the objective. The goal of Socialist Industrial Unionism is a classless society, an Industrial Republic of Labor, in which the means of production are owned collectively and administered through Industrial Union councils which replace the outworn and useless Political State. Accordingly, the goal implies the overthrow of the capitalist system and wage slavery through the classconscious efforts of the working class itself.

Fake industrial unionism aims only to “bargain collectively” with the master class and thereby subscribes to the system that renders the workers so many commodities. In this, as well as in its form, it bears a striking resemblance to the fascist unions of Italy, and, like the latter, can only lead to industrial feudalism. John L. Lewis has looked into a mirror. He has seen there the jutting jaw of a Mussolini. Hypocritical, ruthless, filled with an overweening ambition fed by “successes,” Lewis seeks to mass the workers behind him—workers who will be unable, upon the event of the ultimate and inevitable collapse of capitalism, to do aught but serve as instruments of reactionary intrigue. They will have no program,

no *modus operandi*, through which to consummate the revolutionary act.

Socialist Industrial Unionism shatters the fatuous theory of “brotherhood between capital and labor.” With merciless logic it tears away the fabric of falsehoods that enshroud the inherent antagonisms between those who work without living and those who live without working. It teaches the principle that the interest of the working class is ONE, the abolition of capitalism. While craft and fake industrial unionism begets in the hearts of the workers discouragement, hopelessness and despair, Industrial Unionism unifies, solidifies and cements the workers in one compact body, prepared and ready to act with a moment’s notice and with such momentum that no force on earth would be able to resist it. It inspires the workers with courage, confidence in themselves and faith in their capacity to administer their own affairs. It is the only labor unionism that can end forever the enslavement of the working class.

ALL POWER TO THE
SOCIALIST INDUSTRIAL UNION!

Appendix.

Lewis and Green

LEWIS'S FULMINATIONS AT THE PATHETIC WILLIAM GREEN have made him the envy of pinkish dilettantes who have always declared open season on the doltish A.F. of L. president. The superficial conclusion is drawn that Lewis has parted with Green on principle whereas that which actually determined each man's course was naked self-interest. Lewis will not lose control of the U.M.W.A. and he stands to gain a place of pelf and power, while Green, perhaps conscious of his own mediocrity, dare not chance the loss of an office which feeds both his ego and his belly generously.

Green replies to Lewis's barbs with dolorous tirades and runs around like a mother hen after lost chicks. He is Lewis's creature. It was due to Lewis's power and the voting strength of the U.M.W.A. that Green succeeded Gompers as A.F. of L. president on the latter's death in 1924. Each year thereafter Green, who had been secretary-treasurer of the miners' union, was renominated by John L. Lewis. Even *after* Green had taken a stand opposed to Lewis's plan for "industrial organization" Lewis supported his fellow faker. At the 1935 A.F. of L. convention, in the course of a fulsome nominating speech, Lewis said:

"The present president of the American Federation of Labor typifies all that is desirable in American citizenship and in the leadership of American labor. Coming from the ranks of an affiliated organization, the United Mine Workers of America, he served his apprenticeship in that trade. He became familiar with the problems of those who were associated with him in the mining industry. He served them throughout the years as an officer of that organization. He has served his native state of Ohio as a representative of all the people. He has served the people of this Republic of the United States, as an officer of the American Federation of Labor, as a citizen and as an industrial statesman in a manner that commends itself to all thoughtful citizens. . . .

"And so today there comes before us the task of again selecting a president of the American Federation of Labor, and as we look about us among the stalwart captains of this organization from its ranks here and there throughout the country, there looms no man more eminently qualified, more tried and true, in whom we have confidence in the man and in whom we have confidence as regards his statesmanship than the present incumbent of the presidency of the American Federation of Labor, who for so long, has served the workers of this country in all of his pride of

accomplishment and in every sincerity of purpose.”

It is held in some quarters that Lewis is not the issue, but that the issue is “the organization of the unorganized.” The fact is lost sight of that only those *who can pay dues* are organized while those displaced by machinery are left to shift for themselves as best they can. Others are so naive as to believe that after Lewis has accomplished organization of mass production industries, he can be deposed in favor of rank and file control. The facts which we have adduced in demonstrating Lewis’s vice-like hold on the U.M.W.A. knock such silly arguments into a cocked hat.

“They that touch pitch will be defiled.”—Shakespeare.

It is not the labor faker who brings into existence the “job-trust” union, but, on the contrary, the “job-trust” union that breeds the labor faker. He is the inevitable consequence of any union which has as its aim “collective bargaining.” The faker of tomorrow may be an honest man today. But the process of demoralization is inexorable and few who accept offices in present-day unions resist its deleterious effects.

The first requisite of the faker-to-be is a ready tongue. Being articulate among men who are handicapped in expressing themselves singles him out from his fellows and earns for him a degree of local prominence. The next step is a minor office which probably has little or no emolument attached to it.

He may be, and usually is, a “militant,” that is, he is always vocal when it comes to popular grievances and demands. He is also “practical,” and the attribute of “practicability” never leaves him. He hates abstractions and the emancipation of labor from wage slavery seems to him to be too remote to merit investigation. He eschews Socialism, believing it to be, as John L. Lewis described it, “the day-dreams of visionaries.”

The embryonic faker learns his lessons in bourgeois “ethics” well. He would have the employer concede to union demands, but once an agreement is negotiated, the contract signed and sealed, he would have it observed by the union. Should the cost of living rise, thus reducing real wages while the agreement is in force; should the employer circumvent the articles of the agreement and increase the pressure of exploitation; or for any one of sundry reasons should the workers threaten revolt, he is ever ready to condone the invocation of the “sacred” contract which short-circuits labor’s wrathful indignation. He knows instinctively that were the workers to lose

their “respect” for the contract, the reign of the “job-trust” union would end. Ignorant of the commodity status of labor and the fraudulent character of the contract, he thus begins with an intellectual error—which in time becomes a moral one.

Sometimes he rides into higher office on the tide of a revolt against the domination of older fakers as a “rank and file” leader but usually seasoned fakers lend him a hand. They are looking for “comers,” and promising material is broken in with a minor appointment, perhaps as a legislative agent at ten or fifteen dollars a day and a generous allowance for “expenses.” It is a welcome relief from the monotonous grind of daily toil. Hobnobbing with legislators and fellow lobbyists, he learns to enjoy an easy-going existence and reflects with dismay on the possibility of a return to his former dull routine. A faker is being born. Thereafter, lacking character, articulate but ignorant, he works with the “machine,” seeks other appointments. If he is sufficiently clever and ingratiating he climbs to a sinecure with jobs to dispense and independent of rank and file will. From there he goes, not infrequently, into political office, or he may himself become an employer and fleecer of labor.

He has long since abandoned his fine ambitions to raise wages, lower hours and improve working conditions. He has observed the energy of the union membership vitiated in strife which fails to do more than act as a brake on the decline of wages. His entire attention is focused on feathering his own nest.

Call the roll of fakerdom: Lewis, Green, Ryan, Tobin, Woll, Frey, Hutcheson, Berry, etc., etc., etc.—delve into their early records and you will find variations of the same theme of moral degradation, corruption and treachery.

Who will deny that this rank growth emerged from the slime of the “job-trust” union?

What is true of the simon-pure craft unions is equally true of the newly organized affiliates of the C.I.O., for these are also “job-trusts,” organizing not the working class, but the jobs or, what amounts to the same thing, the men who have them.

“When a man does not know what harbor he is making for, no wind is the right wind.”—Seneca.

Fakers will plague the American workers until labor organizes around

exclusively working class principles. Classconsciousness must replace wishful thinking and classconsciousness means not only that there can be no harmony and peace between labor and its exploiters but that the working class must emancipate itself through its own classconscious efforts.

Socialist Industrial Unionism has positive aims. They are to render the socially operated means of wealth production, factories, mines, railroads, land, etc., the social and collective property of the producers. This is a sane and genuinely practical objective because (a) the working class is the only useful class, (b) an abundance is producible for all once production is released from the trammels of private ownership, (c) private ownership in the means of life constitutes a social crime breeding theft, murder, prostitution, war, poverty and degradation, and finally because (d) elementary human dignity rebels against the abject servitude of wage slavery

Socialist Industrial Unionism would replace the present outworn Political State with an Industrial Union Administration. Geographical constituencies (states and congressional areas) would give way to industrial constituencies (steel, transportation, textile, etc.). The function of the Industrial Union is, therefore, twofold: First, to act as a battering ram for the revolution by backing up the fiat of the Socialist ballot and locking out the capitalist class; secondly, to serve as a unit in the Industrial Republic of Labor.

Industry knows no geographical boundaries. The nail in your shoe, for example, is made from the iron-stone of the Mesabe range, coal made into coke, limestone from Ohio and manganese from West Virginia. In it is crystallized the labor of countless thousands of workers engaged in mining, quarrying, construction, steel production, transportation, power producing, etc., etc. It would be as absurd to expect a government elected from states and congressional areas to direct this complicated productive mechanism as it would be for the mule-skinner to drive a modern streamlined train with a bull-whip. Only the Industrial Union Administration conforming to the industrial set-up is capable of directing production and distribution, thus making available to the producers the abundance our technical age makes possible.

The political vote will accompany the Political State to the graveyard of history. We shall vote where we work instead of where we live, electing our foremen, management committees and representatives to higher administrative bodies.

Failure to organize to attain the goal of Socialism means certain reaction, and, for the workers, industrial serfdom. “Today there is no longer any question as to whether or not the system of private ownership in the means of production shall be maintained,” wrote De Leon. “Its downfall is certain. The only question to be answered is this: Shall the system of private ownership in the means of production be allowed to pull society with itself down into the abyss; or shall society shake off that baneful burden, place the land and the implements of production in the hands of the people, to be operated collectively, for use and not for profit, and then, free and refreshed, resume the path of progress, which the evolutionary law prescribes for it?”

“Such is the question and such the alternative. Our generation stands where the roads fork. One road [Lewis’s C.I.O.] leads, through ruin, back to barbarism; the other [Socialist Industrial Unionism] leads onward to the Socialist Republic.”

(THE END.)