

Students in Revolt

DURING the last few weeks the conventions held by various national student organizations has brought up again the question of a united front among them and the possibility of dropping the antagonism which only plays into the hands of the ruling class. At the present time there are three leading student organizations in the United States, the National Student Federation, the Student League for Industrial Democracy and the National Student League. Members of the S. L. I. D. with the permission of administrations, attend an annual convention at Christmas and a few regional conferences at Thanksgiving. These meetings are restricted wholly to members of student governing organizations, student councils and the like. The annual conventions were formerly very collegiate, but things have changed. At the recent Boston meeting the Federation became socially conscious and supported the New Deal up to the hilt.

The Chicago convention of the Student League for Industrial Democracy, and the St. Louis convention of the National Student League, were much more important. The former organization has been losing ground, especially among undergraduates. It has always been close to the Socialist Party. At present it has reached the stage where its chief problem is how to give organizational form to its various activities. The convention was mainly interested in tightening up its organization. The major concern of both groups is with certain fundamental problems such as militarism and Fascism in the colleges. Although in a minority, a leading element in the N. S. L. is composed of Communist students. They work side by side with the Socialist students.

Though at first, the S. L. I. D. snubbed the N. S. L., it later entered into numerous united fronts. In its most recent convention it appointed a standing united front committee which held weekly meetings. For the past year, these united fronts have borne irresistible testimony to the power of unity of action. Last April, 25,000 students walked out of their classrooms in an epochal demonstration against war and Fascism. The chances are that many more will do so this April.

A year of the united front convinced

the N. S. L. to go a step further and put forward the call for the unification of both organizations into one militant student movement.

The leaders of the S. L. I. D. still see plots and subterfuge in every united front proposal. However, it is becoming increasingly difficult to dismiss the problem. Pressure by the students is too great.

These points somewhat illuminate the actions taken by the S. L. I. D. at its convention on the question of unity. A motion to affiliate with the Socialist Party, which would have successfully precluded unity with the N. S. L., was defeated by a majority of about five to

one. A motion to elect a committee to investigate the possibilities of united action was also defeated. The motion which was finally passed endorsed unity "in principle" and then stated: "Just so long as the Communist Party, working through the N. S. L. under the guise of non-partisan activity, continues to follow its present sectarian attitude toward other radical organizations, just so long will that stand in the way of the all-essential of good faith in an amalgamated organization."

Resolutions like this, however, will hardly put a stop to the movement for unity. Students throughout the country are beginning to realize that the fight against war, the fight against Fascism are the all important issues today and can be waged only through united front.

A Year of the Guild

ONE ORGANIZATION making steady progress in the field of unionism today is the Newspaper Guild. Led by Heywood Broun, who advocates militant trade-union methods—and who practises on the picket line what he preaches—the Guild has become one of the outstanding economic organizations of professional workers in this country.

Only a year old, the Guild is a force that capitalist newspaper publishers fear more and more. During its year of existence newspapermen and women have learned important lessons. They have seen the Guild carry on negotiations with publishers, and they have seen that these negotiations were between themselves as wage-earners and the publishers as profit-takers; they have seen the N.R.A. machinery brought into the negotiations, and they have learned why other workers call the N.R.A. the National Run Around; they have seen newspaper workers fired for belonging to the Guild, and they have seen the power of unionism in fighting for the right to organize. From aloof and often hostile observers of the class struggle newspapermen and women have become fighters in that struggle. They have lent their aid in picketing with fellow workers on strike in other fields, and they have sent their own delegates to the great Washington Congress for Social Insurance. They have learned, in short, the all-important lesson that they are working-men and women, and that if their economic and professional condi-

tions, driven sharply downward since the beginning of the crisis, are to be bettered, this will only happen through a strong organization such as the Guild.

The Guild is here to stay. It is bound up with and is part of the labor movement in America. The publishers know it too, and are preparing a nationwide attack, on the hypocritical slogan of "freedom of the press." The Jennings case in San Francisco, where Hearst is determined to smash the Guild, marks the beginning of a major offensive. The picayune tactics of Roy Howard of The New York World Telegram, in relation to Heywood Broun, are part of the same move. (Broun's column, after being shifted around, chopped down, squeezed together, left out altogether, and generally used as a football to gratify the publisher's dislike of the president of the Guild, has finally been successfully "buried" on an inside page.)

The Guild has enlisted 9,000 members. It has won a few minor battles. It has just carried through a brief strike action on The Jewish Daily Bulletin, forcing the publisher to pay back wages to the staff. The strike on The Newark Ledger continues with The Ledger's eccentric publisher, L. T. Russell, facing a 45-percent loss in circulation. Greater battles lie just ahead. The Boston Herald has just entered the arena by firing two men for Guild activity. At every point the publishers are challenging the right of newspaper workers to have their own union. More power to the American Newspaper Guild!



Phil Bard

Our Congress and Theirs

MICHAEL GOLD

WASHINGTON.

CONGRESS was in session on Capitol Hill. I sat in the gallery and listened to a discussion of the new federal budget. This is one of the fateful issues of the day. In these statistics, as in a well-manured soil, lie buried the seeds of another world war and an American fascist state.

An old man was muttering on the floor of the House. It was difficult to follow him; he was talking to himself and The Congressional Record. He had a flabby paunch that trembled under the baggy vest of a country politician; withered gray dewlaps overlay his collar; he mumbled and grumbled, like a weary old fox bored with another hunting season.

I am sure I heard him mention the American flag and the constitution. But it was mainly pork that was bothering him; he querulously complained that the budget did not promise his district all the political pork he and his friends craved.

There are some five hundred representatives of the nation elected to this capitalist Congress. Only a hundred were sufficiently interested to appear for this vital debate. And some studied openly the sporting page of their newspapers; others collected in what resembled smoking-car groups chuckling over the ancient story of the drummer and the farm-

er's daughter; one group passed certain photographs around with a guilty secrecy that made one suspect these were the latest nudist postcards from Paris. Several congressmen slept. A slick old go-getter was picking his nose. Several worried solons could be discerned writing letters to their absent wives. I am sure I spotted one old imbecile playing a solitary game of tic-tac-toe. A few seemed to listen. One could tell that because they cupped their ears, and strained forward with the bewildered attentiveness of the deaf. They were small-town bankers and city lawyers; fox face, pie face, hog face and bug face; demagogues who lived by wind and cunning; exploiters of the ignorance of the poor; the scum that oozes up to the surface of a capitalist democracy, all of them more incredible than your wildest dreams. A Daumier was needed to immortalize the fantastic degeneracy of a session of this Congress.

At the Auditorium in Washington last week another congress was meeting. It was an assembly, not of lawyers, but of the workers of America, elected on the Soviet plan of representation by industry. There were nearly three thousand delegates. They had gathered to discuss ways and means of obtaining unemployment and social insurance for the desperate people of America.

The budget is the battlefield where the corporations of America maneuver toward fascism. Social insurance emerges more and more as the front on which the workers are uniting their forces in the war against hunger. From now on, I am certain, you will hear a great deal about this campaign for social insurance.

A young delegate of the Unemployment Councils in a Californian city bummed to Washington in freezing box-cars, living on dry sandwiches all the way. But when he made his speech at the congress, you might have taken him, except for the blue overalls, for some unusually earnest young professor of economics.

Twelve delegates from Colorado and Wyoming traveled here in a truck they had painted with their road-name, "The Rambling Cowboys." Among them was a full-blooded Pueblo Indian whose father is active among the Unemployment Councils in Denver. The owner of the truck, Mack Smith, tall, wind-burned and sombreroed, looked like a movie cowboy until you talked to him. Then you discovered that this strong somber man who operates a mortgaged 20,000-acre cattle ranch in Wyoming with his father and brothers, has for years been reading Marx, Lenin, Gorky, Dos Passos, Rolland and Palme Dutt, and recently ran for office on the Communist ticket.