

"equal rights." But recently the Democratic party has been showing an unprecedented interest in the beneficial exercise of political power. For the first time in its history it has exhibited an incontestable ability to frame plans of constructive legislation and to improve its own projects as the result of public criticism and discussion. It has been performing the same kind of service for the country which the Federalists did in 1790, which the Whigs failed to do more than a generation later, which the Republicans did during and after the Civil War, and which the Progressive wing of the Republican party tried four years ago to obtain an opportunity of doing. It is the spirit of this new Democracy which Mr. Wilson would have done well to emphasize and interpret, a spirit which must necessarily attach less importance to the jealous and suspicious possession of political power than to the vision of a better nation which it may be used in part to create.

Considering the prevailing uncertainty among progressive Republicans the second Shadow Lawn speech can be criticized as poor campaign tactics. Mr. Wilson is certain to poll the full Democratic vote, except in so far as it may be reduced by German-American and Irish-American hyphenism. He must depend for his majority on winning the support of former Progressives and of new voters. His success in making such converts will depend largely upon the emphasis of his own speeches. A very superficial reading of anti-Wilson propaganda makes one characteristic of it abundantly clear. Neither the reactionary nor the progressive Republicans sufficiently appreciate that they are confronted by a different and much more vigorous and aggressive partisan Democracy. A realization of this disagreeable fact cannot be expected to penetrate the minds of the Old Guard until it has been drilled into their heads by a succession of defeats. They prefer to believe themselves opposed by the Democracy of Parker and Bryan, because as long as they can make themselves believe it, they feel under no necessity of modifying Republicanism. But it is different with the former Progressives. Although many of them are in a fluid state of mind they do not sufficiently realize the alteration which has been taking place in the Democratic party, and the great object of the Democratic campaign should be to make them realize it. When Mr. Wilson emphasizes in his addresses the historical continuity of the Democracy and the failings of its opponents, and its claim to be the only trustworthy political agent of the American people, all the latent Republican prejudice of these Progressives is aroused. They become reconciled to accepting from Mr. Hughes's hands the same old Republicanism in order to have an opportunity

of effectively testifying against the same old Democracy.

Of course it still remains an open question how far it is the old or a new Democracy. In order to be equal to the career on which it has been launched by Mr. Wilson, the Democratic party must submit to many delicate and perilous changes. It can no longer be satisfied with the crude and formless vitality of class feeling, which has been responsible for its remarkable longevity. It cannot remain united chiefly by opposition to the designs of the more highly differentiated and energetic special classes of American citizens. It must seek, on the contrary, a basis of union in the will and the ability to accomplish its own positive program. Such a basis of union means a higher organization and a sharper and franker definition of purpose, and hospitality to groups of men representing scientific standards and disinterested expert service. That any such basis of union will be developed has only been vaguely and remotely promised by past performances; and its development will suffer from almost insuperable obstacles, should the spirit of the second Shadow Lawn speech continue to pervade the party. A Democracy which perpetuates itself not by allowing its restless parts to secede but by itself undertaking the continuing work of national reorganization cannot abide a merely complacent attitude toward its own history and business. Before it becomes capable of reorganizing the nation, it must submit itself to a process of internal reorganization, a process more steady and more drastic than the most progressive Democrats desire or anticipate.

The Public and Trade-Union Policy

THE progress of the traction strike in New York City, especially when contrasted with the earlier strike of the cloak and suit makers, goes far to answer one of the most hotly debated questions of trade-union policy. In approaching a strike, is it worth while for the union to appeal for public support by a full, candid and sustained presentation of all the facts through the press; or is it wiser for the union to assume that the press is hopelessly biased by its capitalistic affiliations, that any statement of the facts will be distorted and therefore of no good effect, and that the safe union rule is to play a lone hand by placing exclusive reliance upon the class-conscious solidarity of labor in the struggle for economic emancipation?

The Amalgamated Association of Street and Electric Railway Employees launched the traction

strike in New York without any preliminary attempt to prepare public opinion for a judgment on the merits of the case. It was by the merest accident, and not at all through the initiative of the union, that the public learned, some weeks after the strike began, that the wages of the men on the New York street railways were far below the standard prevailing in some forty of the largest American cities. Vague reports emanated from the mass meetings organized by the Amalgamated that the hours of work and the methods of discipline enforced by the traction companies were oppressive and unreasonable. These reports, vague as they were, immediately caused public opinion to prick up its ears; but the union made no attempt to follow up its strategical advantage by centering public attention upon the precise points at which the companies were violating enlightened modern standards. In spite of the union's lethargy, the newspaper reporters, almost without exception, did their utmost to dig out the facts and thus to educate public sympathy on the side of the men. It was, indeed, this diligence of the reporters rather than any effort on the part of the union that created the generally sympathetic atmosphere in which it became possible for Mayor Mitchel and Chairman Straus of the Public Service Commission to secure an agreement in which, for the first time in the history of New York traction, the companies definitely recognized the right of the men to organize for the purposes of collective bargaining.

Within a few days of this agreement, a rumor spread that a dispute had arisen over some action of the companies which the men construed as a violation of the spirit of the agreement, and that unless the companies receded, the truce would be called off and the strike renewed. But again the union left the public in the dark as to the facts. It was public knowledge that the agreement provided for the arbitration of all disputes, so that in the absence of definite information, the public naturally inferred that in threatening to renew the strike the union was being tempted to an act of indiscretion. The companies, on their side, resorted to paid advertisements in which they asserted that the union was attempting to coerce them into reinstating certain men who had been under arrest for lawlessness. The crimes were not specified, but the advertisements were cleverly conceived to influence public sympathy at the point of greatest sensitiveness. Mayor Mitchel hurried back from Plattsburg, examined the facts, and secured the reinstatement of the men in question. Again the press showed its predisposition to fairness by endorsing the Mayor's achievement—a strong indication of prevailing public sympathy for the men.

But hardly was this flurry over when another

rumor of dissension got abroad. There was vague talk of "individual agreements" and "within-the-family brotherhoods." It seemed that the union regarded these things as new violations of the spirit of the agreement. The public was still in a receptive frame of mind; but still the union took no steps to enlighten public opinion with respect to the merits of its contention. Instead, the leaders did precisely the one thing that was calculated to alienate public sympathy in shaking the mailed fist and threatening to "tie up the town." It was reported that the Mayor and Commissioner Straus had been sent for. But before the Mayor could reach town, the men on the surface lines had walked out. The public was left to infer that it was these men, with whom the companies had entered into the arbitration agreement fathered by the Mayor and Commissioner Straus, who had been aggrieved by the companies. Not until the open hearings held by the Public Service Commission, did the public clearly grasp that this new controversy concerned the organization of the subway and elevated operatives who had not been included in the original agreement, and that the surface men had not gone out on strike, but in sympathy—that they had breached their agreement.

This was the moment when public sympathy for the men first showed strong signs of wavering. But the union's opportunity was not yet entirely gone. In a statement issued jointly by Commissioner Straus and the Mayor, the public got its first clear intimation as to the real cause of the trouble. "Our conclusion," so ran a passage in this statement, "after a very careful consideration of the entire record in this matter is: 1, That the Interborough Company breached a verbal agreement made on the 30th day of August by Mr. Hedley for the company and by Mr. Fitzgerald and Mr. Fridiger for the men, in refusing, on the 5th day of September, to arbitrate a question which had arisen subsequent to the making of that verbal agreement. This agreement was entirely distinct from and independent of the contract of settlement of August 6th," which was breached by the men. Here was the union's case against the companies ready-made by the two men upon whose judgment the public implicitly relied—a solid foundation for a campaign of publicity designed to secure public support for the demand that the whole controversy be returned to arbitration which the union now made. Certain of the most powerful dailies did, as a matter of fact, immediately support the demand for arbitration. But once more the union persisted in contempt of public opinion, and instead of meeting the companies' refusal to arbitrate with an appeal to the public, played Achilles, retired sulkily to its tent, and left it to the officers of the

American Federation of Labor to attempt the coercion of the companies through the intimidation of the public by a threat of a general sympathetic strike.

During the agitation for a general strike and since its collapse, much has been said by labor leaders of the unfairness of the press. It is true that the threat of paralyzing the industrial life of the city united the editorial pages in a chorus of execration; but nothing in the whole history of this misguided manœuvre is more impressive than the persistent effort of the reporters to put the best possible face upon the figure cut by organized labor. Such inaccuracies as crept into the news columns were largely due to the star-chamber methods adopted by the officers of the American Federation who had charge of the general strike agitation. These men either refused to issue statements or they gave out "facts" which the event proved to be the grossest perversions of the truth. They repeatedly announced, for example, that the building trades, upon whose action they relied to determine the success or failure of the general strike, had voted to participate. They then set Wednesday, September 27th, as the day when the general strike order would go into effect. On that day, the building trades went about their work as usual. Then the reporters learned that these trades had not yet voted at all and that they would not vote until Thursday, September 28th. When they did finally vote, they decided to postpone action for a week, which was tantamount to a vote of non-participation. It was not until then that the reporters joined the hostile chorus of the editorial pages, neither was it until then that the public at large, provoked by the disingenuousness of the labor leaders, abandoned sympathy with lost confidence.

We are not here discussing the merits of the original controversy, neither are we entering into the question as to whether the present triumph of the traction companies represents a solution of the labor problem in our public utilities that is favorable to the public interest. Our sole immediate concern is with the question as to whether organized labor can afford to be in contempt of public opinion as a determining factor not only in isolated struggles, but also in the advancement of the cause of all organized labor. In this connection, one's mind inevitably turns to the lockout and strike in the garment trades last summer. From the moment of the lockout, the cloak and suit makers took the public fully into their confidence; by every conceivable means they encouraged the public to go into the merits of their controversy. And their policy of candor and faith in the fair-mindedness of the public bred faith in them. For fourteen

weeks they held the solid support of the press, and the support of the public made itself manifest not only in resolutions of sympathy drafted by citizen bodies, but in hundreds of thousands of cash contributions. It has been said that the two cases are not parallel; that the garment trades are not, like the traction companies, in the hands of "big business," and that they do not, therefore, exert the same corrupting influence upon newspaper policy. But there is little evidence to sustain this contention. On the contrary, the burden of evidence warrants the opinion that the policy of candor and full and accurate publicity is the strongest weapon in the hands of organized labor to-day. In a country measurably civilized, where the majority of adult male workers receive less than a decent living wage and where laissez-faire, even in the public attitude toward labor, no longer holds absolute sway, the open road to progress for organized labor lies through the systematic education of the public in the facts of labor's duress. We do not believe that the labor movement will gain by a syndicalist philosophy, based on contempt of public opinion; its best hope still lies, we believe, in the ideals and methods of democracy.

Science as Scapegoat

THE *Atlantic Monthly* has just published an article by Mr. R. K. Hack called "Drift" which sets itself the task of explaining why the world is in such confusion. The true father of the essay is Mr. Chesterton, though the breed has been crossed with that peculiar hysterical pedantry which has affected Boston culture since August, 1914. Chesterton is visible not only in the vein of jocose theology and overwhelming intimacy with God but also in that famous rhetorical trick which consists in beginning with an earthly joke and ending with a divine pun. Used by Mr. Chesterton the method, when it does not rattle and creak like a penny-a-liner, often produces a flamboyant wisdom and a gorgeous playfulness. But in Mr. Hack's hands it produces screaming nonsense like his description of Hobbes as "the great atheist, coward and logician," and the worst case of muddle-headedness recently printed in a responsible periodical.

Mr. Hack begins by asking why we are where we are. He turns to the historians, and in two pages rejects them. The historians he has happened to read did not predict the war; therefore, says Mr. Hack, "let us not blame them overmuch, but let us not trust them at all." That there is a whole library of books by students of affairs which predicted the war with extraordinary accuracy Mr.