

"Peace" Moves Collapse As A.F.L. Ends Hope of Lifting Suspensions

Craft Union Die Hards Hold Posts; Still Hope To Split CIO

TAMPA, Fla.—The convention of the American Federation of Labor came to a close with the re-election of the whole executive council and the fraternal delegates of the A. F. of L., according to the plans of the machine, which in certain spots worked none too efficiently.

The decisions of the convention in restricting certain of the rights of the lower bodies in the A. F. of L. and the re-election of the council places the leadership firmly in the hands of the die-hards, despite all talk of peace plans and compromises. The strategy of the council leadership now is two-fold. On the one hand to intensify and sharpen the fight against the Committee for Industrial Organization and on the other to develop still further the underhand drive to break the International Ladies Garment Workers Union and the Millinery Workers from the C.I.O. As part of this drive one hears with increasing frequency about the dictatorial methods of Lewis, and certain flaws in the strategy of the C.I.O.

The International Ladies Garment Workers Union will convene its General Executive Board soon where the present situation in the trade union movement will be considered and a position taken.

NEWSGUILD WINS SEATTLE PACT

The three months strike of the Newspaper Guild against Hearst-owned Seattle Post-Intelligence, was settled with definite gains for the union. While complete and formal recognition of the Guild was not achieved, discrimination against Guild members was ended. Substantial wage increases, plus minimums for various categories and a forty-hour week are included. The latter point is for six days per week until March 1937, and for a five-day week thereafter. Vacations with pay and sick leave with pay are provided for.

Immediately after the settlement, it was announced that John Boettiger, son-in-law of Roosevelt, had been appointed publisher for this Hearst paper, apparently part of the new "rapprochement" of Hearst with the administration.

Anthony Eden's pledge of aid if Belgium is attacked. At the same time Eden announced that Great

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FRENCH UNIONS AID SEA STRIKE

Refuse To Unload Liner At Havres; Mexican Labor Also Aids

The shipping strike was given tremendous heart this week by the stirring display of international solidarity given by the French and Mexican longshoremen's unions.

Altho the shipping employers thought they had achieved a victory which would break the strike, in the sailing of the liner Washington, they were quite staggered when the French longshoremen refused to unload cargo at Havres. The Strike Strategy Committee had cabled for such aid. The American shipping interests immediately appealed to Blum's government and to Jouhaux of the French Confederation of Labor, who tried unsuccessfully to force the workers to end the sympathy move.

In Mexico, the employers were once again foiled. Ships were supposed to stop there in order to avoid the strike-bound West Coast ports. However, the Mexican Federation has ordered a boycott of all American ships arriving at national ports, including the Gulf of Mexico. Mexican chauffeurs will also refuse to drive passengers to such ships.

This splendid action of the French workers received a contemptible answer from Joseph Ryan, president of the longshoremen's union here. He announced that, if this support to the American striking seamen continued his union would refuse to unload French ships—as if the issue were America vs. France! However, some conferences have been going on between Curran, leader of the strike, and Ryan. It is known that the latter is beginning to fear spontaneous action by "his" longshoremen.

Baltimore Strike Strong

The type of strike-breaking that has been the only activity of the international officials of the ISU has also been carried on in Baltimore by the local bureaucrats. In addition the president of the Baltimore Federation of Labor, Joseph P. McCurdy has aided the ISU in attempting to supply scabs. They were forced to close the union hall because it was controlled by the strikers, who are now 2,500 strong. From there, the officialdom moved to the Emerson Hotel, where their expenses are being paid by the shipping interests. The attempts to find scabs not being so successful, van der Staay, the representative of the ISU in Baltimore tried to get unemployed seamen from the Federal Re-Employment Agency. Labor and liberal groups raised such a howl of protest that this had to be stopped.

The next step of the-ISU officialdom was to apply for an injunction against the striking seamen, jointly with the employers! The injunction was immediately granted by Judge Stanton of the Second Circuit Court—despite the existence of the Kimble Anti-Injunction Act,

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Jewish, Negro Question Get Reactionary Answers from Frey

By JAY LOVESTONE

Tampa, Fla.—Far more than a mathematical majority for the Frey-Wharton-Green combination was revealed in the vote of 21,679 to 2,043 for sustaining the suspension of the CIO unions. Here was involved a situation, here came to the fore new problems which transcend in importance even the virtual expulsion of more than a million A. F. of L. members centered in the mining, auto, rubber, garment, oil, and textile industries. Here we deal with issues which are infinitely more important than the vast majority of the contestants themselves are aware of.

By this vote—the outcome of which was a foregone conclusion months ago—the old-line, craft union, A. F. of L. officialdom has registered its ruthless determination to dominate the whole course of trade union development over perhaps the next decade. As the roll call was being taken, as the miners, garment workers, automobile workers were ominously absent, as the younger delegates from the federal locals and the city and state bodies cried "no" and the hardboiled teamsters and building trades officials groaned "yes" to the resolutions committee proposals, one could clearly see that the old-time craft union leaders were merely trying to shut the door against a setting sun.

Specifically, Matthew Woll reported the following proposals in behalf of the Committee on Resolutions:

1. "That the convention approve of all actions taken, decisions reached and rulings made by the Executive Council, as herein before noted and referred to. We specifically recommend approval of the suspensions noted, and all actions and decisions and rules relating thereto. Lest there be fear that this recommendation may be interpreted to mean permanent suspension or complete severance, let it be understood that the suspension noted shall remain in effect until the present breach be healed and adjusted under such terms and conditions as the Executive Council may deem best in each particular case or in all cases combined.

2. "That the special committee appointed to discover a basis of settlement be continued with the full faith and confidence of the convention.

3. "In event that by action of the suspended unions they make the present relationship beyond bearing and create a situation that demands a more drastic procedure, that the executive council be authorized and empowered to call a special convention of the A. F. of L., at such time and place it may deem best, to take such further steps and actions as the emergency of the situation may then demand. We counsel this procedure and delegation of authority in the sincere desire to avoid any possible future and permanent severance unless such permanent separation

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JAY LOVESTONE

will report on the

A.F.L. CONVENTION

this FRIDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 4 at RIVERA HALL, 51 WEST 14 ST. Comrade Lovestone has just returned from Tampa, and his analysis should not be missed by any worker.

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comes as the choice of those who would permanently divide and bring warfare instead of peace and unity into the ranks of labor."

Meaning of Resolution

The why and wherefore of the strategy of these recommendations we have made clear in our despatch of last week. The significance of sustaining the Council's action goes beyond the surface meaning of the proposals—far beyond the confirmation of the suspension of the CIO unions. In essence, the import of the above decision is:

1. A transformation of the organization structure of the A. F. of L.—from a voluntary federation to a centralized body, with tremendous power concentrated in the hands of the Executive Council.

2. A foundation is hereby laid for the Council, dominated by the craft organizations, to pop off one by one individual international unions organized on an industrial basis.

3. In this wise, the domination of the craft over the industrial unions will be continued.

4. Thus, the Executive Council can stop, hinder or so direct the organization of the mass production industries—even when the industrial form is nominally accepted—so as to insure continued primacy for craft over industrial union interests.

5. In this fashion and, in substance, the above decision really knocks the meaning out of any concessions that may be given to the CIO in regard to charters for industrial unions in the auto, steel, oil, rubber and similar mass production industries.

More than that: these are not short-time effects. They will last for quite a while. That is why there is little stock to be placed in all the rumors and efforts revolving around peace negotiations and maneuvers on the part of the weaker sisters in and around the CIO camp as well by the Council. That is why the issue at stake, the issue of whether the American trade union movement will be able to readjust itself to the new setup of industry in the U. S., will be settled far more by the outcome of the CIO's campaign to organize the steel workers than by bickerings in hotel lobbies and dickerings around mahogany tables. Important as the question of the unity of the trade union movement is, vital as is the necessity to secure this readjustment with the maximum intactness of the trade union movement being maintained, still, the very life of the labor movement as an effective force revolves around the capacity of American labor to win a firm foothold in the mass production industries. This means the reorganization of the trade unions in such a manner as to make the industrial form dominant over the craft.

The Obstacle to Progress

It must not be forgotten that the A. F. of L. was built on the foundation of voluntarism and skill. Due to the changes in the organic composition of capital, to mass production dominating the capitalist economic process in the U.S. skill has been progressively disappearing as a foundation of unionism. In many cases this has been reflected in unions being set up on an industrial basis—despite the top leadership of the A. F. of L. Despairing at this foundation being undermined, the craft leaders, the heads of the organizations still clinging to skill as a basis of organization, are now dumping

voluntarism in order to cling desperately to the vanishing cornerstone of skill. Thus, the old-line officialdom is prepared to change the structure of leadership by transforming the A. F. of L. from a voluntary organization of autonomous unions into a body with a strongly centralized executive council. Simultaneously, it resists changing the structure of the membership's organization by fighting the acceptance of industrial unionism as the basis of organizing the overwhelming majority of the workers.

Clumsily, if not inadvertently, Vice-president John Coefield, head of the plumbers union and staunch supporter of Landon, recognized as much when he declared in the course of the debate on the resolutions committee report: "... There should be a change in the laws and procedure of the A. F. of L. I agree that the laws of the A. F. of L. should be modernized in order that they might conform to the evolution in the great labor movement, and more clearly in line with the laws of the international unions who are so successful in the conduct of their affairs, and the change that is necessary to put a few teeth in the law."

Naturally, no one could expect Coefield to admit that putting in a few such false teeth could come only at the expense of taking out such healthy teeth as the ten CIO unions.

What this course means to the future and life of the trade union movement was most painfully disclosed by some of the important decisions and the very nature of the debate over them in the convention. Let us take a representative half dozen for illustration.

1. The debate over the CIO controversy. Here we saw the lowest ebb of life in the Federation's existence. Except for the speeches by Zaritsky and Trotter there was practically nothing worthwhile said on either side. The Zaritsky did not propose concretely the immediate, unconditional lifting of the suspensions, tho he did not present the facts to show beyond a shadow of a doubt that it was the Council that sabotaged unity negotiations at the very outset of the controversy, yet his speech in general was of such a nature as to make him tower over the convention debaters. We say this in spite of the fact that from a formal debater's point of view the summary address of Green was undoubtedly telling. But President Green swinging in his remarks from drops of tears to sparks of fire was really unimpaired of the salient facts of the controversy and was able to make a telling address only by concentrating on the weakness of the CIO strategy in recent months, only by literally walking thru the gaping holes in the CIO line of defense in regard to certain recent incidents. Indeed, in comparison with the big debate over industrial unionism at Atlantic City last year, this clash was on the whole a contest of pigmies.

Decay and Anti-Semitism

2. "The Jewish Question": Insistent as the Old Guard of the Federation has been that nothing new must be resorted to or done that has not been touched or tried in the more than five decades of the life of the A. F. of L., yet they did not hesitate to strike out on a new path and inject the "Jewish question" into the debate over the CIO. Here the target was the membership of the ILGWU and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers. The resolution on the CIO controversy, as first proposed to the convention, thus emphasized:

"As for the organizations

composed largely of Jewish workers, it can only be said, if we are to have the full truth, that we took them by the hand when there were few hands willing to greet them; and we have led them and builded with them and for them, and protected them. When some of their leaders steeped in the ideas of the Old World from whence so many of them had fled in mortal terror of their lives, used our platform to preach doctrines alien to our own beliefs and convictions, we still led them and protected them. They are our equals in every respect. The story of these persecuted people is too long to tell here, too filled with the gripping emotions of a half century of affectionate relationship, of helpfulness and co-operation. Let them think it over in their hearts and in their homes."

And commenting concretely on the ILGWU, the resolution read:

"It is inconceivable that a people so charitable, so appreciative, so understanding of the sufferings of labor, should now question the abilities and sincerity of action of those who have struggled with them and rejoice in the attainments now secured by them."

Zaritsky boldly and effectively dealt with this issue and flung the challenge into the teeth of the decadent old-liners who are struggling—to hold on to their positions—with the frantic but passing energy of spent swimmers. He told them he did not want to go home to think it over there but preferred to fight it out here. After this expression of resentment aroused by the section against the Jewish workers (insisted upon by Frey and Wharton), the resolutions committee returned after the dinner recess to withdraw the paragraphs under fire. I am reliably informed that the above paragraphs were already toned down by Woll. They were much worse in the original formulation of Frey and Wharton. The latter have been particularly obnoxious in their anti-Semitic remarks privately expressed here. It is symbolic of all regimes in decay and despair to turn to such issues as the "Jewish scare." Czar Nicholas and Adolf Hitler were pastmasters in this game much before the Resolutions Committee of the convention turned to it.

Randolph vs. Frey

3. The Negro Question: Indelibly impressed on the mind of the writer is the picture of that fine figure, the inspiring and intelligent Negro labor organizer A. Philip Randolph of the Sleeping Car Porters addressing the convention on the Scottsboro case and prejudice against Negroes in the trade union. Randolph told in gripping terms of his own humiliation in Tampa proper right during the convention when he sought hotel accommodations. He told of the facts in the Scottsboro trials. Maintaining unbelievable self-control he related the horrors inflicted on the Negro masses in that "great democracy" known as the USA.

The written draft of the resolutions committee report recommended "non-concurrence with the resolution" advocating freedom for the Scottsboro boys. In his oral report, however, Frey backwatered again and proposed to refer it to the incoming council which was to be guided in this by the courts' actions. Here the convention reach its very nadir of its life. An Alabaman, J. F. Watkins of the Firefighters, had the gall to defend the Alabama courts and stressed that after all "the Scottsboro boys

were not members of A. F. of L." But it was left to Frey to sink to the very lowest level. He turned red with rage when he indicted the resolution introduced in behalf of the Scottsboro boys as being guilty of the nefarious crime of asking for "the unconditional freedom" of these Negro lads!

Dealing with resolutions relating to racial discrimination, Frey almost burst a couple of blood vessels insulting and abusing Randolph for his highly enlightening and effective speech. Frey was enraged because Randolph talked elementary class-consciousness and advocated labor solidarity. He raved that "the attitude of some Negro leaders was a most serious obstacle to overcoming race prejudice." This was a below-the-belt blow at Randolph, whom he further charged with stirring up race hatred by introducing such resolutions. Frey wound up his mud-slinging contribution by shedding crocodile tears over himself (even tho a white man!!) not having had a chance to get the kind of higher education Randolph got (even tho a Negro!!). Needless to say Frey did not try to explain why Randolph with his higher education and infinitely greater ability has not been able to get anywhere near as far as did Frey with his lower education and obviously less intelligence. . . .

4. It is not unimportant to point out that the report of the Executive Council did not contain a word in behalf of reaffirming the previous convention resolutions against the Nazis. Only in the oral report of Frey—not in the written draft of the report—in behalf of the Resolutions Committee was such a proposal for re-affirmation made. It was just that much cheap and second hand taffy thrown to the Jewish workers in order to try to counteract their resentment against the "Jewish paragraphs" of the resolution on the CIO.

5. That the Executive Council is past help, beyond cure, and past hope was most pathetically confirmed in the resolutions committee report on the question of a labor party. All it could say was "that nothing has occurred since the last convention to justify any change in the well-established non-partisan political policy of the A. F. of L." The Frey-Woll-Wharton brain-trust even went so far as to conclude that "To the contrary, the most recent political experience in the election of a President of the

CARRYING VALUABLE LUGGAGE



Courtesy Union News Service

U. S. and the members of the Congress of the U. S., again emphatically demonstrates the wisdom and the practical value of the non-partisan policy. . . .

We do not recount the oral arguments made by Frey against a labor party for fear that our readers would be insulted at such inanities appearing in our columns—even when emanating from the bitterest foes of working class solidarity. Suffice it to say that reporter Frey was all himself when he burst into ignorance in discussing this question.

"Capitulatory Democracy"

6. The Hearst Problem: The resolutions calling for action being taken by the labor organizations to defend themselves against Hearst's anti-labor policy met with short shrift at the hands of the committee and the convention. Here Green came to the fore, posing as chaste as an icicle and weeping in behalf of pure democracy and absolute freedom of opinion for anyone to express anything regardless of how much labor may disagree with it. At first, the resolutions committee recommended to refer the half dozen anti-Hearst resolutions to the incoming Council. Then Dan Tobin, who had been quite silent during the previous sessions, jumped to his feet and amended the proposal so as to recommend non-concurrence. Judging by the speed with which Frey accepted the amendment in behalf of the resolutions committee it would appear that it was all staged. At any rate, Hearst was given the fullest freedom of the press—in his anti-labor propaganda on the following basis: "The A. F. of L., from the beginning, has been an active champion of freedom of the press, the right of a newspaper to publish its views without censorship."

As the debate on this resolution was being concluded, it was announced that the Tampa police had slugged and arrested the president of a local cannery workers' union and held him for investigation because he had on his person the printed proceedings of the previous day's session of the convention. And while a resolution in behalf of Mooney and Billings was being adopted, the local police arrested some young ladies for distributing, outside the convention hall, literature dealing with the violation of civil liberties.

In summary, stormy and difficult (Continued next column)

In The CPO Pre-Con

Can Marxists In Alliance w

By LEONARD SCHILLER

The fundamental mistake of the C.I. on war is the transfer of diplomatic strategy into the realm of revolutionary tactics. The C.I., in place of revolutionary tactics, relies on diplomacy, on pacts by the Soviets with bourgeois powers as the sole method of defending the U.S.S.R. It subordinates civil war and revolutionary defeatism to mutual assistance pacts and collective security. The C.I. sees in these pacts the best means of defending the U.S.S.R. and it makes concessions in revolutionary principles so that these pacts may be consummated, strengthened and maintained.

The C.I. has come out for the defense of the bourgeois democratic countries because these countries are threatened by Germany—the main enemy of the Soviets at the moment—and can be counted on as possible allies against Hitler. Dimitroff states: "Other capitalist governments are interested at the present moment in the maintenance of peace. It is therefore wrong to depict all countries as aggressors." Further on in the same article he says: "It is not a matter of indifference . . . what foreign policy the government carries on toward fascist enemies of peace; whether this policy will help strengthen collective security or hinder it." And then he comes to what the revolutionary working class must do: "... the party of the proletariat must actively interfere in the foreign policy and in the sphere of the defense of the country." From this the line of the Communist parties is clear, countries must be brought into alliance with the Soviets and once a country is in alliance with the U.S.S.R. the question of the defense of that country can be taken up, more, the Communists are urged to take the lead. What is confessed here is the inability of the C.I. to formulate an independent revolutionary foreign policy but merely to mimic and adopt Soviet foreign policy. Blinded by a super bureaucracy, aided and abetted by a coached messenger-boy leadership they mechanically transfer Soviet foreign policy as the international policy for all parties; making no distinction between policy of the proletariat in capitalist countries, Soviet foreign policy, and revolutionary tactics. Soviet foreign policy, international policy of the working class in Western Europe and revolutionary tactics are separate and distinct planes of action, each independent and at a different level of struggle. Yet they are each dialectically connected because they strive for the same objectives. To transfer these separate and distinct levels of struggle one into the other is to breathe the worst fumes of opportunism into the policy, as is now being blown with gusto into the

days are ahead for labor in the coming months, in the next few months of great opportunity for the working class. But let no one be discouraged. It is true the progressive forces at this convention were weak and few. Furthermore, except for the contribution made by the delegates from the agricultural field, these forces showed the visible effects of the confusion of the present "people's front" line of the Communist Party. But all these difficulties, all the shortcomings, all the mistakes in strategy are only momentary—natural to the period of the birth of a virile trade union movement, to the rebirth of our whole labor movement.