

AFL ORGANIZING DRIVE IS OPENED IN SOUTH

Meany Predicts Win Over Reds In Dixie

AFL Official In Keynote Speech Denounces Communist Political Plot to Raid Unionization Campaign.

Asheville, N. C.—In a stirring keynote address at the opening of the Southern Labor Conference here, AFL Secretary-Treasurer George Meany started the wheels rolling for an all-out organizing drive designed to bring a million new members into the American Federation of Labor.

He pledged that in organizing the unorganized, the AFL will concentrate its efforts on improving the conditions of oppressed workers and promoting American principles.

The 3,000 delegates cheered lustily when Mr. Meany charged that the rival CIO drive in the South is a Communist-inspired plot, motivated by political objectives.

With the opening ceremonies out of the way, the delegates got down to considering the adoption of policies to implement the organizing drive.

AFL President William Green, other high-ranking labor leaders and outstanding public officials were scheduled to address the conference at later sessions.

The intense interest manifested in the conference throughout the nation was evidenced by the presence of a large representation of newspapermen, radio commentators, photographers and news reel men.

George Googe, AFL Southern Director, presided at the conference and introduced Mr. Meany soon after the first session got under way for the delivery of the keynote address.

The unorganized workers of the South, Mr. Meany said, "need trade unionism if they ever are to pull themselves out of the mire." He expressed confidence that these workers "finally realize today that the only instrument by which they can ever hope to raise themselves to economic parity with other workers who have made such great advances in this country, is the trade union."

"Let there be no pussyfooting on the race issue," Mr. Meany emphasized. "The American Federation of Labor is determined to bring into the fold of real trade unionism all American workers of the South—white and black, Gentile and Jew, Protestant and Catholic.

"The American Federation of Labor has consistently opposed racial and religious prejudice in all its conventions. It stands on the same solid convictions today—in the South, in the North, and in every other area of our country."

Southern workers, Mr. Meany continued, have the choice between joining the American Federation of Labor, which has never swerved from the principle laid down by Samuel Gompers that "you cannot be a good union man unless you are first a good American," and an organization "that has openly followed the Communist line and is following that line today."

Mr. Meany cautioned the workers of the South not to be misled by CIO window dressing and camouflage.

"The real operators of the CIO-Communist drive to stop the AFL in the South are devoted followers of the party line."

Mr. Meany identified as Communists and Communist sympathizers the following members of the CIO National Executive Board: Harry Bridges, Joe Curran, Julius Emspak, Lewis Merrill, Abram Flaxer, Ben Gold, Mike Quill, Joseph Selly, Lee Pressman, and "last but not least, that distinguished politician, Sidney Hillman."

"There are the people who run the CIO," Mr. Meany charged. "When we look over this array of Communist talent in key spots in the CIO organization, we can determine for ourselves whether the so-called Southern Director of the CIO is telling the real story when he says the Communists are not going to take charge of their drive in the South."

Mr. Meany scouted the danger of real competition in organizing from these Communist CIO forces. He emphasized that the really powerful opposition the AFL faces is from the "representatives of entrenched capital who have exploited the South and its workers for many, many years."

He also predicted opposition from reactionary politicians "who fear that organized workers will become a threat to the political life of those who make capital out of their bias against labor."

Despite this peculiar combination of foes, the AFL is going to make an all-out campaign in the South and is certain to achieve its goal with team-work and real effort by the representatives of all

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'Nothing Can Stop Us In South,' Says Green

Delegates Cheer AFL Leader's Rousing Pledge to Organize Million New Members and Raise Their Wages.

Asheville, N. C.—Three thousand cheering delegates to the Southern Labor Conference jumped to their feet and gave AFL President William Green a spontaneous pledge of victory in the million-member organizing drive launched here.

This climactic demonstration came at the close of Mr. Green's rousing address, in which he emphasized that neither reactionary employers nor CIO Communists can stop the AFL campaign to enroll unorganized southern workers, raise their wages and living standards and fortify their political power.

"Let me give the workers of the South this solemn assurance," the AFL leader declared. "When you organize into AFL unions you will be promoting your own interests and you will run your own affairs.

"Let me give southern industry this warning—grow and co-operate with us or fight for your life against Communist forces.

"Let me give the people of the South this pledge—the unions of the AFL are not out to destroy you but to bring better and more prosperous times to the South.

"Nothing can stop us, neither the opposition of reactionary management nor the rivalry of the Communistic dual movement."

Mr. Green's address was to have been broadcast to the entire nation but some miscreant cut the NBC wires in the basement of the city auditorium just as the program was going on the air. However, a master recording was made, and radio stations throughout the South will be asked to rebroadcast the address in the interests of free speech. Police are investigating the crime.

Unaware of the reprehensible sabotage, the packed audience in the city auditorium hung on Mr. Green's fighting words and burst into frequent applause as he scored hits against the rival CIO.

"With its usual flair for sensationalism," he said of the CIO, "it announced recently its intention of making the South a political battleground this year. That approach didn't go over. It aroused more resentment than support. So now the dual movement has changed its tune. Now it proclaims a rival organizing campaign in the South.

"The workers of the South will not be misled by this sudden and transparent reversal of policy any more than the American people were fooled by the abrupt changes in the Communist Party line during the war.

"The weather vane of the dual movement swings to the right or to the left, whichever way the wind from Moscow blows. As far as their efforts in the South are

concerned, I predict that though they may invade you today they will be gone with the wind tomorrow."

The AFL, on the other hand, has a firmly established organizing campaign in the South, Mr. Green pointed out, with 1,800,000 members who have already fought and won the initial battle for recognition.

"I predict that before another year has passed your organizing drive will have added another million new members to our ranks," he declared.

Our purpose is to raise the standards of living of the millions of southern workers and create a new era of lasting prosperity in the land of Dixie.

"Make no mistake about it—this is an undertaking of southern labor, by southern labor, and for southern labor."

The great weakness of the southern economy today is its low wage standard," Mr. Green said.

"Trying to maintain industry and agriculture without high purchasing power," he continued, "is like attempting to operate an automobile without fuel. It just can't be done.

"Therefore, we are determined to raise wages in the South. We don't want high wages in the North and lower differentials in the South. The American standard of living is the only standard of living which the AFL will accept in the South."

SOUTHERN DIRECTOR



GEORGE L. GOOGE

HEADQUARTERS FOR CAROLINAS WILL BE SET UP IN CHARLOTTE
According to plans made at the Asheville meeting Charlotte will be headquarters for the Southern AFL organization drive for the two Carolinas. Offices will be set up soon.

COAL PINCH GRIPS NATION, PARLEY STILL DEADLOCKED

Washington, D. C.—With coal shortages growing acute throughout the nation, powerful pressure for prompt settlement of the dispute between the mine owners and the United Mine Workers of America became intensified.

President Truman told a press conference that he considered the month-old shutdown of the mines alarming in its effects. He flatly denied, however, that he considered the situation a walkout against the Government.

Negotiations between the coal operators and representatives of the union continued, but no definite progress was reported. The negotiators are still deadlocked on the first point of controversy, the need for establishment of health and safety provisions for the mine workers.

John L. Lewis, UMW President summoned the union's 250-man Policy Committee into session in Washington. It is considered certain that this committee, made up of union representatives from the coal fields, will back up Mr. Lewis 100 per cent.

Meanwhile, a drastic embargo on railroad freight shipments, excepting foods and other essential items, and a 25 per cent reduction in passenger service on coal-burning railroads was ordered by the Office of Defense Transportation, effective May 10.

Brownouts are in prospect for the principal cities of the nation as electric utility companies reported their coal reserves dwindling to the danger point.

Steel production already has been crippled by the coal shortage and other industries are expected to be drastically affected by the power pinch within a few days.

Publicly, the Government has kept hands off the coal dispute except to offer the services of conciliators and to keep the negotiations going. However, several Federal agencies have interfered in the case "behind the scenes."

One case in point is the repeated declaration by Economic Stabilization Director Bowles that he will not permit any wage increase for the miners higher than the general level obtained by workers since V-J Day.

It was rumored that Mr. Lewis is preparing a bitter blast against the secret interference and meddling and misrepresentation by Federal officials in high office.

Officials Promise Full Assistance to Drive as Conference Adopts Key Policies and Charts Great Goals.

Asheville, N. C.—The Southern Labor Conference proposed that AFL national and international unions lend-lease organizing assistance to the new drive to unionize the unorganized workers of Dixie. Immediate assurances of such aid were given by high-ranking union officials.

"Our victory will be the victory of all labor and the nation," said a unanimously adopted resolution. "Whatever you lend us will come back to you many-fold."

To organize the large masses of unorganized Southern workers calls for redoubled efforts on the part of established AFL unions in that territory and "unity and singleness of purpose by the entire trade-union movement," the conference emphasized.

"It imposes an obligation on every national and international union and every local and state body of the American Federation of Labor to assist freely and generously."

These specific steps were urged:
1. That the AFL Executive Council authorize President Green to appoint a co-ordinator for the organizing drive, so that all elements in the Federation can work as a team.

2. That organizing efforts be concentrated first in fields where unionization has lagged, such as textiles, lumber, chemicals, garment trades, public employes, service trades and white collar employes.

3. That state-wide and city campaigns be directed by the state federations and city central bodies and that special organizing committees be named to take charge in communities where no central labor council exists.

The conference adopted a clear-cut statement of principles to guide the economic, social and political aspects of the organizing drive.

The AFL's first goal in the South will be to raise living standards, declared the delegates. It will seek expansion of industry in the South to create more jobs. Through collective bargaining and the negotiating of contracts the AFL will aim for labor and peace in the South and union-management co-operation. By increasing the purchasing power of the work-

ers it will provide better markets for the products of southern farms and factories.

Besides these economic goals the conference set its course on the firm path of American democracy, rejecting any and all alien isms.

Affirming the AFL's nonpartisan political policy, the conference announced these political objectives:

"As believers in self-government we resent invasion from other communities to direct our use of the ballot as well as our use of economic power. As free workers, we must accept responsibility for our own lives and hence make our own decisions.

"Members of the American Federation of Labor years ago led a movement to open the ballot boxes of the South to all citizens when we marched the Negro-organized longshoremen of Savannah to vote in the primary elections. Organized labor will make this right to vote effective in all Southern States."

The conference adopted a legislative program calling for wider social security, a federal unemployment service, a strong emergency housing program for veterans, federal aid for education, higher minimum wage standards, pay increases for government workers, and state labor relations laws patterned after the Wagner act.

The AFL Presents . . .

No. 4—United Mine Workers
(Featuring William Blizard, president of the United Mine Workers in District 17, with active miners, men blinded and otherwise permanently incapacitated by mine accidents and widows and children of miners who died at their work, interviewed by Dwight Cooke (CBS commentator).)

Charleston, W. Va.—The sorry plight of the soft coal miners and of the dependents of those who have died or have been incapacitated for life in mine accidents was dramatically portrayed in the fourth of a series of radio programs entitled "Cross Section—AFL" over the Columbia Broadcasting System.

This cumulative testimony of the unfortunate victims of the callous disregard by the coal mine operators for human welfare provided a powerful and convincing justification for the current demands of the United Mine Workers for the inclusion of health and safety provisions in their contract.

Two ex-servicemen who saw plenty of action during the recent war frankly declared they fully believe the hazards of mining, under present-day conditions in the coal fields, are far greater than those of battle.

Fletcher Burlov, a veteran of the 355th Combat Engineers, told Commentator Cooke:

"I saw plenty of action—especially in the Battle of the Bulge—and I know what danger is. But I think a man on the battlefield has a six-to-one better chance than a man in the West Virginia coal mines."

Turning to another branch of the service, Cooke asked Curtis

Freeland, who served two years in the Pacific with the 19th Special Seabee Construction Battalion and who took part in two invasions, how he felt about the dangers of mining.

"I fully agree with Burlov on the hazards of mining in West Virginia, compared with the dangers of battle," he replied.

Freeland told the radio audience that while he was fighting for his country the mining company attempted to evict his family from the company-owned house in which they lived.

A small girl approached the microphone with a seasoned miner. She identified herself as Mary Louise Carpenter and explained that she was there with her father because he was totally blind and partly deaf—the result of a mine accident.

Carpenter said that he is wholly incapacitated and receives only \$69.52 a month to care for a family of four.

Mrs. Whitey Cubby, widowed mother of 8 children, explained her husband died of silicosis, contracted in the mines. Just before he died, she said, the company paid him \$1,000 compensation, but has contributed nothing to the family since.

Floyd Cowan, who contracted asthma in his 35 years in the mines and has been unable to work in recent years on orders of his doctor, is receiving no compensation from the company, although he has a family of 8, he told the commentator.

Another widow, Mrs. Valley Meade, said she receives compen-

BULLETIN

Washington, D. C.—The United Mine Workers Union offered a 12-day truce in the coal strike during which period 22 million tons of soft coal can be mined to meet the Nation's pressing needs.

If the coal operators agree to the truce, the terms of the new contract to be negotiated meanwhile must be made retroactive, the union's Policy Committee stipulated.

As this edition went to press, President Truman had summoned UMW President John L. Lewis and Charles O'Neil, spokesman for the coal operators, to the White House to discuss the truce proposed by the union and to take up compromise suggestions for the final settlement of the six-weeks-old dispute. Up to press time no agreement had been reached.

The UMW policy committee's action was a surprise move. A union statement explained:

"This action is the contribution of the United Mine Workers of America to our Nation's economy, which is being imperiled by the stupidity and selfish greed of the coal operators and associated financial interests and by demagogues who have tried to lash the public mind into a state of hysteria rather than grant justice and fair treatment to the men who mine the Nation's coal. The coal to be mined during this two-week period

can be utilized for consumption by essential facilities and the Nation's health and security thus safeguarded while efforts to negotiate a contract continue.

"Let every member be assured that the members of the National Policy Committee are determined to accept no contract that will not give to the mine workers the essential protection which is imperatively required."

The union emphasized that it was not retreating one whit from its demands in proposing the truce and that it will continue to insist on the establishment of a health and welfare fund for the miners and better safety conditions in the mines before the wage and hour issues are taken up.

The halls of Congress became the sounding board for the most virulent attacks on Mr. Lewis and on organized labor generally, with labor-baiters enjoying a field