

AFL COUNCIL CONDEMNS MINE OPERATORS

Health and Welfare Fund Fight Fully Justified, AFL Says As Government Seizure Impends in Strike Deadlock

Washington, D. C.—Placing responsibility for the coal shutdown on the "uncompromising" attitude of the mine owners, the AFL Executive Council pledged full support to the United Mine Workers of America "until victory is won." This means, AFL President William Green told a press conference, that the seven million members of the Federation will back up the coal miners "morally, financially, and politically."

The Executive Council's sweeping endorsement of the union's demand for a health and welfare fund broke the wave of denunciation which had been rolling up against UMW President John L. Lewis and served notice to the nation that the mine union leader is not carrying on his fight alone and unaided.

The controversy was rapidly heading toward a new crisis as the mining truce granted by the union neared its end and the deadlock in negotiations between the UMW and the coal operators remained unbroken. Reports persisted that the Government plans to seize and operate the mines under an agreement to be worked out with the union, the anti-labor bloc in Congress rushed efforts to enact legislation which would outlaw the very things the miners are fighting for.

Mr. Lewis appeared at a morning session of the Executive Council, of which he is a member, to give his colleagues the "inside story" of the negotiations to date. He was not present, however, at the afternoon session when the Council reached its decision and drafted its declaration.

Another outstanding development as the Executive Council ended the first week of its Spring meeting was the issuance of a solemn warning that the clouds of another world war are gathering because of the aggressive actions of Soviet Russia since V-J Day. The Council demanded that the United States force a showdown with Russia to preserve world peace.

In its resolution on the coal strike, the Council unhesitatingly and unanimously gave the union's proposal for a health and welfare fund unqualified support. It said: "Health and welfare funds have been established to protect mine workers in Great Britain, Spain, and India. Shall America lag behind other countries in safeguards for its workers?"

The Council pointed out that similar health and welfare funds are in operation in other American industries, including the garment and electrical trades. It demanded to know on what grounds it is reasonable to refuse such benefits to miners, engaged in a far more hazardous occupation.

Citing the heavy toll of death and injuries in coal mines each year, the Council sharply condemned the mine owners for their "greedy and begrudging policy toward safety installations."

Declaring that "the facts leave no room for debate," the Council charged that thousands of miners are "slaughtered or crippled each year by preventable mine accidents," and that compensation for injured miners and the dependents of those killed "falls far short of even a minimum standard of human decency."

The evils of the company doctor system, the council said, deprives the miners of the opportunity for proper medical care and hospitalization. The proposed health and welfare fund, the statement asserted, will prove a great boon to the mining industry in accident prevention, reduction of occupational disease and improved morale, as against the "inhuman conditions" under which miners have been compelled to work.

"We wish to let it be known," the Council declared, "that the American Federation of Labor supports the UMW to the fullest extent in this controversy. The coal miners are not fighting alone for the justice they deserve. The seven million members of the AFL will back them to the limit."

The Council's blast at Russia for impeding efforts by other members of the United Nations to establish world peace, was issued several days before Secretary of State Byrnes, in a report to the Nation, made it clear that the Soviet is the stumbling block to international understanding.

"Gravest concern" over the increasing threat of another world war was expressed by the Council, which asserted "the evidence is clear and menacing." Calling attention to the fact that more than a year has elapsed since V-E Day and nine months since V-J Day, it deplored the inability of the Foreign Ministers' Conference in Paris to chart a road for enforcing European peace or end hostilities in Asia.

"But more dangerous than these obvious manifestations of unrest

The Charlotte Labor Journal

(AND DIXIE FARM NEWS)

A Newspaper Dedicated To The Interests of Charlotte Central Labor Union and Affiliated Crafts—Endorsed By North Carolina Federation of Labor and Approved By The American Federation of Labor.

VOL. XVI; NO. 2

CHARLOTTE, N. C., THURSDAY, MAY 23, 1946

Subscription Price \$2.00 Per Year

CONVENTION CALENDAR OF A.F.L. UNIONS

(Following is a list of conventions scheduled for this year by National and International Unions and State Federations of Labor under the banner of the American Federation of Labor. This is not final or complete. Additions will be announced later.)

June 1—National Brotherhood of Operative Pottery, Atlantic City, N. J.
June 3—Intl. Union of Glove Workers—Chicago, Ill.
June 3—Intl. Union of United Hatters, Caps, etc.—New York, N. Y.
June 3—American Federation of Musicians—St. Petersburg, Fla.
June 8—South Dakota State Federation of Labor—Huron, S. D.

June 10—Oregon State Federation of Labor—Astoria, Ore.
June 13—Maine State Federation of Labor, Bangor, Me.
June 13—Colorado State Federation of Labor—Pueblo, Colo.
June 17—California State Federation of Labor—San Francisco, Cal.

June 17—Nevada State Federation of Labor—Las Vegas, Nev.
June 17—Intl. Union of Elevator Constructors—Toronto, Ont., Can.
June 17—Pattern Makers League of North America—Cincinnati, Ohio.
June 24—Texas Federation of Labor—Houston, Tex.
June 26—Intl. Fed. of Tech. Engineers, Architects, etc.—Washington, D. C.

REDS' ATTITUDE CONDEMNED BY A.F.L.

Washington, D. C.—Text of AFL Executive Council statement condemning Russia's post war attitude and demanding toughening of U. S. stand, follows:

The Executive Council views with the gravest concern the mounting threat of another world war.

The evidence is clear and menacing. It is now more than a year since V-E Day and nine months after V-J Day, yet world peace has not yet been established. The failure of the Foreign Ministers' Conference at Paris to reach agreement on how peace shall be applied and enforced in Europe is grievously disappointing. Continuation of hostilities in Asia appears to baffle all attempts at settlement.

But more dangerous than these obvious manifestations of unrest and conflict is the deep cleavage in policy which has developed between the United States and Britain on one side and Soviet Russia on the other.

The Executive Council is convinced that further delay and appeasement offer little hope of success and may only widen the breach. We must reach a clear understanding with Russia. If the policy of Soviet Russia is to be "tough" we must show her that we can get tougher in our defense of basic principles.

The American Federation of Labor unequivocally condemns the attitude taken by Soviet Russia since the war ended. In Europe and in Asia, she has employed main force instead of consultation with other powers. Russia has seized captured territory, she has brazenly sought to extend her influence and domain over most of Asia and eastern Europe.

In pursuing this policy Soviet Russia has employed the methods of aggression (rather than self-defense). She has trampled on the high principles proclaimed by the United Nations, denying fundamental freedoms to the citizens of other countries and depriving them of self-determination.

The Executive Council considers it significant that the foreign agents of Moscow are again assailing the foreign policy of the United States and accusing us of "imperialism." Such propaganda already is being broadcast throughout South America and it even has invaded our shores. At a recent convention in Atlantic City of a union of government employees not affiliated with the American Federation of Labor resolutions were adopted condemning the United States and Great Britain for "aggression." While Soviet Russia attempts to hoodwink our diplomats her followers in America are engaged in a campaign to deceive the American people.

The time has come to face these facts. We call upon the Government of the United States to insist that Russia observe her wartime commitments based on the Atlantic Charter.

COUNCIL BACKS MINERS' FIGHT

Washington, D. C.—Text of declaration of the AFL Executive Council on the United Mine Workers' demand for a health and welfare fund follows:

The Executive Council, after giving careful consideration to the issues involved in the coal dispute, has come to the unanimous con-

LAUNDRY WORKERS PLAN INTENSIVE SOUTHERN DRIVE

Washington, D. C.—Plans for an intensive campaign to organize laundry workers throughout the South were announced by Sam J. Byers, president of the Laundry Workers' International Union (AFL), in an article prepared for the American Federalist, official AFL publication.

Citing marked strides made in union-management relations through newly-negotiated contracts, Byers said:

"The laundries considered our members unskilled workers prior to the war. They learned their mistake from the abominable and costly work turned out by temporary workers who tried to fill the places of those who went into the armed services of war plants.

"During the past year we have been successful in markedly increasing our membership and our rates of pay. Confidence and satisfaction pervade the membership. The heavy turnover of the war days has slowed down and we are getting some of our old members back. Employers in the laundry industry are learning that humane methods, as advocated by the union, are good business and pay dividends.

"We are getting across to the unorganized laundry workers of the South the story of what organization has meant to others in their industry. In some sections of the South wages are as low as 15 cents an hour. The workers have no vacations and no extra pay for holiday work.

"We have recently negotiated a minimum wage of 75 cents an hour in San Francisco. It is our determination to raise, as rapidly as possible, the scales in Southern cities to this level.

"We are concentrating on the South because it is here the workers are the most ruthlessly victimized, living under conditions of economic slavery comparable to pre-Civil War times."

STREETCAR AND BUS UNION WINS STRIKE IN ATLANTA

Atlanta.—The six-day transit strike ended here May 6 when 1,400 AFL union members employed by streetcars and busses returned to work under a new contract with the Georgia Power Company.

The agreement included a 19 per cent wage increase to \$1.07 an hour and an arrangement by which the company will make yearly payments to a special pension fund to be set up and administered by the union. The first company payment will be \$45,000.

More than 531,000 enlisted men of the armed forces of the United States became officers during World War II, according to Army and Navy records.

SAY LISTEN!

Forthcoming radio programs in the "Cross Section—AFL" series broadcast each Saturday at 2:45 p.m., Eastern Standard Time, over the nation-wide Columbia Broadcasting System, are listed below for the information of trade unionists everywhere so that they can make advance plans to tune in:

May 25—Report from the South. George Googe, AFL Regional Director, and David Lillenthal, TVA chairman, will describe the advances won by AFL organization of southern workers.

June 1—Teamsters. Members of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters who operate over-the-road trucks in the mid-west area will be interviewed from a roadside lunchroom.

JUSTICE ON THE MINERS' SIDE

Washington, D. C.—The justice of the coal miners' cause is upheld in the following excerpt from an article in the United Mine Workers Journal:

"From the very start of the blundering coal wage negotiations the operators have attempted to pooh-pooh the UMW demands for the establishment of a health and welfare fund and a guarantee of the acceptance by the operators of compliance with safety laws in accordance with mine inspectors' recommendations. Operators have openly defied discussion of the NLRB decision granting collective bargaining rights to supervisory employees.

"Repeatedly, the operators have insisted that these demands—fundamental principles—be cast aside, and that wage negotiations be confined solely to a discussion of hours and dollars-and-cents earnings and pay increases.

"There is nothing new about this pattern... Operators through the years... have been solely interested in dollars and cents... The whole propaganda program of the operators... is tied to the hope that (they) can make the public believe the UMW is responsible for the breakdown in negotiations.

"Every investigator, every reporter who has gone to the coal fields to investigate... has found a multitude of victims of inadequate compensation and medical care.

"American coal miners are fed up with the stalling tactics and continued refusal of coal operators to consider the financial obligation of industry to meet the human needs of the men who man America's basic industry."

ILO DELEGATES MEETING ON 17-POINT AGENDA

Montreal.—Delegates to the two-week session of the International Labor Organization are in conference here on matters covering a 7-point agenda. Following the meetings here, an ILO delegation will visit New York to negotiate the terms of the ILO's relationship with the United Nations Organization.

Refugee Couple Who Saved 26 GIs From Nazis Reach U. S. with NRS Aid



As refugees in Italy, while themselves hiding from the Nazis, Louis Kahn, 73, and his wife, Leontine, risked their lives to help 26 American and British prisoners of war escape from a Nazi firing squad. The National Refugee Service, whose work is supported by the \$100,000,000 campaign of the United Jewish Appeal for 1946, helped the Kahns to immigrate to the United States. They are shown here telling their story to Ann Petluck (left), head of the NRS Migration Department. With them is a relative, Frederick D. Weil, himself a refugee who gave an affidavit for Mr. and Mrs. Kahn. The Kahns have settled in San Antonio, Texas.

BELT TIGHTENING IS URGED BY GREEN TO AID HUNGRY

Washington, D. C.—AFL President William Green, in a special message, called upon American families to eat 40 per cent less wheat and 20 per cent less fats in a move to relieve mass famine abroad.

In an editorial written for the American Federationist, AFL official publication, Mr. Green said:

"Famine, which means human misery and suffering on a mass scale—hunger and malnutrition for approximately 500,000,000 persons—is the aftermath of a war bringing unparalleled destruction of life and material civilization.

"War prevented the planting and harvesting of crops in Europe and Asia. Further losses came from forced migration of large groups of people. Some of the armed forces lived on the land of conquered peoples. The USSR extended its control over neighboring countries and reversed old lines of supplies and markets. Large armed forces in Central Europe daily increase the amount of relief food needed.

"We in the United States must and will share with those who have not. Let us each and all make plans to eat 40 per cent less wheat and save at least 20 per cent in fats. Let us willingly and conscientiously make our contributions. The success of the plan depends upon determination and discipline within each household.

"Famine and malnutrition are a poor foundation for peace within nations or between nations. Food freely given will be a power for peace and for democratic institutions."

COSTS OF LIVING CLIMBING, LABOR DEPT. INDEX SHOWS

Washington, D. C.—Living costs are continuing their climb, the Labor Department disclosed in a report showing its "consumers' price index," official yardstick of the rise in costs of many commodities, had risen 30.2 per cent above pre-war levels.

The index does not reflect the full rise in costs, however, the department conceded, since such things as deterioration in quality of goods and disappearance of low-cost goods from store shelves aren't shown adequately in the compilation. The latter factors would add another 3 to 4 per cent, making the total officially-recorded advance 35 per cent, the report explained.

AFL SURVEY ASKS VOICE FOR LABOR IN ECONOMIC AGENCIES

Washington, D. C.—Representation of labor, management, farmers and other citizens' groups in economic agencies of the American government was urged by Labor's Monthly Survey, economic publication of the AFL.

"Giving the citizens a voice through their economic organizations is the democratic way to mobilize initiative and avoid the danger of concentrating power in government hands," the article declared. "Participation in the life of democracy. Free men can work together for progress. Communist regimentation offers nothing which can compare with the co-operation of free citizens."

The survey, discussing peaceful settlement of disputes, cited the electrical construction industry, with 150,000 workers and 1,500 firms, which has been free of major labor strife for 25 years.

"Its Council on Industrial Relations, established in 1920, is today becoming the model for other industries," it added. "The plan is simple. A 10-man council, composed of five union and five industry representatives, is the supreme court for settlement of disputes. A joint union and management planning committee studies future economic problems. Local labor-management committees thresh out local problems regularly. The plan has ended union-management hostility, prevented wage cuts, resulted in efficient work at high pay. Workers and employers have prospered, the union has been strengthened and the public has had better service."

Union-management co-operation in the railroad industry was cited as another example of how successful such plans can be. Out of the rail strike in the early 20s, the survey pointed out, came a plan for union-management of the rail repair shops. Joint committees of labor and management studied mutual problems. Workers offered many suggestions, and through these improvements came gains in railroad income which brought wage increases and other benefits.

"During the war, union-management co-operation in different forms was spread to more than 4,000,000 workers in 2,500 plants," the survey added. "A partial study early in 1945 showed at least 700 committees dealing with such problems as improving production, care of tools, absenteeism, safety and health, training and many other matters important in daily shop work. Through these committees workers contributed immensely to speed the war effort.

"During the war, labor and management representatives on the War Labor Board, the War Manpower Commission and other agencies gave workers and employers a partnership in the war efforts without which our production miracles could never have been achieved."

The AFL economists saw a bright outlook for employment during the next year.

"Right after V-J Day," the report said, "forecasters estimated that by March, 1946, 8,000,000 people would be out of work. Actually, government figures show less than 3,000,000 unemployed. The reason (1) the demand for workers in industry has been much greater than expected; and (2) some 5,000,000 people have retired from work, which is more than was anticipated, and many veterans are taking college courses or vacationing on their terminal pay.

"Retail sales today are the highest in history, now running at a level of more than 90 billion a year, compared to the previous peacetime peak of 55.1-2 billion in 1941. Some forecasters expect that by early 1947 58,200,000 will be working in civilian jobs and 1,800,000 in military service—total 60,000,000."