

January Rallies Will Start Gompers Memorial Campaign

St. Paul.—The American Federation of Labor ordered a two-pronged drive for 1950 to organize a million new members and to repeal the Taft-Hartley law by electing a liberal Congress.

Winding up its 68th annual convention, the AFL welded this strong platform of action on the domestic front to a program of world action backing up the formation of a new democratic free international trade union organization and supporting a firm United States foreign policy to repel communism and fascism in Asia, Europe and Latin America.

The convention sounded a cry for a new battle against the Taft-Hartley law. Its repeal was listed as the paramount issue of a broad 1950 platform. The convention's closing sessions brought these outstanding developments:

1. Plans to start in January a drive for a million new members as a tribute to Samuel Gompers, first AFL president, and to coordinate it with the political education campaign for repeal of Taft-Hartley and election of a liberal Congress.
2. Adoption of an international relations program supporting formation of a new free democratic world labor organization next month in London and urging against appeasement or communism and fascism anywhere.
3. Unanimous reelection of AFL President William Green, Secretary-Treasurer George Meany and all other members of the Executive Council.
4. Adoption of proposals to get the Senate to liberalize the social security bill passed by the House of Representatives; to get congressional enactment of a broad national health program, and repeal

of taxes on sales, pay rolls, amusements.

5. A change in the convention meeting time to the third Monday in September annually, and receipt of invitations to go to Houston, Texas; Cleveland, or Miami in 1950.

6. Speeches by Secretary of Defense Louis A. Johnson and Maritime Commission Chairman Philip Fleming, praising AFL cooperation in building the national defense. Both pledged continued cooperation with the AFL.

7. Endorsement of a shorter work week to spread jobs and reduce unemployment.

8. Further moves to induce the International Association of Machinists to reaffiliate with the AFL and to merge all organized labor under the AFL banner.

Link Drives as Memorial

The convention undertook a drive for a million new members next year as a means of paying tribute to the memory of Mr. Gompers on the 100th anniversary of his birth in 1850. It directed "complete coordination of political activity with the expansion of organization among the unorganized."

"These two gigantic efforts," the convention said, "cannot help but increase the prestige and membership of the AFL and at the same time protect the welfare and democracy of all organized workers."

The AFL expressed disappointment with the failure of the 81st Congress to repeal the Taft-Hartley law in accordance with the mandate given by the 1948 elections.

"If the 81st Congress persists in its refusal to act affirmatively," the convention said, "we are prepared again to take our appeal to the people of this country and to make Taft-Hartley repeal the para-



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mount issue of the 1950 congressional election campaign.

"Though defeated in our first attempt because our adversaries had a few more votes in Congress than we, it is our determination to redouble our efforts in wiping out this majority and elect to Congress men who will heed and carry out the will of the people. Borrowing a phrase from President Truman's message to this convention, Taft-Hartley repeal is America's unfinished business now, not the business alone of the labor movement, but that of every fair-minded citizen of our land."

All Officers Re-elected

President William Green, Secretary-Treasurer George Meany and the 13 vice presidents were unanimously reelected by acclamation.

In accepting election for the 26th time, Mr. Green recalled that when he first was called to head the AFL there were less than 2,000,000 members. He recounted the nation's cycle of wars and economic changes during which the AFL grew steadily to 8,000,000 members.

"The cause of labor is a religion to me," Mr. Green said. "I shall give in the future as in the past all I have, the best I have, all my service for the good of labor."

The 700 delegates gave him a standing ovation. The election climaxed the highly successful convention featured by a succession of important speakers and a round of social affairs that took union officials into many affairs in St. Paul, Minneapolis and surrounding cities.

Wary delegates held a final night session to hammer out the final planks in the AFL's progressive 1950 platform. Here is a thumbnail summary of some of the more important actions:

Economic developments—Devaluation of the pound sterling by Great Britain and concurrent work stoppages in coal and steel industries in this country have occurred with unpredictable consequences but our free enterprise system can absorb shocks if free to readjust and plan new expansion.

National health insurance—It now appears that Congress may adopt certain portions of this program, such as extended federal aid for hospital construction, school health and local health units. The AFL must continue to emphasize its long-standing position that the health problem of working people will not be adequately met except through a comprehensive and all-inclusive system of prepaid health insurance so that the economic barrier between patient and doctor is removed.

Taxation—Wartime excise taxes should be repealed. Federal, state and local tax systems should be integrated. Taxes on sales, pay rolls and amusements should be repealed and progressive tax programs adopted at all levels based on the ability-to-pay principle.

Radio and press public relations—All members are urged to tell neighbors, friends and associates and the labor press to publicize the AFL's 5 nights a week radio broadcast to begin January 1, 1950, over 147 stations of the Mutual Broadcasting System.

Labor unity—Issues which formerly divided the labor movement have largely disappeared and whatever of conflict may remain is overshadowed by far the more fundamental and serious problem confronting labor not only here at home but in other lands as well. The road is considerably smoother

and should lead to the ultimate unionism and merging of all organized labor under the banner of the AFL. The AFL should continue its efforts toward achieving this goal.

Israel—The State of Israel was greeted upon its arrival among the family of nations, and its people and Histadrut trade union movement praised for the tremendous obstacles overcome in the past year. The American people can be proud of its contributions to the world's youngest democracy.

World Federation of Trade Unions—Not the slightest excuse exists for any self-respecting trade union organization to remain affiliated with the discredited Communist-controlled World Federation of Trade Unions. An appeal is made, particularly to the free democratic trade unions of France, Italy and Israel to lose no time in severing themselves from the WFTU. AFL pledges moral and material support to a new democratic federation of trade unions to make it a powerful instrument for lasting peace.

GREEN TELLS LEWIS LABOR MUST UNITE

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eration of labor or of organizations affiliated with it for financial help.

"Please send me an answer to this inquiry so that I can, in the event it seems necessary, transmit it to the members of the Executive Council and of national and international unions when your suggestion and proposal may be brought to their attention.

"In transmitting this answer to your communication, it seems fitting and appropriate for me to make the following comments:

"Experience is a great teacher. It has taught the officers and members of organized labor many valuable lessons. It is teaching us one now. The crying need for the establishment and maintenance of a united labor movement in our country is being emphasized over and over again. The establishment of organic unity within the ranks of labor is a basic primary requirement. Through such a united labor movement, the economic power of all the workers of the nation could be mobilized. Their finances could be united and centralized. The obligation of each worker to the other could be successfully discharged. The moral, financial, economic and psychological power of the millions of workers in our country could be united and blended into one common purpose and for the realization of one common objective.

"The question is and should be answered—Shall we have a united labor movement or shall we continue divided and discordant?"

"The pooling of labor's resources while divided, as it is today, is impossible and impracticable. At best it would be but a shadow without substance. The cross-currents of division, competition and discord which run through the labor movement of our nation at the present time make it increasingly difficult for workers to achieve their commendable aims, purposes and objectives.

"I have appealed repeatedly over all the years since division took place within the ranks of labor to the workers of the nation to return to the house of labor where they could live together, plan together, work together and unite together in the promotion of a common purpose. I hope and trust that the day will come ere long when a favorable response will be made to this appeal."

RHODES SAYS POLITICS NOW AN EVERY DAY JOB

St. Paul.—Congressman George M. Rhodes, an AFL organizer in Reading, Pa., told the 68th AFL convention:

"Politics is a job day in and day out throughout the year. It isn't only a job for a few weeks before election day."

WINS NEW WAGE GAINS

Cincinnati—The 6-day-old stero-typers' strike against the three daily Cincinnati newspapers ended under a compromise wage settlement.

Strike Benefits Increase Voted

St. Paul.—Strike benefits for members of federal labor unions were boosted to \$10 per week for a period of 10 weeks.

This constitutional change was voted unanimously by the 68th AFL convention on recommendation of the committee on laws.

The new section provides that when a strike has been initiated under sections 2 and 3 or Article 13 of the constitution the AFL shall pay for a period of 10 weeks \$10 per week for each member to the bonded officer of the striking federal union.

No benefit shall be paid for the first two weeks of the strike. The Executive Council is given authority to pay strike benefits for a period longer than 10 weeks.

The present benefits are \$7 per week for six weeks.

Irving Brown Sees World Situation Worsening

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tarian system, and once again it is my opinion that in the world the labor movement must speak up and act now or face the inevitability of a new and more horrible world conflict."

Brown said that despite the gloomy situation, some progress was made in the past year in the fight against totalitarianism. He said communism has been hit hard and suffered defeats on every front in western Europe.

"But let no one have any illusions in the light of the world political situation and in the light of Communist strength on the western labor movement," Brown said. "A rocky road lies ahead. The road

is mined at every turn, since Communism's strength, although diminished, remains a serious menace in western Europe with grave economic problems."

He said that specifically the new world labor movement must help France and Italy to keep their unions out of Communist control; work against an alliance of German nationalism and Soviet communism; assist trade union leaders in exile from countries behind the iron curtain; work for an economically unified western Europe, and battle communism in the Far East.

MINISTERS WELCOMED

St. Paul.—Ministers representing the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, attended sessions of the 68th convention and were welcomed by AFL President William Green.

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