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Meany Questions Histadrut Ties to Commie WFTU

Chicago.—AFL Secretary-Treasurer George Meany said that the American friends of Histadrut are "perplexed" that Israel's labor organization continues to be a member of the Communist-controlled World Federation of Trade Unions.

Mr. Meany spoke of the long friendship and earnest support of the AFL for Israel and Histadrut at a dinner of the trade union division of the Chicago Israel Histadrut.

But, he pointed out, "Histadrut, alone, of all the free national trade union centers in the world still holds membership in the Communist-controlled World Federation of Labor."

Mr. Meany said: "I understand the problem of the new State of Israel, and I understand the problems of Histadrut, which has such an important role in the affairs of Israel. I know that the Jewish trade unionists of Israel are deeply concerned over the plight of the Jews who are now behind the Iron Curtain and whom the masters of the Kremlin are holding as hostages. We appreciate that the problems of the new republic, which is not yet two years old and which has hostile neighbors, are not easy ones. We can, and we do understand all of that.

"But, while we give these matters the consideration and weight which they merit, we cannot comprehend the Histadrut being silent or neutral about the spread of slave labor into other countries from the modern home of slavery—Communist Russia.

"We cannot understand how the Histadrut can be silent or neutral about the Kremlin's practice of genocide. Nor can we understand how the Histadrut can be neutral when Communist Russia is refusing to permit Jewish workers to migrate to Israel, as is their desire and their right.

"Finally, how can Histadrut possibly be neutral when Jews in Soviet Russia at the present time are being actively and brutally persecuted?"

"The Histadrut is a democratic free trade union movement," Mr. Meany said. "It is not sympathetic to communism or any other form of totalitarianism. It is not an auxiliary of the Communist party. Therefore, it is very strange, very inconsistent and—let us be frank—very disturbing when we see the Histadrut seeking to be neutral in the struggle between the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and the Kremlin satellite, the WFTU.

"I have gone into this question at great length and I have spoken plainly. We admire the Histadrut and we honor it for all that it has done—for its truly heroic achievements—during the past 30 years. We want to be able to continue to respect the Histadrut and to keep our friendship thriving.

"As a friend of Israel and as a friend of the Histadrut, I am confident that American labor is not misplacing its faith when it predicts that the democratic labor movement of Israel will soon take its place in the free trade union movement of the earth—the vanguard of peaceful, liberty-loving humanity.

"The Histadrut is needed in the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. The Histadrut belongs in the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions."

Green And Meany Urge Get That Million New Members

Washington.—The nation's biggest union organizing drive reaching into all fields of the economy is on.

AFL organizers left a 2-day conference here and are deployed all over the United States and Canada to seek 1,000,000 new AFL members in 1950.

The campaign was directed by the 1949 AFL convention in honor of the centennial of the birth of Samuel Gompers, founder and first president of the American Federation of Labor.

Winning the new members is linked to the AFL efforts to elect a liberal Congress that will enact social security, housing, health insurance and other welfare measures and repeal the Taft-Hartley law to strengthen the American way of life.

The organizers were spurred to their task by AFL President William Green, Secretary-Treasurer George Meany, Harry O'Reilly, director of organizing, and Joseph Keenan, director of Labor's League for Political Education.

After these leaders outlined the objective and strategy, organizers from all sections discussed the particular problems they faced and how they hoped to solve them. They climaxed the two-day sessions with this pledge:

"We the organizers of the American Federation of Labor, acting under the combined inspirational spirit of our present and past great leadership, pledge ourselves to work with renewed zeal within our fields in full cooperation with the officers and organizers of the International Unions, State Federations of Labor, City Central Bodies and Local Unions.

"We make this pledge in the firm conviction that 1,000,000 more members in the AFL will mean the enhancement of the dignity of labor, the improvement of the standard of living of the workers, and the strengthening of democratic ideals throughout the world and that, by thus helping to give greater effectiveness to the ideals he stood for, we will render the greatest tribute possible to the memory of Samuel Gompers."

The conference of organizers followed a series of state-wide rallies held by many state federations of labor. More of these rallies are planned and the organizing drive is expected to spread out among city and local unions gaining momentum through the summer.

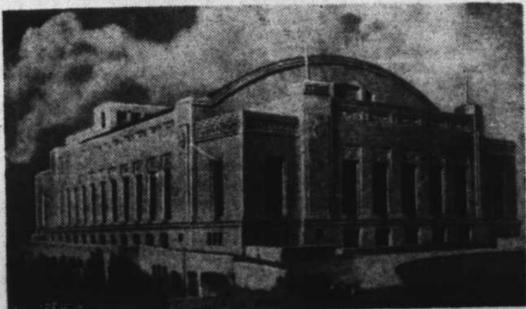
DROPS CONTROLS

London.—All postwar labor controls have now been dropped in Britain. The government has discontinued entirely the use of the power of direction. It has been applied almost exclusively to workers in coal-mining and agriculture. For others, it had been used only in 29 cases out of 9,500 vacancies filled through the Ministry of Labor's Employment Exchanges. In the past 15 months not a single worker had been directed.

GRANT INSURANCE

Chicago.—Stewart-Warner Corporation signed a contract with Local 1031 of the AFL, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers covering 2,500 employees. The agreement provides no wage increases, but includes a comprehensive insurance plan paid for by the company and for 3 weeks' vacation for employees with 12 or more years of service.

Site of Union Industries Show



Philadelphia.—This is the huge Convention Hall—scene of many nationally historic occasions—where one more great event will be held when the AFL Union Industries Show opens there May 6 to run to May 13. More than 500,000 visitors are expected to see the show. The AFL executive council, American Federation of Women's Auxiliaries of Labor and the Pennsylvania Federation of Labor will meet concurrently with the show.

