

# The A.F. of L. in the South

For two months the American Federation of Labor has been "campaigning to organize" the South. About 100 special organizers are claimed to be in the field covering the five states of Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia and the two Carolinas, to concentrate mainly on the textile industry.

Results to date have borne out all the serious indictments made by the revolutionary movement against the A.F. of L. policy and methods. They have shown also that the Southern bourgeois have not in the least relented in their hostility to union organization, even of the reactionary brand, but have rather intensified the offensive against the workers. The latter are giving ample proof of militancy and in the now less spectacular but still continuing sharp conflicts are making a mockery of the deceptive practices of the A. F. of L. with its spineless appeals to the bosses for friendly cooperation. Certainly there is a fertile field for union organization.

## Green Meets the Bosses

President Green is again touring the South to try further to put the Federation in the "right" light, to renew his pledges and, if possible, fully to win the favor of business (!!). On his last visit he did not forget to advise the employers to organize in order to make an end to cut-throat competition and particularly to emphasize common struggle against the Communists: "Accept us, or the alternative will be the Communists," said Green. No wonder that certain of the more far-sighted capitalist dailies give him a rather favorable reception, comparing him to a successful banker or head of a large business institution. The mayor of Memphis, Tenn., in welcoming Green to the city could therefore, think "hopefully" of the future, remind his audience that he (Green) had "saved the Federation from the Bolshevik tide in 1922."

Meanwhile even children under 16 years of age work the twelve hour shift in North Carolina. Just as the "organization campaign" started, the Piedmont mill in Gastonia administered a 20 per cent wage cut, reducing spinners from \$14.30 to \$11.78 per week and card hands from \$14.40 to \$12.00. This is at a twelve hour night shift and eleven hour day shift.

## The Wage-Cutting Campaign and the Strikers

At the Riverside and Dan River mills at Danville, Va. a 10 per cent wage cut took effect on February 1st, bringing the average wage down from \$18.69 to \$16.75. Many, however, receive much less. The company claims, of course, that the workers, through the company union, voted the cut. In these mills Negroes are barred from the company union but not from the wage cuts. The president of the company, H. R. Fitzgerald, appears still able to draw his yearly salary of \$85,000; and the dividends paid on its \$7,500,000 common stock have kept the level of 10 per cent.

In general profits coming, out of the sweat and blood of the Southern textile workers, have piled into the coffers of the absentee owners. Senator Wheeler, quoting from a report in the Senate, stated that the American Viscose Co., producing two-thirds of all rayons, averaged a net profit of 48 per cent on \$184,166,000 gross sales for the three year period 1926-29. Net profit, after all expenses, taxes and depreciation, amounted to \$88,306,000, although the capital investment in 1922 was only \$10,000,000.

The Marion Clinchfield mills, N. C., have announced that the stretchout system is to be put back into effect and, according to reports, there is strike talk among the workers. 135 families are still evicted from the company houses since the last strike. At Swannanoa the weavers in the Beacon Blanket Co.'s mill have struck against the stretchout system and predict that their ranks will grow.

At the American Bemberg Glanzstock

Co. mills at Elizabethton, Tenn., the workers succeeded in obtaining control of the company union. Immediately wholesale discharges followed, against which the workers struck on March 3rd. Over 2,000 workers responded to the call and are now carrying on active picketing.

## Southern Workers Show Militancy

Such are the reports from the South. The present Elizabethton strike is the third within less than a year. Without any financial backing and without any strike relief whatever, nevertheless these Southern workers show splendid examples of class solidarity, worthy of becoming object lessons for the worker north of the Mason-Dixon line. McMahon and other leaders in charge of the "drive" have been the most emphatic in stating that they did everything in their power to avert strikes. Unquestionably so; that is the particular mission of the A. F. of L. in the South. Vice-President Gorman of the U. T. W., one of the committee of three in charge, offers the mill barons "cooperation of the U. T. W. in stabilizing labor costs and removing inefficiency in accordance with the labor-management cooperation plan worked out on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad". The Southern workers, however, have already had lessons aplenty in company unionism, for which the B. and O. plan is but another name. By their own initiative they show the way, even forcing

these reactionary leaders to move a step ahead.

## Left Wing Must Adopt United Front Policy

Meanwhile the National Textile Workers union under Left wing leadership has apparently left the southern field uncontested to the A. F. of L. Not because the field for organization and militant struggle is less fertile now than before, to which the reports cited above bear witness. No, it is the penalty of false policies which now leaves the reactionaries in complete command. Undoubtedly the Left wing could yet have been an important factor. With correct **united front policies**, particularly at the height of the bourbon lynching campaign, at the time of the assaults at Gastonia and the killings at Marion, the whole crew of A. F. of L. organizers could not have separated the Left wing from the working masses of the South. Such a policy would have become a mighty lever to extend, to unify and strengthen these many scattered strikes, and thus become a mighty weapon against the bosses. There were conferences held at the time, at which delegates of both unions participated, which could have become splendid opportunities for the practical organization of the united front. Naturally, the A. F. of L. leaders would have opposed this most strenuously; that was to be expected. But, with this policy, whom would the workers follow? The Left wing, of course.

Lessons of the past should be taken advantage of to help guide the present and the future; and it is time that the Left wing learns this lesson.—A. S.

# Auto Bosses in Struggle for World Markets

Early in January Col. L.P. Ayres, economist of the Cleveland Trust Co., wrote: "If conditions in the automobile industry can improve vigorously in the early months of the year there will be little cause for concern about the course of general business."

But this does not seem to have taken place. Instead the *Annalist* reports that auto production the first week of March was only one half of last year, while the production schedules of Ford and Chevrolet are both lower than they were a month ago. And for the first two months of the year total production of autos and trucks was just one third lower than it was for the first two months of 1929. Clearly, this industry does not "improve vigorously."

With a falling domestic demand for cars what is happening to exports—the hope of auto manufacturers? Last year they sent abroad only \$234 million worth of passenger cars as compared with \$263 million in 1928. However, though their value declined, the number of cars increased as did the value of trucks exported and the value of auto parts and accessories. There was a gain of 8% in the value of all auto exports in 1929 as compared with 1928. But this gain was much less than that of 1928 over 1927 which was 27%.

## European Capitalists, Resist American Penetration

European motor capitalists have been putting up a militant resistance to the exports of American auto makers. The French manufacturers raised a storm of protest from American exporters, when they introduced bills into the French Chamber setting a prohibitive duty on U. S. cars. The Americans immediately formed a "Committee of Defense" to protect their interests, brought pressure to bear on the French government, including threats of reprisals against French goods and, through the American embassy, compelled the French to recede from their position. The French tariff will probably raise the duties on cars only 10%, making a 55% duty which will still permit the Americans to do business at a profit. But the French car makers want an 80 to 90% duty and will put up a strenuous fight for it. Even if the 10% compromise bill should go through this year there is nothing—but still more American pressure—to prevent increased duties being levied later on.

At the same time the Germans have

limited the number of American cars to be imported, through an agreement with Belgian, Italian, French, Czechoslovakian and Austrian manufacturers. This action foreshadows further joint effort to block the growing imports of American cars, and a cartel of all European auto makers.

All signs thus point to increased opposition by the motor capitalists of Europe to being "conquered commercially" by the United States.

## British Labor Fakers Aid Bankers

And Britain, under the aggressive lead of the labor government, is not at the tail of this procession. It aims to get its own foot further into the world's auto markets and to fight the advances of the American magnates. Early in the year London reported that J. H. Thomas, chief foreign sales promoter of the labor government, had been in secret meeting with the leaders of the British auto industry urging them to evolve plans to increase their export trade, and to combine and rationalize their factories further in order to compete with American high-speed production.

These foreign developments indicate what is in store for American auto workers, as well as for their brothers working in native or American-owned factories in Europe. The fierce competition for markets is reflected in mass unemployment, more wage cuts and speed up, for those left with precarious jobs in the plants of Detroit, Pontiac, Lansing and Flint—as well as those of Paris, Frankfurt, Berlin and Milan.

## NO COMPENSATION FOR FINGERLESS BOYS

RALEIGH, N. C.—Two boys, one 15, the other 15, have been denied compensation for the loss of fingers in mill machines. They were not doing the work for which they were paid, the state industrial commissioner ruled. The 16-year-old boy, white, lost two fingers and a thumb in a cotton mill and the younger boy, a Negro, lost three fingers in a veneer factory.

HOUSTON, Tex.—Committees have been appointed to prepare for the annual convention of the Intl. Typographical Union, which will meet for the first time in this section of the country in September. 2,000 delegates and visitors are expected.

# LABOR HATERS MERGE FORCES

The merging of Chase Natl. Bank, Equitable Trust Co. and Interstate Trust Co. places Rockefeller interests at the head of the largest bank in the world.

Until now Rockefeller's Natl. City Bank has been the largest in the United States, but London has held its leadership with the largest in the world. The new mammoth Chase Natl. with total deposits of \$2,100,000,000 now steps ahead of the Midland Bank, Ltd., leading British bank, and registers the fact that New York has displaced London as the world's financial center.

Winthrop W. Aldrich who has been president of the Equitable Trust Co. will represent Rockefeller interests as president of the giant combine. He is brother-in-law of John D. Rockefeller Jr. and was personal representative of the Oil Emperor in the Indiana Standard Oil fight last year.

## American Capitalists Combining

Other powerful industrial overlords, in addition to the Rockefeller men, are directors of the new financial titan. Copper and iron mining interests are represented by D. C. Jackling, American Smelting and Refining Co. by F. H. Brownell, utility interests by G. M. Dahl, the Western Union Telegraph by Newcomb Carlton, explosives and chemicals by W. S. Carpenter of the DuPont Co., packing interests by F. E. White of Armour's, the international match trust and the sugar trust by H. O. Havemeyer, silk textiles by T. F. Victor, expresses and railroad interests by Cornelius Vanderbilt and other railroad magnates.

As Aldrich has represented Rockefeller interests in a Morgan bank, so now Morgan interests sit on the new combine through Geo. H. Howard and F. L. Polk (utilities), Alfred P. Sloan of General Motors, A. H. Griswold of International Tel. and Tel. and G. K. Morrow of Morgan's grocery interests.

## Bitterly Anti-Labor

For the workers in the United States, this merger means a further step in consolidating the strongest financial interests, whose anti-union policies are well known. Strikes in the factories, mills and mines controlled by these directors have always been savagely broken up as scabs, thugs, police, courts and churches have been lined up to break the workers' resistance.

Internationally, this latest and mightiest financial merger marks a new stage in the British-American conflict. Rockefeller's Natl. City Bank has long been an outpost of American imperialist finance in territory once dominated by British investors. Now the Chase Natl. steps forward under Rockefeller leadership to displace a British bank as largest in the world.

## STATE LABOR HEAD SHOWS HEAVY UNEMPLOYMENT IN MICHIGAN

DETROIT—Speaking at a Detroit student gathering, Eugene J. Brock, state commissioner of labor stated:

"The situation here in Michigan has become steadily worse," said Brock. "Where we usually have 3,000 families totally destitute in Detroit we now have 12,000. In the state at large over 100,000 are totally dependent on charity for their continued existence. 75,000 persons have already been compelled to leave the state."

"This is one of the busiest seasons of the year for both furniture and automobiles and yet we find unemployment reaching unprecedented figures in Grand Rapids, the furniture center, while out of 48,000 workers in Flint only 28,000 are employed. And they are employed only on part time."

"In Detroit less than 60% of the workers are at work and even they are working considerably less than two-thirds full time."

ASHEVILLE, N. C.—More than 2,000 workers are now employed at the new Enka rayon mill near Asheville. Of these 1,270 are girls and 750 men.