

Burning Problems Face Fifty-Fifth A.F.L. Convention

MARCH OF EVENTS

F.D.R. Warns Soviets...

Through Secretary of State Hull, Roosevelt has given warning to the Soviet Union that he expects Russia to keep its pledge given at the time recognition was granted. Hull makes it perfectly plain in his statement to the press that what America had in mind in demanding Litvinov's signature to Article 4 of the pledge was one institution and one institution only: the Comintern.

Meantime Walter Duranty expresses for the Stalinists their utter amazement that this Seventh Congress should in any way be confused with the earlier congresses which really aimed at advancing the interests of the world proletarian revolution.

Aim of U.S. Capitalism...

Press comment stresses that Roosevelt was motivated in his present move against the Soviet Union by the exigencies of the coming Presidential elections. He desired to rob his reactionary critics of one of their main arguments proving Roosevelt to be "radical": his attitude towards the Soviet Union.

Recognition of the Soviets came at a time when Japan was threatening a rapid advance and deeper penetration into China. Involved in the domestic crisis and unprepared for a military conclusion, the American capitalist class found it necessary to impede the advance of Japanese imperialism by threatening a military alliance with Russia.

It is with this strategy in mind that the U. S. is now engaged in a vast project of militarizing the entire Pacific, establishing air bases and naval bases in all its possessions...

Fear of Progressive Tendencies in Labor Movement Disturbs Officials

They are apparently the A. F. of L. faces its fifty-fifth annual convention. The heaviest blows to the bureaucratic domination and control of the movement have come from two widely different directions: from the teachers union and from the newly constituted international union of automobile workers.

At its recent national convention the teachers union administered a serious rebuke to the "red scare" campaign of Bill Green and Co. and rejected by a firm majority vote his arrogant demand for expulsion of its New York local which he charged to be under Communist influence.

Political Policy Challenged

These, however, are not the only manifestations disturbing and contrary to the aims of Green and company.

Bankrupt Union Leadership Must Be Challenged by Awakened Membership

field the miserable capitulation to the coolie wage scale sacrificed important trade union principles and squandered many real gains attained in hard-fought struggles.

Retreat in Face of Bosses Assault

They are closely tied-up with the whole question of working class economic standards. And it is precisely in this respect that the incompetence of the A. F. of L. leadership is the most glaring and where its turn to greater perfidy and a more reactionary position is the most outstanding.

Crucial Issues Still Remain

In face of these facts the decrepit A. F. of L. leadership, proclaimed as entirely an upswing accomplished entirely at the expense of the workers, through increased exploitation, and it reiterates its faith in this system of exploitation. This, let us not forget, comes also as a prelude to the coming convention. It makes only so much more clear that this leadership remains wedded to capitalism in theory and practice and depends upon the active forces of capitalism to sharpen its own class in order to deal the more effectively with any opposition to its reactionary policies and bureaucratic domination.

Roosevelt Assures Business It Will Get New "Breather"

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get old-age pensions, go not to the ghost of Long or the dreams of Townsend, but to the sane and sound original share-the-wealth and old-age-pensioner, Franklin D. Roosevelt. He is a past master at stealing thunder; and making it crack for him.

Roosevelt Program a Fraud

The easiest way to expose the Roosevelt hypocrisy, on the share the wealth Tax Program as on old age pensions or any other presumably liberal reform, is to compare what Roosevelt actually does with the high-sounding phrases he is so fond of. The Roosevelt Tax Program is a fake through and through. It does nothing whatever about eliminating tax-exempt securities, the means whereby the majority of the very rich escape practically all income taxation. It does next to nothing to regulate so-called "personal holding companies," another favorite device whereby the wealthy report "No Income" while they live on \$10,000,000 a year.

This does not mean, of course, that the present Tax Program is the last in the rise of Income and Inheritance Taxes. This will come, will have to come, but it will wait for the most part until after 1936. And at that time it will be not the higher brackets that will share the burden, but the lower income range. The ones who will be really hit will be from the same middle class which Roosevelt now so wilyly tries to charm with his paper blows at the Tories.

Roosevelt does not, however, in his letter to Howard, stop on a Left note. As in the case of the Soviet correspondence, he is anxious to assure the public that, though he is a real reforming liberal, through and through, yet he is a safe and sane liberal—nothing that a sensible business man, or an owner of a large newspaper chain, need be worried about. He has no new upsetting acts up his sleeve; he grants business a breathing spell; his program is substantially completed.

Profits Mount

And well might Roosevelt feel that, for the moment at any rate, his program is substantially completed. Profits are once more rolling in. The automobile companies are doing their biggest business since 1930; steel, since 1931. General Motors and General Electric have just raised their dividends. The Stock Market is continuing its longest sustained advance since the crash. Merchandising expects the biggest year since 1930. The army and navy have the largest appropriations in peace-time history, and a new high in personnel. The chemical companies are operating full time. Electric output has been up, during several weeks, to all time highs. Business will indeed have

to have a breathing spell—for at least long enough to add up the profits. Naturally, a few details are not yet taken care of. Unemployment seems to remain close to its low levels. Real wages have been declining during the present year. The Schechter Decision has given an impetus to a wide-spread increase in hours. The influence of WPA is rapidly lowering relief standards.

Indeed, somehow or other, the present partial revival of prosperity seems to be leaving out the working class altogether. It is a prosperity exclusively designed for the "business men" about whom Howard and Roosevelt so solicitously correspond.

And this is no accident. Capitalist prosperity was always of a kind that gave 90 percent of its relative benefits to the capitalists, and a poor 10 percent to the masses. It always meant a prosperity for profits, with perhaps a few dollars extra for the workers as a by-product. But now, in the decline of capitalism, with the expansive and self-reviving powers of capitalist economy exhausted, "prosperity" becomes a grotesque caricature even of its former self. Prosperity—that is, profits—can be rehabilitated only by the impoverishment of the masses. No possible business upturn can absorb any large section of the unemployed, and the contradictions between wages and profits—always present but often hidden during the advance of capitalism—becomes glaring and open.

Roosevelt's program is substantially complete—at least it is his own words that say so. We can stop, then, to taste the favor of the New Era he promised. It is for the working class to make judgment.

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New War Alliances

On one and the same day, the Daily Worker printed the following comments on the Ethiopian situation:

On September 14, 1935, page 1: "Laval Asks Concessions for Italy and Military Rule Over Ethiopia."

On September 14, 1935, page 4, in the column conducted by Harry Gannes:

"The last important bulwark of the League for a possible support of Italian Fascism has given way. In an unwilling, but quite definite speech, Premier Laval has spoken with the voice of the French masses, and not his own nor that of de la Rocque, and the de Wendels, of the Comite des Orges, the war munition makers and the pro-Fascist exploiters."

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And what of Ethiopia, the pawn in the imperialist game? The independence of this small country of less than 11 million people, living under semi-feudal conditions, has in the last decades been dependent on the conflicts among the imperialist powers themselves. Even this tenuous independence is now threatened by Mussolini.

If Mussolini is to be repelled it can be accomplished only by international working class action. The quarrel between France and England against Italy is a conflict of imperialist powers; war between them is imperialist war, regardless of the immediate cause. To support imperialist "sanctions" against Italy is to pledge support for this imperialist war which will go far beyond a "defense of independent Ethiopia."

The genuine independence of Ethiopia requires arousing the colonial masses of Africa against their predatory masters, the French, English and Italian imperialists and an active movement of solidarity by the workers in the advanced countries. Such a movement will also have its effect on the masses in the colonies and semi-colonies of imperialist America who are oppressed under the iron heel of Wall Street.

The task of the workers of the United States is to expose the hypocrisy of the Roosevelt government in its "neutrality" position, to get the railroad men, longshoremen and seamen to refuse to handle any munitions, arms or foodstuffs going to Italy. Means must be found to give material aid to the Ethiopian

people in the struggle for independence. The slogan of "Boycott Goods for Fascist Italy" has been launched by the International Communist League. Everything in our power must be done to arouse the masses for the revolutionary struggle in defense of the Ethiopian people and against imperialism war.

Seek to Appoint Officials

An international charter carrying a provision that the A. F. of L. executive council through Green can appoint all officers "temporarily" will, no doubt, be presented by Green for adoption with the warning, "take this or nothing."

Against this provision will be centered all the strength of the progressives. If this fails, and it seems probable, a fight will ensue to prevent Green from automatically appointing the officers.

Another move being watched for is that Green's henchmen will support George Roberts, an assistant to Claherty, for the presidency since he is a delegate from Goodrich local and his election would remove the unsavory stench caused by Green in Detroit through his flagrant methods. Such an action, however, would not bind any of the rubber workers who expect it.

Industrial unionism is the second major issue before the delegates. There are seven craft unions in the rubber industry. Since some of them are very weak and virtually inconsequential, it would not be

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