

slavery and another guaranteeing the rights of seamen had both been rejected.

Gompers, in reply, adopted the usual tactics of accusing Furuseth of acting behind the back of the American delegation. He then went on to say that while the provisions of the Labor Charter were not adequate, the American delegation accepted them to help the workers of the "backward nations." He said that American labor, under the beneficent rule of the Federation, had advanced more than the labor movements of any other country in the world—which of course is not true, since the workers of Europe have, during the war, gained a position far in advance of the United States, as was proven by the Berne Trades-Union Conference; and that not only politically, but also in the purely trade-union province of wages and hours.

The ignorance of the delegates concerning the Labor Movement in foreign countries was extraordinary, and deliberately fostered by the Gompers "machine." According to the officials the A. F. of L. was the largest, most powerful, most advanced, most enlightened workers' organization in the world. It had, according to them, led the workers of the world in inaugurating a Labor Day—in fact, Gompers claimed that the A. F. of L. first suggested May Day to Europe! He added that in Europe the workers did not dare take a full holiday on Labor Day, as Americans did—but celebrated on Sunday or at night, after work; a most remarkable statement! According to Frey, all democratic political reforms in the United States, including the Initiative and Referendum, were invented by Organized Labor . . . .

The delegates listened to the reports of the Foreign Labor Missions without a smile—the hob-nobbings with King George, King Victor Emmanuel, Clemenceau, the visits to Venice, the art galleries of Paris, pleasure tours and banquets; the shaking of hands with generals and military heroes on the battlefield; and the ignorant abuse of the great Socialist movements of Europe, and of the tremendous Labor groups supporting them. They did not even laugh when Gompers was telling of the International "Labor" Congress at Paris; at which, he said, he and the other American delegate (representing the employers), were in absolute harmony—and complained bitterly that the Socialists attacked him as violently as the reactionaries!

But what, you will ask, has all this to do with labor? True, the Convention denounced the usurping of legislative functions by the courts, and also resolved to organize the Steel Industry in the face of the most hostile trust in America. But these actions were in no sense revolutionary actions; they were merely to protect the Federation's monopoly of the commodity, Labor.

The real business of the Convention was the settling of jurisdictional disputes. Just as one of the functions of the capitalist state is to settle disputes among the capitalist class, and to suppress the weak capitalists in favor of the strong, so the main function of Federation is the adjustment of troubles between groups of skilled workers, and the strengthening of the powerful at the expense of the weak.

A little union is formed in a new trade. This union grows, gets a charter from the Federation, becomes important enough so that the great national and international unions about it covet its dues-paying membership, which would strengthen their own financial and political position. So they fall upon the little union and begin to compete for its membership. Then the little union appeals to the Federation; and the Federation appoints a committee to investigate, and this committee is composed of persons obedient to the Gom-

pers machine, in which are represented the presidents of the great unions. Then begins a bitter fight between the great unions for the fragments of the little union; and the end is that they partition it between them, like the Kingdom of Poland, or the Austrian Empire.

Again and again in the Convention these jurisdictional fights cropped up, accompanied by the savage quarrels of the great unions themselves—forever pirating upon each other, forever stealing each other's membership or encroaching upon the boundaries of each other's trades; the increasing refinement and complexity of industry always bringing new quarrels, new adjustments, new partitions.

The officials of the Federation are always repeating phrases about the autonomy of the

## The Left Wing Program

(Continued from page 10.)

tion of mass power by the proletariat, taking on political consciousness and the definite direction of revolutionary socialism. The manifestations of this power and consciousness are not subject to precise pre-calculation. But the history of the movement of the proletariat toward emancipation since 1900 shows the close connection between the revolutionary proletarian assertion and the political mass strike.

The mass action conception looks to the general unity of the proletarian forces under revolutionary provocation and stimulus. In the preliminary stages, which alone come within our pre-determination and party initiative, the tactics of mass action includes all mass demonstrations and mass struggles which sharpen the understanding of the proletariat as to the class conflict and which separate the revolutionary proletariat into a group distinct from all others.

Mass action, in time of revolutionary crisis, or in the analogous case of large-scale industrial conflict, naturally accepts the council form of organization for its expression over a continued period of time.

8) Applying our declarations of party principle to the organization of the Party itself; and realizing the need, in correspondence with the highly centralized capitalistic power to be combated, of a centralized party organization, we offer the following recommendations:

a) Delegation by the National Executive Committee of a large measure of its administrative powers, between intervals of meetings, to a National Emergency Committee, composed of three or more members of the National Executive Committee; this Emergency Committee to maintain the closest possible contact, with the work of the National office and to advise with the Executive Secretary on all matters where consultation is necessary.

b) Strict control by the party organization over all Socialists elected to public office; the Emergency Committee, and the National, State and County Committees to co-operate with the public officers within their respective jurisdictions; immediate expulsion of all public officials who refuse to accept the decisions of the party.

c) Control by the party membership, through the regular party processes, of all party papers and official publications; not by committees or trustees not responsible to the membership.

d) Like control of all party property, such as offices, halls, etc.

e) Like control of officially recognized educational institutions.

f) Establishment of a Central Lecture Bureau and of a Press and Information Bureau.

g) Standardization of party platforms, propaganda, dues and methods of organization.

national and international unions, and how the Federation has now power over them. But it has the power of life and death—absolutely. If a union does not behave—if it becomes too powerful or too radical, if it shows signs of revolt—then another great union is set on to organize in its trade. A jurisdictional dispute ensues, both parties appeal to the Federation and the machine gets in action and revokes or suspends the charter of the offending organization and orders its membership to enroll in the other. And if the members of the defeated union do not obey, they are black-listed, scabbed upon by the Federation union, and in some cases, forced out of their jobs.

Thus at this Convention I witnessed the partition of the Jewelry Workers between the Machinists and the Metal Polishers. One despairing delegate of a union whose charter had been suspended because it refused to submit to the disastrous ruling of the Federation, addressed the chair:

"You have suspended our charter," he said. "That is equivalent to expelling us from the Federation. But under the rules it requires a two-thirds vote of this Convention to revoke a charter; isn't that so?"

Gompers looked at his watch. He then engaged in a low-voiced conversation with old Jim Duncan for a few moments, while the delegate waited. Finally Gompers said: "The hour of adjournment having now arrived, the Convention stands adjourned!"

But while the "machine" appeared all-powerful—more powerful than it has for years, while the old-time radicals kept silent, and only a handful of comparatively new men—Duncan of Seattle, Deutelbaum of Detroit, Sullivan of Salt Lake, Strickland of Portland, Ore.; Brown of Providence, Birch of Seattle, Grow of Los Angeles, Schoenberg, Gorenstein and the foreigners generally—battled with the machine, there were signs of change not to be disregarded, and not disregarded by the ever-watchful machine. For instance, although there was a good deal of talk about "Bolshevism" the first two days, the term was not again mentioned, but deliberately avoided.

But the most important symptom was in the attitude of the radicals themselves. They were not disheartened by the results of the Convention. After all, it was what they had expected, and at the end their attitude seemed to be that of men who had found what they came to find. All with whom I talked were very cheerful. The Convention had proved itself not only reactionary, but entirely out of touch with the Labor movement of the new era. It was not the rank and file which was represented here; this was a gathering largely of national and international officers, profoundly ignorant, profoundly selfish—business men, looking out for their jobs. The "radical" delegates—the Westerners and the foreigners, as can be noticed, acting together—were at last, I thought, and finally, convinced that the American Federation of Labor was nothing but a putrid corpse, and that life was not in it; that what new life shall come into the Labor movement must come, not through the bourgeois political machinery by which the Federation is controlled, but from the new revolutionary impulse stirring at the bottom, among the workers on the job.

And they seemed to feel that the Thirty-Ninth Convention of the American Federation of Labor had provided them with some pretty good propaganda against the Trade-Unionism of before-the-war, which, although it is not yet apparent, has gone as completely out of the world as Wilson's Fourteen Points.

Capitalism created the American Federation of Labor. Without Capitalism there would be no A. F. of L. And the end of Capitalism is in sight.