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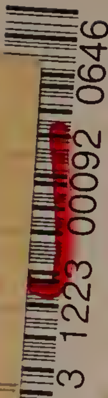
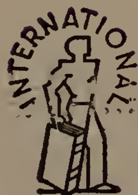


LABOR IN WARTIME

To Geraldine and Joseph

Labor in Wartime

JOHN STEUBEN



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FOREWORD

With another world war threatening to engulf America the workers of this country are faced with one of the most critical periods in labor history. In this situation they have much to learn from the war experiences of the workers in 1914-18.

Did war and post-war developments justify the position of the leaders of the American Federation of Labor in giving unqualified endorsement to the Wilson-Wall Street war aims? What is there behind the talk of "high wages" during that war? What happened to the cost of living and labor legislation? Was unemployment wiped out and a "labor shortage" created? What were the labor policies of the government? What were the purposes of labor leaders when they accepted appointment to various war boards? What tactics were used by employers and government in dealing with unions and strikes? Which forces within the ranks of labor fought for peace in time of war? Finally, what was "labor's reward" when the war was over? To answer these and similar questions is the main aim of this book.

The reader will at once be struck by the many parallels today with the situation just before the United States declared war in April, 1917. He may note also many striking differences. Among these may be mentioned the fact that the labor movement today has some eight million workers enrolled compared with only two million then. The basic and mass production industries are now largely organized or on the way to being completely unionized. In 1916 they were almost

completely unorganized. Also today labor is a much more powerful political force than twenty-five years ago.

It is hoped that in the present perilous situation facing labor this book will in some measure help workers and their unions to avoid the mistakes and pitfalls of the last war, and to profit by the lessons of that period.

The author is deeply grateful to Robert and Sylvia Loring without whose collaboration the book could not have been prepared. He wishes to express his appreciation also to William Z. Foster and Alexander Trachtenberg for their helpful advice and criticism; to H. W. L. Dana for his suggestions on the chapter dealing with the struggle for peace in wartime; to the Labor Research Association for its extensive help in checking facts and figures; and to Frances Steuben for her invaluable help at every stage of the work.

October, 1940. J. S.

I. From Peace to War

THE TRADE UNIONS AT THE OUTBREAK OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

At the outbreak of the war of 1914-18, the trade union movement in America was on the upgrade, gaining steadily in membership and influence. From 1910 through 1914, each convention of the American Federation of Labor recorded a steady growth of membership—from 1,562,000 in 1910 to over two million in 1914. The A.F. of L. was then the only large national trade union federation.

The growth of the A.F. of L. was part of a rapidly spreading social consciousness throughout the nation. Indicative of this period was the victory of the Democratic Party in 1912. It swept Woodrow Wilson into the White House under the slogan of the "New Freedom," much as 20 years later Franklin D. Roosevelt was to be elected under the slogan of the "New Deal." The Socialist Party was then the major political party of the working class. Eugene V. Debs, its candidate for president, received 900,000 votes in 1912. The Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.) likewise became an important factor in the labor movement in this period.

The growth of the A.F. of L. was partially due to a new trend within the labor movement. Some unions opened their doors to semi-skilled and unskilled foreign-born workers, who brought with them a militant spirit and a certain degree of class consciousness from the European labor movement. Together with progressive native-born union members, under

the leadership of the Socialists and under the influence of the I.W.W., they soon began to make themselves felt in the unions. The leadership of the A.F. of L. was forced to grant concessions in the direction of industrial unionism, more co-ordination during strikes, reduction of initiation fees, wider jurisdiction to national and international unions, and a more positive attitude towards workmen's compensation bills, the limitation of hours of work for women and minors, a federal retirement pension for government employees, and other progressive labor legislation.

One of the most significant developments in the American trade union movement before the outbreak of the World War was the further crystallization of a progressive and a conservative camp within the A.F. of L., the former embracing a large number of unions. For a time it looked as though a normal and healthy relationship would finally be established between the Socialists and the broad labor movement, a relationship which had been historically delayed.

This progressive trend was expressed at the A.F. of L. convention in 1911. Socialist delegates introduced a resolution to the effect that all officers of the Federation be elected by referendum instead of by convention. It was clear to the progressives even then that A.F. of L. conventions were not representative of rank and file sentiment. So strong was the support for this resolution that the Executive Council was instructed to obtain an expression of opinion from the membership. Although the Council controlled the machinery and manipulated the "findings of fact," it announced on the basis of a questionnaire (in 1912) that 23 unions with a membership of 508,119 favored election of A.F. of L. officers by referendum.

It was at this convention also that the progressives introduced a resolution demanding that officers of the A.F. of L. resign from the National Civic Federation. The resolution was supported by delegates of the United Mine Workers and

other important unions, but was defeated by a vote of 11,851 to 4,924. It is significant that a similar resolution was introduced again by the United Mine Workers at the historic A.F. of L. convention in 1935 in Atlantic City.

At the 1912 convention Socialists and progressive delegates were even more strongly represented. For the first time since 1903 Gompers faced an opponent for the presidency. The Socialist Max Hayes of the Typographical Union polled 5,073 votes against 11,974 for Gompers. During the following year the struggle against the reactionary leadership continued to gain strength. Charles H. Moyer, President of the Western Federation of Miners, speaking at the 1913 convention of the United Mine Workers, referred to the Executive Council as "reactionary, fossilized, worm-eaten and dead." [1]

While this progressive movement within the ranks of the A.F. of L. was growing, the activities of the I.W.W. attracted attention, especially during 1912-1914. Hitherto unorganized lumber, textile, cannery, farm, dock and other workers from industries in the East and Far West responded to the I.W.W. A strike movement under its leadership spread over the country. Strikes in the textile plants of Lawrence, Paterson and Passaic and in other industries were part of this movement and the general social unrest, which was further aggravated by the depression in the winter of 1913-1914.

Harassed by a progressive movement within the Federation and by the I.W.W. without, the Gompers leadership turned its attention almost entirely to legislative lobbying. It hoped to use the new Wilson administration to obtain certain legislative victories, in this way bolstering the faltering influence of the Executive Council. They considered their efforts crowned with success when in October, 1914, Congress passed the Clayton Act, which was supposed to prevent the courts from interpreting the Sherman Anti-Trust Act as applicable to labor unions. Gompers declared the Clayton Act labor's

"Magna Charta." But only a few months later and in spite of this Act courts again began issuing anti-labor injunctions. In January, 1915, the United States Supreme Court sustained the verdict of the lower courts in the famous Danbury hatters' case, in which the hatters were fined nearly $300,000 as a consequence of a suit by employers under the Sherman Act. A year later, in a case involving the United Mine Workers, a federal court handed down a decision "that unions could be sued for damages and that assessed damages should be paid from union funds." [2]

Now, a quarter of a century later, under another "pro-labor" Administration some 86 unions and 260 officials have been indicted (up to September, 1940) under the same Sherman Act. The Executive Council of the A.F. of L. at its meeting in Miami (February, 1940), declared that "for more than twenty-five years, the American Federation of Labor has fully believed that the Clayton Act meant what it said and that labor organizations and labor officials could not be prosecuted under the anti-trust laws.... Now, suddenly, we are confronted by this wave of indictments." [3] Yet as early as 1914 progressives in the A.F. of L. realized the flaws and weaknesses of the Clayton Act.

The A.F. of L. undoubtedly would have been stronger at this turn of world events if left wing elements in the Socialist Party had not suffered from the sickness of dual unionism. The right wing Socialists, on the other hand, pursued a "hands off" policy with regard to the unions. Both courses left the rank and file A.F. of L. members under the influence of reactionary labor leaders. The A.F. of L. would have been stronger also if the I.W.W. had accepted the advice of William Z. Foster who as early as 1912 visualized what a power the trade union movement could become if the militant workers rid themselves of the disease of dual unionism and entered

the A.F. of L. Foster organized the Syndicalist League of North America with this express purpose. He urged that:

> The I.W.W. shall give up its attempt to create a new labor movement, turn itself into a propaganda league, get into the organized labor movement and, by building better fighting machines within the old unions than those possessed by our reactionary enemies, revolutionize these unions.[4]

The militants in the I.W.W. could have provided a much sounder leadership for the growing radicalization of the rank and file inside the A.F. of L. than did the right wing elements of the Socialist Party who attempted to reduce the whole struggle to capturing positions in the trade unions.

Despite the retarding influence of the Gompers leadership, the opportunist tendencies in the Socialist Party and the dual unionism of the I.W.W., the American trade union movement was gaining momentum at the outbreak of the First World War.

ON THE MARCH

Conditions in America today are remarkably similar in some respects to those at the time of the first World War, from August, 1914, to April, 1917. Then, as now, the United States was on the brink of assuming a new role in world affairs. Then, as now, the country passed gradually from neutrality to intense war preparations and finally to active participation in the war. In some respects the 1940 elections had the earmarks of those of 1916, when Woodrow Wilson was re-elected on a "He-kept-us-out-of-war" program. History is repeating itself also in the economic and social field. Then, as now, the Administration turned its attention from domestic problems to the war in Europe, curtailing progressive legislation and concentrating on war preparations under the

slogans of "Peace," "National Unity," "National Defense," and "Support of Democracy."

The American Federation of Labor went through a similar process. There was a question whether the trade union movement would become a force for peace, preventing American entry into the war, or whether it would cast its lot with Wall Street, against peace. Under the reactionary Gompers leadership the Federation took the road to war.

During the winter of 1914-1915 the country went through a period of hardships, mass unemployment and general lowering of living standards as a result of the cyclical crisis that began in 1913. The workers refused to accept bread lines and soup lines, refused to give up homes to move to municipal lodging houses. Militant groups of unemployed were formed in California and other parts of the country. The employed refused to accept wage cuts.

Unlike the C.I.O. today, the A.F. of L. then did not take leadership in the fight for the unemployed, or develop a social program that would ease the burdens of the workers. This had a retarding effect. In fact, the Federation's 1915 convention for the first time in five years not only failed to report growth, but recorded a slight loss of some 75,000 members.

By the middle of 1915, however, the economic situation in America had changed rapidly, due to the war in Europe. Orders from the Allies began to pour in. America became one of the chief sources of munitions, foodstuffs and other essentials of war.

In this period the American working class entered a new stage of struggle and organization. They won victories in strike struggles, organization and progressive labor legislation. Outstanding among the strikes of this period were those of munition workers which began in Bridgeport, Conn., and spread to several centers in other states, under the leadership of the International Association of Machinists. As a result of

this strike over 60,000 machinists in the East gained the basic 8-hour day, 48-hour week, with Saturday a half-holiday. New York longshoremen struck in 1916 for a signed contract and payment of double time for handling war munitions and explosives. The strike was won. In Chicago street car men and elevated employees struck for recognition of the Amalgamated Association of Electric and Street Railway Employees. This strike too was won. Garment workers in New York, Philadelphia and Boston struck and won agreements.

The railroad workers, with their independent railroad brotherhoods, were also on the march, developing a struggle for the basic 8-hour day and for time-and-a-half for overtime. Over 350,000 workers on 52 railroads consolidated their efforts, presenting a common front of A.F. of L. and independent unions. A major strike was in the making. The railroad unions used good judgment in timing their struggle, sensing that a strike would cripple war preparations and would therefore force the railroads to grant substantial concessions. In August, 1916, the Big Four brotherhoods announced that a large majority of their members had voted to strike unless a satisfactory settlement was reached. President Wilson became alarmed and offered a compromise containing the 8-hour day which the unions accepted but the railroad managements rejected. The unions issued a strike call and set the date for September 4. Fearful of the consequences of a railroad strike at that time, Wilson addressed both Houses of Congress, urging the enactment of an 8-hour day law for the railroads. Congress immediately passed the Adamson Act, two days before the strike deadline. Whereupon the managements contested the constitutionality of the Act. But just as the President and Congress had lost no time in passing it, the United States Supreme Court was quick to declare it constitutional. The railroad workers thus won a splendid victory.

During this period the I.W.W. conducted some of its most

spectacular strikes. It attracted many unskilled foreign-born workers, still neglected by the A.F. of L. Realizing a greater economic power as a result of war production and suspension of immigration, this section of the working class saw that the moment had arrrived when it could at least partially undo the great injustices done by the capitalist class and by the neglect of the A.F. of L. The I.W.W. led many hard-fought strikes in important industries; for example, the strike of 8,000 oil workers in Bayonne, N. J.; of 15,000 miners on the Mesabi Iron Range; and of 6,000 steel workers in Youngstown, Ohio.

Many I.W.W.-led strikes were defeated because of the hostility the employers and government offered to unions under militant leadership and advocating a program of class struggle. Weaknesses in organization methods and strike strategy of the I.W.W. were also contributing factors. Indirectly, however, the I.W.W. strikes often brought concrete results. For example, as a result of the steel strike in Youngstown, a 10 per cent wage increase was granted which soon became general throughout the steel industry. The very existence of the I.W.W. often forced the leaders of the A.F. of L. unions to carry on organizing work.

During 1915 and 1916 there were 4,924 strikes involving two million workers.[5] The positive character of these strikes is apparent in that 1,386 of them were for wage increases as against 129 strikes against wage cuts.[6] The number of strikes for union recognition or shorter hours was also very large.

A number of independent unions joined the A.F. of L., the Bricklayers, Teachers and Actors being among the new affiliates. The A.F. of L. in 1916 reported a total membership of 2,072,702.

In the field of labor legislation the Federation made considerable progress. Lewis L. Lorwin, in his history of the American Federation of Labor, summarizes these legislative gains:

The A.F. of L. continued its advance in the field of legislation during these years. Some of the more important gains were the LaFollette Seamen's Act; a new conciliation and arbitration law for railroad employees; an eight-hour law for women and children in the District of Columbia; prohibition of the Taylor system in arsenals, navy yards and gun stations; extension of the eight-hour law on government contracts; increased appropriations for the Department of Labor and for the Children's Bureau; the passage in 1916 of a federal child labor bill, prohibiting the transportation in interstate commerce of the products of child labor; a compensation law for federal employees.... In fact, practically all the industrial demands of the Bill of Grievances of 1906 had been favorably disposed of by 1916.

A CONVENTION DEBATE ON WAR

Obviously the Federation had a real opportunity then to organize the millions of unorganized workers. But instead of utilizing these favorable economic and political conditions the Gompers leadership betrayed the fundamental principles of the labor movement. It accepted the role of capitalist agent, preparing the American workers for entering the world slaughter.

This was no easy task. The trade unions were opposed to war, a fact the Federation leaders were forced to recognize from the very start. Thus the Executive Council's report to the 1915 convention urged that strict neutrality be maintained for "after all, down deep in the hearts of all real unionists lies that fraternal spirit and world-wide brotherly love, genuine sympathy and kindly regard for the welfare of our fellow workers, regardless of place and nationality." [7] The convention adopted the recommendation of the Council to call an International Labor Peace Conference immediately after the cessation of hostilities. The resolution further pointed out that during the previous history of the world,

international relations have been left for professional diplomats and politicians. As a result this field has not been organized, and there are few permanent agencies for dealing justly, comprehensively and humanely with international questions and rights.[8]

But all these high sounding phrases, the proposal to do something after the war instead of becoming an active force for peace *during* the war, was pacifist phrasemongering, an attempt to satisfy the anti-war rank and file. Even before the convention adjourned the real test came, when Adolph Germer of the United Mine Workers (more recently a C.I.O. leader) presented a resolution against introduction in public schools of "military mania" and calling upon the workers "to desist from affiliating with any branch of the military forces." In defense of his resolution Germer stated: "I refuse to go to some other nation to shoot some other workers and I refuse to be shot by them." [9]

This resolution forced Gompers to disclose his real position for "preparedness." He stated that for many years he had been a "doctrinaire pacifist," but that the sight of the workers abroad responding "to the colors" of their own countries made him revise his judgment. Germer's resolution was defeated.

It was not because European workers were pitted against each other that Gompers adopted his pro-war attitude. His position was part of his whole conception of class collaboration, which in time of war expressed itself in open support of the capitalist class and its government.

During the 1915 convention Gompers did not reveal his secret dealings with the National Civic Federation and the joint plans with Ralph M. Easley, its secretary. He did not report to the convention on the confidential memorandum he received from Easley September 2, 1914, outlining what the tasks of a "patriotic labor leader" should be during a national emergency, from the standpoint of the "'general welfare."

Nor did he tell the convention how Sir Gilbert Parker, later the secret head of British propaganda in the United States, supplied him with information for the purpose of helping American unions to have "the true history of this tragic conflict studied and understood."[10] How Gompers was taken in by the Civic Federation war-mongers is described by Dr. Lorwin, who had access to the files of the A.F. of L.:

> ...Easley influenced Gompers by flattery and by playing on the latter's well known biases. He berated the peace propaganda of the socialists, whom he branded as insincere, since by their own admissions they were ready to plunge the world into a class war. Referring to Gompers as "that great statesman, the President of the American Federation of Labor," Easley condemned the "mushy nonsense emanating from sentimentalists about Peace, with capital 'P'"; warned against the "young college men with half-baked ideas imbibed from their socialistic professors," spoke of need of "peace with honor," and stressed the advisability of leaving all peace moves to President Wilson.

The job of winning over Gompers was not difficult. Although he had claimed to be a "pacifist" and had participated in various peace movements since 1887, within a few months he "ceased to pose as an advocate of peace, began to discourage suggestions that he start action to stop war...."[11]

It is now established that Gompers knowingly misled the 1915 convention of the Federation and the entire labor movement and served as the rich man's representative and war organizer within the labor movement. In his autobiography Gompers describes in detail his war role and makes the extremely important admission that "With the world aflame for military conquest, it was not possible for any important world-power to remain neutral."[12] But while the war was on, Gompers did not tell the workers that the chief purpose of the war (as in the present war) was *military conquest*. He sang a different song from the platform:

I was convinced that the real issues of the War concerned those who believed in democratic institutions and that the time has come when the world could not longer exist part democratic and part autocratic. It was an issue upon which there could be no real neutrality, and therefore propaganda for neutrality was propaganda to maintain autocracy. Those not actively for democracy were in effect against it.[13]

These demagogic arguments are now heard again and are most clearly voiced by the right wing Social-Democratic group in the American Labor Party of New York. Likewise, Sidney Hillman and William Green in the present war are assuming a role similar to that of Gompers in the first World War.

PEACE MOVEMENTS

As the danger of American involvement became more real, many peace movements developed. The American League to Limit Armaments and the American Neutrality League had been formed as early as 1915. These were movements of the middle classes, primarily women's organizations, pacifists, church groups, writers and a few liberal Congressmen. The chief programs of these movements were complete neutrality, embargoes on arms and war supplies, and the assumption by the United States of the role of mediator. While valuable as auxiliary forces of a great anti-war movement led by the working class, by themselves they were entirely inadequate.

After the Lusitania incident in May, 1915, the pro-war forces unleashed a flood of propaganda. The labor movement, especially in the Middle West and on the Pacific Coast, began to realize that America's entry into the war was drawing dangerously near. This growing consciousness and instinctive desire to stay out of war expressed itself in a rather peculiar trade union conference in Indianapolis, May 27, 1915. Representatives of the miners, teamsters, carpenters, typographers, bridge

and structural iron workers, stone cutters, bookbinders and barbers were present. Daniel J. Tobin was chairman. The conference took no action and no resolutions were adopted. The only decision reached was to urge Gompers to call an emergency conference of all trade unions if the international situation developed to a danger point.[14] Other groups similarly requested Gompers to call such a conference, including the Maintenance of Way Employees, Commercial Telegraphers, the Chicago Federation of Labor and Pennsylvania Federation of Labor. Gompers sabotaged all these popular requests. He knew that the anti-war sentiment was rising rapidly and that such a conference would adopt an anti-war position and this would have a paralyzing effect upon the war preparations.

The Socialist Party could have led in organizing and crystalizing anti-war sentiments in the trade unions. It could have weakened or destroyed Gompers' usefulness to the war mongers. The least that could have been done was to reduce Gompers to an *open* and *exposed* betrayer of labor in the eyes of the working class. Many Socialist trade union leaders were themselves part of the right wing or influenced by them, with the result that the unions they led were in no way distinguished from unions under conservative leadership.

With no force capable of giving leadership, instead of becoming more widespread as we drew nearer to war, the anti-war movement within the A.F. of L. began to disintegrate under pressure. Gompers was able to win over most of the trade union leaders to his position. It was a tragic period in the history of the American labor movement.

It was the I.W.W. and the left wing group in the Socialist Party that conducted a militant struggle before and after America's entry into the war. Unfortunately, the dual unionist policies and sectarianism of both groups prevented them from assuming leadership of a broad anti-war labor movement, especially before April, 1917.

Yet even without such militant opposition Gompers and the government had their hands full in their efforts to whip labor into line. "Labor men throughout the country," wrote Gompers, "were deluged with invitations to form labor peace councils....In New York and in Washington a few were induced to assume leadership. Labor Peace Councils were formed in Chicago, in Washington, and in Baltimore." [15]

The government and Gompers opened a broadside against the peace movement. As early as 1915 it was branded "pro-German" and its activities the work of "German agents." Then, as now, grand juries were set up to investigate "sedition cases." The Labor National Peace Council was one of many peace organizations under "investigation." Strikes in New York harbor and in other cities were subject to grand jury investigations. It would be well for trade unionists today to remember an admission made by Gompers after the war, during one of his rare spells of frankness:

> I had foreseen before others in the labor movement that the United States had entered a period when all activity, whether individual or group, would be interpreted in the light of its effect upon the one great world-issue, the struggle between the European nations.[16]

This was indeed the yardstick then and it is rapidly becoming so now. Its effect on the labor movement was cynically stated by Gompers:

> We all had to shift from the freedom of action, thought, and speech that belongs only to peace over to circumspection and control made imperative by war dangers...things that can be done safely in time of peace arouse suspicion and condemnation in time of war.[17]

In the light of these observations it is easier for trade unionists and other progressives to realize the true meaning of the indictment of A.F. of L. and C.I.O. unions under the anti-trust laws in 1940, the open season for new grand jury

investigations, the activities of the Smith Committee and other reactionaries against the National Labor Relations Act, the red-baiting of the Dies Committee, the attempts to outlaw the Communist Party and the anti-alien drive. All these are links in one chain, the preparation of the country for entry into the second World War.

DRAGGING THE UNIONS INTO WAR

The military victories scored by Germany in 1916, the breakdown of the Eastern front and the February, 1917, Revolution in Russia, made many believe in the possibility of a German victory. By this time American capitalists had already heavily committed themselves to the Allies. Munitions and other war materials worth millions of dollars were being shipped to England and France. An Allied defeat would result in tremendous losses to the American ruling class. Besides, American participation would prolong the war, thus guaranteeing more millions of profits to the munition makers and profiteers.

Although Wilson was elected in 1916 on a stay-out-of-war platform, that same year Congress passed a bill providing for a Council of National Defense and an Advisory Commission. The task of the Council was to make practical preparations for war.

Gompers was appointed by the President to serve on this Commission as a "representative of labor," a position similar to that at present occupied by Sidney Hillman, president of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and vice president of the C.I.O. Gompers' job was to mobilize labor for the rapidly approaching war and so he formed a special "Committee on Labor." The makeup of this committee shows very clearly the lengths to which Gompers had already gone in betraying the workers' vital interests. Besides himself there was Frank Mor-

rison, Secretary of the A.F. of L., Warren S. Stone, President of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. Then there were Ralph M. Easley of the National Civic Federation, John D. Rockefeller, Cornelius Vanderbilt, Daniel Guggenheim, George Pope, then president of the National Association of Manufacturers, and other anti-labor figures whose names spelled long years of exploitation, degradation and misery for hundreds of thousands of workers who were their direct employees. Gompers left it to such people to deal with the problems of the working class during a most crucial time in American history.

As 1917 rolled around there was no longer any doubt that America would enter the war. It was only a matter of time. The drums of propaganda were beating. Gompers decided to "remove uncertainty as to labor's position ... in the impending crisis. We owed it to our movement and to the government to make our position known in advance." [18] When the labor unions had clamored for an anti-war conference Gompers had turned a deaf ear. But now he felt it safe to call a trade union conference and turn it into a pro-war gathering. Besides, Gompers had to prove to Rockefeller, Vanderbilt and Guggenheim that he could place the trade unions at their disposal. In this connection his first job was to remove the "suspicion" and "reservations" these gentry still nurtured towards him:

> In the beginning I was conscious that other members of these committees regarded me with suspicion or reservations, but after we had been working together for a while they all accepted me as genuinely eager to serve my country.[19]

With this in mind Gompers called a general trade union conference on March 12, 1917. Almost the entire "'general staff" of paid labor officials were there, the Executive Council and 148 officers of 79 international unions of the A.F. of L. and railroad brotherhoods.

The chief purpose of this conference was to pronounce labor's position on war. The policies it adopted were of great significance, for in them Gompers outlined what he thought should be the theory and practice of a labor movement in war. It was a strictly capitalist point of view, wrapped in labor terminology. Decisions of this conference are of added importance today, for it is quite possible that Sidney Hillman or William Green will bring forward a like set of "principles," should America enter the present war. Let us therefore examine these 1917 decisions.

First, it should be remembered that the conference took place before America declared war. Instead of exerting last minute pressure against the war, the conference declared that "should our country be drawn into the maelstrom of the European conflict, we ... offer our service ... and call upon our fellow workers ... devotedly and patriotically to give like service." The imperialist war was pictured as a struggle between democracy and autocracy.

So far the statement simply repeated the usual war propaganda and was void of originality. But when it dealt with the role of the working class, Gompers made a new "contribution." He was not satisfied with labor's assuming the role of a supporter of imperialist war, but advanced the idea that labor must be the *driving force*. "In no previous war," said the resolution, "has the organized labor movement taken a directing part." Here we see the complete degeneration of a labor leader. In the war in 1940 such British labor leaders as Atlee, Bevin and Morrison assumed a similar role.

Finally, the statement proposed a number of concessions to labor in return for its unconditional support of war. The resolution called on the government (1) to recognize organized labor as the representative of the workers; (2) for labor representation on all agencies determining and administering policies of national defense and on all boards controlling pub-

licity; and (3) for union standards in government factories and private businesses.[20]

What a fraud this turned out to be and what a heavy price the workers paid for Gompers' shortcut to glory for the unions. Let no one be under the impression that Gompers really believed in these demands. For it has since been established that when he reported on the decisions of this union conference to the Advisory Commission of the Council of National Defense, Gompers completely "omitted all reference to the demands and spoke only of the 'comprehensive declaration of loyalty' which the conference had produced." [21] The demands were simply window dressing for rank and file consumption.

Although the conference claimed to represent the entire organized union movement and the press proclaimed its decisions as "wise labor statesmanship," it ran in opposition to the anti-war sentiments of the rank and file. Even some trade union leaders were, for a while, opposed to the decisions of the conference. John P. White, then president of the United Mine Workers, refused to participate. He wrote Gompers: "I see no humanitarian issues in the present war. In my broad travels, I find little sentiment among the working people in favor of this terrible war." [22] The Typographical Union, International Ladies Garment Workers, the Western Federation of Miners and the Journeymen Barbers also refused to attend the conference. Some who did attend complained of the lack of democratic procedure, Daniel J. Tobin of the Teamsters Union declaring that the delegates were "not allowed to change a word" of the proposed resolution. Immediately after the conference a wave of opposition to the decisions developed in the trade unions. It was especially strong in the Chicago Federation of Labor, the Brewery Workers Union, the needle trades unions, and others. Opposition to "Labor's Declaration"

undoubtedly would have developed further, but three weeks later America entered the war.

Those leaders who had expressed some opposition to the Gompers war policy soon fell into line. At the first opportunity they jumped on the war bandwagon. Gompers promised them new positions and added strength for their unions if they were "patriotic." On this basis he persuaded many trade unionists to give up their opposition to war, in return for a "degree of national prestige and a freedom to expand which could not have been conquered by many years of the most persistent agitation and strikes." [23] Not a few were influenced by the promise of governmental positions.

The trade unions, lacking militant leadership in the fight against war, were snowed under during the campaign of jingoism that followed. On April 6, 1917, this country formally entered the war.

II. Workers' Conditions During the War

History shows that in all predatory wars, workers and farmers suffer the most, at home as well as on the battlefield. More than at any other time workers must rely during war on their own economic strength in order to withstand the attacks upon their living and working conditions.

An analysis of the problems the trade unions and the workers generally faced in the last war will throw some light on economic problems facing the workers today. It is unfortunate that many labor historians have failed to give an accurate picture of the unions during the last war. This resulted in one-sided conclusions. Some made the fatal mistake of trying to prove that the growth of the unions during the war was due to the "constructive" policies of the A.F. of L. leaders. Others seriously minimized the struggles of the rank and file arising out of their grave economic needs.

We have seen that the workers prior to the war were in a militant mood, developing major strike struggles, fighting for wage increases, shorter hours and union recognition. They entered the war with accumulated resentment and deep dissatisfaction arising out of these basic needs. The problem of wages was most acute in the light of constantly rising living costs against a background of already low living standards.

The whole question of workers' wages during the last war must be thoroughly reviewed, for a new generation of American workers has grown up under the impression that workers enriched themselves. This propaganda of "high wages" in

war even penetrated the ranks of the labor movement. There are today many trade unionists who are torn between their natural hatred for war and a belief that perhaps it will bring substantial wage increases and eliminate unemployment. The myth of "high war wages" is one of the greatest obstacles to rallying the labor movement so that it can be decisive in preventing America from entering the present war.

LIVING STANDARDS BEFORE THE WAR

It is important to know something of the conditions of the workers before the war, since many writers make over-simplified comparisons that becloud the real facts. They argue that before the war a worker made, say, 25 cents an hour, and during the war he made 50 cents an hour. This is supposed to show that war was a godsend. It is from this simple approach that so many people believe the propaganda that war is "easy picking" for the workers.

What were the wages of the workers prior to the war? In 1915, the United States Commission on Industrial Relations reported that

> between one-fourth and one-third of the male workers 18 years of age and over, in factories and mines, earn less than $10 a week; from two-thirds to three-fourths earn less than $15, and only about one-tenth earn more than $20 a week . . . from two-thirds to three-fourths of the women workers . . . in industrial occupations generally, work at wages of less than $8 per week.[1]

These figures cover workers in all industries. What of pre-war wages in those industries where war wage increases were highest? We find that

> in the steel mills and the packing plants and other trust-controlled industries up to 1915, prevailing wages for unskilled men varied from 15 cents to 20 cents per hour, averaging about 18 cents. For ten hours a day and six days a week, this meant weekly earnings

of $10.80 or $562.60 per year.... Nor were low wages in all cases confined to workers of little skill; in many cases skilled men and women fared little better.[2]

From these figures it is evident that prior to the war wages were extremely low. Some may argue that even though wages were low in dollars and cents, they could buy a lot, and therefore the standard of living was relatively high. That this was not the case is seen from the numerous studies of workers' conditions before the war. Surveys made by the government, private agencies, and individual economists come to more or less similar conclusions. Workers were divided into three categories so far as living standards went:

1. *Poverty level.* These were primarily unemployed workers who depended almost entirely on charitable institutions. This category was always only one step from the grave; some call it the *pauper* level.
2. The *minimum of subsistence level,* or as it is commonly referred to, the living wage level. In this category were chiefly the unskilled, making up over 50 per cent of the entire working class. The unskilled workers' living standard has always been recognized as just above the poverty level. Professor Ogburn, describing conditions of workers in this category, concludes that "we might call certain low earnings a dying wage instead of a living wage."[3]
3. The *minimum comfort level.* In this category were part of the semi-skilled and the skilled workers. The standard of living was higher because they enjoyed a minimum comfort budget.

It is clear that the overwhelming majority did not enjoy a minimum comfort budget before the war. Not only were wages and standards of living low, but what is even more important, for many years before the war workers' living standards were becoming progressively lower. John B. Andrews, labor legislation expert, made this observation:

Up to the outbreak of the world war, in 1914, students of the subject had decided that for the last quarter century wages, as measured by what they would buy, had been slowly but surely

falling. The decline amounted to about 10 or 15 per cent over the whole period and was more rapid from 1900 to 1914 than during the previous decade.[4]

A similar conclusion was reached in a study by the economist George Soule:

> Studies of the actual course of real wages made by comparing an index of retail prices of food over a period of years are familiar, and they show uniformly that, if food prices may be taken as a sample of retail prices in general, real wages have materially decreased since 1896.[5]

In his book *The Causes of Industrial Unrest,* John A. Fitch summarizes the most authoritative studies on wages since the beginning of the century. He shows that all such studies on wages came to the conclusion that the tendency of real wages had been downward. A study made by I. M. Rubinow in 1914 concluded that the purchasing power of wages

> probably increased slightly between 1870 and 1890. But since 1900 it has been rapidly falling. The purchasing powers of wages in 1913 are not much higher than they were in 1870. . . . The conclusion is inevitable that a much smaller share of value reaches the wage-worker now than did twenty or thirty years ago.[6]

COST OF LIVING SOARS

The mad rush for super-profits, following America's entry into the war, made the conditions of the workers even more unbearable. Workers were confronted directly with a terrific rise in the cost of living. As compared with August, 1915, by June, 1917, the increase amounted to 29%; by June, 1918, 58%; by December, 1918, 74%; and by December, 1919, it had almost doubled.[7] Because of this rise the chief struggles for higher wages during the war were not connected with the usual and main workers' objective of raising standards of living, but

rather to meet the *rising cost of living*. Alexander M. Bing, a large real estate operator who served in many branches of the government that dealt with wartime labor disputes, writes:

> We have seen that the general wage level prior to the war was in a majority of cases too low to permit proper living standards. If our workers were to avoid acute suffering, adequate wage increases became imperative. Moreover, the injustice resulting from the lessened purchasing power of the worker's wages was felt with added keenness because of the general belief (which was substantially correct) that the employers were making large profits and that the mounting costs of the necessities of life were due in part at least to profiteering.[8]

Figures compiled by the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics show the following increases in leading cities in the average annual cost, per family, of principal food articles such as meat, milk, butter, eggs, bread, flour, rice, potatoes, sugar, tea, coffee, and other food necessities:[9]

	1913	*June, 1919*	*Percentage Increase*
Buffalo	$321.72	$611.36	90
Boston	392.65	693.16	77
Baltimore	330.01	641.59	94
Birmingham	356.04	669.32	88
Cleveland	343.68	628.85	83
Chicago	327.92	582.02	77
Detroit	324.29	623.35	92
Minneapolis	311.37	577.71	86
New York	359.48	662.77	84
Philadelphia	356.80	659.09	85
Pittsburgh	354.74	654.87	85
San Francisco	350.97	623.25	78
Seattle	351.34	627.24	79
St. Louis	316.82	595.46	88

The Bureau of Labor Statistics also gave the following table covering all items of the family budget in 18 industrial centers:

INCREASED COST OF LIVING BY COMMODITY GROUPS, 1914 TO 1919 [10]

Items	*Per cent increase Dec., 1914, to Dec., 1919*
Food	89.3
Clothing	181.0
Housing	25.9
Fuel and light	58.7
Furniture and furnishings	164.2
Miscellaneous	86.9
Total (weighted according to importance of each item in the family budget)	97.8

There are other estimates on increases in the cost of living that show a still higher percentage, but we may use these government figures as the most authoritative.

REAL WAGES DOWN

The cost of living in most cases outran increases in money wages. The real wage—or what the worker can buy with the money he gets—declined. John B. Andrews substantiates this:

> We are forced to conclude that all the wage increases of the war hardly changed the situation, as wages in most cases little more than kept pace with the cost of living and only very rarely exceeded it.[11]

And Fitch's study, previously mentioned, reported:

> Such data as are available seem to indicate that labor generally suffered a decline in purchasing power during the period of 1914-17; wages began to catch up in 1918, and for the most part caught up with prices somewhere between 1919 and 1920.[12]

For many years in their struggle for higher wages the trade unions attempted to bring about higher standards of living. But during the war their struggles were concerned chiefly

with the rising cost of living. For example, the Shipbuilding Labor Adjustment Board granted three wage increases to meet the rise in cost of living. The Railroad Wage Commission applied the same yardstick as did other war agencies and private employers. In other words, during the war, workers could not even think of higher standards of living. All they could do was to try to keep wages as close as possible to the rising cost of living. Professor Ogburn, who headed the Cost of Living Department of the National War Labor Board, confirmed the fact that this was unsatisfactory for the "standard of living in the pre-war period which was used as the basis for computing an increase was too low." The method was thus "not an adequate" one, since it did not consider the standard of living, but only increased cost of living.[13]

Although top leaders of the A.F. of L. condoned the idea of tying wages to the cost of living during the war, they had at least changed their minds somewhat by 1921. The A.F. of L. convention report that year contained the following statement on this subject:

> The practice of fixing wages solely on a basis of the cost of living is a violation . . . of sound economic theory and is utterly without logic or scientific support of any kind. What we find as a result of practice, so far as it has gone, is that there is a constant tendency under it to classify human beings and to subordinate classes, each class having a presumptive right to a given quantity of various commodities.[14]

LABOR'S REAL VOICE

While the top leaders of the A.F. of L. refused during the war to take the lead in grappling with the cost of living problem, the rank and file refused to accept the growing burdens without a stubborn fight. Proceedings of trade union conventions of the time are filled with protests, resolutions and speeches against rising prices and profiteers, as well as with

demands that Gompers and other leaders do something about it. When we examine these records we find the real voice of the workers crying out against the rising cost of living.

In a report to the 1917 convention of the Brewery Workers Union it was stated that the "wage-earner finds no difficulty to keep within the advice and appeal of Food Dictator Hoover, for the conservation of food" because "his earning power has not kept pace with the ever-increasing cost of all necessities of life."

A grim description of the effects of the high cost of living can be found in the proceedings of the 1918 convention of the Massachusetts State Federation of Labor: "there is a steady increase in the number of children under the age of 16 years who are leaving school to go to work as a result of the necessity to supplement the family income due to the rise in the cost of living...."

The California State Federation convention, in a resolution said that the "high cost of living has now become the high cost of half living....The wage of the earner buys far less in proportion than in the past. The margin between the producer and the consumer has become so great that the consumer can buy back only about one half of what he produces."[15]

A convention of the Railway Employees Department of the A.F. of L. at St. Louis passed a resolution condemning the

> tendency of certain classes, commonly known as profiteers, for taking advantage of these abnormal times to boost the prices of most foodstuffs especially and other articles of necessity....Such action on their part is criminal and unpatriotic and has a tendency to discourage the workers....[16]

The President of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers in his report to its 1918 convention in Denver, said: "While certain employers have met these advanced

prices by an increase in wages . . . yet the wages in other parts of the country practically remained stationary, or if advanced at all, it has been in an amount wholly inadequate to meet the increased prices of commodities." He added that the "percentage of gain in wages in most instances appears to be measured by the thoroughness of organization of the workers, or lack of it."

The National Federation of Federal Employees at its convention also discussed the high cost of living and hoped to effect "by concerted action a betterment of conditions." A delegate from New York urged the convention to look upon the 5% and 10% wage increases only as a "stepping-stone to something in addition."

Although the conventions of the A.F. of L. were completely under the control and domination of the Gompers forces, indignation of the rank and file against the high cost of living was so great that it finally reached the 1919 convention. The delegate of the Cleveland Federation of Labor presented a resolution stating that

> The cost of living is steadily increasing as far as rents, food, clothing, etc., are considered, thus absorbing increases of wages that may be obtained by the organized workers through negotiations and strikes, and . . . This condition is unjust and unbearable to the masses of the people; therefore . . . we, delegates to the Cleveland Federation of Labor, hereby request that a special grand jury be appointed to investigate this problem and make public their findings and also indict all individuals and concerns that are violating the statutes against trusts, conspiracies and committing other lawless acts. . . .[17]

It then urged "that the delegates to the A.F. of L. be instructed to present a similar proposition to that body and urge that this question be made a national one."

The delegate from the Illinois State Federation of Labor introduced a resolution stating that

> It has come to the time that we think that there should be something done to check the outrageous grafters and profiteers that are existing, where the laborers get a twenty per cent increase on wages we have to pay from fifty per cent to one hundred and fifty per cent increase for our necessaries of life....[18]

The resolution urged the legislative committee of the Federation to have introduced in Congress a bill to "govern all prices and profits...."

THE "LABOR SHORTAGE" MYTH

The second popular fable of the war period is that there was a shortage of labor. At present, with over 10 million jobless, the cry of a "labor shortage" is again being raised.

Many believe that a labor shortage means that the demand for certain skilled labor is greater than the labor market can supply. Such a concept does not stand serious analysis. The only accurate definition of a labor shortage is where the *total number of jobs to be filled in industry as a whole is greater than the labor market can supply.* An authoritative formulation which we can accept was made at the 1917 convention of the A.F. of L. In a report on this subject, the "Special Committee on Alleged Shortage of Labor" declared that the only "correct interpretation of the term 'labor shortage' is that situation in which the number of positions to be filled exceeds the number of applications for work in all classes."[19]

The committee not only found no such shortage, but denounced this as propaganda of "employers, aided by those newspapers which act as their publicity agents ... which habitually sacrifice truth for sensation...." It declared that the facts showed that the "cry of a scarcity of labor was false, lacking in particulars that could be substantiated, and untruthfully promoted for selfish purposes."

In preparation for this report the Federation had set up a

committee of inquiry that gathered information from affiliates from coast to coast, from state and city employment bureaus and industrial concerns. Twenty-eight international unions with a dues paying membership of 922,400 and central labor bodies from 66 cities responded with written reports. These reports are important not only because they are the independent findings of the organized labor movement, but also because they came from unions of skilled workers, and if a labor shortage existed these unions certainly would have been aware of it. These reports,

> without exception, state that there is no shortage of labor among their membership. The great unions whose members are to supply skilled labor in construction, in making uniforms and in transportation, all declare that they have unemployed members who may be turned to the service of the Government at any point at any time. There are mining districts on partial time, many boot and shoe and other factories either closed or on part time, cantonments and other building operations just finished, or nearly finished, garment factories with tens of thousands of unemployed, manufactories avoiding the employment of skilled machinists, while each of the trades concerned stands ready to supply labor from the ranks of its unemployed.[20]

The reports of various central labor bodies are also very illuminating. Detroit, Mich., reported: "Thousands of workers walking the streets." Dayton, Ohio: "The scarcity of labor cry is another trick of the common enemy to tear down standards." Canton, Ohio: "Carpenters and painters are taking jobs at common labor." San Antonio, Texas: "Absolutely no foundation for the assertion that a shortage of men exists." Salem, Mass., reported shoe workers "on half time." Fitchburg, Mass.: "The only firm advertising is one notoriously opposed to organized labor." One foreman was reported saying that his firm could employ women at $1.50 where they would have to pay men $2.25. Denison, Texas, reported the employment of women at $30 per month to replace men doing the same work

at $60 a month. An A.F. of L. organizer from New Jersey, the report added, told how "at one of the munition plants in New Jersey between 200 and 300 men can be seen any day waiting at the gates to apply for work; one morning 318 were counted."

Reports from state labor bureaus and employment agencies fully confirmed this. The Ohio employment bureaus "raised 20,000 men for building the Chillicothe cantonment; practically all of those men were secured from the State of Ohio and without exception the industries of the State were not at all disturbed. If Ohio can take 20,000 men and center them in one place in the course of a few weeks without dislocating the industries of the State, there is no reason why the Federal Government should not be able to raise 100,000 men in the same time."

The Director of the New York State Bureau of Employment was quoted as saying: "There is plenty of labor in this country to do the work there is to be done, and there will be plenty of labor so long as the war lasts, even if it lasts five years." The Commissioner of Labor in California also declared there was no lack of labor. From Portland, Ore., the city employment bureau advised: "We can positively state that at no time this year have we been unable to fill any position offered where the wages and working conditions were at all reasonable. There is no labor shortage."

A fairly good barometer of employment conditions is labor turnover. It is obvious that when there is a shortage of labor, employers cannot indulge in the luxury of firing workers to replace them with still cheaper labor, one of the main causes of labor turnover. The A.F. of L. report included much valuable information on labor turnover in 1917. Curtiss Aeroplane Co., Hammondsport and Buffalo, N. Y., had a labor turnover ranging from 15% to 22% a month. Amoskeag Manufacturing Co., Manchester, N. H., employing from 22,000

to 25,000 workers, had a turnover from 54% to 79%. Fore River Shipbuilding Corp., Quincy, Mass., hired 5,000 men between May 14 and August 14, 1917, to increase its labor force from 3,600 to about 7,000.

Since the facts cited so far deal with the year 1917, one may question whether this situation was also true of the entire war period. An exhaustive study by Paul Douglas and Aaron Director of unemployment from 1897 to 1926 showed that the average unemployment for the 30 years was 10.2%. During the war years of 1917 and 1918 the percentage of unemployment was 6% and 5.5%, or about half the 30-year average.[21] This would indicate no general labor shortage during these years. And according to Fitch, the "report by the Committee on Waste, of the Federated Engineering Societies, states that a million men were out of work in 1917-18."[22]

Even more significant are the findings of the annual report of the U. S. Employment Service for 1918. It shows that 2,381,392 applied for jobs through state employment services, but only 1,890,593 were actually placed.[23] The A.F. of L. inquiry in 1917 also brought out a number of facts indicating that there was no more a shortage of farm labor than of industrial labor. It quoted the President of the Commission of Immigration and Housing of California as writing: "For months now we have had to listen to all kinds of general statements alleging farm labor shortage in this State. Not one of these statements has been supported by what even gave it the appearance of being evidence in fact."[24] The Commissioner of Labor of New Jersey reported applications from farm workers coming in at the rate of 300 to 400 a day.

BEHIND THE PROPAGANDA

Employers have always favored a policy of maintaining a large reserve of unemployed, even in years of prosperity.

Workers' competition for jobs creates a favorable condition for keeping wages down. The manager of one of the largest public employment systems in America put this policy in these words: "My experience has taught me that the average large employer of labor figures that in order that wages may be maintained to the point of his satisfaction there should be two workers for every job."[25] Why then did employers raise the cry of labor shortage during the war years?

1. During the war years workers, especially in basic industries, had not yet obtained the 8-hour day. Fearing that the workers would utilize this opportune moment to achieve their goal, the cry of "labor shortage" was raised. On the basis of the situation in the country and an appeal to patriotism, it was felt that they could be persuaded to "postpone" their demand for an 8-hour day till the war was over; or at least public opinion could be prejudiced against them.

2. Another reason was to replace skilled workers with semi-skilled and unskilled labor, thus destroying union standards, reducing wages of skilled workers, and by the same process, further lowering the wages of the unskilled. The A.F. of L. report states that "So common in Buffalo was the practice of advertising for the semi-skilled, or unskilled, to come to fill places—presumably available—that skilled mechanics, of which there were an abundance in that city, were forced to find employment two thousand miles away on Government jobs."[26]

3. Because of the war, immigration stopped. Employers were anxious to build a new reserve of cheap labor. Women in industry and child labor offered a new source for such labor.

4. The A.F. of L. report pointed out also that one purpose of the labor shortage cry was based on the desire of the employers that "male labor must be replaced by female, skilled labor diluted by unskilled, the age at which children may be

employed reduced, and the workday for all classes of labor extended to a point which would break down the health and efficiency of the workers."

5. If the employers could show that the country was in an emergency and a labor shortage existed, they could obtain guarantees that under no circumstances would there be a stoppage of production in any branch of industry regardless of extreme exploitation or low wages. Therefore, "proceeding with their baseless assumptions and selfish arguments, these spokesmen are today talking of conscripting labor; of putting labor in uniform; of placing all labor under the same discipline and regulation as the soldiers at the front."

In those cases where a temporary shortage of labor was reported it was due not to a total shortage or even a shortage in a particular craft. It was usually a local problem, easily adjusted. The A.F. of L. report deals with this aspect in an interesting way:

> With regard to particular calls for certain minor or strictly wartime classifications of labor, no intelligent observer in the ranks of labor will assert that there is in every case an immediate and full supply. Of course, there is somewhat of a shortage of tool and die makers; of course, there are not endless regiments of stenographers at Washington headquarters; of course there are not thousands of women ready to walk into a factory to make time fuses for Russian shells; of course there are not within easy reaching distance the men fully instructed to act as foremen and workmen in aeroplane establishments; of course shipbuilding at certain points needs more perfectly qualified men. And equally, of course, the employers who are calling for Mexican, Japanese, Hindoo and Chinese labor are disappointed in not having their million of immigrants from southeastern Europe in the year 1917. But for all the kinds of labor to be performed in war needs, there are today seeking employment somewhere in this country tens of thousands of men of the building and other skilled trades whose training for the ordinary tasks of shipbuilding or new machinery would be only a matter of a few weeks or even of a few days.

III. Wilson's Early War Labor Policies

PRACTICAL STRATEGY

For an understanding of the basic labor policies of the Wilson administration during the war years, we must understand the chief underlying factors that determined it. For it was not static for the duration of the war, but changed with the exigencies of the war and the pressure of the workers. The chief considerations that at all times determined the government's labor policy during the war may be summarized as follows:

1. The country's economic and political life was subordinated to the major objective of prosecuting the war. The government was quick to realize that military success depended to a great extent on increased production at home and the avoidance of any interruption of production and transportation. These factors provided the economic base for the slogan "national unity" while the war was on. To achieve this Wilson was forced to grant labor certain concessions.
2. The war created a most favorable situation for labor to obtain certain basic demands. Realizing that labor was the most uncertain link in the whole chain of "preparedness," something tangible had to be offered in order to strengthen this link.
3. Having obtained from the leaders of the A.F. of L. unqualified support for a pro-war policy even before the war broke out, the administration did not fear giving organized labor a degree of recognition, so long as labor's policies were shaped by leaders who not only supported the war but even demanded a "directing part" in its prosecution. The I.W.W. did not support the war with the result that it not only failed to get recognition but was hounded and prosecuted by this same administration.

4. While A.F. of L. membership was relatively small in proportion to the entire mass of workers, the fact that it consisted mainly of skilled workers made the government give it important consideration.

5. The administration had benefited from the experiences of the British and French governments in handling their labor problem since 1914. In England and other countries, for example, strikes were prohibited for the duration of the war. This brought about serious discontent and resentment. The Wilson administration, therefore, had to look for other and more subtle methods to achieve the same end. It thus offered the labor leaders official recognition and substituted arbitration and conciliation for strikes.

6. The Russian Revolution was of such great historic significance and had made such an impression on workers everywhere, that it had to be taken into consideration by all governments in shaping their labor policies during this stage of the war.

7. The American working class was heterogeneous. The large number of foreign born or first generation Americans who had roots abroad had to be considered. The foreign born workers and Negro workers, long the most exploited sections, naturally hoped to improve their conditions.

8. The horrors of war, the merciless destruction on the battlefields of Europe from 1914 to 1917, did not help to generate enthusiasm in the ranks of the working class in support of war.

9. The rising cost of living at home due to war profiteering did not make things easier for the government in winning the American workers over to support of the war.

10. The vigorous strike policy of the I.W.W. and its anti-war activities as well as those of the left wing of the Socialist Party headed by C. E. Ruthenberg, later a founder and secretary of the Communist Party, were factors which the government could not overlook in shaping its war labor measures.

These were the fundamental considerations guiding the Wilson administration's policies with regard to labor.

The government, as we have already seen, did not encounter serious difficulties in winning over the A.F. of L. leaders. But it was only a matter of days after America entered the war before the administration realized that Gompers and his lieu-

tenants were not all-powerful. It did not necessarily follow that because some labor leaders in Washington approved a proposal that the rank and file of the unions would go along. "Far more complex than promotion of loyalty campaigns," writes Lorwin, "was the task of the A.F. of L. to help maintain uninterrupted and efficient war production. In so far as the Federation wished, or was forced by pressure from local unions, to solve this problem without jeopardizing union standards, it came up against its greatest difficulties."[1]

On April 7, 1917, the day after declaration of war, the Council of National Defense issued a public statement urging employers and workers not to change existing standards for the duration of the war. Trade unions immediately sensed that they were expected not to make any demands for higher wages or improved conditions while the war lasted. With their members already subject to skyrocketing prices, and fearing that this declaration might become the fixed policy of the government, trade unions all over the country protested, declaring that under no circumstances would they submit. Labor protests were so effective that the Council had to retreat from its original position, and stated, April 16, that it was not averse to having unduly low standards of living raised.[2] However, a week later it issued a final statement which said that:

> the standards that have been established by law, by mutual agreement or by custom, should not be changed at this time; that where either an employer or an employee has been unable under normal conditions to change the standards to their own liking, they should not take advantage of the present abnormal conditions to establish new standards.[3]

In practice, such a statement meant first, complete disregard of the fact that the status quo was already impossible, since the cost of living had already leaped skyward, destroying established standards. It meant also that the millions of unor-

ganized must remain so. Finally, it meant that if workers had been unable before the war to improve their lot, they must not try to do so during war. In essence, the statement gave employers complete assurance that for the duration of the war labor would be kept in a straitjacket.

Gompers echoed this declaration of the Council of National Defense. Newspapers throughout the country acclaimed him for his "patriotic" stand. But even the *New Republic* (April 14, 1917), sharply criticized Gompers' position and brought forward a more realistic point of view:

> With singular unanimity the press has magnified Gompers' recommendation that neither employers nor employees shall endeavor to take advantage of the country's necessities to change existing standards to a guarantee against all industrial unrest. Patriotic manifestoes unsupported by definite administrative plans are no guarantee, since standards change daily as food costs mount... hence the Government should make them (wages) more flexible by creating joint conciliation committees to be provided with the power to make adjustments.

THE FIRST VICTIM

Immediately after the declaration of war, industry was reorganized on a wartime basis. A number of government boards were at once set up. They had broad jurisdiction and almost dictatorial power. Thus organized labor was confronted with war boards having authority to determine living standards, wage scales, hours of work, and other vital questions. Thus "the problem was simplified by having practically but one employer," according to Gompers.[4] He added: "When the world was aflame men could not stand on ceremony or precedent.... Many decisions were a complete reversal of prevailing thought and practice. Many of us who had been most resolute in advocacy of voluntary principles found it necessary

to assume responsibility for initiating policies which placed control in the hands of the government."[5] That this meant tying the hands of the workers, curtailing their right to strike, giving up the union shop, accepting compulsory arbitration, was of no great importance to Gompers. His attitude was logical and consistent with labor's "war aims" as enunciated by him:

As far as American participation in the World War was concerned, American workers felt that the War was their war. The cause for which our government had declared war upon the Imperial German Government was one which we felt was righteous and wholly necessary. The issues of that War were stated by the spokesmen of our Republic in a way that proclaimed to the world the spiritual reasons that made us willing to give our sons, our personal service, and our money to the War. So far as the duties of citizenship are concerned, American wage-earners have never felt that their identification with organized labor has built up any class lines that separate them from other groups of citizens. Organized labor realized that the most valuable service it could contribute to winning the War was to help maintain and raise production levels.[6]

The first government war agency to deal with labor problems was the Cantonment Adjustment Commission. Formed on June 10, 1917, it later became the Emergency Construction Wage Commission. As was to be expected, the problem of living quarters for hundreds of thousands of new army recruits was an early task to confront the government. Thousands of building trades workers were needed temporarily to construct 16 National Army Cantonments to accommodate 640,000 men.

Workers in the building trades were then among the best organized in the country. As a result of their strong unions their wages were relatively higher, hours shorter, and their contracts contained union shop or closed shop clauses. The closed shop was almost a tradition in the industry, unionists refusing to work with non-union men.

It would have been impossible for the government to carry through this gigantic construction program without first reaching an understanding with the unions. As a matter of fact, such an attempt was made and resulted in an immediate strike in Indianapolis, which threatened to become nationwide. It was then the government realized it must reach an agreement with the union leaders. From negotiations arising out of the Indianapolis strike, on June 10, 1917, a national contract was signed by the Secretary of War and Gompers as president of the American Federation of Labor. It was proclaimed an event of historic importance. "This was the first time in our history," writes Bing, "that the United States Government entered into an agreement with labor unions. The event is considered by many to mark the beginning of a new era in the history of American industry." [7]

However, probing beneath the surface shows that the building trades unions suffered a serious setback when they accepted the agreement forced on them by the War Department and Gompers. Moreover, the agreement was thereafter cited as a precedent for similar contracts with the government. It is true that it provided union wage scales, but in the building industry union wages were the *prevailing wages,* and in this case the prevailing wage was becoming unsatisfactory because of rising living costs. Hence it was no victory at all. The contract itself stated that "consideration shall be given to special circumstances... which may require particular advances in wages...." Another serious weakness of the contract was that it accepted the principle of compulsory arbitration, making the Board's decisions binding on both parties. But the most dangerous aspect of the agreement was the abandonment of the principle of the union shop, not a single reference being made to the union or closed shop. Only one word in the agreement could possibly be interpreted as a reference to the union

shop. That section states that "as basic standards with reference to each cantonment, such commission shall use the union scales of wages, hours, and conditions in force on June 1, 1917. . . ." In order to make reasonably sure that the word "conditions" would not be misinterpreted there was an exchange of letters and telegrams between the government and A.F. of L. leaders. These documents were not made public till after the war was over, but they are important enough to reproduce here. Mr. Louis B. Wehle, a representative of the War Department sent the following letter: [8]

War Department,
Washington
June 20, 1917.

Mr. Frank Morrison
Secretary, American Federation of Labor
Washington, D. C.

Re: Cantonment
Construction Labor Conditions

My Dear Mr. Morrison:

Confirming our talk over the telephone this afternoon, it must be clearly understood, as a basis for any labor adjustment machinery, that the Government can not commit itself in any way to the closed shop, and that the conditions in force on June 1, 1917, which are to serve as part of the basic standards do not include any provisions which have reference to the employment of non-union labor. In our telephone talk just now, I understand that you accede to this view. The word 'conditions' is of course clearly understood to refer only to the union arrangements in the event of overtime, holiday work, and matters of that kind. This was clearly understood between Mr. Gompers and myself this morning when we agreed that it would not be legally possible at this time to insert an understanding even so much as a provision that preference be given to members of organized labor.

Very truly yours
Louis B. Wehle

(Copy to Mr. Gompers.)

In reply, Gompers sent Wehle the following telegram:[9]

New York, N. Y., June 22

Louis B. Wehle
901 Munsey Building,
Washington, D. C.

Your understanding of the memorandum signed by Secretary Baker and me is right. It had reference to union hours and wages. The question of union shop was not included.

Samuel Gompers

In a second letter acknowledging Gompers' telegram, Wehle once again emphasized that "So long as there was a possibility that anyone could misunderstand the intention of the memorandum in connection with the question of the union shop, I deemed it best to keep the memorandum undelivered . . . the Government could not possibly . . . commit itself in the employment of labor to employing only union labor or even to give preference to union labor."[10]

Thus, what was hailed as a historic victory for labor turned out to be a distinct setback. With the help of Gompers the government deprived the building unions of a right won after many years of struggle.

Many building trade unions resented waiving the closed shop. The Carpenters Union openly declared that it was not bound by Gompers' signature. Ironical as it may seem, the result of the "victory" was that for the first time in many years building trades unionists were *forced* to work alongside non-union labor. The most strongly organized group of workers became the first victim of the Wilson-Gompers war labor policy.

MINE WORKERS WIN

Coal mining assumes increased importance in wartime, with both industry and transportation dependent on it. Recognizing

the vital character of the industry, the government immediately set up a Coal Production Committee which took charge of virtually all phases of coal mining. Francis S. Peabody, a notorious anti-union operator, was made chairman. The committee as a whole consisted exclusively of coal operators, including anti-union operators from the Western and Southern coal fields. No union leaders were included.

Peabody's first official act was directed against the miners. An order was sent out to the coal fields with instructions that "coal miners should be discouraged from moving from district to district." In practice it meant virtually imposing army discipline in the coal fields.

This order enraged the United Mine Workers, the largest single union of the A.F. of L., organized on an industrial basis and having traditions of great militancy. The union sent a sharp protest to the Labor and War departments, demanding that its representatives be added to the committee. Since the nation's most powerful union had presented this demand the government could not very well ignore it, and was forced to grant the union's wish. Seven union representatives were added to the committee. In order to save face, as well as to give Gompers credit, Secretary of Labor Wilson and Secretary of War Baker informed the union that it had been intended all along to have labor representatives on the committee, but that in their haste they had gone ahead, before Gompers had had time to nominate the labor members.[11]

Labor everywhere considered this one of the most important victories won during the early days of the war. Again it was obtained without Gompers' help. "Gompers' opponents took pleasure," writes Lorwin, "in pointing out that it was won by President White of the United Mine Workers, and not by the President of the A.F. of L."[12]

To appreciate fully the importance of this victory it must be noted that when the various government boards and com-

missions were set up for "war work," they consisted almost entirely of bankers, manufacturers, lawyers, and other "dollar-a-year-men." Only to boards that dealt directly with employer-employee relationships, had union representatives been added, and that only after vigorous insistence. But boards dealing with production standards and other problems affecting workers were closed to unionists.

Inspired by the victory of the coal miners, other unions put pressure on Gompers to obtain similar representation. The miners had won their victory on June 15. By June 27, 1917, the pressure was so great that Gompers wrote as follows to the Council of National Defense: "These boards and committees are now composed almost entirely of business men—able, prominent men of large affairs who control the placing of contracts and the expenditure of millions of the nation's money." Gompers was thus forced to concern himself with asking for labor representation on these war boards. But this was not to protect the workers. Rather, Gompers felt that as a "matter of precaution to prevent any charge of discrimination or suspicion of scandal, representatives of all citizens contributing to the national funds expended ought to be on the boards or committees." [13]

STRIKES IN EARLY WAR PERIOD

The cleavage between the leadership of the A.F. of L. and the membership during the war was very great. This may be illustrated by the strike wave shortly after the declaration of war. Yet the report of the Executive Council to the 1917 convention scarcely mentions these strikes which took place against the urgings of the A.F. of L. leaders.

The war did not eliminate the grievances of the workers. If anything it aggravated them. The deterioration of living standards, the stubborn resistance of employers to demands

for wage increases, the 8-hour day movement, and the demand for union recognition, had already brought about serious labor unrest even before 1917. Additional hardships brought on by the war precipitated the strike movement. Aside from the economic aspect, the natural hostility of the workers to war also expressed itself in these strikes. Realization that in time of war it was possible to obtain certain concessions that would otherwise be much more difficult to get further stimulated strike actions.

In a later chapter we shall analyze the strike movements of the war period as a whole. Here we mention only strikes that occurred immediately following America's entry into the war. They were of special importance for they greatly influenced the labor policies of the administration.

The National Industrial Conference Board, an employers' research agency, conducted a special study of the extent, causes and character of the strike movement and their relation to war production. Results of this investigation were published in a special report covering the first six months of the war. It found that from April 6 to October 6, 1917, there were nearly 3,000 strikes. Of these, the N.I.C.B. selected 1,156, involving 283,402 workers, for the purpose of close examination. With regard to the industries affected the report declares:

> It is apparent that the metal trades, shipbuilding, coal mining, and copper mining, four of the industries most essential to the prosecution of the Government's war program, were hardest hit by strikes at the beginning of the war. These four industries contributed 46.1 per cent of all strikes, 61.8 per cent of the workers made idle, and 66.3 per cent of the workdays lost.[14]

Though the workers in war industries received first consideration and obtained concessions more easily, conditions were so bad that even these somewhat "privileged" workers had to resort to strikes to win something substantial.

The character of the demands is even more revealing:

"...demands for higher wages were the most frequent cause for strikes. Increased cost of living...readily accounted for this." During the six months period there were 445 strikes for wage increases exclusively. Of these, 320, or 72%, were won in whole or in part. Of 230 other strikes caused by demands for higher wages and closed shop conditions, 208 were compromised, the wage demand being conceded, but not the closed shop. Conditions were so obviously bad that in a majority of cases the employers were forced to grant increases.

The employers, however, bitterly resisted demands for the closed shop or even for union recognition. The N.I.C.B. study states that of 69 demands solely for the closed shop, 53 were refused, 9 granted and 7 compromised. In elaborating these findings, the report declares that "Demands for recognition of the union and closed shop conditions, alone or with other issues, caused the most serious labor disturbances....The duration of interrupted production in this class of disturbances also indicates somewhat their bitterness."[15] Here is an oblique reference to the fact that the workers fought just as hard for the right to organize and bargain collectively as for wages and hours.

Students of the labor movement will immediately be struck by the difference in outcome of strikes for wage increases and those for union recognition or the closed shop. It is especially significant if we remember that both types of strikes occurred in the same period; 72% of all strikes for wage increases were won, but only 12% of the strikes for union recognition or the closed shop. Here is graphic proof that Wilson's "recognition" of Gompers and other labor leaders did not mean recognition of the trade unions in the country at large.

The N.I.C.B. also classified strikes according to the proportion of union members involved. This section of the report is admittedly less accurate, but one part may be noted:

> The outstanding feature of this tabulation is the number of strikes and the magnitude of lost production in those cases where a majority of the workers involved were members of labor unions... as the proportion of union influence increased in the establishments affected, an increase also occurred in the proportion of strikes, workers made idle, and workdays lost. It is interesting to note in this connection that in 533 establishments embraced in four industries most affected by strikes—metal trades, shipbuilding, coal, and copper mining,—75.5 per cent of the strikers were labor union members....[16]

In other words, where the workers were solidly organized they were in a better position to meet the attacks of the employers.

The manner in which the strikes were settled is also of interest. In 42% of the cases where strikes were settled by private conferences between representatives of the union and the management, the demands of the workers were granted.

The N.I.C.B. study took special cognizance of the I.W.W. in the strike movement. "Sharply distinguished from what is generally recognized as the labor movement," it declares, "with its varying shades of radicalism in various labor unions, stands the disturbing influence of the I.W.W. organization particularly in the western sections of the country.... This revolutionary body of workers was involved in 116 strikes, rendering 26,906 workers idle, and causing 1,001,364 lost workdays. These I.W.W. strikes were of long duration, and in many instances were accompanied by great violence."[17]

Summarizing the "salient features of the evidence" presented, the report makes the following summary of the labor situation during the first six months of the war:

> The first six months following the entry of the United States into the war was a period of extensive strikes. Even the incomplete returns here summarized, indicate 283,400 idle workers and a loss of 6,285,000 workdays.
>
> Strikes were most numerous and most serious in those industries particularly essential to war production.

Demands for increased wages were the most frequent cause of disputes. Strikes for recognition of the union or closed shop conditions were the most bitterly contested.

Nearly three-fifths of the disputes occurred in establishments where a majority of the strikers were members of trade unions; the percentage of total time lost in strikes of this class was even higher.

Direct conferences appeared to be the most satisfactory and expeditious way of settling disputes and the least costly in point of days lost; those in which injunction proceedings were resorted to were the most prolonged.[18]

EMPLOYERS OFFER A WAR LABOR POLICY

In the fall of 1917 it became evident to the administration that a grave internal crisis was rapidly developing out of the strikes and threatened strikes. The Council of National Defense, the Labor Department and the various war labor boards became alarmed and were at times helpless to cope with the situation. It also became increasingly difficult for Gompers to control the labor front. Conditions were especially bothersome in the Northwest and Southwest where the I.W.W. was strong and led many strikes.

By invitation of the Council of National Defense, on September 6, 1917, the National Industrial Conference Board submitted a plan to deal with labor. Its plan was important for two reasons: (1) it came from a body representing the most important employers in the country; and (2) it was in the main accepted by the government a few months later. Because of this the N.I.C.B.'s recommendations and their full implications should be examined.*

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* In July, 1940, the N.I.C.B. again presented a program to deal with labor in the "emergency" created by the European war. Entitled "A Labor Truce for the Duration," it is largely based on the N.I.C.B.'s 1917 plan. In fact, the 1940 plan repeats many of the key ideas incorporated in the 1917 program.

1. For the "period of the war, continuous efficient production can alone equip and sustain our military forces. Every dispute, whatever its motive, which interrupts production, furthers the ends and operates to the advantage of the public enemy." In essence this meant the outlawing of strikes for the duration of the war, thus placing the workers at the mercy of employers and government boards. Industrial relations in America were bad enough before the war. Now, under the guise of war needs the employers were asking for something they had been unable to put over before.

2. The open shop must be maintained at all costs. In the spirit of "patriotism" the N.I.C.B. declared that "The nation needs the service of every citizen. Its industrial workers are as indispensable to victory as the soldier on the firing line." But then we find that the "non-union man is as necessary in the factory as he is in the army. On economic as well as indisputable moral grounds the Government can, therefore, neither permit nor tolerate the exclusion of any laborer from productive employment." How granting union recognition or the closed shop, would in any way exclude workers from industry is nowhere explained. One would think that the workers were so opposed to unions that they would rather quit working than stay in a union shop! Yet the employer representatives termed it a "guiding principle" and a "fundamental American doctrine" that "no person shall be refused employment or in any way discriminated against.... There shall be no discrimination against or interference with any employee who is not a member of any labor organization by members of such organization." How ridiculous that sounds when one knows that the real discrimination, firing, and blacklisting in industry were used against those who dared to join a union.

Underlying this program was the desire not only to outlaw strikes, but also to make it a crime for a union to ask for recognition. The employers demanded that no "combination

of workmen undertake during the like period [the war] to 'close' an 'open' shop."

3. A board with dictatorial powers was called for to carry through the above recommendations. Creation of a Federal board that would make "full settlement" was urged and "its decisions must bind all parties to the dispute." In other words, compulsory arbitration.

4. If the government would accept this program, the employers pledged "to the country . . . the acceptance of such a program by the great body of representative associations and individual manufacturers we are authorized to represent."

The employers were determined to prevent the unions from making any inroads. This is seen in the concluding statement which declared:

> A Government which can not itself discriminate between its citizens can not tolerate conditions which encourage private organizations to compel such discrimination. Politically and economically such a policy spells disaster. It destroys the responsibility of management which is vital to successful production and denies in our own democracy the basic principles of individual liberty and opportunity, for which its citizens since the foundation of the Republic have shed freely of their blood and for which today they are prepared to die on alien soil.[19]

Today, Tom Girdler, E. T. Weir, Henry Ford and other anti-labor bosses are chief exponents of such "individual liberty and opportunity." They are free in shedding the blood of the workers. Witness the Chicago Memorial Day massacre at Girdler's Republic Steel Corp. plant in 1937 and the Dearborn massacre of unemployed Ford workers in March, 1932. All for their capitalist brand of "individual liberty."

PRESIDENT'S MEDIATION COMMISSION

It was difficult for the administration to accept the recommendations of the National Industrial Conference Board at

once. It would have resulted in an immediate knockdown, drag-out fight on a national scale between the labor movement and the employers. Nor was the administration willing to accept the recommendations of organized labor that the unions be given complete recognition. Neither could it adopt a "plague on both your houses" attitude, for everything had to be subordinated to the war.

While the government, employers and labor leaders were conducting debates in Washington, the issues were being fought out on picket lines throughout the nation.

Even before a final labor policy could be shaped the government had to settle the lumber workers' strike in the Pacific Northwest, the strike of the copper miners in Arizona and elsewhere, the spreading strike of marine workers in the Puget Sound ports, a threatened strike of 100,000 men in the shipyards on the Pacific coast, and a similar situation in the Chicago stockyards. Production was already seriously affected by these strikes and the entire war program was in danger.

The struggle was sharp and violent, particularly in the Far West. Employers and government officials were ruthless in their determination to break the strikes. Both A.F. of L. and I.W.W. unions suffered alike from the wave of anti-labor terror. State and city authorities openly lined up with employers against the workers. The A.F. of L. state organizations in Washington, California, Montana, Idaho, Michigan, New Mexico and Arizona sent desperate appeals for help to the Executive Council in Washington. Deportations of thousands of strikers from one state to another, vigilante bands, company-instigated mob rule, illegal arrests and murder were rampant. In Arizona alone over a thousand strikers were evicted from the state in the Bisbee deportations. The situation was so critical that the Arizona State Federation of Labor sent a delegation to Washington to place the situation before Gompers.

It is against this background of industrial struggle that Presi-

dent Wilson on September 18, 1917, set up a special body that became known as the President's Mediation Commission. It began to cover the strike areas at once.

Workers' resistance to the roughshod methods of employers and government officials in breaking strikes made it clear that different methods must be applied to settle existing strikes and to prevent others from developing. Hence the Mediation Commission, headed by Secretary of Labor W. B. Wilson, included a number of trade union officials. Felix Frankfurter, now a U. S. Supreme Court Justice, was its secretary. The government was determined to have a "liberal" commission so that workers would be more likely to give it a hearing.

The workers were enraged over Gompers' failure to come to their assistance while he found time to go up and down the country speaking in support of the war. He conveniently missed the areas where this other war—labor's—was going on. In order to strengthen his prestige the administration decided to give Gompers credit for the formation of the President's Mediation Commission. It was thought that a commission "sponsored by labor" would receive a readier response from the workers.

WILSON ADDRESSES A.F. OF L. CONVENTION

Between April, 1917, and November, when the annual A.F. of L. convention was to be held, the leaders of the Federation spent most of their time and energy talking about "national unity," urging "class peace," and bargaining for positions on war boards. In return they cited their faithful service in pacifying the rank and file. Because of such policies the chasm between the leaders and the rank and file became greater. Something drastic had to be done at the convention to resolve the situation. The strike wave made it necessary to reassure employers that it was not the doing of the top leaders.

There was need also to prove to the rank and file that despite their experiences with state and city authorities, the President of the United States was backing them. There was also the need to show unorganized workers that it was futile for them to join I.W.W. unions, which the government would not recognize.

In view of all this, Gompers recommended that a personal appeal by President Wilson might turn the tide. "I felt that the one thing needful to assure our coalition till the end of the War was a personal message from President Wilson to the representatives of American unionism assembled in convention."[20]

Wilson considered it good strategy to accept this invitation, coming as it did, at the time his Mediation Commission was in the strike-torn areas trying to crush the labor revolt.

Thus the stage was set for Wilson to appear in person at the Federation convention and make a dramatic appeal from the platform of organized labor. It was the first time a President of the United States had addressed an A.F. of L. convention.

The press and trade union leaders proclaimed it an historic event, one that would mark a turning point in the relationship between government and organized labor. It was to have indicated the high degree of "recognition" won by the trade unions in return for unqualified support of the war. Above everything, it was considered an important demonstration of "national unity." What the newspapers failed to mention was that Wilson's decision to address the convention was motivated primarily by the desire of the administration to ease labor unrest, to strengthen the prestige of the Federation leaders, and to make it known that as far as the government was concerned, the A.F. of L. was the recognized national trade union body.

A few days before the President's address, Secretary of War Baker sent him an interesting memorandum suggesting that

the President "warn labor not to make an inelastic ultimatum but to leave their accredited representatives free to work out with the Government those just rearrangements which are necessary by reason of war conditions." Wilson considered this a "very wise suggestion" and promised to "keep it in mind." [21]

On November 12, 1917, President Wilson addressed the 37th annual convention of the Federation and outlined his labor policies:

1. Productivity of the country must be "raised to its absolute maximum," and nobody "...allowed to stand in the way of it."
2. "We must...see that the conditions of labor are not rendered more onerous by the war."
3. "Nobody has a right to stop the process of labor until all the methods of conciliation and settlement have been exhausted."
4. "Let us show ourselves Americans by showing that we do not want to go off in separate camps or groups by ourselves, but that we want to co-operate with all other classes and all other groups in the common enterprise. . . . I would be willing to set that up as the final test of an American."
5. The "fundamental lesson of the whole situation is that we must not only take common counsel but that we must yield to and obey common council."
6. "I am with you if you are with me."

Nowhere in this speech did Wilson make single reference to profiteering or to the high cost of living—the real problems of concern to the workers. But he found time to eulogize Gompers:

> I want to express my admiration of his patriotic courage, his large vision, and his statesmanlike sense of what has to be done. I like to lay my mind alongside of a mind that knows how to pull in harness. The horses that kick over the traces will have to be put in corral.[22]

The President was of course right in considering Gompers one who would not "kick over the traces." But Wilson's remark contained in it also an indirect warning to those who

might try to "kick over the traces." Gompers was greatly pleased with Wilson's praise and in his autobiography wrote that it "cheered me in some of the hard places where I had to contend against less appreciative understanding,"[23] as, for example, among the trade unionists who sought to protect their interests against the avaricious employers.

Wilson's appeal to labor did not bring the hoped-for results. Strikes continued and dissatisfaction among the workers grew. It may have pleased the vanity of the labor leaders and spurred them on to become even better labor lieutenants of the ruling class. But it did not improve the conditions of the workers.

IV. The National War Labor Board

WAR LABOR CONFERENCE BOARD

At the beginning of 1918, labor struggles were attracting national attention. With the American Expeditionary Force overseas and with the growing demand of the Allies for food and munition supplies, the problem of production assumed importance almost equal with the military.

With the National Industrial Conference Board as their mouthpiece, as early as September, 1917, the employers had demanded creation of a federal board with full power to settle labor disputes. It was on the basis of this demand that the Council of National Defense called a conference of representatives of production departments of the government to consider centralized control of labor relations. On December 20, 1917, representatives of the Council, the Navy, War and Labor departments, the Aircraft and Shipping boards, and the Executive Council of the A.F. of L. met to consider the labor situation. The conference went on record favoring the establishment of "machinery which will provide for the immediate and equitable adjustment of disputes in accordance with the principles to be agreed upon between labor and capital and without stoppage of work." [1] In order to enforce such a policy the conference recommended a "co-ordinating war labor board" because "effective action in dealing with labor problems is vital to the success of the war." [2] Thus the chief demand of the employers was approved.

The President's Mediation Commission in its report similarly recommended that "Unified direction of the labor

administration of the United States for the period of the war should be established.... A single-headed administration is needed...."[3]

On January 4, 1918, Wilson appointed the Secretary of Labor as "Labor Administrator" with full authority "to take steps to organize a labor administration along lines of the report of the interdepartmental conference."[4] The Secretary of Labor formed an Advisory Council that was to assist him in formulating a national policy and in setting up a national board. On January 19, the council recommended that the Secretary of Labor call a conference of 12 persons representing "employers' organizations, employees' organizations, and the public...having in view the establishment of principles and policies which will enable the prosecution of production without stoppage of work."[5] The Secretary of Labor approved the recommendation of the Council and on January 28 established a new agency known as the War Labor Conference Board which had equal representation of labor and capital. The A.F. of L. selected the labor representatives and the National Industrial Conference Board the employer representatives. Each group was invited to choose its own chairman. The War Labor Conference Board was then instructed to go into immediate session to work out a national labor policy. John Lind, chairman of the Advisory Council, issued a public statement clearly indicating the seriousness of the situation and also stating what was expected.

> [He said that the] conference may easily prove one of the most significant developments in the history of America's participation in the war. In a sense it is unprecedented in American industrial history.... To accommodate the basic differences between the two groups and unite industry as one behind the war program is the real purpose behind the conference.... It is for the members of this conference to decide whether this meeting may prove the turning point of the war and perhaps even the resolution of a crisis in America's history.[6]

The conference was in session from February 25 to March 29. Its program was submitted to the Secretary of Labor with the recommendation that for the period of the war he create a national war labor board, and that the principles and policies of such a board be based on a no strike policy.

> These principles thus agreed upon unanimously and voluntarily by both workers and employers were interpreted and applied by the National War Labor Board.... They became the basis of adjudication of disputes by other war-time agencies and constituted in essence a code of industrial law for the period of the war.[7]

Early in April, President Wilson issued a formal executive proclamation creating the National War Labor Board which was to insure that "there shall be no discontinuance of industrial operation which would result in curtailment of the production of war necessities." William Howard Taft, former President of the United States, was named joint chairman and public representative of the employers and Frank P. Walsh joint chairman and public representative of the employees. Five employee and five employer representatives were also appointed. They were picked from the group originally named by the National Industrial Conference Board and the A.F. of L. to the War Labor Conference Board.

Thus after a year of American participation in the war the Wilson administration, with the help of the A.F. of L. leaders, had settled on a war labor policy as reflected in the principles, powers and functions of the National War Labor Board. Few people then realized that many of these principles and policies had originated with the employers.

The Board was in existence 16 months, till August, 1919. Altogether it took up 1,251 cases involving over 700,000 workers. It made awards in 490 cases. Most of its decisions affecting wages were made after workers had protested the rising cost

of living. Its rulings with respect to "worker representation" were in general an encouragement to company unions.

SURRENDER OF RIGHT TO STRIKE

"There should be no strikes or lockouts during the war." This contained the essence of the purpose of the War Labor Board. Agreement of the representatives of the A.F. of L. to a no strike policy during the war constituted a complete departure from established fundamental trade union principles. For many years attempts had been made to outlaw strikes through the establishment of compulsory arbitration. Yet even the leaders of the American Federation of Labor had consistently fought against surrendering the right to strike or even its curtailment. When the officials of the Federation *voluntarily* gave up this right it practically meant the transformation of the A.F. of L. from an independent trade union center to a government department which assumed the duty of preventing strikes and if necessary breaking them.

The history of the American labor movement is crowded with struggles and sacrifices for the right to organize and strike since the days of the "conspiracy laws." The pioneers of American trade unionism had an early taste of compulsory arbitration. After the defeat of the railroad strikes in 1888 and 1894, the leadership of the railroad unions fell into the hands of conservatives who accepted compulsory arbitration. But the labor movement as a whole soon realized that compulsory arbitration was a hindrance to its progress and the 1895 convention of the A.F. of L. denounced it. In 1896 the A.F. of L. convention reiterated its opposition to compulsory arbitration. The leaders of the independent railroad brotherhoods were not so vigilant however. With their approval the Senate in 1898 passed the Erdman Act providing "mediation, conciliation and arbitration in cases of industrial

disputes affecting railroad employees engaging in operation of trains in interstate commerce." Fifteen years later, when the next encounter with the railroad managements took place, the unions recognized that the Erdman Act was detrimental and sought to repeal or amend it.

In those days Gompers took the initiative in the fight against "compulsion." He argued ably against the claim that compulsory arbitration meant industrial peace. "Absence of industrial dislocation," he declared, "does not necessarily mean industrial peace. Nor does industrial peace necessarily mean industrial progress." [8] Acceptance of compulsory arbitration by a labor union was considered incompatible with membership in the Federation. Gompers claimed that in 1896 his "resistance to the entering wedge of compulsion in industrial relations in America probably was a deterrent to efforts to bring the railroad organizations into the Federation," [9] even though he had been anxious to bring these groups into the A.F. of L.

In 1890 Congress enacted the Sherman Anti-Trust law. It soon became apparent that the unions might become the only victims of this act. Again organized labor fought to secure legislation that would draw a clear line of demarcation between human and property rights. In 1914 Congress finally passed the Clayton Act with its oft-quoted declaration that the labor of a human being is not a commodity or article of commerce. Labor was therefore thought to be exempt from prosecution under the Sherman Act.

Soon after other clouds darkened labor's horizon. In 1915 the Colorado State legislature adopted a law making it illegal for workers to strike pending investigation or arbitration of the dispute. An Industrial Commission was set up by the state to supervise this law which did not outlaw strikes completely, but required thirty days' notice before a strike was called. The trade unions in the state at once initiated a movement for its repeal, the Colorado State Federation of Labor

publicly declaring that the workers "will not relinquish the right to strike whenever and wherever that course may be deemed advisable by the men and women of labor. The right to strike is the only distinguishing mark between free men and slaves, and we shall unflinchingly make every sacrifice to retain our freedom."[10]

Voluntary abandonment of the right to strike by the A.F. of L. leaders was all the more reprehensible since less than a year before America entered the war organized labor fought and won a fight against concerted effort to establish compulsory arbitration in the railroad industry. Although most of the unions involved were not affiliated with the Federation, the A.F. of L. had taken a leading part in this struggle.

We have already mentioned the united movement of the railroad brotherhoods for the 8-hour day in 1916. Their experience with arbitration schemes caused them to refuse acceptance of the carriers' proposal to submit the issues involved to arbitration. A nationwide railroad strike was imminent. With the country on the verge of entering the war the government hoped to avert a strike through a "give-and-take" policy. On August 29, 1916, President Wilson made a special address to Congress on the threatened railroad strike and urged the adoption of two important measures. The first was to grant railroad workers the basic 8-hour day. But as a guarantee against future strike threats he urged the adoption of a Compulsory Investigation Bill as "an amendment of the existing federal statute which provides for mediation, conciliation and arbitration of [such] controversies as the present by adding to it a provision that in case the methods of accommodation now provided for should fail, a full public investigation of the merits of every such dispute shall be instituted and completed before a strike or lockout may lawfully be attempted."

The organized labor movement vigorously opposed this bill, which railroad managements fully supported. Like the Colo-

rado Industrial Commission Law, the President's proposal was a "mild" form of compulsory arbitration, yet the trade unions were fully conscious of its consequences. Two days after Wilson offered his amendment to Congress, Gompers appeared at the hearings of the Senate Committee on Interstate Commerce and argued that the bill would lead to involuntary service which was a violation of the Constitution.

The Executive Council, reviewing the railroad brotherhoods' struggle in its report to the 1916 convention, declared: "The proposal to establish compulsory institutions is a matter that involves and affects the interests of all the wage-earners in the country. It is a revolutionary proposition totally out of harmony with our prevailing philosophy of government."[11]

Labor fought unitedly and effectively against the President's Compulsory Investigation Bill. In his annual address to Congress, December 5, 1916, Wilson defended his bill, arguing that it did not negate the workers' right to strike, but that it was only a preventive measure until "the nation shall have had an opportunity to acquaint itself with the merits of the case" and have an "opportunity to consider all practical means of conciliation or arbitration."

Despite the claim that his bill was a mere precautionary measure for the country's key industry, organized labor fought against any encroachment of the right to strike. Progressive and conservative labor leaders united on this issue. The great labor leader Eugene V. Debs summarized labor's objections when he said:

> The antistrike amendment recommended to Congress by President Wilson . . . is wholly to the advantage of the employers' class. A threatened strike would be held up indefinitely or at least until its force was spent in watchful waiting. Under this amendment a strike, if lawfully possible at all, would be robbed of its strategic advantages and doomed to inevitable defeat. A strike held up becomes as futile as a charge held up in the field of battle. But

such a law could not be enforced against the will of the labor movement. All the laws and all the courts and governments on earth could not prevent a million organized workers from striking.[12]

Wilson's bill was defeated. Once again labor upheld its right to strike without curb by legislation.

Against this background of consistent and determined opposition to any restrictions on the right to strike, we may examine the reasons for the complete reversal of position by the A.F. of L. leaders during the war. First the question arises: Did labor give up the right to strike? Some labor historians argue that in few instances were strikes legally prohibited. Others say that since punitive measures against strikes were not officially embodied in the powers and functions of the National War Labor Board, the workers were free to strike. Still another declares that "the only restraint accepted by labor was a promise of self-restraint."[13] And others cite the many strikes during the war to prove their point.

Such an approach is somewhat mechanical, and does not take into consideration the real forces at work. Experiences in England and other countries had proven that outright branding of strikes as illegal did not end them. As early as March, 1915, the British trade unions, with the exception of the miners, signed the "Treasury Agreement," under which they relinquished the right to strike. But after a year and a half of reverses, the unions which were a party to the agreement decided to break it. When the workers had no other redress, they struck. That was the experience in England and other countries in banning strikes. In shaping its final war labor policies, the government of the United States had to take these European experiences into consideration. Nor could it disregard the well established American trade union tradition of regarding the right to strike as precious.

In the fight for his Compulsory Investigation Bill, Wilson

had opportunity to convince himself of how strong this feeling was. Labor's fight in 1916 undoubtedly impressed him. When, among others, Dr. Charles W. Eliot urged immediate enactment here of legislation like the Canadian law for compulsory investigation of industrial disputes, the President wrote him on July 24, 1917:

> I have dealt with this matter so much now that I have somewhat intimate knowledge of the feeling of Congress and of the possibilities of legislation along those lines, and I am sorry to say that it would be impossible at this session at any rate to obtain any legislation whatever.[14]

Nor could the government utilize the officials of the A.F. of L. as effectively as it had to if it placed them in the position of supporting an administration that *formally* outlawed strikes. The very creation of the National War Labor Board was a method and instrumentality through which strikes were to be eliminated, without *formally* declaring them illegal. This was the strategy, jointly worked out by the administration, employers, and labor officials, which gave birth to the Board.

But even from a formal point of view, it cannot be denied that the Board's principles and declared policies were against wartime strikes. Hence the breaking of strikes by injunctions could be accomplished without formally outlawing strikes on a national scale. State and federal courts did grant a number of injunctions on the ground of a "national emergency." When the workers of Rosenwasser Bros. went out on strike the company applied for an injunction. A New York lower court granted it on the grounds that "the life of our nation is dependent upon the uninterrupted production of the things needed to successfully carry on the war in which our country is engaged." The judge was quite outspoken, ruling that "Strikes for any cause whatsoever are to be enjoined for the duration of the war."[15] The U. S. District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri issued an injunction against

striking machinists at the Wagner Manufacturing Co. on the ground that the company was engaged in the production of munitions for the government. It argued that the plant was therefore practically a government agency.

It is true that open injunctions in strikes were not very common at this time. The reason for this was stated by the National Industrial Conference Board when it admitted that those strikes "in which injunction proceedings were resorted to were the most prolonged."[16] In other words, it was the stubborn resistance of the workers to injunctions which prevented their broader application.

Just as today the foes of the National Labor Relations Act do not advocate outright abolition of the act, but rather amendments that would in essence destroy it, so during the war, drastic restrictions were placed on the right to strike without outlawing that right.

Furthermore, in the powers and functions prescribed to the board and approved by the President's proclamation it was declared:

If the sincere and determined effort of the National Board shall fail to bring about a voluntary settlement and the members of the board shall be unable to unanimously agree upon a decision, then and in that case and only as a last resort an umpire appointed in the manner provided in the next paragraph shall hear and finally decide the controversy under simple rules of procedure prescribed by the National Board.

This meant, simply, compulsory arbitration. In one case members of the International Association of Machinists working in the Bridgeport, Conn., munition plants, refused to return to work on the basis of the umpire's decisions. President Wilson sent a letter to the strikers in which he warned:

I desire that you return to work and abide by the award. If you refuse, each of you will be barred from employment in any war industry in the community in which the strike occurs for a period

of one year. During that time the United States Employment Service will decline to obtain employment for you in any war industry elsewhere in the United States, as well as under the War and Navy Departments, the Shipping Board, the Railroad Administration and all other Government Agencies, and the draft boards will be instructed to reject any claim of exemption based on your alleged usefulness on war production.[17]

Under the threat of this unprecedented blacklist by the President himself, the workers were forced back.

Then there were the "work-or-fight," or compulsory work laws passed in various states. Under these laws, many workers who went out on strike, were threatened with immediate conscription.

A typical example of intimidation through draft boards was the following bulletin[18] posted in the plant of the American Can Co. in Bridgeport, Conn., where the workers contemplated strike action:

American Can Company
Liberty Ordnance Plant
Union Avenue June 28, 1918
Bridgeport, Conn.

This plant employs a number of men who have received exemption or deferred classification on account of the value of their services in the production of munition or guns. Any of these men who walk out in this crisis will automatically forfeit such classification and their local board will receive immediate advice to that effect. Every assurance has been given that these men will at once be placed in class 1-A of the draft and that further exemption at this or any other plant, will be refused.

By Direction of the Acting Chief of Ordnance:
C. F. Hepburn
Captain, O.R.C.

During the munition workers' strike in Bridgeport, Conn., a local newspaper featured an article reporting that "Munition workers employed at the Remington Arms and other places,

who have been placed in a deferred classification as registrants for the draft, by local boards, will be placed in Class 1-A if they go out on strike, according to a decision made yesterday by one of the city draft boards. It is probable that all of the other boards will take similar action."[19] The Seamen's Union charged the Lake Carriers Association with using the draft as a means of intimidation. The draft threat was frequently used when workers contemplated strike action.

The "work-or-fight" principle was also dangerous as used by vigilante groups as a "patriotic" cover for their unlawful actions. In their frantic appeals to mob violence, vigilantes coined the slogan, "It is up to you to help make these people (strikers) work, join the army, stop eating or leave the country."

President Wilson was aware of this movement and approved it. In a letter to the Governor of Maryland he expressed the hope that the "work-or-fight" law would also be taken up by other states.

> Your letter [he wrote] ... calls my attention to the proposal for a nation-wide movement based upon the principles embodied in the Maryland compulsory work law. I can say without hesitation that I am heartily in accord with any movement intended to bring every citizen to a full realization of his responsibilities as a participant in this war.... The slogan "Work or Fight" has everywhere been taken up as a satisfactory expression of the spirit of the people.... I hope that it will be possible to duplicate the action and experience of Maryland in other states.[20]

Labor unions protested to the President against this movement, but he continued to support it on the grounds that it was not "automatic." In a memorandum to the Secretary of War, Wilson expressed confidence that a "protest of this sort ... would come, and yet I am convinced that it is based upon misapprehension of the law proposed.... It would undoubtedly bear the appearance of enforced labor if we were to make the

principle work automatically and administer it in such a way that a man would immediately be called to the colors the moment he ceased to be engaged in a preferred occupation."[21]

Similar laws were enacted in West Virginia, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and North Dakota.

The National War Labor Board finally refused to take up cases of workers who went out on a strike, until they returned to work. In face of this it cannot seriously be argued that the right to strike was not abridged. The government tried hard, and with partial success, to take away labor's right to strike by agreement of certain labor leaders. But the rank and file refused to give it up.

The anti-strike policies of the administration, the union smashing laws enacted in a number of states, the anti-labor court decisions, the hostile press and the vigilante movements —all these together did not do as much harm as the "leaders of labor." Workers were accustomed to government strikebreaking. They did not suffer illusions about courts, and had come to expect a hostile press. But their position was made difficult in the extreme when their own leaders lined up with these hostile forces.

The report of the A.F. of L. Executive Council to the 1918 convention dealing with this subject would have been more appropriate at a Chamber of Commerce function. Under the slogan "Avoid Interruptions of War Production," the report stated:

> The workers in war production are practically a part of the fighting force, the Army and Navy. They cannot stop work without interfering with the whole program. The whole campaign from production to where munitions are used in the field must be so precise, so well articulated, that nothing shall interfere with any forward movement if we are to check and defeat the best organized war machine the world has ever seen. No action should be taken in the shops or in the field not in harmony with the purpose of the war.[22]

This sounds more like a dictatorial M-Day order than the voice of labor.

But neither the no-strike policy of the government, nor the strong anti-strike policy of the labor leaders were able to stem the tide. In 1918 some 3,353 strikes took place involving over 1,240,000 workers or almost as many as in 1917.

It is significant that in his autobiography Gompers devotes some 200 pages to the war period. He admits that labor representatives helped to draft the fundamental principles upon which the work of the War Labor Board was established. But Gompers does not analyze or draw significant conclusions concerning the work of this important wartime body. He acknowledges that "Many decisions were a complete reversal of prevailing thought and practice" and that those "who had been most resolute in advocacy of voluntary principles found it necessary to assume responsibility for initiating policies which placed control in the hands of the government."[23] His was a logical development: from pacifism to war, from voluntarism to compulsion.

ACCEPTING THE STATUS QUO

One of the important principles advocated in the war labor policy of the National Industrial Conference Board was that no "combination of workmen shall undertake during the war period to 'close' an 'open' shop." And on May 29, 1918, labor representatives agreed to the following declaration which later became the established policy of the War Labor Board: "In establishments where union and non-union men and women work together and the employer meets only with employees or representatives engaged in said establishment, the continuance of such conditions shall not be deemed a grievance."[24] Comparing the N.I.C.B. recommendation with the principle embodied in the policies of the National War Labor Board,

one finds no differences, aside from language. In other words, the A.F. of L. leaders agreed that for the duration of the war they would not endeavor to organize the unorganized, or gain the closed shop. This policy became known as maintaining the status quo during the war.

In practice it meant to condemn the trade unions to a defensive position of merely holding their own. It was a logical effect of a no strike policy. Because of the hostility of employers, organizing and strikes in most cases go hand in hand. The labor leaders surrendered both, and even more. The provision cited above gave legal protection to anti-labor employees to retain the open shop, by means of the clause that "continuance of such conditions shall not be deemed a grievance" on the part of the workers. There were numerous cases where workers joined labor unions but were refused recognition under the clause quoted above.

The steel workers were the chief victims of this policy. The industry could not be organized by the steel workers alone, but was a job for the entire labor movement. The wealth, power, and union-smashing policies of the managements were well known. The experiences in 1919, and again in 1936-37, proved that only the full support of the most powerful labor unions in the country together with a favorable political situation could break steel's resistance to unionism.

No industry is more important than steel in wartime. And no labor man in the United States can speak with more authority about the steel industry during the war than William Z. Foster, leader of the 1919 organizing campaign. He belonged to a small group of labor leaders who strongly advocated using the war period to bring millions of unorganized into the A.F. of L. In his autobiography Foster describes how he based his entire plan on a proper utilization of the war. For it was the best "organizing period American labor had ever known ..." but was "fast slipping away as the war neared

its end" without being properly exploited. From Foster's earlier experiences in the packing industry, where a decisive section of the industry was organized in nine weeks, he believed it possible, under wartime conditions, to organize the steel industry in six weeks. "This would have brought our movement to a head," Foster writes, "while the war was still on, and the government and the steel trust could not possibly have faced a war-time strike in this great munitions industry. ... Had my proposals been adopted we would have won through easily and definitely established unions in the steel industry."[25] But Gompers and the others played "ducks and drakes" with Foster's plan. The support he was given was not even sufficient "to organize a bunch of peanut stands, instead of 500,000 almost totally unorganized workers in the steel industry, American finance capital's chief open shop stronghold."[26] The steel workers and millions of others remained unorganized because of the status quo policy. Gompers favored this policy, fearing for his own position if new millions of workers entered the ranks of the Federation and began to assert themselves. In order to retain his position of leadership he sacrificed the very trade union movement which he headed.

Despite this sort of sabotage the A.F. of L. grew during the war. From a membership of 2,072,702 in 1916 it reached the high mark of 3,260,068 in 1919. But this growth was almost entirely due to the initiative of the lower ranks.

Foster's experiences in the packing industry in 1917-18 are a dramatic example of what could have been accomplished had the leaders of the A.F. of L. rejected the status quo policy. Along with Jack Johnstone, another militant rank and file leader, and without any financial assistance from the Federation, Foster was able to organize 200,000 workers in a very short time. From a completely unorganized industry the stockyards became one of the strongest organized mass production industries, the workers winning the 8-hour day and substantial

wage increases. The secret of this success lay in Foster's rejection of the status quo policy.

Aside from being the first large mass production industry organized in this country by rank and file forces against the sabotage of the A.F. of L. leadership, the stockyard drive was also the first such campaign that resulted in the organization of a large number of Negroes. In Chicago, out of the 60,000 stockyard workers 12,000 were Negroes a majority of whom joined the union.

Like the rest of the unorganized workers, the Negroes were ready to join the unions. But the Jim Crow policy of the Federation leaders prevented them from doing so. During the war years, Negro workers and Negro organizations made numerous appeals for the A.F. of L. to open its doors to Negro labor. These efforts were in vain.

Among the established unions that grew rapidly was the United Mine Workers, which had a strong Socialist tradition. According to the report of A.F. of L. secretary Morrison to the 1918 convention the Mine Workers during 1918 issued 437 new charters, gaining 367,966 new members and spending $403,200 on strikes. In contrast, the Cigarmakers Union under complete domination of Gompers in the same period issued six new charters and surrendered eleven, losing more members than it gained and spending practically no money on organizing.

Very often organizing work was carried on in direct opposition to the top leaders of the Federation. This was true not only in packing and steel, but in other industries. The Federation's organizing expense totaled only $184,038, for the war years 1917-1918, a sum not big enough to organize a single large industry. As one writer observed, "A.F. of L. organizers became conciliators and mediators."

However, the rank and file in the unions continued to increase in initiative, and began to take matters into their own

hands. An article in *The American Labor Year Book, 1919-20,* clearly analyzed the relationship between the lower and upper ranks of the Federation as it then existed:

> Authority and responsibility within the American labor movement have to a very great degree passed over from the executive offices of the international unions and the executive offices of the American Federation of Labor to the meetings and local councils of the rank and file. We have international unions stronger in numbers and in financial showing than ever before, and we see the American Federation of Labor gathering in hundreds of thousands of new members, with scarcely an effort as compared with the days before Europe went to war. But the initiative and the power of action on the industrial battlefield had slipped from the national leaders' hands.[27]

The policy of the status quo failed just as did the no strike policy. The rank and file, however, was not strong enough by itself to storm the steel industry, the fortress of the open shop movement. Seventeen years later the C.I.O. won the battle in steel, placing the trade union movement on a solid basis in this basic industry.

COMPANY UNIONS CREATED

The administration and the employer representatives on the War Labor Board were fully aware that the labor leaders would not have easy sailing when they agreed not to rock the boat. It was advisable therefore to embody in the principles of the Board a clause which, on its face, would seem to make some concessions to labor. Therefore the Board declared: "The right of employees to organize in associations or groups and to bargain collectively through chosen representatives is recognized and affirmed." But this clause was practically meaningless in view of the status quo clause directed against cracking open shops. There was another catch in the clause that

"The workers, in the exercise of their rights to organize, shall not use coercive measures of any kind to induce persons to join their organization nor to induce employers to bargain or deal therewith."

There is no need for bona fide trade unions to use "coercive measures" to induce workers to join. But there is at all times the need to induce employers to bargain with unions. To attempt to organize without the right to ask the employer for recognition is almost hopeless. In practice it was like telling the workers, you can have your cake but you can't eat it. Thus the right to organize clause was therefore an empty gesture, intended solely to appease.

Local unions were quick to realize that the right to organize clause, with all the "ifs" and "buts" surrounding it, must be utilized. In many respects this clause was destined to play somewhat the same role as Section 7a of the N.I.R.A. in 1933-35. Workers took its guarantees seriously and under its protection hastened to organize into bona fide trade unions.

But the employers, realizing that the unions were using the clause advantageously, demanded strict observance of the status quo. At this stage the Board was trying to strike a balance between the status quo and the right-to-organize clauses. But it had to be done in a manner that would not completely destroy the workers' belief that the government had granted them the right to organize. So clever lawyers worked out the ingenuous "shop committees." The workers were told that they could have "collective bargaining" without having to join a union or pay dues. Shop committees were hailed as a great step forward in collective bargaining, and as a sign of growing "industrial democracy."

When the workers of Bethlehem Steel Corp., American Sheet and Tin Plate Co., American Locomotive Co., and General Electric Co., for example, demanded recognition of unions, the War Labor Board gave them "shop committees." In many

Board awards we find the following words: "As the right of workers to bargain collectively through committees has been recognized by the Board the company shall recognize and deal with such committees after they have been constituted by the employees ..."

Most employers stubbornly refused to grant union recognition. But the same employers welcomed the shop committee form of so-called collective bargaining. It is not hard to see why. For in essence the shop committees were nothing more than company unions. They were usually limited to one plant, prohibited general meetings of workers, and used the system of joint conferences with management, the latter having the deciding vote.

Thus the Board's right to organize clause turned out to be the right to organize into counterfeit unions. The *Harvard Law Review* reported that

> shop committees were thus put into successful operation in a sufficient number of instances to give them a great impetus in all American industry. The question now will be whether unions will desire to take over and control the shop committees and whether they have sufficiently extended their strength to do so.[28]

The Federation top leaders did not want to take over the shop committee movement or to direct it into genuine trade union channels. However, local union men did make such efforts and with some success. They sought to use the shop committees as steps toward a more complete organization of their respective crafts.

V. The I.W.W. and the War

The history of the Industrial Workers of the World during the last war is in a sense a study of war hysteria and its effect. It exposes employer strategy and shows how under the guise of fighting militant unions the big corporations extended the struggle against *all* labor unions. It reveals how in the name of "patriotism" and "loyalty" the anti-labor forces committed crime and murder.

No labor organization has been painted so black as the I.W.W. The job was so well done that the very name I.W.W. was made synonomous with treason, sabotage, violence, foreign agents and murder. They were beyond the pale of the law, to be handled by pickhandle brigades, tar and feather committees and necktie parties.

The present day M-Day plans will no doubt bring forth similar methods, but instead of the I.W.W. as a bugaboo, it will be the Communist Party, the "Reds," then the C.I.O. and A.F. of L. Already the "trojan horse" and "fifth column" hysteria is directed not only against Communists but against many militant unions.

A DEADLY PARALLEL

The tenth convention of the I.W.W. was in session from November 20 to December 1, 1916, only four months before America entered the war. Just as the leadership of the A.F. of L. was eager to declare its pro-war position, so the I.W.W.

was anxious to announce its anti-war position. Taking a stand against war was not a mere matter of passing a resolution to salve the conscience. The I.W.W. realized that foremost of all struggles confronting labor in time of war was the struggle for peace. Nor was the war question one that could be compromised in return for immediate benefits. From the outset the I.W.W. refused to trade in workers' blood. The 1916 convention said in part:

> With the European war for conquest and exploitation raging and destroying the lives, class consciousness and unity of the workers, and the ever growing agitation for military preparedness clouding the main issues and delaying the realization of our ultimate aim with patriotic and, therefore, capitalistic aspirations, we openly declare ourselves the determined opponents of all nationalistic sectionalism, or patriotism, and the militarism preached and supported by our enemy, the capitalist class. We condemn all wars and, for the prevention of such, we proclaim the anti-militarist propaganda in time of peace, thus promoting Class Solidarity among the workers of the entire world, and, in time of war, the General Strike in all industries.[1]

On adoption of this declaration the convention instructed officers "That every effort should be made to get this published in the capitalist press and that it should also be printed in leaflet form and widely distributed." They were confident that their anti-war position expressed the true feeling of the great majority of American workers. As William D. Haywood, General Secretary of the I.W.W., said, "I had a leaflet made of this resolution with a red border which we printed alongside of a resolution adopted by the American Federation of Labor, bordered in black, under the caption 'A Deadly Parallel.' These were circulated in vast numbers throughout the country."[2]

A number of A.F. of L. leaders had also declared themselves against war before it began. But the acid test came when President Wilson proclaimed a state of war against Germany. Most of these leaders fell by the wayside at the crucial mo-

ment. But not the I.W.W., which sent out a ringing call of opposition to the war, of which the following is an excerpt:

All class conscious members of the Industrial Workers of the World are conscientiously opposed to spilling the life blood of human beings... because we believe that the interests and welfare of the working class in all countries are identical. While we are bitterly opposed to the Imperialist Capitalistic Government of Germany, we are against slaughtering and maiming the workers of any country. In many lands, our members are suffering imprisonment, death and abuse of all kinds in the class war which we are waging for social and industrial justice.[3]

It soon became evident to the Wilson administration that the I.W.W. was a force to be reckoned with, especially in the West. An effort was made by the government to come to terms with it. "I received information," wrote Haywood, "that the government intended to make overtures to the I.W.W. the same as they had done to the American Federation of Labor." Realizing that acquiescence meant surrender of the anti-war stand, the I.W.W. refused to enter into any agreements. At a meeting of the General Executive Board held in Chicago, July 28, 1917, a final statement was adopted entitled, "Where the I.W.W. Stands on the Question of War." [4] It said in part:

Since its inception our organization has opposed all national and imperialistic wars. We have proved, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that war is a question with which we never have and never intend to compromsie....

The principle of international solidarity of labor to which we have always adhered makes it impossible for us to participate in any and all of the plunder-squabbles of the parasite class....

All members of the I.W.W. who have been drafted should mark their claims for exemption, "I.W.W., opposed to war."

Having failed to win over the I.W.W. to support of the war, the pro-war forces, headed by the government, joined in

an effort to destroy it. The I.W.W. fought furiously and heroically against these powerful forces. This page in its history remains an example of working class stamina and solidarity, and won it the admiration of class conscious workers the world over. It was hounded and persecuted, its members jailed and murdered, but the I.W.W. was never beaten. Aware of the power of its adversaries the I.W.W. picked its own field of battle, sometimes attacking, other times retreating, but always putting up a principled struggle for the defense of the economic conditions of the workers and for peace. For this the hatred of the ruling class was fed and fanned against the I.W.W. and its leaders. It was pronounced an "infernal combination of treason, pro-Germanism and anarchy."

BATTLES IN THE NORTHWEST

On May 1, 1916, the A.F. of L. International Shingle Weavers Union called a strike at Everett, Washington, for the 8-hour day, return to the 1914 wage scale and other demands. This followed rejection of these demands by the employers. The I.W.W. supported the strike. It already had great influence among the lumberjacks, many of them being floaters and foreign born, long neglected by the A.F. of L.

Brutalities were committed against the I.W.W. Members in Seattle who heard about it chartered a steamer and headed for Everett. Upon arrival, deputies and gunmen opened fire. Five workers were killed and 12 others were drowned. The national officers of the A.F. of L. union "having the best interests of the city at heart," [5] called off the strike. But the Everett Massacre was to be the "prelude for the struggles of the lumber workers to be fought in Washington and Idaho in 1917 and in Centralia in 1919." [6]

Early in 1917 the I.W.W. worked out the following de-

mands: 8-hour day; no work on Sundays or holidays; minimum monthly wage of $60; better food; more sanitary sleeping quarters; hiring from union halls; no discrimination against I.W.W. members. The I.W.W. felt it was in a good position to press these demands. For with the country at war, the government was dependent on the Northwest for most of its ship timber and most of the spruce for the air fleet. The I.W.W. grew rapidly and "captured the imagination of the lumberjacks. . . ." [7]

A prominent Washington business man admitted that "behind its demands for the eight-hour day and better living conditions in the lumber camps and on the farms is every laboring man in the State." [8]

Out of these demands a strike began in April and by June two-thirds of the lumber workers of Idaho, Montana and Washington had responded. The army was called out to break the strike and stampede the workers into submission. In Cle Elum part of the 3rd Oregon Infantry swooped down upon the strikers and later penned them in a stockade at Ellensburg, Wash. Many were held there for months without charges or trial. Soldiers were sent to many other points in Washington and Idaho. In Montana, Idaho and Minnesota "criminal syndicalism" laws were adopted in the hope of checking the onward march of the I.W.W.

By July 15 some 50,000 lumber workers in the Puget Sound timber belt joined the strike. Thus the battle raged over the Northwestern woods.

The lumber barons remained adamant. It was not only a matter of fighting the I.W.W. because of its militant program and tactics. It was a fight against the 8-hour day and for maintenance of super-profits. Robert Bruere made this clear in a series of articles published in the New York *Evening Post* in 1918:

At the conference between the Western lumber men and the President's Mediation Commission in Seattle, it was the practically unanimous opinion of experienced men that the I.W.W. had forced upon the serious attention of the lumber industry evils which had long needed correction. The operators frankly admitted that their opposition to the I.W.W. was simply an expression of their general opposition to all attempts of organized labor to interfere with their exclusive management of their business, and that the peculiar reputation for violence and lawlessness which had been fixed upon the I.W.W. was largely the work of their own ingenuous publicity agents.... But in war—and a strike is war—anything is fair. We have fought the I.W.W. as we would have fought any attempt of the A.F. of L. unions to control the workers in our camps. And of course, we have taken advantage of the general prejudice against them as an unpatriotic organization to beat their strike.[9]

After months of struggle and open terror the A.F. of L. leaders were able to withdraw their members from the strike. But the battle was not yet over. Only the tactic changed as the strike was transferred to the job. By referendum vote the I.W.W. decided

that the strikers should go back, and work no more than 8 hours a day or if at times they found it necessary to stay on the job 10 hours they should work slow so that no more than 8 hours' work should be done in 10 hours. Poor work for poor pay, poor food and poor conditions.[10]

MURDER IN BUTTE

On June 8, 1917, disaster overtook the famous mining town of Butte, Montana, as nearly 200 miners perished in a mine accident. In the words of a local miner,

They were caught like rats in a trap by the explosion of gas in the lower levels, the exits of which were blockaded by solid concrete bulkheads with no opening in them. This holocaust was the last straw. The miners, galling under abuses and working under

conditions which endangered their lives every moment underground, decided to call a halt to this condition of affairs, and not return to work until assured by the operators that the conditions would be corrected and the lives of the miners fully protected.[11]

Four days later, 14,000 Butte miners struck against death. Neglected by the A.F. of L. and completely unorganized, they formed the independent Metal Mine Workers' Union. Their demands were unique, five out of seven being concerned not with working conditions, but the *right to live.*

One of the strongest A.F. of L. unions in Butte, the Electrical Workers, under the fearless leadership of William F. Dunne, joined the miners. They also put up their own demands. Fearing that the strike might spread to other industries and crafts, the company granted the demands of the electricians. An international representative of the union ordered the men back to work or their charter would be revoked. "The union went back to work as a union and officially, but each individual member in the union took a vacation"[12] and laid off while the miners remained on strike.

The copper kings refused to meet with the miners. Their press raised the cry of "enemy of the Government" and "I.W.W." Soldiers were called out in an attempt to drive the men back at the point of bayonets.

A.F. of L., I.W.W. and independent unions all over the country came to the aid of the miners. The I.W.W. sent one of its outstanding leaders—Frank Little. A militant and courageous labor leader since 1906, and a consistent fighter for peace, Little had earned the hatred of the western capitalists. The copper bosses knew that as long as he was in Butte he would inspire the workers to carry on their struggle to a successful conclusion. Little had to be eliminated. A copper miner tells what happened:

At 3 o'clock in the morning of August 1st, six masked heavily armed men broke down the door of Little's room and dragged

him from his room in his night clothes, placed him in an auto, and took him to a railroad trestle at the edge of the town, and there hanged him. To his dead body was pinned a card, which read, "First and Last Warning—3-7-77," followed by the first letters of the names of prominent members of the strikers, which indicated that the perpetrators of the crime intended more violence on other members of the strikers....[13]

Little's funeral was the largest ever seen in the state. Thousands marched in the line of the funeral procession the entire distance of five miles from the city to the cemetery. His murder was hailed by certain newspapers as a "patriotic" act and similar treatment recommended for other labor leaders and strikers. Frank Little had gone to Butte to help the miners preserve their lives and in the fight had lost his own. It was a rude awakening. Many workers began to ask: "Why fight for democracy abroad when our people die from autocracy at home?"

WAR IN ARIZONA

Unionism had not made much headway in Arizona, one of the most important copper producing states. Wages were kept low and miserable working conditions prevailed. For many years the Western Federation of Miners, the A.F. of L. and the I.W.W. had to fight every inch to gain a foothold in the industry.

The leaders of the Arizona State Federation of Labor were loyal followers of Gompers, participating in the State Council of National Defense. The President of the State Federation of Labor, John L. Donnelly, as chairman of the Council's Labor Committee called a state conference of "those engaged as employers and employees in the great mining industry of the State" because differences of opinion as to industrial conditions "during the present crisis in this State and

Nation might prove disastrous to our efforts for public defense. . . ." The copper barons rejected any truce with labor, and instead declared in the press that they would "not compromise with rattle-snakes; this goes for the International—the A.F. of L. organization—as well as for the I.W.W."

The miners, having a tradition of militancy dating back to the Western Federation of Miners, and strongly under the influence of the I.W.W., refused to be intimidated. As a matter of fact the rank and file of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers had been clamoring for action for some time. The State Federation leaders hoped to avert a struggle by their appeal to the heads of the industry in the name of patriotism.

As soon as the miners learned of the collapse of the peace conference they began preparations for action. When the miners presented their demands in Jerome, the committee was fired. An A.F. of L. organizer, McCluskey, who came to town to avert a strike was driven out of town at the point of a gun by company thugs.

On May 25, 1917, the Jerome miners struck. The company sent a telegram to the Governor calling the strikers "foreigners" and "enemy aliens" and asked for two companies of regular troops. The same day the president of the State Federation of Labor also telegraphed the governor. Instead of asking for troops he stated: "The tie-up is complete. It can be settled by conference."[14]

Through the intervention of the federal government the A.F. of L. leaders withdrew their most important demands at the instance of Secretary Wilson. An agreement was adopted and the strike called off.

The I.W.W. had a strong membership and influence among the Jerome strikers. They demanded a voice in the negotiations, but were refused. When the "settlement" was announced

the I.W.W. called upon the miners to reject it and remain on strike. Many strikers followed this advice. From then on "law and order" prevailed as the company organized a squad of gunmen to round up all militant strikers. They were put on a train and forcibly sent to Needles, California.

Like the lumber barons, the copper kings miscalculated the reaction of the workers. Instead of collapsing in the face of terror, the strike spread to other parts of the state, culminating in the Bisbee deportations.

The Bisbee miners, under direct I.W.W. leadership, struck June 26. Two days later the Bisbee sheriff sent a telegram to the governor stating he expected bloodshed, that most of the strikers were foreigners and the whole thing appeared pro-German. He called for troops to take charge. His was the voice of the companies asking for troops in order to unleash violence against the strikers, although the latter were peaceful and orderly.

Meanwhile company officials and town business men formed a "Workmen's Loyalty League" which plotted secretly to destroy the union. On the morning of July 12, an armed mob of 2,000 with the sheriff at their head, took possession of the telegraph and telephone, placed guards all over town and proceeded to round up the strikers. The strikers were driven to a ball park. A "Kangaroo Court" was set up, the "judge" asking only if they were willing to return to work or be imprisoned or deported. Some 1,186 miners were thus loaded into cattle cars and sent into the Arizona desert. They finally landed at Columbus, New Mexico, where U. S. troops took charge. Here they stayed for three months torn away from their families and not permitted to return to their homes in Bisbee.

TAR AND FEATHERS IN TULSA

Strikes were not the only occasions for violence against both A.F. of L. and I.W.W. members. Even the threat of a strike was enough to let loose the forces of anti-labor terror. Tulsa, Oklahoma, is a characeristic example.

Even before the war the I.W.W. carried on intensive work among oil workers in Tulsa and other parts of Oklahoma. These workers were among the unorganized. Neglected by the A.F. of L., many of them turned to the I.W.W. in hope of improving their conditions.

When the I.W.W. developed a following in the industry, the oil corporations decided to strike first. Not long after the Butte and Bisbee outrages, an explosion took place in the home of a Standard Oil Co. official. Newspapers throughout Oklahoma declared it to be the work of the I.W.W., and predicted that it was the beginning of a campaign of terror. The populace was called to meet the I.W.W. "menace." Tulsa business men organized the "Knights of Liberty" to serve as their shock troops.

On the night of November 5, 1917, police and federal agents without any apparent reason raided the headquarters of the I.W.W., arrested 11 members, charging them with vagrancy. When arraigned they plead not guilty. During the trial, the defendants' attorney on several occasions declared that "if the police have any evidence that these men have been guilty of any act of disloyalty to this Government, I will withdraw from the case." His challenge remained unanswered. The trial ended November 9, with the judge declaring that "You are not guilty but I will fine you $100. These are no ordinary times." The prisoners were rushed back to jail, and with them six spectators in the court room.

While the men were on trial the local newspapers conducted a ferocious campaign against the I.W.W. The day of the

judge's decision, an editorial entitled "Get Out the Hemp" appeared in the Tulsa *Daily World*. It read in part:

> The attempt of the I.W.W. or any other organization to decrease by so much as the infinitesimal fraction of a barrel the oil supply of the government should be sternly repressed.... Any man who attempts to stop the supply for one-hundredth part of a second is a traitor and ought to be shot....
>
> In the meantime, if the I.W.W. or its twin brother, the Oil Workers Union, get busy in your neighborhood, kindly take occasion to decrease the supply of hemp. A knowledge of how to tie a knot that will stick might come in handy in a few days.... The first step in the whipping of Germany is to strangle the I.W.W.'s. Kill them, just as you would kill any other kind of a snake. Don't scotch 'em; kill 'em. And kill 'em dead. It is no time to waste money on trials and continuances and things like that. All that is necessary is the evidence and a firing squad.[15]

On the same day posters reading: "MR. I.W.W., DON'T LET THE SUN SHINE ON YOU IN TULSA. (Signed) Vigilance Committee," appeared in Tulsa.

Some of the prisoners were ready to pay the fine, but this was not acceptable. A sworn affidavit signed by one of the victims told how the men were suddenly taken out of their cells into waiting automobiles.

> Then the masked mob came up and ordered everybody to throw up their hands.... We were then bound, some with hands in front, some with hands behind, and others wrapped around the body. Then the police were ordered to "beat it" which they did, running, and we started for the place of execution.[16]

Arriving, they were ordered out and lined up in front of armed gunmen. They were then whipped, tarred and feathered. Another victim reported that the police evidently knew all that was going to happen when they took the men from jail. Extra gowns and masks were provided which were put on by the Chief of Police and a detective, "the number of

blows we received were regulated by the Chief of Police himself. . . ."

Glen Conlin, editor of the Tulsa *Daily World,* and author of its editorial quoted above, and his wife were also witnesses to the whipping, tarring and feathering. On November 16, a few days after the outrage, Conlin wrote: "The only criticism of their action that we have seen in any of the hundred newspapers comments that have come to our attention is by way of berating them (the Knights of Liberty) for not going a bit stronger." The Tulsa *Democrat* also approved the mob's action.

Most of these victims, like hundreds of Bisbee miners, never again "let the sun shine on them in Tulsa," for fear of their own lives and those of their families. Routed out of their homes, torn from their families, they took to the road.

AN ESTIMATE OF THE I.W.W.

There were other cases of terror and persecution. An I.W.W. organizer was tarred and feathered in Jackson, Michigan. Another in Aberdeen, S. D., was taken out of town and beaten; at Red Lodge, Montana, workers were whipped on suspicion of I.W.W. membership. At Franklin, N. J., an organizer was hung to a tree by the chief of police and a group of business men and was cut down only after losing consciousness. Why was there this reign of terror? Why of all labor organizations was the I.W.W. most bitterly attacked and misrepresented?

The evidence shows that the I.W.W. committed two "crimes." (1) It was opposed to the war; and (2) It fought for better living and working conditions. Responsibility for the outrages against the I.W.W. falls squarely on the shoulders of the alliance of the Wilson administration, the employers, the Gompers leadership, and the press.

Wilson had given Gompers a monopoly on "labor" in the same way he gave the employers a monopoly on war orders. He gave the lead at the 1917 convention of the A.F. of L. when he called the I.W.W. "an organization in this country whose object is anarchy and destroying the law. I despise and hate their purposes...." It was the President's Mediation Commission that refused to recognize or negotiate with the I.W.W. representatives. It was Department of Justice agents that not only failed to prosecute the real perpetrators of violence against the I.W.W. but even participated in attacks on it. It was Gompers who "had gone to Newton Baker, then Secretary of War, and had presented to him a plan to annihilate the I.W.W." When Baker was not yet ready for it, "the latter then went to the Department of Justice where he met with more success."[17] It was the Department of Justice that initiated nationwide Nazi-like raids upon homes of workers, setting the example to corporation vigilantes and gunmen.

And the call for violence as well as approval of vigilantism came even from the halls of Congress. Sen. Thomas of Colorado told the Senate on April 2, 1918: "I contend that the man who incites a strike at this time—I do not care what his motives are—is an enemy to the United States and should be treated as such. I declare, Mr. President, deliberately, that the fomentors of strikes in our labor ranks are traitors to the country whose protection they invoke."[18]

And Sen. McCumber spoke with pride of how I.W.W. workers were "ordered to leave. They were arrested.... There were too many of them to put into jail, so the farmers organized and came to town with their shotguns and they gave them orders to leave. They got out and they did not come back, and if they had, there would have been a great many funerals in that part of the State."[19]

The press also did its share to foment a spirit of violence,

hatred and intolerance toward organized labor, so strong in fact that the A.F. of L. was itself often the victim. Thus A.F. of L. strikers were often treated just as harshly as I.W.W. strikers.

"Prominent citizens" did their share to incite violence, in the name of fighting violence. Elihu Root, former Secretary of State, and Republican elder statesman, addressing the Union League Club, August 15, 1917, was quoted by the *New York Times* as saying:

If the people all understood why it is that we are going into this war, they would rise and crush these traitors down to earth. ... There are men walking about the streets of this city tonight, who ought to be taken out at sunrise and shot for treason, and if we are competent and fit for our liberty, we will find them out and get at them. There are some newspapers published in this city every day, the editors of which deserve conviction and execution for treason.[20]

Numerous impartial investigations were made of the activities of the I.W.W. during the war. They came to the conclusion that the charges of disloyalty and treason against the I.W.W. were not proven in a *single case*. After a year of newspaper libel charging the I.W.W. with being pro-German, a campaign to which the Department of Justice contributed, a Washington dispatch to the *New York Times,* July 17, 1918, advised:

Reports that the activities of the Industrial Workers of the World in the west recently had been financed by German gold have failed of substantiation after an exhaustive investigation by agents of the Department of Justice.

But the damage was already done. Professor Carlton H. Parker of the University of Washington, special agent of the War Department in dealing with the I.W.W. in the lumber industry in the Northwest during the war, denounced the

charges that the I.W.W. indulged in sabotage or other unlawful activities. And the New York *Evening Post* declared editorially that the

> belief that the Administration's policy against the I.W.W. and in a lesser degree against the Socialist Party can be based on a general assumption of conspiracy and treason in time of war is an impossible one and a dangerous one. The fact cannot be explained away that the I.W.W. does embody one phase of the labor movement in this country, and only blindness will persist in regarding every manifestation of labor trouble under the I.W.W. auspices as a pro-German conspiracy calling for the strong hand.[21]

Another conclusion reached by impartial investigations was the fact that the employer's struggle against the I.W.W. was part of a general struggle against organized labor as a whole. John Fitch writing in the *Survey* said that:

> Unscrupulous employers are endeavoring to take advantage of the disrepute of the I.W.W. in order to further their own ulterior ends. Hardly a strike occurs in which the cry "I.W.W. influence" is not immediately raised. The street car strike in San Francisco ... was ascribed to the I.W.W., though it is being handled by a representative of the Amalgamated Association of Street and Electric Railway Employees, a union affiliated with the American Federation of Labor. The strike of iron workers in the shipyards, all members of unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, was said to be fomented by the I.W.W. The move for an eight-hour day in the lumber camps of Washington, endorsed by no less a person than Newton D. Baker, Secretary of War, was denounced to the world as a part of the I.W.W. conspiracy to injure the government....
>
> It is most disheartening that these exploiters can resort to extreme lawlessness in the furtherance of their ends without evoking a protest from the public. Because of this spirit of acquiescence, the dread initials of the Industrial Workers of the World can be used not only to injure the legitimate labor movement everywhere, but also as a red herring across the trail of those employers who do not hesitate to use the nation's plight as an opportunity to strengthen their unjust practices.[22]

Even the President's Mediation Commission in its final report was forced to make this significant statement: "Too often there is a glaring inconsistency between our democratic purposes in this war abroad and the autocratic conduct of some of those guiding industry at home. This inconsistency is emphasized by such episodes as the Bisbee deportations." [23]

Robert Bruere, in his study of the I.W.W. during the war, makes this observation: "The mystery began to clear soon after the President's Mediation Commission opened its conference in Phoenix. It developed early in these hearings that in the State of Arizona all labor leaders, all strikers, and all persons who sympathize or are suspected of sympathizing with strikers are lumped under the general designation of 'I.W.W.' or 'Wobbly'." [24]

The company mobs in fact made no distinction whether workers struck under A.F. of L. or I.W.W. leadership, whether a worker carried an A.F. of L. or I.W.W. card. In this connection the Bisbee deportation is perhaps most revealing. The President's Mediation Commission, for instance, disclosed that of the 1,200 deported miners, 381 were members of the A.F. of L., 426 of the I.W.W. and 361 belonged to no labor organization. It also revealed that 662 were either native-born or naturalized citizens; 62 ex-soldiers and sailors; 472 registered under the Selective Draft Law; 205 owners of Liberty Bonds, and 520 subscribers to the Red Cross. Among the foreign-born workers there were 141 British, 179 Slavs, and 82 Serbians. Only a few were Germans.[25]

The 1917 figures clearly show that the majority of strikes were led by A.F. of L. unions, yet the cry of I.W.W. drowned out the demands of the workers or their organizations. They were all lumped together as "Wobblies."

The I.W.W. made a supreme effort to counteract this campaign. But it was a difficult job as newspapers and other public agencies were closed to them. Their only means was the

distribution of handbills, for which they were often arrested and jailed. A typical such handbill is reproduced below:

TO THE PUBLIC, AND PARTICULARLY THE WORKING MEN AND WOMEN OF THIS VICINITY:

The I. W. W. wishes to warn society in general that, despite the lying statements in the capitalist press regarding this organization, society has nothing whatever to fear from the I. W. W. We wish you to understand that the I. W. W. has no intentions of resorting to violence in any form in retaliation for the numerous outrages perpetrated on our members throughout the county.

There is nothing destructive in the policies or tactics of the I. W. W.; in fact, our policy is to elevate, not to tear down. The history of the labor movement will show that the I. W. W. has never used violence in their strike or struggles for better conditions and more of the good things of life. The I. W. W. has been accused of every act of violence imaginable. Our membership have been murdered, beaten, thrown into jail, subject to every abuse that the master class could hire thugs to do. And, always remember that the excuse for so doing was the supposed crimes that the I. W. W. was SUPPOSED TO BE GOING TO DO, not for crimes or acts committed, but for crimes that the I. W. W. was SUPPOSED TO DO IN THE FUTURE. Tulsa, Okla., and Aberdeen, S. D., are good examples of the hysterical condition that society has been wrought up to by the lying statements and insidious rumors of the capitalists' tools and press. DON'T BELIEVE THEM.

Working men and women, why not get your information first hand? Why take anyone's word for the truth? Investigate for yourself. If you wanted a pair of shoes you would not go to a grocery store for them, would you? You would go to a shoe store. If you want the truth in regards to the I. W. W., go to the I. W. W.

But remember, the purposes and aims of the I. W. W. is Industrial Unionism and NO side issues whatsoever. The only "war" we are concerned in at the present time is the war of Capital vs. Labor. And the weapons are Organization and Education. DON'T BE MISLED!

I. W. W.

Because the I.W.W. fought for peace in time of war, 4,000 of its members were prosecuted. More than 1,000 were sent to

prison. In all these cases the only crimes proven were expressions of opinion by word or in print. In none of the numerous dramatic trials at any time were acts of violence, espionage and pro-Germanism proven, even though these charges were made again and again in the newspapers.

As this is written the press of today raises the cry of "Fifth Column." In Congress the cry against aliens is becoming louder and anti-alien bills are passed. Vigilante mobs are again used against dissident labor groups. Are we going to repeat the same experiences as in the first World War, or have we learned from the past? Will employers succeed in raising against Communists the same hysteria as against the I.W.W., and then utilize this hysteria against the A.F. of L. and C.I.O.? Such efforts will be made. But will labor have learned its lesson from the last war; from the tactics of the Nazis and Fascists before the second imperialist war and from the present experiences of the French and British workers?

VI. Fighting for Peace in Wartime

NEW PEACE MOVEMENTS

There is no more daring struggle than the fight for peace in time of predatory war. Only courageous people with high devotion to principle are capable of it. It is said that all is fair in love and war. And it was considered fair in the period of the first imperialist war to brand loyal and devoted people traitors. It was fair to dress them in tar and feathers; to hang them; to shoot them; to deprive them of their families, jobs, and professions; to send them to prison.

During the last war thousands of courageous Americans underwent such experiences. They were not limited to the I.W.W. or to the Socialist Party. They were in the A.F. of L., among university professors, among mothers whose sons were across the seas, and even in Congress.

True enough, many professional peace societies that had been strong for peace in time of peace withered away in time of war. It was easy and fashionable to talk about peace at afternoon tea parties. But "fashions" changed when the drums were beating and the bugles calling. These organizations were soon replaced by more daring ones after the first World War broke out.

Among the first of the new peace organizations was the Women's Peace Party under the leadership of Jane Addams. Formed in 1915, it soon developed into a national organization rallying the women of the country against entrance into the war.

A year later the Anti-Preparedness Committee was formed and conducted a remarkable campaign against militarism, pointing out that under the slogan of "preparedness" the country was being led into war. This organization's anti-war activities were very effective. Its name was later changed to the American Union Against Militarism. Its representatives appeared before the Senate Committee on Military Affairs denouncing various militaristic measures. In 1917, before our entry into the war, the Emergency Peace Federation was formed in an effort to "Keep America out of war and its attendant consequences." This organization stood out for its anti-war literature, public mass meetings, and peace delegations to Washington.

After America entered the war some of these peace organizations replaced old slogans to fit the new situation. They came to stand for a speedy conclusion of the war, and a clear declaration by the government of its war aims.

THE SOCIALIST PARTY AND THE WAR

Unlike the Socialist Parties in most European countries, the American Socialist Party officially adopted a vigorous anti-war position. Seeing that war was imminent, just before the U. S. declaration of war it called an emergency convention in St. Louis for April 7-14, 1917. The question of what position to take towards the war was the main concern of this convention. Although traditionally Socialists the world over were opposed to war, the majority of the Socialist Parties supported the war, siding with their own governments. The very fact that the St. Louis convention remained true to the spirit of internationalism indicates the deep anti-war sentiment that prevailed among the American people. A small group of delegates led by John Spargo attempted to lead the Socialist Party into a pro-war position, but mustered only 5 votes out of 177.

Although written 23 years ago, the St. Louis anti-war resolution developed an approach to war which, in spite of some unclarities, is applicable today. It reaffirmed "its allegiance to the principle of internationalism and working class solidarity the world over," and proclaimed its "unalterable opposition to the war just declared by the government of the United States." The declaration exposed the hypocritical war aims. "The wars of the contending national groups of capitalists are not the concern of the workers. The only struggle which would justify the workers in taking up arms is the great struggle of the working class of the world to free itself from economic exploitation and political aggression, and we particularly warn the workers against the snare and delusion of so-called defensive warfare. As against the false doctrine of national patriotism we uphold the ideal of international working-class solidarity. In support of capitalism, we will not willingly give a single life or a single dollar; in support of the struggle of the workers for freedom we pledge our all."

Although Morris Hillquit and other outstanding leaders of the Socialist Party supported this anti-war declaration, it was Eugene V. Debs and Charles E. Ruthenberg and their followers who translated it into action.

They devoted their time and energy to exposing the war and arousing the people for peace and freedom. Their opposition to war was not like that of Jane Addams and other pacifists. For they understood the class character of the war, the system that breeds war, and how lasting peace could be achieved. When Ruthenberg and other leading Socialists were imprisoned for anti-war activities Debs told the people why. In a speech delivered in Canton, Ohio, on June 16, 1918, Debs declared:

> The master class has always brought a war and the subject class has fought the battle. The master class has all to gain and nothing to lose, and the subject class has had all to lose but nothing to

gain. They have always taught you that it is your patriotic duty to go to war and slaughter yourselves at their command. You have never had a voice in the war. The working class who makes the sacrifices, who shed the blood, have never yet had a voice in declaring war. The ruling class has always made war and made peace.[1]

For delivering this address Debs was arrested, charged with violating the Espionage Act, and sentenced to 10 years in prison. The United States Supreme Court reaffirmed the decision. Even though Debs knew that the jury represented a world at the opposite pole from his own, he told the court:

Your Honor, the five per cent of the people that I have made reference to, constitute that element that absolutely rule the country. They privately own all our public necessities. They wear no crowns; they wield no scepters, they sit upon no thrones; and yet they are our economic masters and our political rulers. They control this Government and all of its institutions. They control the courts. The five per cent of our people who own and control all of the sources of wealth, all of the nation's industries, all of the means of our common life—it is they who declare war; it is they who make peace; it is they who control our industry. And so long as this is true, we can make no just claim to being a democratic government—a self-governing people.[2]

As Debs approached the prison gate he said: "'I enter the prison doors a flaming revolutionist—my head erect, my spirit untamed, and my soul unconquerable!" Even though Debs was shut off from the outside world for over two years, his prestige and standing within the ranks of American labor continued to grow. Debs was the most outstanding symbol of a man fighting for peace in time of war. When he ran for president while still at Atlanta Federal Penitentiary in 1920, Debs received nearly a million votes—the highest cast for a labor candidate up to that time.

Another outstanding fighter against the war was Earl Browder, now general secretary of the Communist Party of

the United States. A young socialist leader, Browder's activities resulted in his being convicted in 1917 of violating the draft laws. He served about two years in Leavenworth Penitentiary. In 1940, Browder was again threatened with imprisonment, a victim of war hysteria.

FIRST AMERICAN CONFERENCE FOR DEMOCRACY AND PEACE

The outbreak of the Russian Revolution in 1917 created a profound impression on the American working class. It stirred forces that had been dormant and without hope in the face of the gigantic pro-war barrage. It brought new strength and impetus to those who wanted a speedy end of the war. Demands of the Russian Revolution for immediate peace on the basis of no annexations, no indemnities and self-determination of peoples became the most popular slogans of anti-war fighters.

A number of A.F. of L. unions cut loose from Gompers' pro-war policies and joined with Socialists and other peace organizations in a new aggressive anti-war movement. On May 30 and 31, 1917, the First American Conference for Democracy and Terms of Peace was held in New York. The conference endorsed the peace terms of the Russian Revolution and the defense of civil liberties and living standards at home.

How deeply the progressive trade unions, the Socialists and liberals in America were impressed with the events in Russia can be seen from the foreword of a printed report of this conference:

> Such an organization was rendered doubly necessary by the revolution in Russia.... They (the American people) wanted to make known to this free Russian people that the feelings of those who

> dwell in America were not truly expressed by the war-like and undemocratic action of the official government that was elected to represent them. They wanted to show that they stand solid behind the Russian democracy and are ready to work with them until the autocracy of the entire world is overthrown.[3]

The conference favored "an early democratic peace, to be secured through negotiation in harmony with the principles outlined by the President of the United States and by revolutionary Russia, and substantially by the progressive and democratic forces of France, England, Italy, Germany, Austria, etc., namely: (a) no forcible annexations of territory; (b) no punitive indemnities; (c) free development of all nationalities."[4]

Speaking for the resolution, Morris Hillquit, chairman of the Socialist Party, declared that the war was "essentially a war for international trade and markets." The Socialist Congressman Victor Berger, in his address, declared:

> This war to me, ladies and gentlemen, is the Morganatic marriage, an illegal marriage between Lombard Street, London, and Wall Street, New York. The issues are illegitimate war babies down in Wall Street, and every time you mention peace one of these babies is ready to die... and we will stay in this war until our American people follow in the footsteps of the Russian people and establish a social democracy.[5]

Edward J. Cassidy, of the New York Central Federated Union spoke on labor and peace. Miss Leonora O'Reilly of the National Woman's Trade Union League, in an address on "Safeguarding Labor in War Time," declared that

> not only the labor movement, not only the trade unionists, not only these Socialists, not only these agitators, but the whole people together will begin to sense how fundamental are the teachings of that much abused labor movement which teaches that every child that is born be taught that labor creates all wealth and that all wealth belongs to those who create it.[6]

Alexander Trachtenberg spoke on the developments in Russia, the international character of the Russian Socialist movement and its opposition to the imperialist war, saying that "The whole Russian working class is imbued with internationalism. It has been taught so from the very beginning." [7] Seymour Steadman discussed the right of free speech and the right to strike in war-time. "Let us make one thing emphatic," he said, "that as liberty rises in Russia it shall not perish here." [8]

The conference called for the establishment of a permanent national People's Council. The majority were expected to come from progressive trade union locals, single tax associations, Socialist locals, the Granges and the Farmers' Cooperative Union. The conference ended with a great mass meeting in the old Madison Square Garden attended by a capacity audience of 15,000 people at which its program was enthusiastically approved.

THE PEOPLE'S COUNCIL

The conference in New York stimulated the anti-war movement all over the country. Conferences took place in Chicago, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Salt Lake City, Seattle, and many other cities and towns. James H. Maurer, President of the Pennsylvania Federation of Labor, made a coast-to-coast tour, addressing mass meetings and trade unions, calling upon labor to organize the anti-war movement. Hundreds of local Workmen's Councils were formed. It is estimated that the movement represented some two million, including trade unions and other labor organizations.

Late in the summer of 1917 a national conference was called to take place in Minneapolis on September 1-2, to form a national organization, the People's Council of America for

Democracy and Peace. The purpose and program of the Council were outlined in the call:[9]

TERMS OF PEACE

1. To demand that our government shall announce immediately in concrete terms its war aims, and shall seize every opportunity to achieve those aims through negotiation unhampered by the ambitions of other governments.
2. To strive for an early, democratic, and general peace in harmony with the principles outlined by Free Russia: (a) No forcible annexations; (b) No punitive indemnities; (c) Free development for all nationalities.
3. To urge international organization for the maintenance of world peace.

AMERICAN LIBERTIES

1. To defend our constitutional rights of free speech, free press, peaceful assemblage, and the right to petition the government.
2. To secure democratic control of foreign policy and a popular referendum on all questions of war and peace.
3. To work for the repeal of conscription laws.

ECONOMIC POLICIES

1. To safeguard labor standards.
2. To meet the cost of war by taxation of wealth.
3. To reduce the high cost of living.

This three-point program dealt with nearly all the vital problems facing American workers during the war. Labor responded with enthusiasm to this new, and rejuvenated anti-war movement.

Minneapolis was a strong union center, Mayor Van Lear was a Socialist and a leader of the Machinists Union. The sponsors felt that under such favorable circumstances the conference could be held there without molestation by local authorities, despite the violent attacks in the press. However, on the eve of the gathering the Governor of Minnesota issued

a proclamation barring it from the state. He said that the convention can, "in my opinion, under the circumstances have no other effect than that of aiding and abetting the enemies of this country."

The conference was hurriedly transferred to Chicago. The Governor of Illinois decided he could be no less patriotic than his Minnesota colleague. Troops were sent to Chicago and the conference broken up after one day's session. Determined to create a People's Council, the delegates met two weeks later in New York and formed the organization which did valuable and constructive work in enlightening the people as to the nature of the war and how to end it.

AMERICAN ALLIANCE FOR LABOR AND DEMOCRACY

The influence of the People's Council grew rapidly. In New York some of the largest A.F. of L. unions actively supported it. It challenged Gompers' authority to speak in the name of organized labor. He, in turn, said the Council was supported by "immense sums from the government of Germany," a charge then made against any organization adopting an anti-war position. What really disturbed Gompers was that a New York division of the People's Council announced it would protect the interests of wage earners during the war.[10] This was, of course, a direct challenge to his policy of class collaboration in wartime.

But Gompers and his associates were in no position successfully to counteract the work of the People's Council.

Some months after adoption of the St. Louis resolution by the Socialist Party, a group of pro-war Socialist intellectuals who had left the Party, conferred with the A.F. of L. executive council. Out of these efforts grew the American Alliance for Labor and Democracy which was organized August 16,

1917. Gompers made no secret of the fact that before launching the Alliance he asked and received the approval of the government, "as of course, was necessary under war emergencies." He writes: "I first submitted the proposition to the Advisory Commission and Council of National Defense and to George Creel who was chief of the Committee on Public Information. The plan was approved." It has since been established that the Alliance was financed by the federal government from beginning to end.

New York, the center of the People's Council, was made the center of the Alliance. One of the first things undertaken by the Alliance was an intensive "Americanization" campaign among the workers with the object of eliminating anti-war sentiments and of discrediting the Council. "Loyalty weeks," "loyalty material" for newspapers, "loyalty speeches" in munition plants, the sale of Liberty Bonds, and delegations to Europe to reach the French, English and Italian workers with war propaganda were part of the work of the Alliance.

When the People's Council called its national conference in Minneapolis, Gompers decided to call a national convention of the Alliance, of which he was president, to meet at the same place. "I wasn't going to run away. I was going to be there where they were. The psychology of the time and situation demanded that there should be a clean-cut distinction between what the People's Council represented and what the American trade unionists represented, and because the mind the people of the United States was focused upon Minneapolis we decided the conference should be held there." [11] This itself was a left-handed admission of the great support and influence of the People's Council.

Paid organizers of the A.F. of L. received telegraphic instructions to drop everything and concentrate on bringing delegations to Minneapolis. Of course the Alliance convention was not driven out of town. On the contrary, the Governor

was the first to greet it. A street parade was staged and the press hailed the convention. Gompers made his usual speech, each delegate signed a "loyalty pledge" before being seated and several "loyalty resolutions" were adopted. The government paid all expenses.

When the annual convention of the Federation took place soon after the Executive Council asked for an endorsement of the work of the Alliance. Delegate J. Mahlon Barnes, a leader in the Cigar Makers Union, led the fight against such an endorsement.

> The report of the committee [he declared] says that we endorse in full the patriotic work of the Alliance. There is a question arises as to what is patriotism here. I know something about the Alliance convention at Minneapolis. I was a spectator at that convention and I discovered that the Governor of Minnesota who was the first executive of a state in the union to, by proclamation, prevent the assembling of a peaceful congress of people and hounded them out of his state, was the first patriot who spoke at the Alliance convention in Minneapolis. That kind of patriotism I don't approve of and I describe it as anything but patriotic in America to deny free speech and free assemblage.
>
> I witnessed the welcoming of the Alliance convention to the city of Minneapolis by the labor-baiting and labor-hating press, column after column of praise for patriotism not yet expressed by the Alliance, but anticipated. The business organizations of the town had opened their doors for the patriotic Alliance; the same business organizations that are robbing the farmers and browbeating the labor organizations, as told to me by responsible representatives of the Central Body of Minneapolis.[12]

Barnes' speech created a profound impression. One of the "regulars" immediately moved to close discussion. The motion was lost. Another delegate who lost an 18-year-old brother in Flanders declared that "as long as war exists no man, no set of men, no nation can destroy the idea of peace. In that convention of the American Alliance for Labor and Democracy it became completely obliterated.... The ... Alliance ... is an

opposition movement more than it is an expression of the will of the great majority of the working class of this country."[13]

Other delegates expressed opposition to the Alliance because of its pro-war position. The significance of this discussion is all the more obvious when one considers that President Wilson had addressed the same convention only a few days before. For Gompers to have been defeated on this issue of endorsing the Alliance would have meant the repudiation of his pro-war position. All the heavy artillery was put into motion to prevent such a defeat. John P. Frey painted the Alliance as a militant movement in the interests of organized labor. Matthew Woll pleaded that since Gompers was also president of the Alliance, "refusal to endorse the good work of that Alliance means to place the President of this Federation in a most unenviable and embarrassing light and situation before our people and the public generally."[14] When Woll sat down another delegate got up: "I want to tell you brothers that I have been sent here from the Pacific Coast for one purpose, and that is to fight the kind of democracy that is spreading in the labor movement.... We are tired of our international officers signing agreements for us without our consent and making scabs of us."[15]

Gompers summarized the debate. He sensed the anti-war sentiment of the rank and file delegates, and therefore appealed to them to support the war in the name of pacifism:

Pacifist, as I have been all my life, going as far as any man living to try to make that pacifism real, when I find that there is a marauder or a band of marauders about and I would not defend my wife and my children and my neighbor's children from the attacks of such a monster, I would not be a pacifist, I would be a poltroon and a coward. The President of the United States, a life-long pacifist; the Secretary of War, Mr. Baker, a life-long pacifist; the Secretary of the Navy, a life-long pacifist; the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of Labor—I don't know of a militarist or an advocate of militarism that is in the cabinet of the President

of the United States. And now they are fighting men, and I as a life-long pacifist publicly here declare that I am a fighting man and I will fight to help my country.[16]

Despite all effort of Frey, Woll and Gompers, 402 votes were cast against endorsing the Alliance, and 1,305 did not vote. But the convention steamroller piled up 21,602 votes for it.

DISMISSALS, RAIDS, PROSECUTIONS

Although in this volume we are concerned chiefly with the labor movement, the picture would not be complete if we failed to mention labor's allies in the fight for peace. Professors and men of science who spoke up for peace were hounded and discriminated against as were the men in overalls. Academic freedom suffered as much as the workers' right to freedom of speech and assemblage.

There were hundreds of such cases. The following are typical. Professor James McKeen Cattell, for 20 years Professor of Psychology, and Dr. H. W. L. Dana, Assistant Professor of English, both of Columbia University, were dismissed in 1917. Scott Nearing, Dean of Toledo University, Dr. Carl Haessler, Instructor in Philosophy in the University of Illinois, Russell Scott, Instructor in French at Vanderbilt University, and Dr. Lyford Edwards, Department of Sociology, Price Institute, Texas, were among the other victims of war hysteria.

The drive against opponents of war in universities and colleges was so intense that a number of professors who fully supported the war resented such encroachments upon academic freedom. When Professor Cattell and Dr. Dana were dismissed from Columbia, Professor Charles A. Beard, a leading American historian, resigned as a protest "against the Prussian spirit in the University." Professor Henry R. Mussey also resigned for the same reason.

Hundreds of public and high school teachers were dismissed for the slightest criticism or opposition to war on religious, pacifist or other grounds.

One of the chief weapons of control of public opinion was the Espionage Act. Congress enacted this law as a measure against German spies, but soon *all* opponents of war were being prosecuted under it. More than a thousand people were arrested and charged with violation of this act. Most of these charges were utterances in public speeches, conversations, newspapers, books and pamphlets. Distribution of anti-war literature was considered a violation of the Espionage Act. Among the outstanding Socialists convicted under this act, in addition to Debs, were Kate Richards O'Hare, sentenced to five years' imprisonment, J. O. Bentall, five years, and Rose Pastor Stokes, ten years.

In February, 1918, a secret indictment was returned against five leaders of the Socialist Party including Victor L. Berger, Adolph Germer and J. Louis Engdahl. In the fall of that year, while still under indictment, Berger, who was elected in 1910 as the first Socialist Congressman in the United States, again was elected. But Congress refused to seat him in 1919. The trial of Berger and his associates in 1918-19 attracted national attention. Each of the five Socialist leaders was sentenced to 20 years imprisonment. Their case was appealed and they did not serve.

Another group of Socialists persecuted as a result of the war were the five New York State Assemblymen elected in November, 1919. They were expelled in January, 1920, by the legislature which brought charges of "disloyalty" against them. After lengthy hearings the expulsion was confirmed by the legislature. Another special election was held and the five were again chosen. This time the legislature voted to expel three of the five Socialists. The other two immediately resigned in protest.

Outstanding I.W.W. cases included that of William D. Haywood and 165 others in Chicago, sentenced to from one to twenty years; 46 members in Sacramento, Calif., sentenced to from three to ten years; seven members in Tacoma, Washington, to five years. Similar sentences were meted out to hundreds of other members of the I.W.W.

Even outstanding religious leaders did not escape the wrath of the government. Some paid dearly for their anti-war convictions. Outstanding among these was the Rev. Clarence H. Waldron of Burlington, Vt., who was given a 15-year sentence, and Joseph F. Rutherford, leader of the International Bible Students Association, who got a 20-year sentence.

People from all walks of life who dared to speak for peace were arrested and prosecuted. Raids and illegal searches were a common occurrence. Federal agents all over the country raided offices and homes of leaders and members of the Socialist Party, the Rand School of Social Science, the I.W.W. and the International Bible Students Association. Homes of citizens suspected of criticizing the war were invaded.

Many periodicals and newspapers were barred from using the United States mails by arbitrary ukase of the Postmaster General. "Some hundreds of papers have had their second class privileges withdrawn or issues suppressed. Some ten or more periodicals using third class rates were barred altogether. Some twenty books and pamphlets have been forbidden circulation by mail."[17] Among the persecuted were the *Masses,* New York *Call,* Milwaukee *Leader, American Socialist,* Toledo *People's Press, Eye Opener,* Cleveland *Socialist News,* Spokane *Socialist,* the *Bulletin* of the People's Council and many others.

Because of this persecution some of the war-time peace movements became perforce civil rights movements. Their energies had to be spent in large part in fighting for civil liberties. Because of this, the I.W.W. especially suffered

greatly. Instead of concentrating on the economic needs of the workers, it devoted too much of its time and forces to free speech struggles, thus separating these two phases of the same struggle.

Another weakness of the activities of these peace movements was that they did not strike back with sufficient vigor against the charge of disloyalty—even though with public opinion mobilized against them, the task was a difficult one.

Despite these weaknesses and handicaps the peace movement was strong and growing when the armistice was declared in 1918.

VII. When the War Was Over

ARMISTICE

November 11, 1918, was a most joyful day. The war had come to an end. From the horror, sorrow and grief of the war years, people looked to the future. At last the "war to end war" was over and the forces that fought to "save the world for democracy" had won.

In America there were additional reasons for optimism. The role of the United States in world affairs had greatly changed. The country was transformed from a debtor to a creditor nation. While industry in Europe had been practically destroyed, American industry had expanded. Europe loomed as a great market for American goods for many years to come. On the American continent and in the Pacific the United States had strengthened its position and had the advantage over England, Japan and other competitors. According to old conceptions and standards it looked as though the country had emerged from the war the richest in the world, with almost unlimited possibilities for further internal and external growth.

Few people realized then that a new and different world had come out of the war. The war did not end with the Wilsonian "just peace" talked of during the conflict. Instead it was divided into victors and vanquished. The Versailles Treaty was a pattern around which the post-war world was to be built. Of all the statesmen of the world, only the leaders of the young Soviet Republic predicted that the Versailles Treaty would be the cause of another and more horrible war, a prediction which some 20 years later became grim reality.

Nor was the world of 1919 able to fully appreciate the deep international significance of the new mode of life in Soviet Russia, then engaged in a life and death struggle with foreign and domestic enemies.

Nor did many realize that the most important fact arising from the war was the permanent crisis of capitalism on a world scale. The failure to realize this new and fundamental factor gave rise in America to many optimistic illusions of the unlimited possibilities in the future.

> Could America maintain its unique vigor while the disease spread? After all, the United States was but one segment of the capitalist system; it was subjected to the same afflictions. When the fire broke out in the basement and spread unchecked, was the attic safe? But American industrialists and bankers, if they considered the dilemma at all, perceived no reason for caution or dismay.[1]

However, it did not take long for the American ruling class to awaken to the fact that although the United States had become a creditor nation, Europe was unable to pay its war debts to this country. Instead it asked for more loans. Potentially Europe was a great market, but the people of Europe were so impoverished they were unable to buy here the things they needed.

The Armistice spirit did not last long at home. It was found that 130,128 American soldiers had been killed in the war and nearly 200,000 others wounded. The workers were increasingly aware that while they had suffered greatly during the war years in the belief they had sacrificed for a worthy cause, the capitalists had grown unbelievably rich. For example, "Eighteen leading American companies increased their net profits of $74,650,000 for the 1912-14 period to $337,000,000 for the 1916-18 period," according to Labor Research Association's *Labor Fact Book II*. While the misery of the workers increased there was a rapid growth of millionaires during the

same time. In 1914 there were 7,509 of them, in 1917 the number of millionaires jumped to 19,103 and among them were many of the sacrificing "patriots" known as "dollar-a-year-men." Munitions, food, electrical, mining and other capitalists reaped great profits.

Prices and the cost of living continued to rise even after the Armistice. Among the workers and farmers grew a feeling of having been cheated. The realization that factories producing munitions would soon close and men be thrown out of jobs added to the resentment.

When the Armistice came the workers felt that the wartime restrictions imposed upon them no longer held and that they were free to act. The victorious revolution in Russia and the rise of revolutionary movements in other European countries gave them additional impetus. There was a feeling that since the "war for democracy" had been won abroad, it was time to obtain a share of industrial democracy at home.

Gompers and other Federation leaders had often told the workers that when the war was over would be time to ask for many of these things; that labor would then share in the victory by an extension of industrial democracy.

Shortly after the Armistice a seemingly unimportant incident occurred, which should have indicated what was in store. It happened at a birthday dinner for Lafayette in Washington. General Pershing and Gompers were among the guest speakers. In his address Gompers spoke with pride of labor's share in helping to win the war. Pershing followed. Commenting on the latter's speech, one observer wrote: "rage fairly consumed him, his words fell burning and blistering . . . on the assumption that Gompers laid a claim to victory . . . Pershing denied that organized labor had been loyal to the country. . . . Vituperative, vitriolic, he poured upon the head of the old man a torrent of passionate contradiction which fairly swept the audience off their feet."[2] Gompers was stunned. Accus-

tomed to high praise, considering himself an ex-officio member of Wilson's cabinet, having done everything possible to hold labor in check while the war was on, he expected different treatment when the war was over.

A.F. OF L. RECONSTRUCTION PROGRAM

It was appropriate when the war was over for the A.F. of L. to formulate a new program. The problem of reconstruction was uppermost in the American mind, workers especially being concerned. The program of the new Soviet Government was discussed as were the reconstruction programs offered by the British Labor Party and the Socialist parties on the continent.

After months of consultation, discussion and joint thinking by the best brains of the Federation, a reconstruction program was offered and later adopted by the 1919 convention. If anything ever exposed the bankruptcy and lack of vision of these labor leaders, it was this program. Even more important, the program demonstrated that the fundamental problems the trade union movement faced before the war had remained unsolved. If anything, they became more aggravated as new problems arose. As one reads this program one inevitably wonders what labor gained during the war and whether the truce and "partnership" were worthwhile?

The program began with a plea for democracy in industry. It had suddenly been discovered that there was a great contradiction in American life, the contradiction between the worker as a "free citizen" at the same time living "under autocratically made law within industry." Obviously the war for democracy had not eliminated this contradiction, since its solution was still set as the number one goal. The program raised the question of unemployment but refused to approve unemployment insurance. It dealt with the need to combat

wage cuts at a time when the rank and file were asking for substantial wage increases to meet the continuous rise in the cost of living. The 8-hour day was an objective yet to be accomplished in a number of important industries. The program called for "freedom of expression and association" but the same convention refused to endorse a resolution favoring amnesty for war prisoners. On such a vital question as workers' independent political action, the program reiterated Gompers' old, worn-out formula of "rewarding friends" and "punishing enemies." At the time the program was debated the question of government ownership of the railroads was agitating the labor movement, but the A.F. of L. failed to back this step. The rest was a repetition of old and meaningless phrases, some taken from "Labor's Bill of Grievances" adopted by the A.F. of L. as long ago as 1906.

The program demonstrated again how little the A.F. of L. leaders had learned from the world-shaking events of the war and post-war period. Fortunately it did not express the state of mind of the entire Federation. Proof of this was the program of the Chicago Federation of Labor, strongly influenced by William Z. Foster, Jack Johnstone and their progressive following. The Chicago Federation called for a league of workers as opposed to the League of Nations. It called for abolition of unemployment through public works programs during depressions; for public ownership of railroads, public utilities, steamships, stockyards, grain elevators and telephone and telegraph; for an immediate and complete amnesty for political prisoners and for independent political action of the workers.

THE SEATTLE GENERAL STRIKE

It is amazing how many labor historians gloss over such a gigantic event as the country's first general strike. Some

merely mention that there was such a strike in Seattle in 1919, but avoid serious analysis. Yet this strike dramatized the post-war militancy of organized labor in America as did no other event. It is all the more significant when we consider that it was led and directed by conservative A.F. of L. unions and not by the militant I.W.W. Nor were the economic and political conditions of the workers in Seattle basically different from those in other American industrial cities.

The General Strike of February 6-11, 1919, grew out of a strike of 35,000 shipyard workers for higher wages. These workers made numerous attempts to raise their wages during 1917 and 1918, but like workers in other industries were not successful because of war restrictions. The Emergency Fleet Corporation, an agency of the federal government, not only failed to satisfy their demands, but actually warned some shipyards that if these demands were granted their contracts would be voided. The local unions were also restricted by international officers who had agreed to a no strike policy.

The Seattle labor movement was distinguished from that in many other cities in the high degree of unity among the various craft locals. A militant Metal Trades Council acted as co-ordinator. Their unity was cemented in joint struggles and by a local leadership relatively free from domination by the A.F. of L. top leaders. When the Seattle shipyard owners offered substantial wage increases to the skilled workers and refused an increase to the unskilled, the union representatives branded this scheme as a "bribe to induce the skilled men to desert their brothers."

After the Armistice, the local unions in Seattle no longer felt obligated by wartime restrictions and agreements signed without their consent. They felt that charges of "disloyalty" could no longer hold. All attempts to negotiate a satisfactory agreement failed and the overwhelming majority of the workers voted for a strike. On January 21, 1919, some 35,000 ship-

yard workers walked out. Despite efforts of the international officers to prevent the strike, or to split the ranks of the unions, it was a very successful walkout.

The Seattle labor movement, with its militant traditions and having many able local leaders imbued with a spirit of solidarity despite artificial craft barriers, looked upon the strike as their own fight. The day after it began, the Seattle Central Labor Council, on request of the Metal Trades Council, decided on a general strike in sympathy with the shipyard workers. This eventful decision was immediately submitted to the local unions for a referendum vote.

Within a few days 110 unions had voted for a general strike. The unanimity with which union after union voted in favor of a general strike was indeed remarkable, considering that most of these unions had contracts obtained after bitter strikes and sacrifices. News of the pending general strike swept the country. From the Atlantic to the Pacific the press reported the imminence of revolution in Seattle. Federal officials in Washington declared that the strike was the beginning of Bolshevism in the Northwest! Tension gripped Seattle and panic was rampant among the well-to-do. Business men took out riot insurance and purchased arms, and the local press appealed to labor "not to ruin their home city." The press played up prominently the news that some of the wealthy families had left the city. Meanwhile, people affected by the press hysteria, stored away food supplies and other necessities in expectation of a "long siege."

In the meantime the unions proceeded calmly with the organization and preparation of the strike. They refused to be sidetracked by the threats of the press, the business men or the international union officers who converged upon Seattle to prevent the strike. Since it was the first general strike, the unions had no past experience to draw upon, but only their own initiative.

A General Strike Committee was set up composed of 300 members elected from 110 local unions and the Central Labor Council. The committee assumed the role of a general staff. An executive committee of 15 was elected to put into effect the decisions of the larger body. Although unplanned, it was inevitable that the strike committee should come to govern Seattle for the duration of the strike. Supplying food, water, light, heat, transportation, milk for the children, caring for the sick, feeding strikers, preserving order—these were some of the problems to be faced on the eve of the strike. Although lacking experience in running a local government, the inventive genius of the workers helped them overcome this without the help of those who thought they had a monopoly on such functions. Committees were set up to handle transportation, provisions and exemptions.

The strike committee was aware that the rich of the city were fully armed and the danger of provocations was real. To meet this, two days before the strike the committee placed an advertisement in the *Union Record,* the official paper of the Central Labor Council, calling together labor union men who had seen service in the Army or Navy. The famous "Labor's War Veteran Guards" were thus organized to police the city and preserve order, a duty they performed nobly.

When all preparations were made the Strike Committee set 10 A.M. of Feb. 6 as the beginning of the general strike. "Together we win" became the slogan of the strike.

The day before the strike the *Union Record* published an editorial declaring that "We are undertaking the most tremendous move ever made by *labor* in this country, a move which will lead—*no one knows where!*" (Emphasis in original.) The editorial outlined the program of the Strike Committee. It declared that *labor* would feed the people and for this purpose "Twelve great kitchens have been offered, and from them food will be distributed by the provision trades at

low cost to all." It assured that *labor* would care for the babies and the sick. "The milk-wagon drivers and the laundry drivers are arranging plans for supplying milk to babies, invalids and hospitals." It told the people that labor would preserve order. "The strike committee is arranging for guards, and it is expected that the stopping the street cars will keep people at home."

The same editorial outlined in a general way the objectives of the strike. Here we see that beneath the sympathy for the yard workers there were more fundamental questions involved, and aims that went far beyond wage increases. The workers were tired of being ruled. "Not the withdrawal of labor power," declared the editorial, "but the power of the strikers to manage will win this strike. The closing down of Seattle's industries, as a *mere shutdown,* will not affect these eastern gentlemen [the shipyard owners]... *but,* the closing down of the capitalistically controlled industries of Seattle, while the *workers organize* to feed the people, to care for the babies and the sick, to preserve order—*this* will move them, for this looks too much like the taking over of *power* by the workers. Labor will not only *shut down* the industries, but labor will *reopen,* under the management of the appropriate trades, such activities as are needed to preserve public health and public peace. If the strike continues, labor may feel led to avoid public suffering by reopening more and more activities, under its own management. And that is why we say we are starting on a road that leads—no one knows where." (Emphasis in original.)

At the appointed hour the workers downed tools. The strike was on—60,000 men and women were out. The second day, the anti-labor *Post-Intelligencer* was forced to admit that "not a wheel turned in any of the industries employing organized labor or in many others which did not employ organized labor." The walkout was complete and the strike was a suc-

cess. With the exception of government employees, the A.F. of L. unions, the I.W.W. and many unorganized workers all joined hands. Tacoma followed Seattle and declared a general strike. Greetings and help came from nearby cities and towns. A number of unions in nearby Renton struck. A union delegation was sent to Seattle pledging that no Seattle work would be done in Everett.

The majority of the members of the strike committee proved worthy and capable of the tasks that confronted them, supplying the milk for the children, feeding thousands of strikers and their families, maintaining order, directing transportation, combating false rumors. Organized labor proved itself capable of managing the life of a great city.

All the forces at the command of big business were organized to break the strike. Within 24 hours after the strike began, the Mayor was asked to call it off. He announced that the soldiers were ready to act. In a statement to the press flashed throughout the country the Mayor declared that he was putting down an attempted Bolshevik revolution. Troops marched into the city under Major General Morrison. Business men openly took up arms, waiting for their hour of vengeance. The international officers that had come to Seattle acted as a fifth column within the ranks of the strikers, and with the press did their share of strikebreaking.

On February 11, the General Strike was terminated. Newspapers falsely declared that the strike had been lost. The History Committee of the General Strike Committee later published a report in which it gave labor's views on the results of the strike. It declared:

> ...The workers of Seattle did not go back to work with the feeling that they had been beaten. They went smiling, like men who had done a big job and done it well. The men went back, feeling that they had won the strike....They went back proud of themselves for the way they had come out; proud of themselves for the

way they had kept order under provocation; glad to have gained so much education with so little comparative suffering; glad to have worked shoulder to shoulder with their fellow unionists on a lot of big problems; and a bit relieved, to tell the truth, that no one had been raided, no one shot and that the labor movement of Seattle was still going strong. For they were quite aware that they held in their hands a weapon which might have exploded in any one of a dozen different directions. They were glad to find themselves able to use it, to examine it and to lay it down without any premature explosions.[3]

The Seattle strike saw the beginning of a new nation-wide wave of strikes, of a growing political independence by labor and of widespread resentment against the Gompers' leadership.

OTHER POST-WAR LABOR BATTLES

On the day the Armistice was announced a general strike broke out in the men's clothing industry of New York. It was the workers' answer to a lockout by manufacturers who refused to grant the 44-hour week and wage increases. The Amalgamated Clothing Workers was then in the front rank of progressive trade unions. It was not affiliated with the A.F. of L. but steered an independent, militant course. The membership was greatly aroused by the events in Russia which further stimulated their struggles for social gains in America.

Over 60,000 clothing workers took part in the union's 1918 strike, which spread from New York to Chicago and other centers. Discharged soldiers and sailors who were members of the union came to the picket lines in their uniforms. After three months of struggle, the strike ended in complete victory. In May, 1919, the Amalgamated celebrated its greatest accomplishment—the 8-hour day.

Another strike of major importance involved 17,000 New York harbor workers in January, 1919. They too struck for the

8-hour day. "...the harbor was as calm as a mill pond.... Tugs, lighters, ferries, scouts, barges, the entire harbor equipment was at a standstill..."[4] Eight local craft unions banded together, formed the Marine Workers' Affiliation and combined their efforts and energy to face the shipowners.

The strike was so successful and so dramatic that it attracted the attention of the entire nation. President Wilson, who was then in Europe attending the peace conference, cabled asking the National War Labor Board to intervene. The international officers of the union forced the workers back, placing them at the mercy of the Board.

The Board's award gave even less than the employers had been prepared to grant. Enraged and indignant, the harbor workers on March 4 struck a second time. It was as effective as the first. In addition 45,000 longshoremen gave their support. For six weeks the strike was solid, the ranks unbroken and victory in sight. But, "where the government and the employers failed to break the solidarity of the workers, the labor officials succeeded."[5] Officials of the International Longshoremen's Association were able to split the ranks of the Marine Workers' Affiliation by inducing the members of the Tidewater Boatmen's Union and the Lighter Captains' Union to make a separate agreement with the employers and return to work alongside scabs. As a result of this treachery the unions in the marine industry soon disintegrated.

A magnificent struggle was fought and won by the textile workers of Lawrence, Mass., who were practically unorganized. Only a small local of the United Textile Workers was in existence. The textile workers were still working a 54-hour week, and wanted a 48-hour week. Immediately, the American Woolen Co., the largest concern in the city, inserted a notice in pay envelopes asking whether the workers wanted six hours less pay.

This threat of a wage cut galvanized the workers into action. A central committee of elected delegates from all mills was set up. The workers adopted the slogan "48-54" (i.e., 48 hours work for 54 hours pay). On February 3, 1919, some 32,000 of them walked out for this demand.

The strikers, the General Strike Committee, and the leaders who came to help, suffered from every form of vilification and persecution. Newspaper hostility, citizen committees, police brutalities, denial of open air meetings even on private property, paid spies in the Strike Committee and among the people, attempts to frame up the leaders, and finally the use of lynch law by masked Vigilantes upon two of the strike leaders.[6]

But the workers withstood these attacks. Labor everywhere gave them generous support. The Amalgamated Clothing Workers was especially helpful in providing organizers and financial aid. After 16 weeks, the Lawrence textile barons bowed to the demands of the strikers. The 48-hour week without reduction in pay was won, plus a small wage increase.

Out of this strike grew the Amalgamated Textile Workers of America, an independent union that had gained strength and influence in the leading New Jersey textile centers and in other parts of the country. It was another sign of disillusion of the workers with the Gompers leadership of the A.F. of L. and their desire to organize independently.

These few strikes are characteristic of the many that took place following the Armistice. Whether these strikes were won or lost, all had certain features in common: they were neither initiated nor led by A.F. of L. top leaders. And the three chief demands were the 8-hour day, wage increases and union recognition.

If these were the main demands of the workers after the war ended, then what had they gained by supporting the war?

GREAT STEEL STRIKE

The 1919 steel strike was to decide the future of the American labor movement for many years to come. We have already seen how Gompers' sabotage robbed the steel unionization drive of one of the most important elements for success, as advocated by William Z. Foster—the time element. More than any other event this strike exposed the ruinous policies of the A.F. of L. leadership.

The main demands of the steel workers were essentially the same as those of other workers: the 8-hour day, right of collective bargaining, wage increases. Workers in many other industries had won these demands during the war, either through strikes or pressure on government agencies. In the case of the railroad workers Congress enacted the Adamson 8-hour law. The steel industry being the citadel of anti-unionism naturally fought back the hardest. With little help from the A.F. of L. international unions involved, Foster and a small group set out to challenge the Steel Trust. With speed and enthusiasm, the workers responded to the call for organization and action. News of the Seattle General Strike and the strike wave throughout the nation penetrated even the isolated steel towns. In July, 1919, the movement was already so powerful that the leaders decided to submit the question of strike to a referendum. The vote was almost unanimous for a strike. Immediately afterwards, the national organizing committee made a second request for a conference with the U. S. Steel Corp. To this Judge Gary replied that "our corporations and subsidiaries decline to discuss business with them (the unions)," and "the corporations and subsidiaries are opposed to the 'closed shop' and they stand for the 'open shop'." Shortly thereafter Gompers went to the White House to ask that President Wilson call a conference of both sides.

Wilson promised to confer with Gary and induce him to attend such a conference. On this basis the unions delayed setting a strike date. "A week passed," Foster relates, "with no word from the President." Workers' conditions in the steel industry were becoming worse. The companies, realizing the importance of striking the first blow, were discharging men by the thousands. The unions could wait no longer. They had to move or be annihilated.[7] On September 4, the union leaders informed President Wilson that thus far they were able "to prevail upon the men not to engage in a general strike. We cannot now affirm how much longer we will be able to exert that influence."

Soon after, President Wilson informed the national committee that he was unable to arrange a joint conference. Furthermore, he insisted that the strike be held off until the Industrial Conference called for the following month. Gompers asked the union to "conform to the wish expressed by the President."

Under different circumstances there would have been no strike. The steel workers would have been defeated and their forces dispersed without a fight. But this time it was not Gompers but Foster who was the leader. The workers backed him and were determined to strike on September 22.

> Many long and weary months they had waited patiently [wrote Foster] under the urgings of the organizers, for a chance to redress their grievances. And now when they had built their organization; taken their strike vote; received their strike call and were ready to deliver a blow at their oppressors, the opportunity of a generation was at hand, and they were not going to see it lost. They would not postpone indefinitely, and in all likelihood break up altogether, the movement they had suffered so much to build, in the vague hope that the Industrial conference, which they had no guarantee would ever consider their case, and which was dominated by their arch enemies, Gary and Rockefeller, would in some distant day do something for them.... Under such cir-

cumstances the workers could not consent to the withholding of the strike. Practically all the steel districts in the country solemnly warned the National Committee that they would strike on September 22, in spite of any postponement that was not based on positive assurances that justice would be done. The control of the situation was in the hands of the rank and file.[8]

On the date set 365,000 workers emptied the great steel mills and joined the strike, a strike that was to last three and a half months. Every conceivable weapon was used to break the ranks of the workers. Civil liberties were destroyed. The A.F. of L. top leaders sabotaged the strike, and unions like the United Mine Workers and those in the railroad industry, which could have turned defeat into victory, adopted a passive attitude.

What had happened to all Wilson's promises that labor would share in the war gains? What happened to Gompers' promises that, in turn for loyal services during the war, labor would get greater recognition than ever before? The steel strike exposed the "pro-labor" Wilson administration. It taught the American workers a great lesson, but a costly one. The defeat marked an end of the rapid post-war growth of the trade unions and the beginning of the great open-shop offensive.

THE MINERS STRIKE

As the steel strike had shown that labor could not expect any help from the Wilson administration, the miners' strike exposed the administration as a strike-breaker.

At the beginning of the war the leadership of the U.M.W.A. had displayed some signs of independence, but as time went on all semblance of this disappeared and Gompers' policies prevailed. In 1917 the union signed a duration-of-the-war agreement with the U. S. Fuel Administration. The cost of

living was mounting and the miners reached the limit of endurance. Local unions demanded action from their international officers.

In July, 1918, the representatives of the union asked the Fuel Administration for an opportunity to present the miners' grievances, and urged that a wage increase be granted. When this request was ignored, the union renewed its demands a month later. H. A. Garfield, Fuel Administrator, again refused, holding the union bound to its war agreement. The miners then made a direct appeal to President Wilson for "an opportunity to be heard." The President turned a deaf ear, and after the Armistice affirmed the position of the Fuel Administrator. The miners then realized that they had been double-crossed by the administration, and so began to look for other means to obtain their demands.

The war was over. Whatever price restrictions had been placed on the coal operators by the Lever Act were lifted and the Fuel Administration practically ceased to function. The miners' officials therefore felt that they too were no longer obligated by wartime restrictions.

The 1919 convention of the union at Cleveland found nearly 2,200 delegates present representing 500,000 organized miners. Never before was the union so strong and ready for battle. The most important issue at the convention was the economic conditions of the workers. Most of the delegates came instructed and determined that the convention should take action. The miners formulated their demands for a 60% increase in wages, time-and-half for overtime and elimination of the penalty clause. If a satisfactory wage agreement was not reached before November 1, 1919, the international officials were instructed to call a general strike of all bituminous miners.

The coal companies refused to negotiate with the union representatives until the strike order, decided upon by the convention, was withdrawn, a demand no self-respecting union

could accept. With other possibilities for a peaceful settlement exhausted the union issued the strike call on October 15.

A week later President Wilson issued a statement to the country that shocked the whole labor movement. Even such docile labor leaders as Gompers could scarcely swallow it. The heart of this statement was that "A strike under these circumstances is not only unjustifiable; it is unlawful."[9]

When the President declared the strike "unlawful" things began to happen with "blitzkrieg" rapidity. A few days later the notorious Attorney-General A. Mitchell Palmer declared that "It does not follow that any strike is lawful merely because the right to strike is recognized to exist.... The facts present a situation which challenges the supremacy of the law, and every resource of the Government will be brought to bear to prevent the national disaster which would inevitably result from the cessation of the mining operations." On top of this Congress adopted an emergency resolution giving "the National Administration and all others in authority the assurance of our constant, continuous, and unqualified support in the use of such constitutional and lawful means as may be necessary to meet the present industrial emergency."

These were no mere words. On the eve of the strike the federal government applied and obtained a temporary restraining order against all officers of the U.M.W.A. The injunction was so severe that it restricted the officials of the union from counseling, aiding or being in any way connected with the strike.

The Executive Council of the A.F. of L. had its back to the wall. Gone were the days when "labor statesmen" were embraced, when Gompers was a frequent visitor at the White House. Their services were no longer needed. Somewhat bewildered, Gompers issued a public statement, complaining that he had not received what was promised him.

"It is almost inconceivable," an A.F. of L. statement de-

clared, "that a government which is proud of its participation in a great war to liberate suppressed people should now undertake to suppress the legitimate aims, hopes and aspirations of a group of its own people." [10]

Despite the temporary injunction, on November 1, 1919, nearly a half a million miners went on strike. They were solidly behind the union and its demands. The very success of the strike enraged the administration, and a week later the courts granted a permanent injunction even harsher than the temporary restraint. The injunction gave the officers of the union 72 hours to rescind the strike order.

The steel workers were already on strike. The ruling class and the administration realized that if the steel workers and coal miners combined their strength, victory for both was possible.

All concerned realized the gravity of the situation. Gompers called an emergency meeting of the Executive Council to consider the coal strike. But the Council limited itself to pledging "moral support." Not a single practical step was taken when it could have done a great deal to arouse the people of the country, in spreading the struggle to other industries, organizing financial aid, and putting pressure on the government. It could also have combined the struggles of the miners with the steel workers, since both in many cases were fighting the same corporations. This was not done.

Meanwhile the officials of the U.M.W.A. decided to call off the strike "in obedience to the mandate issued on November 8 by the United States Court." The chief reason given was that "you cannot strike against the government." Newspapers hailed this decision, a *New York Times* editorial, November 12, 1919, saying: "That is Americanism, it is a conclusion stated in an American way." But the rank and file did not agree. Thousands refused to obey the order and remained on strike until December. This retreat by the union officials was

one of the greatest mistakes the leaders of the miners ever made. Even the reactionary Executive Council expressed outward surprise when it heard of this decision. To avoid responsibility for the move the Council declared it

> was misled by the officers of the United Mine Workers of America and their representatives as to the attitude they would take in the strike and the injunction. [It added that] in the principles involved by the restraining order and the injunction and the mandatory order in connection therewith the A.F. of L. will proceed as a matter of principle, right and freedom of the workers of America to contest every inch of the ground until freedom shall again be re-established.[11]

WILSON'S INDUSTRIAL CONFERENCE

Although the Armistice marked the cessation of hostilities abroad, it marked the beginning of violent industrial conflicts at home. The manufacturers prepared to take away whatever concessions they had been forced to grant to the workers during the war years. On the other hand, the workers felt free of the shackles imposed upon them by the Gompers' class peace policies.

Likewise, the Wilson administration was no longer concerned with the "labor problem." Various war boards went out of existence, and Wilson devoted his time to winning public opinion in support of the Versailles Treaty. However, the Seattle, Lawrence, New York harbor and steel strikes, as well as other workers' movements, could no longer be ignored by the administration. Alarmed over these developments Wilson was once again forced to turn his attention to the "labor problem." With this in mind he called an industrial conference of representatives of industry, labor and the public to formulate a program for "genuine and lasting cooperation between labor and capital."

The conference opened in Washington October 6, 1919. The

employer representatives were among the most notorious open shoppers in the country. The labor representatives included such well advertised "labor statesmen" as Gompers, Woll, Rickert and Tighe. The railroad brotherhoods were represented by Wills, McNamara, Lee and Sheppard. Included among the representatives of the public, appointed by Wilson, were John D. Rockefeller and Elbert H. Gary, head of the U. S. Steel Corporation. The latter had refused to meet with representatives of the union, but was willing to sit in the same room with labor leaders as a "public" representative.

Only a few weeks before the industrial conference Gompers requested a conference on the steel situation, and Gary had replied: "We do not think you are authorized to represent the sentiment of a majority of employees of the United States Steel Corporation ... the officers of the Corporation respectfully decline to discuss with you as representatives of a labor union any matter relating to employees."[12] Because of his opposition to such "public" representatives John L. Lewis of the United Mine Workers, later head of the C.I.O., resigned his appointment a few weeks before the industrial conference was to meet.

The conference was doomed to failure. Since the manufacturers had resisted labor's every effort to obtain concessions during the war years when interruption of production meant tremendous losses in profits, there was no reason to offer voluntary concessions in time of peace. But Gompers still cherished the idea of extending the "truce." The A.F. of L. leaders therefore proposed to the employers the establishment in each industry of a "national conference board" with joint representation. These boards were to have for their object "the consideration of all subjects affecting the progress and well-being of the trade, to promote efficiency of production ... to consider any proposed legislation affecting industries in order that employers and workers may ... counsel and advise with

the government in all industrial matters wherever needful legislation is required."[13]

The A.F. of L. bureaucracy offered the employers efficiency, increased production, labor's support to corporation-sponsored legislation, all this and more, providing the employers were willing to give them some kind of recognition. But the employers had other plans. They preferred company unionism even to a Gompers. At the time of the conference some 50 of the largest corporations, including International Harvester, Bethlehem Steel, Youngstown Sheet and Tube, General Electric and Standard Oil had already installed company unions and were well pleased with the results.

The industrial conference was in session for a month. Although the program called for a consideration of cost of living, wages, production, unemployment and immigration, the discussion never reached these points. It stalled on the question of collective bargaining. Rejecting the principle of genuine collective bargaining, the manufacturers turned the tables and asked the labor leaders to recognize company unionism.

At the beginning of the conference, the labor representatives had introduced a resolution on the steel strike, urging that each group in the conference "select two of its number . . . to constitute a committee to which shall be referred existing differences between the workers and employers in the steel industry for adjudication and settlement."[14] The resolution was tabled by the employer representatives. This more than proved the wisdom of Foster when he refused to accept Gompers' advice to call off the strike and leave the matter to the conference.

The conference ended in failure. Disappointed, the A.F. of L. Executive Council reported to the 1920 convention that

> The employers delegations would not accept any resolution on collective bargaining unless it was so worded as to be anti-trade union in spirit and to provide encouragement and support for

company unions. The position of the employers in the conference was throughout a position of anti-unionism, a position of enmity and antagonism to trade union effort and organization....[15]

Another industrial conference was held January 12, 1920, as President Wilson made a second attempt to bring "capital and labor" together. This time it was not a "representative" conference. Those invited to attend were asked to do so as "individuals" and not as representatives of any particular groups. In its report to the President the conference endorsed company unionism and warned against the "power of great labor organizations." [16] This was the mood of the employers, not only to check labor but to lay the basis for the great open shop offensive.

POST-WAR LABOR PARTY MOVEMENT

The post-war militancy of the workers did not express itself in strike struggles and union growth alone, but equally in growing political movements. It was during this period that the struggle between the reformists and militants within the Socialist Party crystallized and led to the split and the formation of the Communist Party.

The transition of the Wilson administration to open strikebreaking taught the workers a tremendous lesson. By and large, trade union members were losing confidence in the two old parties. But the effort to form a political party independent of and in opposition to the two major parties was bitterly opposed by the Gompers leadership.

At first the labor party movement developed spontaneously in a number of important industrial communities in Connecticut, such as Bridgeport, Hartford and Danbury.

However, it was the Labor Party campaign in Chicago, sponsored by the Chicago Federation of Labor, that set off a nation-wide movement. The same forces that had initiated the

stockyard drive and the steel campaign, also started the Labor Party movement.

In November, 1918, under the leadership of President John Fitzpatrick and Secretary E. N. Nockels, the Chicago Federation of Labor formulated a program which became known as "Labor's 14 points." This program called for the unqualified right of the workers to organize and deal collectively, democratic control of industry and commerce by those who work with hand and brain, the abolition of unemployment through public projects, complete equality of men and women in government and industry, reduction of the cost of living, democratization of education in public schools and universities, soldiers' and sailors' insurance. It called for liquidation of the national debt by taxing "all persons and corporations where riches have been gained by war, or other profits," for "public ownership and operation of railways, steamships, stock yards ... telegraphs, telephones ... nationalization and development of basic natural resources"; and for complete restoration of all fundamental political rights and the removal of all wartime restraints, the liberation of all political prisoners, representation of labor in all departments of government, the creation of a league of workers of all nations.[17]

By a referendum vote the Chicago local unions endorsed this program. In January, 1919, the Labor Party of Cook County was formed with 125 local union affiliates. The Chicago Labor Party nominated Fitzpatrick for Mayor. He polled 56,000 votes. To promote the activities of the newly organized party the Chicago Federation of Labor published a weekly paper, the *New Majority*.

The Illinois Federation of Labor carried through a similar referendum on the formation of a state Labor Party. The overwhelming majority of the unions voted in favor of it. At a convention in April, 1919, the state party was formed. In the municipal elections in the state the Labor Party scored a

number of important victories. In Aurora the party elected its candidate for mayor, treasurer and two commissioners. In Collinsville, it elected the mayor, treasurer and two aldermen. In Batavia, a labor mayor, treasurer, clerk and aldermen were swept into office. Beardstown elected a labor mayor and five aldermen. In Westville and Merrisville, complete tickets were elected. In many other towns and cities the Labor Party obtained a large vote.

Stirred by the results in Illinois, the Labor Party movement developed in Pennsylvania, Ohio, North Dakota, Minnesota, Kansas and other states. In New York, the Central Labor body sponsored a great convention where the American Labor Party of greater New York was formed. Some 900 delegates attended the convention representing 152 local unions and 41 international unions.

With the Labor Party spreading rapidly a national convention was held in November, 1919, where the Party was officially formed on a national scale. One thousand delegates representing labor unions in 37 states attended the convention. Among its moving spirits were Max Hayes of the Typographical Union and John H. Walker and Frank Esper of the United Mine Workers.

Among the delegates were a large number of Socialist trade unionists who helped in the formulation of many resolutions. These included a demand to impeach Judge Anderson for the issuance of an injunction against the U.M.W.A., denunciation of the federal government for the injunction against the coal miners, demand for the lifting of the Russian blockade and the withdrawal of American troops from Soviet Russia, the release of all political prisoners, a new trial for Tom Mooney, and self-determination for the Irish people. The convention condemned U. S. invasion of Mexico, and demanded full citizenship to Negroes, free medical care, etc.[18]

The *New Majority* was endorsed as the national organ of

the Labor Party, and Chicago was designated as the seat of national headquarters.

The Labor Party movement co-operated closely with the Socialist Party. The Illinois Labor Party at its convention declared: "we urgently invite all Socialists who see larger hope for the workers through the plans of the Labor Party to come into this party and become fellow-workers with us."[19]

Gompers and his associates feared the Labor Party movement, not only because of its militant program, but also because such a party of labor would have stripped Gompers of any authority to enter into devious combinations with capitalist politicians in return for personal gain or glory.

Gompers was quite determined to crush the Labor Party movement. On the eve of the New York convention he called a special conference in New York of A.F. of L. representatives, including the sponsors of the Labor Party convention, and begged them to disassociate themselves from it. He declared that "The organization of a political labor party would simply mean the dividing of the activities and allegiance of the men and women of labor between two bodies, such as would often come in conflict."[20]

Why there should be conflict between the economic and political organizations of the working class Gompers never explained. The 1919 convention of the Federation reiterated its moth-eaten formulas against independent political action. Gompers sabotaged the Labor Party movement in the same manner he had fought other progressive movements.

A.F. OF L. EMERGENCY CONFERENCE

Trade union membership reached a peak in 1920, but 1919 was the turning point and the beginning of a new and crucial period for labor.

The Wilson administration became openly hostile toward

unions. With the steel and mining victories behind them, the employers prepared for concerted action against all unions. The collapse of the President's industrial conferences was the signal for such an offensive.

When the employers and the government needed uninterrupted production, which strikes would have made impossible during the war, they made all sorts of promises to labor. With the war over there was no longer any need for hypocrisy. With war production coming to an end, throwing hundreds of thousands of workers on the streets, with additional hundreds of thousands of demobilized soldiers, the situation was ripe for an attack against labor.

With their backs to the wall, the A.F. of L. leaders had to do something in self-defense. The Executive Council called an emergency conference on December 13, 1919. "In this critical reconstruction period," declared the conference call, "Labor is confronted with grave dangers affecting the very foundation of its structure. So grave is the situation regarded . . . that the executives of the national and international unions should be invited to participate in a conference . . . to formulate such action as may be essential to safeguard and promote the rights, interests and freedom of the wage earners. . . ." [21]

The only thing the conference produced was a document known as "Labor, Its Grievances, Protests and Demands." It was in essence a complete confession that the war policies of Gompers had been detrimental to labor. It admitted that "autocratic, political and corporate industrial and financial influences in our country have sought, and are seeking, to infringe upon and limit the fundamental rights of the wage-earners guaranteed by the Constitution. . . ." It protested against government by injunction and said that fixing wages on the basis of cost of living was "pernicious and intolerable."

Although this conference took place in December, 1919, the most crucial period of the steel strike, not a single step was

taken to help the steel workers. The conference merely recorded labor's grievances, protests and demands, but did nothing to mobilize the workers for struggle against these evils. This would have been too much to expect from Gompers. The only significance of this conference was that the top leadership of the Federation unwittingly admitted failure and disaster, exactly as the militants who criticized the Gompers leadership had predicted.

THE OPEN SHOP OFFENSIVE

The retreat of the miners, the defeat of the steel workers, the election to the Presidency of the reactionary Republican Harding, bringing into the administration open spokesmen for big business, and the post-war economic crisis, created favorable circumstances for an offensive against labor in 1920-22. Never before had there been such a concerted effort to destroy completely the trade union movement. This was "labor's reward" for its services during the war. This was the pay-off for the "loyalty" for which Wilson had asked. The movement for the destruction of the unions became known as the open shop offensive. It assumed the character of a bitter class crusade against unionism. The A.F. of L. unions were not spared. They were considered in the same class with the I.W.W. The mind of the employer drew no distinctions. He was out to destroy every active union regardless of its name or affiliation.

With a technique perfected during war years, the employers declared that trade unionism was dangerous "anti-Americanism." In opposition to the trade unions they brought forward the "American Plan," simply another name for the anti-union shop. The whole campaign was directed toward closing plants to union members and the eventual annihilation of organized labor.

Ernest G. Draper, President of the American Creosoting

Co., and a leader of the open shop movement stated very plainly the aims of the employers: "They are out to crack organized labor and crack it wide open. They will do it carefully, secretly, perhaps, with the aid of a convenient slogan. But they will do it if they can."[22] Judge Gary, at a stockholders meeting in April, 1921, said that labor unions "may have been justified in the long past," but "our opinion is that the existence and conduct of labor unions in this country, at least, are inimical to the best interests of the employees, the employers and the general public."

The open shop movement was not merely a verbal barrage against organized labor. The National Association of Manufacturers, the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, the National Metal Trades Association, the National Founders Association and other powerful employers' associations joined in the effort to smash the unions. Open shop associations of employers were organized in the leading industrial centers. The National Association of Manufacturers announced the formation of a special Open-Shop Department to direct the union-wrecking campaign. Some 540 open shop organizations were formed in 250 cities of 44 States. In addition, 1,665 local Chambers of Commerce were enlisted in open shop activities. In many communities the Rotary, Kiwanis and other clubs and "respectable" organizations enlisted in this "patriotic" campaign.

The following are some of the policies and tactics used either by individual companies or by employers' associations in the post-war open shop movements:[23]

1. Propaganda against the so-called "tyranny" of the unions under union shop rule.
2. Dismissal of members of unions.
3. Financial aid to employers in conflict with unions.
4. Refusal of credit and raw materials to employers declining to adopt anti-union tactics.

5. Blacklisting active trade unionists.
6. Employing spies and undercover operatives to spy on unionists and inform on union moves.
7. Organization of shop committees and company unions to check the trade unions.
8. Organizing lobbies to influence legislatures to pass anti-labor measures.

In this campaign the employers and their associations received all the cooperation they needed from the government. Criminal syndicalism and sedition laws were used against workers. Local anti-picketing ordinances were employed. State police were mustered to break strikes, supplementing such agencies as the coal and iron police in Pennsylvania.

Robert W. Dunn, in his scholarly book *The Americanization of Labor,* observed that "All the 'anti-Hun' sentiment of the war days ... [was] somehow distilled into an anti-trade union feeling that gave the open shop drive a particularly revengeful and ruthless aspect." [24]

The drive was fierce and at least partially successful. The unions in the basic industries were either destroyed or were reduced to skeleton organizations. If the open shop drive did not succeed in completely destroying the labor unions it was due to the rank and file trade unionists who fought to preserve the organizations which they built after decades of suffering and struggle. The open shop drive was a tragic end to a most promising period for the American labor movement. The war policies of the Gompers leadership could not but lead to such disaster and calamity. From its peak of 4,078,740 in 1920, Federation membership declined to 2,926,468 in 1923.

A BALANCE SHEET

Certain conclusions may be reached by drawing a sort of balance sheet of labor's experiences in the first imperialist war and its aftermath.

Economically, the conditions of workers were not improved during or after the war. The rapid rise in cost of living more than made up for such wage increases as there were. Some gains were made, however, in reducing the hours of work. The 8-hour day was introduced in a number of industries, and paved the way for its acceptance in industry generally.

Outside of a few skilled crafts, unemployment remained a problem during the war years when a minimum of at least a million were jobless. At the same time "labor shortage" propaganda was used to justify the bringing of about a million women into industry in an effort to undermine wage standards. The end of the war brought widespread dislocation of industry and added to the number of unemployed. In 1921 approximately six million were out of jobs.

Organized labor also lost in the field of labor legislation. The National Association of Manufacturers and other employer organizations led this campaign. In addition to the work-or-fight laws mentioned elsewhere, other retrogressive steps were taken. The 8-hour law was suspended on government work. In at least four states laws were passed authorizing suspension of protective legislation for the duration of the war. In eight states so-called anti-sabotage legislation was passed which was used in some cases against legitimate union activities. Certain retrogressive legislation was put over. For example, in Wyoming the number of hours women were permitted to work was raised from 56 to 60 a week, and the law which prevented them from working more than 10 hours in any day was also suspended there. In Oregon, women in certain industries were exempted from the 10-hour day and the 60-hour week law. In California and New York laws were passed authorizing the closing of schools earlier than usual "for agricultural purposes." And this does not by any means exhaust the record.

On top of the weakening of protective legislation during

the war period came the criminal syndicalism and other anti-labor laws of the post-war open shop period. Some of the measures adopted during and after the war are still being used against labor.

Finally, labor did not gain a greater degree of recognition. For when the labor leaders agreed to a "no strike" and status quo policy, "greater recognition" was just an empty phrase. The best proof of this is that the basic industries remained unorganized. Whatever concessions the employers did grant in 1917 and 1918 were cancelled in the following years. The A.F. of L. was in a worse position after the war. During the war the Federation had been like a grand hotel. Hundreds of thousands of workers checked in, but also checked out, or were driven out by the do-nothing policies of the leadership and by the hostility of the employers and government. For many years after workers refused to respond to organizing campaigns sponsored by the Federation. They remembered what happened during and after the war.

The results would have been entirely different had the labor leaders pursued a realistic, independent course. For labor did occupy a strategic position. Did not Congress, the President and the Supreme Court give in to the railroad workers on the 8-hour day to avoid a strike? Did not individual A.F. of L. unions obtain tangible concessions when they adopted militant policies? Consider what would have happened if the Executive Council had adopted Foster's plan and struck the steel mills while the war was still on. A complete victory could have been scored. Labor would have broken the backbone of the open shop. Hundreds of thousands and even millions of other unorganized workers would have flocked to the unions. Foster claims that the Federation could have enrolled from five to ten million members during these years. That it could have been done was shown less than 20 years later when the Committee for Industrial Organization enrolled several

million hitherto unorganized workers in the mass production industries. By 1940 the combined membership of the A.F. of L., C.I.O. and railroad brotherhoods reached an all-time peak in this country of eight million. Labor thus became a real force in American life.

Similarly, such independent strength by the organized working class during the war years could have had a decisive effect on the 1920 Presidential elections which in turn would have saved the labor movement from the devastating open shop offensive that followed.

There were reasons why Gompers and the other top leaders of the Federation adopted a course of surrender. A Federation with millions of new members coming from the ranks of semi-skilled and unskilled workers from the basic industries would have swept aside the Gompers bureaucracy and replaced it with progressive leaders. To keep this from happening, Gompers and his group sacrificed the very organization they were supposed to serve.

The failure of the A.F. of L. wartime policies is implied in the recent book by William Green, *Labor and Democracy,* in which he writes:

> We had sincerely believed that the recognition given by government and by employers during the war was the beginning of real recognition of the labor movement of this country as a functioning, responsible part of industry. We had shown, during the war years, that we were prepared to take our place in industry as well as in the trenches, and it seemed that the next logical step, when the war ended, was to democratize industry, and management of industrial affairs. But our hope that industry had seen the value of co-operation with labor and the importance of giving labor a place in industry was destroyed as the great open-shop movement of the years immediately following the war gained strength (pp. 81-82).

Lessons learned from these experiences of the last war may be of great value to labor in meeting capital's new wartime offensive.

REFERENCE NOTES

NOTE: For the sake of brevity, three of the most frequently cited sources have been abbreviated. They are: A.L.Y.B. for *The American Labor Year Book;* A.F. of L. *Proceedings* for *Report of the Proceedings,* etc., of the annual conventions of the American Federation of Labor; and U.S.D.L. for United States Department of Labor or its division, the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

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