

# Meaning of Lewis's Resignation And the Industrial Union Fight

## Foster Gives Position of Communists on Lewis's Policies

By William Z. Foster

The necessity of organizing the unorganized workers into the A. F. of L. on the basis of the industrial union form of organization, is now the key problem, which is of far reaching importance to the American labor movement. In order to lower wages and to press down living standards, thus maintaining profits, the employers have launched a union smashing, strikebreaking drive against labor. Fascist trends and strikebreaking terror are increasing.

The setting up of a Committee for Industrial Organization by eight presidents of A. F. of L. industrial unions, and the recent resignation of John L. Lewis from the vice-presidency of the A. F. of L. also brings sharply to the front the question of the struggle for building the unions on an industrial basis.

The only effective answer which labor can make to the present attacks of the employers is to unify the whole working class, to bring the millions of unorganized workers into the A. F. of L. to build and strengthen the unions, especially in the basic, mass production industries, and thus prepare successful struggles against the employers' anti-union drive now being directed by the Roosevelt government.

### Industrial Form Is Needed

But, as the progressive bloc at the Atlantic City convention of the American Federation of Labor brought out, the workers cannot be united, nor can the unorganized be brought into the unions, on any other basis than organization into industrial unions. The failure of the Executive Council of the A. F. of L. to organize the unorganized workers in the steel, auto, metal mining, rubber, cement and other industries during the past year, on the basis of the time worn craft policies, proves that the workers refuse to join the union when they are divided into numerous craft organizations.

Unity of action is impossible when the workers are split up within the factory and industry into many craft unions. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. The fact is that in 55 years the Executive Council has failed to organize the millions of unorganized workers because the A. F. of L. leadership clung to the antiquated craft divisions.

### Craft Form Divides Workers

Division into craft unions has encouraged strikebreaking in numerous strikes. In the auto industry today, we see Francis Dillon, appointed president of the A. F. of L. Auto Union, marching members of the union through the picket line of the Motors Product Co. strikers. Had the Executive Council agreed to the demand of the auto workers that they be organized into an all inclusive industrial union, the auto workers would have built the A. F. of L. The insistence of William Green on restricting the auto union charter, and dividing the auto workers on the basis of numerous crafts unions, gave encouragement to the development of independent auto unions and divided the auto workers. Craft divisions make an effective fight against company unions more difficult, as was seen in the steel industry.

The membership of the A. F. of L., as well as the unorganized workers, are aware of these facts. The A. F. of L. members, both in the industrial unions and in the craft



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unions, want to unify the workers in industrial unions.

### The Convention Vote

In his recent statement attacking the Committee for Industrial Organization, headed by John L. Lewis, William Green stated that the A. F. of L. membership are opposed to industrial unionism. This is not true, and Green has no mandate to make such a statement. Green has not consulted the wishes of the membership in any form. Green can speak only for a group of reactionary officials who are stifling the democratic expression of their members.

The vote of 18,000 cast by these craft union leaders at the Atlantic City convention (as against the 11,000 votes cast for industrial unions) did not express the desires of the craft union members. There are scores of thousands of members in the craft unions, who have gone on record for progressive measures and for industrial unions as the only possible form of organization, in a drive to build the unions in the mass production industries.

### Does Not Express Will of Members

For instance, William Hutcheson, head of the Carpenters' Union, and six other high officials of the Carpenters' Union cast 2,000 votes at the convention (for 200,000 members), against the industrial unions. But Hutcheson and his machine is so hated by the membership that he has not dared to call a convention of the union for years. Hutcheson does not dare to allow the membership to express itself on the industrial union issue.

Six officials of the Weber-Weaver-Canavan machine in the Musicians' Union cast 1,000 votes at the convention for maintenance of craft divisions. But the New York local, the largest local in the entire union, has a progressive administration which defeated the same Weber-Weaver-Canavan machine in the last elections on a progressive platform of united front of all the workers. This New York local, and thousands of other musicians, were not represented at the convention on the issue of industrial unions.

In the painters union, the Lindelof machine cast 656 votes against industrial unions. The dozens of progressive painters' locals such as Local 848 in New York City, were disfranchised in this vote. The Machinists' Union went on record for industrial unions years ago, and have never rescinded this action. But A. Wharton cast the 925 votes of the Machinists' Union against industrial unions.

### How to Strengthen Unions

The reactionary majority of the Executive Council, in preventing the organization of the unorganized workers into industrial unions, are trying to crush every vestige of democracy within the unions. The majority of the A. F. of L. members favor an organization drive.

## Building A.F.L. Unions Is Now Key Task of Labor

The craft union members realize that by being divided into craft unions their own interests are being injured and their own struggle for their demands weakened. The building of the industrial unions in the mass production industries would strengthen the entire trade union movement and better the conditions of those now split up in craft unions. Green does not express the wishes or the interests of the members of the A. F. of L.

The millions of unorganized workers in the American Federation of Labor are now looking with hope towards the A. F. of L., feeling that at long last a real organizing campaign will be carried on. The sentiment of the steel workers now in company unions, for joining the A. F. of L., is a sign of the strong urge among the unorganized workers for getting into the unions.

### Stand of the Communists

The Committee on Industrial Organization, headed by Lewis, composed of eight presidents of A. F. of L. industrial unions, has declared that its purpose is to unify and strengthen the A. F. of L., to organize these unorganized workers in the basic industries into the A. F. of L. They declare they will agitate within the A. F. of L. for the industrial form of organization.

The Communists have always fought for such an organizing campaign to build and strengthen the A. F. of L. and to unify the workers in industrial unions. The Communists support this struggle. Of course, the Communists have differences with many of the major principles of John L. Lewis. Lewis is now opposed to the Farmer-Labor party movement which would further unite the workers and would strengthen the fight for industrial unions as well as for all progressive measures. Instead, Lewis still supports President Roosevelt whose party has launched a murderous strikebreaking terror in the South. In Alabama and Kentucky, Democratic Party officials have sent deputized gunmen and sheriffs to kill striking members of the United Mine Workers with machine gun bullets. The Communists point out the inconsistency of Lewis supporting such a party. Lewis speaks of fascism and Communism in the same breath. He lumps together fascism, the murderous, open violent dictatorship of the employers which suppressed all workers' democratic rights in order to maintain a profit system, and Communism, which means democracy for all who toil, and the rule of the broadest millions of toilers in the interests not of profits but of benefitting all toilers. Certainly the Communists differ with such policies.

### Support of Lewis's Struggle

But the Communist Party supports the struggle of Lewis and all others in their fight to achieve the unity and strengthening of the A. F. of L. unions through elimination of craft barriers. The Communists will as they always have supported with all their energies the movement for organizing the unorganized workers into A. F. of L. industrial unions.

### Those Who Cry Split

Following the setting up of the Committee on Industrial Organization and the resignation of Lewis from the Executive Council of the A. F. of L., enemies of the labor movement are crying "split." But those advocating industrial unions in the A. F. of L. are trying to achieve UNITY of the workers, are trying to wipe out all separations caused by craft groupings. William Green flouting the wishes of the

## 44 Per Cent Rise In Profits Cited For 64 Companies

Sixty-four industrial firms reported net profits of one million dollars or more for the first nine months of 1935, an increase of nearly 44 per cent over the corresponding 1934 period, figures just issued by the Labor Research Association show.

From an aggregate of \$296,095,351 in the 1934 period, they rose to a total of \$426,211,525 for the first three-quarters of the current year. Most of these firms also had a substantial increase in profits in 1934 over the preceding year.

### Answer This, Mr. Hearst!

(Daily Worker Michigan Bureau)

DETROIT, Mich., Nov. 27.—Dr. Fred B. Fisher, pastor of the North Central Methodist Church here just back from the Soviet Union, was the speaker at the annual charity dinner given by the West End Y. M.C.A. yesterday. The subject was "Communism," and proceeds, as announced in the Hearst-owned Times, go to undernourished children in the United States, not in the Soviet Union.

membership, is the one who is dividing the workers on the basis of numerous craft barriers. The Communists advocate industrial unions because that is the only way to bring the unorganized millions into the A. F. of L., that is the only way to strengthen the A. F. of L. in the struggle against the attacks of the employers, that is the only way to UNITE the workers and do away with craft divisions.

### Immediate Tasks

The Communists will now exert every energy to see to it that the entire labor movement is thrown into the campaign to organize the unorganized workers especially in basic industries, in all-inclusive unions. It is now time for the entire A. F. of L., to plunge into the actual work of organizing the unorganized workers. This is the safeguard against growing fascist tendencies, the only means of checking the employers' union smashing drive.

An immediate task in strengthening the A. F. of L. in the fight for labor's immediate burning demands is for every A. F. of L. organization, including craft local unions and those now in industrial unions alike, to go on record in support of the industrial form of organization. The fight for industrial unions, on which hinges the success of the organizing campaign should now be taken up, on the basis of the resolution introduced into the A. F. of L. convention by the Industrial Union advocates, in every local union, in every City Central Body, international union and district body of the A. F. of L.

### Tasks in Locals

In those unions where Green's group has prevented the calling of national conventions for years, the membership should immediately go on record for the calling of a national convention to take up this and other vital issues. The A. F. of L. membership, in passing these resolutions, will prove once more that Green, in impeding the organizing drive and maintaining craft divisions, does not speak for the membership.

Side by side with the campaign for industrial unions, the organizing campaign in steel, auto, rubber, cement, and other unions, should be actually begun. Every A. F. of L. body should take up concretely the question of the launching of the organizing campaign, and map out the program for concrete support.

The organizing of the unorganized millions of workers into industrial unions is the key problem of the day. Action to further this aim should proceed throughout the entire labor movement.