

By Gil Green

THINGS are not always what they seem. Surface appearances are often deceiving. This is particularly true of the recent appointment of Frank Annunzio, as director of the Illinois Department of Labor. A superficial glance at this development would lead one to believe that organized labor has won a considerable victory, especially its CIO wing. After all, Frank Annunzio is not a LaSalle Street banker or manufacturer. Nor is he a corporation lawyer or run-of-the-mill politician.

Annunzio is a labor leader, an official of a very important union, the United Steel Workers. He is also the Secretary-Treasurer of the CIO State PAC.

Thus one would ordinarily assume that this appointment is all to the good, and that labor has much to gain from it.

But before the workers in steel, packing, auto, and other industries begin their general jubilation, let them more closely look this gift horse in the mouth.

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ONE THING they will notice. This appointment has not even caused a ripple on La Salle Street. Apparently the bankers and industrialists of the state don't think they have anything to worry about.

And yet, the head of the state labor department is not an unimportant post. This department supervises the enforcement of state industrial safety and health laws and every worker knows how these laws are being systematically violated by the employers. That is one of the reasons for the appalling increase in industrial accidents and occupational diseases over recent years.

This department could also do much to expose the high cost of living and the dwindling real income of the workers. It could take a lead in fighting for advanced social legislation and could demand the prosecution of employers responsible for evading state laws.

But, if the big capitalists of the state are not particularly disturbed, they have good reason. They know that Mr. Annunzio is going to play along with them. In his first statement after appointment he declared that he would "co-operate fully with industry."

Annunzio, and the group of labor leaders that he represents, see this appointment not from the viewpoint of what is in the best interests of the working class, but as opening up careers for themselves as governmental lackeys of big business.

With this appointment they see a grand opportunity to get their fingers in the pork barrel of political patronage in payment for their promise to keep labor tied to the Democratic Party.

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THE WORKERS of the state have got to be on guard against this development. Men such as Annunzio will now more than ever go out of their way to be "good fellows," to prove that they can do an even better job for the industrialists than they could do themselves. They will try to preach patience to the workers; telling them that they ought not to expect too much, and that everything is "under control."

We have seen this same thing take place in other lands. In England, we actually have a so-called "Labor Government." But the labor men who run this government do so not in the best interests of the working people, but of British capital.

We are now witnessing a smaller edition of the same thing in this country. We do not have a "Labor Government," but we have governments on a national and state scale which realize that they can best put over their essentially pro-capitalist policies by making these appear as "labor policies."

No, the workers of Illinois will gain nothing from the Annunzio appointment. In fact, they run the danger that the State Department of Labor itself may now become an instrument in the activities of the Right wing labor leaders to split further the ranks of the CIO.

They must keep their eyes on the ball. They must insist that their union officials serve them and stop looking for personal favors and political bribes from one or another of the two old parties.