

The AFL Council and The Democratic Party

By WM. Z. FOSTER

"Disappointing," was the characterization William Green, president of the A. F. of L., applied to the Republican Party platform, and he refrained from endorsing the Dewey-Bricker ticket.

But what about the Democratic Party platform and candidate? Mr. Green should, when he speaks out on these matters, adopt a quite different attitude toward them. The executive council, of which he is the head, if it responds to the interests of the workers and the American people, should give a categorical endorsement to Roosevelt and Truman and to the platform upon which they stand.

As President Roosevelt pointed out in his acceptance speech, our nation now confronts three great tasks—to win a complete victory in the war, to erect a strong postwar world organization capable of maintaining peace, and to lay the basis for the economic prosperity of the American people. The Roosevelt candidacy by its platform and the patriotic record of the Administration, offers the only means for the accomplishment of these basic tasks. The Dewey candidacy, backed by the great body of American reaction, presents no opportunity whatever for their achievement, and would lead our country to sure disaster. The plain duty of the A. F. of L. executive council, therefore, is to give hearty support to Mr. Roosevelt for another term in office.

AGGRESSIVE STAND NEEDED

Mr. Green is quoted as having said that 80 percent of the A. F. of L. members will vote for the re-election of Roosevelt. But this will remain mere wishful thinking unless the forces of organized labor, jointly with other win-the-war elements, dig in and work hard to bring the great masses of the American people out to the polls next November.

The argument of conservative labor leaders that for the A. F. of L. to endorse any set of presidential candidates would reduce it to a "tail of that political kite" is "stale and profitless." It is a relic of the infantile period of organized labor, and has no place in the present-day labor strategy. Were such a conception to be logically enforced by compelling the state, city and local unions to withhold the endorsement of political candidates, which they now give widely, it would reduce the A. F. of L. virtually to a political zero. The CIO, with its policy of definite support for Roosevelt and Truman, is blazing the



path that organized labor in general should follow.

The Chicago Federation of Labor is one of the many city central bodies in the A. F. of L. that has endorsed Roosevelt, and its journal, *The Federation News*, said recently: "An attitude of indifference by labor, as to whether Roosevelt will or will not be elected, is deep down ingratitude." This is putting the matter mildly—actually such an attitude is sheer political stupidity, as it plays right into the hands of the worst enemies of the workers and the American people.

It is, perhaps, too much to expect that the A. F. of L. executive council will go all-out in support of the candidacy of Roosevelt, as the CIO is now doing. For that would mean to break with the traditional, many years long inertia and conservatism that characterize and cripple the national center of the A. F. of L. But if the A. F. of L. were even formally to endorse the Roosevelt candidacy, it would be of major importance in this crucial and probably very close presidential election.

DEWEY TENTACLES

An endorsement by the A. F. of L. executive council would make much more thorny the path of those sinister elements in the ranks of organized labor who are trying to inveigle the workers into the reactionary camp. There are plenty of such people and their activities are widespread. In the council itself the Wolls, Hutchesons and Bugniatzets are busily working in Dewey's behalf, seeking to paralyze the Federation's political activities. And in many A. F. of L. international unions and state federations there are similar elements trying to slash the Roosevelt vote. Notable in this respect are some conservative officials in New York who are maneuvering to swing that "doubtful" state to their "friend," Governor Dewey.

AFL support of Roosevelt would also make more difficult the anti-Roosevelt maneuvers of certain railroad brotherhood officials, as well as those of the John L. Lewis clique in the miners' union, who are openly campaigning for Dewey.

By the same token, an A. F. of L. endorsement would give the green light to the pro-Roosevelt forces throughout the Federation. At present many local unions, city councils, state federations and international unions are working energetically for the reelection of Roosevelt, but their effectiveness is continually being hamstrung because their campaign lacks the official O. K. of the A. F. of L. national leadership.

In view of the vital character of this election and the overwhelmingly pro-Roosevelt sentiment of the workers, the A. F. of L. membership should demand a specific endorsement of Roosevelt by the executive council. And they should refuse to take "No" for an answer. Whether the council endorses Roosevelt or not, the present widespread movement in his behalf throughout the A. F. of L. should be extended and encouraged. The Dewey reactionaries must be defeated in this election, and if this is to be accomplished there rests upon the shoulders of organized labor the greatest responsibility.

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