

A national conference was called in Chicago, July 10th, at which William Z. Foster was named for president, and Ben Gitlow for vice-president. The National Committee of the Farmer-Labor Party met on the same day, withdrew the candidacies of McDonald and Bouck, and adopted a declaration calling upon all adherents of the Farmer-Labor program to throw their support to the Workers Party. This statement was signed by Alex Howat, chairman, A. C. Hathaway, secretary, Alfred Knutsen, Scott Wilkins and Joseph Manley, members. Alice Daly, of South Dakota, declined

to sign, and William Mahoney, the remaining member, had resigned.

Thus has the alignment taken place for the 1924 presidential election campaign. The issues are clear. William Z. Foster, the candidate of the Workers Party, running on the platform of the dictatorship of the working class against the dictatorship of the capitalist class, is the only representative of the struggle against capitalism. The betrayal of the official mis-leaders of Labor has been complete. Only the struggle for Communism remains in this election for the workers and farmers.

## The Steel Campaign Fiasco

By Wm. Z. Foster

WHEN the great steel strike of 1919-20 came to an end, I, as Secretary-treasurer of the National Committee, left in the treasury about \$130,000, the remains of the strike funds. The hard-boiled trade union officialdom, accustomed to waste whatever funds that come to their hands, smiled at this and looked upon me as one of the innocents. Many greedy eyes were cast upon the big fund and prophecies were freely made that it would be duly frittered away in the approved A. F. of L. fashion, that it never would produce an organization in the steel industry, for which purpose it was supposed to be devoted.

Those who spoke thus spoke from the book, because the steel strike fund is now practically a thing of the past and there isn't a trace of organization in the steel industry. The way the fund has been wasted is a disgrace. For three years after the close of the strike no real work worth mentioning of education or organization was carried on. Yet about \$55,000 was gotten rid of. Finally, on June 20, 1923, with a blare of trumpets, the A. F. of L. announced that with the remaining \$75,000 the steel workers would be organized.

If the public and the gullible ones in the labor movement believed that there was something in the new campaign, the wise heads in the bureaucracy were not deceived for a moment. It was the common gossip among them that the steel strike fund melon was about to be cut, and that a number of good jobs would be opened up for the benefit of the worthy brothers. No one seriously expected that real organization work would be done.

The campaign has been conducted under the control of Mike Tighe, President of the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel & Tin Workers, and Wm. Hannon, Executive Board member of the International Association of Machinists. Tighe is a fossilized unionist of the vintage of 1890. He fought the 1919 strike at every turn of the road and is a good protection for the steel trust against the organization of its workers. His calibre may be judged from the fact that he not only refused all substantial aid to Jacob Dolla, who served almost five years in jail as a result of the 1919 strike, but he actually expelled him from the union and allowed his family to suffer in want.

Hannon was one of the most trusted members of the National Committee that organized the steel workers in 1919. He endorsed and helped formulate all the policies that were carried out. Yet immediately upon the conclusion of the strike, he turned upon the men who had trusted him and cooperated with him. In an article in the Machinists' Journal he cut himself loose from all responsibility and paraded himself as a victimized militant who had tried to make something out of the affair. Naturally, under such leadership as that of Tighe and Hannon, nothing was to be expected from the campaign, except that the fund would be duly spent.

Following its usual custom, the general office of the American Federation of Labor has taken no interest in the campaign. Neither Mr. Gompers nor Mr. Morrison feel the slightest responsibility for the organization of the steel

workers. They have not turned a hand over, either to help or to see that the campaign was conducted in a vigorous fashion. The same is true of nearly all of the Internationals involved.

Neither the A. F. of L. nor the Internationals have put any organizers in the field. They let the full burden of the campaign fall upon the steel fund. Not content with that, they have, notably Tighe, loaded up the organization staff with fossils altogether incompetent to act as organizers. At one time there were a dozen organizers in the field. These received \$250 per month, with \$7.00 per day expenses, or in other words \$460 per month for full time organizers. At present, the campaign being an admitted failure, there are only four men in the field. With few exceptions the organizers engaged in the work have looked upon their jobs as sinecures and have acted accordingly.

### The Money Wasted to Organize 200 Men

The campaign, such as it was, has been conducted chiefly in Chicago, Cleveland, and Bethlehem, a little work also being done in Buffalo. This resulted in complete failure, due to the antiquated and spiritless methods employed. At no point was enough grip secured in the industry to develop even a local strike. Nowhere were real organizations established. The total number of workers signed up throughout the campaign in all the districts did not exceed 200 at the very outside. Such is the ridiculous showing made by the great American Federation of Labor, with its corps of highly paid organizers, after a year's "work" and the spending of many thousands of dollars—a maximum of 200 steel workers who have been coaxed, cajoled, or kidded into joining the unions.

During the existence of the American Federation of Labor there have been many glaring examples of failure in organization work. Time and again the conservative leaders of the unions have demonstrated that they do not understand the first principles of mass organization. But the so-called steel organizing campaign easily tops the list of such fiascos. It is the most pitiful example of impotency and incompetency, that the labor movement of this country has yet seen.

But, characteristically, Hannan and his associates have an alibi for their miserable failure. They have the assurance to come out and make the claim that the recent introduction of the eight hour day in the steel industry was

due to their efforts. They say that Gary was afraid of their organization campaign and introduced the eight hour day to head it off. Many mean things have been said about Gary, but to accuse him of being afraid of the spineless, visionless, organization campaign now being carried on by the A. F. of L. in the steel industry is ridiculous. About the only sentiment that Gary or any other militant capitalist could feel towards such faint efforts as were put forth by the unions in the present campaign is contempt.

### Empty Boasts and Empty Treasury

Even before the campaign began, the agitation for the eight hour day, which developed out of the big strike and which had seized upon a wide breadth of public opinion, had reached the point where the eight hour day had been determined upon by the steel barons. For the men in charge of the present campaign to try to cover up their incompetency by claiming credit for the eight hour day in the steel industry, would be a farce if it were not so tragic.

For 25 years, or ever since the loss of the great Homestead strike, the conservative leaders of the labor movement have failed utterly in the task of organizing the great army of steel workers. Time after time they made efforts, only to still further discredit the unions by showing their weakness. Then, in 1919, a few radicals managed to take a hand in the work, and to apply modern methods, with the result that something substantial was accomplished. Those who are incurably optimistic thought that perhaps the Gompers machine might have learned something from the lessons of the last great struggle. But the bureaucrats have proved themselves totally incapable of so doing. The present organizing campaign in the steel industry is just as antiquated and futile as any that have preceded it under conservative leadership.

The great steel fund has been wasted and the workers are entirely without organization. And it is safe to say that the conservative leaders will never be able to organize them. The job is entirely beyond their comprehension and ability. Only revolutionists can accomplish it. The organization of the steel industry awaits the day when the revolutionary forces are developed to the point where they have sufficient resources to put on the necessary campaign. This day will come much sooner than many expect.