

The World Trade Union Movement

By JAY LOVESTONE.

THE yellow Amsterdam International of Trade Unions has just issued a Year Book which contains a good deal of valuable information about various international workers' organizations.

One of the most instructive sections of this book is the part dealing with the present strength of the trade union movement in different countries. According to the findings of the Amsterdam International, there were organized in sundry trade unions throughout the world, at the end of 1922, approximately 41,000,000 workers.

In every country of the world, with the exception of Hungary, Germany, Poland and Soviet Russia, the tendency has been for a decrease in trade union membership. The greatest gain was made by the trade union movement in Soviet Russia.

On the basis of the findings of the Amsterdam International the strength of the national organizations at the close of 1922 were as follows:

Austria—The year 1922 saw a loss of 29,828 members by the General Federation of Trade Unions, or a total number of 1,049,949 members. In the period 1919 to 1923 there was an intensification in the tendency towards amalgamation of various crafts.

Belgium—The Trade Union Committee of Belgium reported a membership of 618,871 on January 1, 1923. This was a decrease of 79,000 from the preceding year. The heaviest losers were the building trades, the miners, the metal workers, railway men and the textile workers. It is interesting to note that even the almost complete

trade union centralization could not counteract the disastrous effects of the severe economic depression and the reactionary leadership on the Belgian trade union movement.

Canada—In Canada the number of affiliated organizations remained stationary. At the same time the membership of the Trades and Labor Congress declined from 164,883, in 1921 to 117,814 on the last day of December, 1922.

Czecho-Slovakia—On January 1, 1923, there were 388,294 members in the Federation of Czechoslovakian trade unions. In 1923 ten powerful trade unions totaling a membership of 167,078 withdrew from the Amsterdam Federation and affiliated themselves with the Red Labor International.

Denmark—At the close of 1922 the Federation of Trade Unions had a total membership of 232,574. This was 9,971 less than in the preceding year. There are 52 separate unions affiliated with the Danish Federation.

France—The membership of the General Confederation of Labor remained practically stationary during the year. On December 31, 1922, its membership was 757,847. In the same year there were several amalgamations. The General Confederation of Labor Unified, which is the Communist Federation, affiliated with the Profintern, showed increased strength, according to the last convention.

Germany—In 1922 the General Federation of Trade Unions increased its membership by 150,000, rising to a total of 7,908,516. In the same period the Federation of Unions of salaried employees increased its membership

by 25,000 to a total of 667,898. In 1923 the Communists made marked advances in the German trade union movement, particularly amongst the metal workers and coal miners.

Great Britain—Compared with 1921 the membership of the Trade Union Congress dropped from 6,599,93 to 4,369,268. The economic crisis, the severe unemployment, made heavy inroads on the trade union membership. Strong efforts were made in this period to secure amalgamation of several organizations dealing with the same branches of industry. Towards this end, national federations were formed in industries dealing with printing and allied trades, textiles machinery and ship building, transport, building and also technical employees and unskilled workers. There is also a notable tendency towards standardization union dues and rules.

Hungary—At the close of 1922 the Council of Trade Unions had a total membership of 202,956. This was an increase of 50,000 and indicates the fact that the trade union movement is beginning to recover from the heavy assaults launched against it by the Horthy government. The union showing the greatest increases were those of the building trade, metal workers, tural workers.

Italy—The membership of the General Confederation of Labor fell from 1,200,000 in 1921 to 401,054 on December 31, 1922. This collapse was due to the ravages of the Fascisti. The latter now have their own organizations for labor, their own so-called unions which have an approximate membership of 2,000,000, according to

Fascisti claims.

Latvia—The Latvian Federation of Trade Unions lost 10,000 members in 1922. On January 1, 1923, its total membership was only 12,350.

Luxemburg—Here the Trade Unions lost 8,000 members in 1922. On January 1, 1923, its total membership was 12,100.

Netherlands—The membership of the Netherlands Federation of Trade Unions declined from 223,718 on January 1, 1922, to 201,045 on January 1, 1923. Here unemployment was one of the principal causes making for the fall in membership. The clothing trades, the agricultural workers, the metal and transport workers were the principal sufferers in this respect.

Poland—The Central Trade Union Federation membership rose from 365,190 on January 1, 1922, to 411,056 on January 1, 1923. The Communists made considerable headway in the ranks of the trade unions during this period.

Serb-Croat-Slovene Kingdom—The membership of the General Federation of Labor remained practically stationary during the year. On January 1, 1923, its total was 66,166.

Spain—Despite the establishment of a Fascist government, the membership of the Federation of Trade Unions remained practically the same as in the preceding year. On December 31, 1922, the total members was 238,861.

Sweden—The Federation of Trade Unions showed a decline in its membership from 313,208 in 1921 to 292,917 at the close of December, 1922.

Switzerland—The Swiss Federation of Trade Unions lost almost 60,000 members in 1921. The total membership fell from 225,822 to 162,192 on January 1, 1923. The heaviest losers were the banking employees who lost 41 per cent of their total membership; the leather workers who lost 28 per cent; the textile workers with a loss of 25 per cent; the metal workers and clock makers with a loss of 24 per cent; the building workers, 17 per cent; employees of the postal telegraph and telephone service, 16 per cent, and the embroiderers, 15 per cent.

Soviet Russia—For the fiscal years 1922-1923 Soviet Russia shows the greatest increase in membership. This is especially noteworthy because the famine and the severe economic crisis of the preceding year made heavy inroads on the trade union organizations of Soviet Russia. According to the last census there were 5,541,000 members in Soviet Russia trade unions on October 1, 1923. This compares with 4,546,000 on October 1, 1922; a gain of nearly a million members in one year. The extremely favorable policy pursued by the Soviet Government is principally responsible for the great increase in membership.

Amongst the organizations showing the greatest gains the following may be mentioned: the sugar workers, the lumber workers, the food workers, the building trades, the transport workers, government employees, metal workers, mining and textile workers. In industry the average increase in membership was 34.3 per cent. The greatest increase occurred in North Russia, the Ukraine and the Ural district. The workers in Leningrad and in the Donetz Basin showed great increase in trade union membership.

The World Situation.

The Amsterdam International Federation admits heavy losses for the last-mentioned period. On January 1, 1922, it claimed a total affiliated membership of 20,290,182. One year later—its last official figures—it reported a membership of 18,174,373. The greatest losses suffered by the yellow Amsterdam International were amongst the unskilled workers and factory workers. Nearly 25 per cent of the miners affiliated with the Amsterdam Federation in 1921 deserted it in 1922, mainly for the Red Labor Union International. Amongst the skilled workers of the building and printing industries, the Amsterdam International showed substantial increases for the period. These increases, however, were in most cases "due to fusions which took place in 1922."

Summing up, it is safe to conclude, on the basis of the data in the year book of the Amsterdam International, that the total membership of the trade unions of all descriptions throughout the world was 40,928,610 on January 1, 1923. This figure is inclusive of the strength of the American Federation of Labor.

Food Workers' Great Fight

It was a great tribute to the Amalgamated Food Workers in Chicago, when Judge Hugo Freund issued an injunction covering 170 Greek restaurants, prohibiting that organization from organizing the exploited workers in those places. And it was not a score against this independent union, when the lawyers for the bosses pointed out that it is not connected with the American Federation of Labor. Rather should it make all members of the greater body of organized labor ask themselves, why should the relief of the Greek workers, among the most exploited in the city, have been left to a small, independent body, rather than having been undertaken by those who have the big treasuries and powerful connections. That the Amalgamated Food Workers should enter the struggle for the eight-hour day, and decent wages, in the Greek restaurants, throwing all their energies into the fight, is proof that it is animated by

real working class consciousness.

When workers are in battle against the bosses, no real union man will quibble about technicalities of affiliations. Rather every union man in Chicago, American Federation of Labor or otherwise, will cheer on the campaign among the Greek restaurant workers, and will render every assistance possible. Organize the restaurants of Chicago, the Greeks now and then the others. Abolish the 10 and 12-hour day. Establish a decent wage. These are the immediate problems in the hotel and restaurant industry. The Amalgamated Food Workers are making a good start. More power to these efforts.

LaFollette Is Trimming

Persistent statements come from friends of Senator LaFollette to the effect that he is not going to make the break from the republican party. Perhaps, they say, he will run independently, asking for support from the republican party in some states, from democrats in others, from the Farmer-Labor Party in others, and pledging himself to no organized party as a whole. He will not, they predict, even go so far as did Roosevelt in 1912, characterizing such a break as a "great mistake."

This must give food for serious thought to all the LaFollette enthusiasts in the Farmer-Labor Party movement. Such clinging to "regularity" and respectability, such evasion and cowardice, is not the stuff upon which a Farmer-Labor Party can be built.

It is not the spirit that can go with the workers and oppressed farmers in their present struggle against the domination of the Wall Street blood-suckers. It does not fit into the picture of a stern and earnest effort to establish the political power of the conscious workers and farmers. LaFollette seems to be allowing his "friends" to sever, as rapidly as they find it possible to do so, even those

Communist Party is the only Party that is fighting against the crushing of Germany, against the enslavement of the German working class, against starvation and unemployment. The German workers, faced with the alternative which will soon present itself to the entire working class—the dictatorship of the proletariat or submission, starvation and death—is finally breaking the chains of the treacherous Social-Democracy completely. The German revolution cannot be much longer delayed.

Klan Wars Again

Jack Skelcher, anti-Klansman, was killed at Herrin, Ill., Saturday, "on suspicion" that he was implicated in the shooting of Glenn Young, Kleagle of the Ku Klux Klan, ex-prohibition agent, and the Mussolini of Williamson County, who took over the government there some months ago by force and violence. Thus does the struggle, which has been going on openly and secretly since the Illinois Chamber of Commerce began pouring money into Williamson County to revenge themselves for the loss of their scabs in 1922, again break out into open warfare.

When Young was attacked Friday night, the news reports say that he was riding in a big sedan car, presented to him for "cleaning up" Williamson County. This sufficiently characterizes the forces behind the gang of desperados who masquerade at one time as prohibition law enforcers (the Volstead Fascisti, as they have been well characterized), and at another as Ku Klux Klansmen. Their tools may be blindly ignorant and fanatical countryfolk, but their leadership and the money that pays for their wild adventures of murder and arson comes from the organized capitalists of the state.

The killing of Skelcher has all the appearance of another application of the notorious "fugitive law," long popular among bandit gangs like those of Glenn Young. He was "suspected," and did not stop quickly enough when ordered to do so, and therefore was shot down. Southern Illinois seems destined to have more bitter struggles consequent upon the declaration of war made by the Chamber of Commerce.

Another Injunction Judge

Let all workers know that one of the most sweeping injunctions ever issued against organized labor has just been handed down in the war on the Amalgamated Food Workers by Judge Hugo Freund.

The big significance of this event is not that Judge Freund has come to the aid of 170 Greek restaurant bosses. That was expected of him. He is an elected republican judge and that is what he was elected to do. He lived up to the bosses' expectations.

But the thing for the workers of Chicago to re-