This was brought about in more than one way. Expulsions, disfranchisements, and ruling off the ballot, were not good enough. One other effective means used was the systematic organization of a large flock of small, new locals, just before the convention, and the flooding of the convention with delegates from them. Thus, from New Jersey alone, from territories not canvassed, from locals of 25 to 100 members, came 60 delegates, representing less than 1,100 members altogether. At the same time the 16 delegates unseated represented more than 25,000 members. Even if the unseating had not taken place, even if the ballots had not been tampered with, even if the expulsions had not occurred, even if the great locals with the majority of the membership had been allowed to elect the left-wing delegates who really represented them—still the administration gang would have succeeded in disfranchising the majority, retaining their control by this contemptible gerrymandering.

And what did they do, these corrupt bureaucrats, when they had the convention in their pockets? Did they demonstrate how much more “practical” they were, how much more connected with the daily needs of the workers, than the “impractical” and “idealist” left-wing. No, not at all. Their practicality is exhausted when they secure control over the workers in the garment industry they have nothing practical at all to offer. They are completely bankrupt. For 11 days of the convention they did not deal with one single matter of interest to the broad masses of the workers. They were so busy expelling delegates, and making laws to convert the union into their own private property, that they had no time or energy for anything else. Only in the last two days of the convention was any other business transacted at all, and then in only the most perfunctory and hasty fashion, not a single measure being presented to meet the critical situation confronting the industry.

Left Wing Only Constructive Force

There is no time to prepare an exhaustive analysis of the convention proceedings and results for this issue of THE LABOR HERALD which goes to press just as the convention is coming to a close. Nevertheless, we will have complete reports and summary, with the proposals of the needle trades militants as to how this serious and critical situation is to be met.

The left-wing in the I. L. G. W. U. cannot know any defeat, in spite of all the obstacles and setbacks that present themselves. It cannot know defeat because, first, it represents the majority of the membership, and the masses of the workers will ultimately rule, overcoming all bureaucratic machines and holding them. And second, it must go forward to victory because its program represents the only possible path for all the workers to protect and extend their hard-won advances against the exploitation of capitalism.

In Boston the left-wing presented a program that emphasized (1) consolidation of locals in each branch of the industry, to make possible the workers’ control: (2) unemployment insurance; (3) employment bureaus controlled by the membership of overtime work; (5) economy in the administration of the union, with a maximum wage for officials of $75 per week; (6) proportional representation of local unions in joint boards, to go away with the present minority control; (7) the shop delegate system; (8) the labor party; (9) amalgamation of all needle trades unions into one powerful organization; (10) recognition of all expelled members, unity of all elements in the industry, no discriminations and cessation of expulsions against the left-wing.

On With the Fight!

As against this constructive and vitally necessary program, the gang in control set up a new constitution, which centralizes all power into their own hands, gives power to take over the administration of the whole industry, to expel delegates, makes this petty group of bureaucrats a self-perpetuating little autocracy. The I. L. G. W. U. has been turned, insofar as it could be by this gang of trade-union freebooters, into their own private property. They have killed the workers’ democracy.

The workers in the ladies’ garment industry are faced with the most profound crisis in their history. To solve it will require the utmost of energy, determination, courage, and intelligence. The whole future is the issue of the struggle. There is no room for weakness, pessimism, or despair. Those who fight for the program of the left-wing, fight with all the forces of history on their side. The reactionaries are in their last desperate struggle. We warn the workers before they go into battle: beware of the “socialist” dreamers. There is a possibility that the present may be dark in the I. L. G. W. U., but it is up to the courageous and intelligent militants to make it but the darkness that precedes the dawn. On with the struggle for the vital needs of the working class! That is the slogan of the militant garment workers.

The Sixth Convention of the International Fur Worker’s Union of the United States and Canada, held in Chicago from May 12th to 17th inclusive, attended by 80 delegates from 18 local unions and five joint boards, was the most reactionary since the A. F. of L. Convention. But as was not entirely a “labor-faker” body as the A. F. of L. Convention was, the only explanation for its shameful behaviour is the fact that the rank and file of the Furriers were represented. The Convention adopted the illuminating expression: “We are the labor party,” and it follows that the only hope is that the rank and file learns to resist suppression by any and all means and makes its voice heard and its rule effective.

The Kaufman-Cohan-Hillquit gang which rules by force over the Furriers today is a little picture of the German socialist-fascist dictatorship with its arms down in workers’ blood. Just as the workers of Germany are turning in disgust from the “socialists” to whom the Fur Workers’ Union contributed $1,500 last year, so will the “Forward” gang meet its deserts soon or later. Just as the New York “Leader” died expensively of jaundiced “socialism” in spite of $5,000 donated by the Furriers, so will perish, ultimately, the yellow-socialist-gangster control over the workers in the union. But just now the gang seems to have learned nothing from these lessons of history.

The Kaufman machine made sure work of it. The new Constitution provides for an absolute monarchy. The G. E. B. will act as the Credential Committee for further conventions. The Constitution is now amended to provide that anyone who attends or takes part in a protest meeting or an unauthorized meeting against the union or the officialdom of the union, or one who will “slander” or “libel” the union or the officialdom, is subject to suspension or expulsion.

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Secured in its future autocracy—or so it thinks—the machine cancelled any hope of membership control. The Convention rejected the proposal that G. E. B. members be elected by referendum, rejecting also any referendum on recognitions. It continued the present G. E. B. for another year and placed the place left vacant by the impeachment of Tenth Vice President M. Sturroff, the New York leftist, who a rededicated articles for the Freihet.

The T. U. E. L. Measures Carried!

Over 100 resolutions were suddenly jammed through in five hours. The resolution for registration was introduced by the Convention from Local 40, was at first opposed on the ground that “the facts were not right,” but Meyer London opportunistically spoke up for “self-defense,” and another resolution favoring recognition was adopted.

In the face of a foreign-born membership even the Kaufman gang had to codorse a resolution against the Johnson Bill and in protection of the foreign-born workers, despite the fact that these measures originated and are urged by the T. U. E. L. This is the one bright spot on a dismal background. Nor could the Convention do more than stick the mass demand for a labor party. It rejected St. Paul and sent three delegates to the C. P. F. A. at Cleveland.

Charges of B. Gold against Sam Cohen, President Kaufman, A. Soifer and others for the murderous assault upon him last December 19th, in Local 15, were tabled and Gold was forbidden attendance even as visitor at the Convention. Likewise, a motion for a resolution condemning the T. U. U., or any “dictatorship!” Likewise, a resolution demanding that the A. F. of L. sever friendship with the American League defeated on the ground that everyone has a right to belong to any organization he chooses, except, of course....

A resolution against the “propaganda” of the T. U. U. was defeated by the delegates Currie and Holsworth, who never heard of the League until they entered the convention, which accepted the motion by the same vote by which it had agreed to the T. U. U.’s “propaganda” in protection of the foreign-born! Thus vital is the T. U. E. L. program!