

in other centers. The administration proposed that the issue be left for settlement in each market according to conditions and the desires of the membership in each place.

The left-wing was, of course, the militant champion of week-work. It battled solidly for this measure, which is one of burning interest to the rank and file. The right-wing, which finds its principal strength in New York, felt that it did not dare champion piece work, even though they are known generally to favor it, because of strong rank and file opposition. A few even spoke for the week-work resolution. The administration was in a delicate position, for if the right-wing had, against its convictions but yielding to the pressure of the New York membership, voted for week-work, it would undoubtedly have been carried over the administration's protest. But most of the right-wing did not vote at all, 51 delegates absenting themselves or abstaining, so the administration measure was carried by a vote of 131 to 99.

June 17th Versus July 4th

Participation in political action in this election year came up in a large number of resolutions calling upon the convention to endorse the June 17th, St. Paul, Farmer-Labor Party gathering, to send delegates, and advise local unions and joint boards to be also represented. The administration on this issue took a typical centrist, middle-of-the-road position; it proposed to send delegates to June 17th and also to July 4th at Cleveland, pledged to work for the formation of a class farmer-labor party that would unite all the independent political forces of labor. Discussion on this issue was sharp but short; the question had been maneuvered to near the end of a session, so that the delegates were impatient to adjourn. Participation in both conventions was approved by a *viva-voce* vote which indicated about the usual division of 2 to 1. Both reports before the convention, however, committed the A. C. W. of A. to participation in a farmer-labor party and to fight for its formation, so that the decision was thus far unanimous.

Proportional Representation

The fourth battle of special significance was on the issue of proportional representation on joint boards. At present many joint boards have equal number of delegates from each union, regardless of size. This is the basis of much bureaucratic control which is the especial heart's-desire of the right-wing. The left-wing proposed a referendum to the membership,

establishing a rule of proportional representation in every market, with the recommendation of the convention that it be adopted. On this issue the administration was really neutral—at least in speech and vote, wherever its sympathies may have been. The left-wing added 23 votes to its solid 89, and, with the rest of the center group not voting, carried its proposition over the right-wing, by a vote of 112 to 71. It was the only clear-cut left-wing issue that won a definite victory in the convention and the only immediate achievement of a definite nature.

Relation of Forces in the A. C. W. of A.

Analysis of the votes cast on the four issues mentioned, will show that the numerical relation of forces of center group, left, and right-wings is expressed approximately as 121, 89, and 71. Of these groups the center is the broadest, but is less definite and clear-cut than either of the others, and owes its strength largely to the skillful piloting of Sydney Hillman, who dominates it completely. The right-wing is small, growing smaller, and has a very narrow base, relying largely upon the survival of craft spirit among the New York cutters who occupy a strategic position in the industry. The left-wing has assumed larger volume than the right, and in addition has a broad base in the organization, including all language groups and all trade sections of the industry.

It will be readily apparent that the left, as organized and led by the Trade Union Educational League and the Workers Party, has by its militant and aggressive championship of the most vital needs of the needle workers, by its clarification of its position and program, grasped the attention of the entire industry. It has prepared the way for a great and solid growth of power and influence. At the same time it has assumed a responsible and sober attitude toward organizational matters that augurs well for its ability to hold and consolidate its growing influence. It was significant that one of the most effective speeches for standardizing dues payments, bringing up the dues of many centers to the standard of Chicago, \$2.00 per month, was made by a left-wing militant, in the face of a demagogic appeal to the interests of the poor rank and file by the right-wing. Its clear-cut and militant program, its growing definiteness of organizational connections, its responsible attitude toward the union generally, and the rapidly-growing confidence of the rank and file—these are the great attainments of the left-wing in the A. C. W. of A. during the past two years, and they were registered at this convention so that all the world could

see. This is the most important achievement in the clothing industry, not alone from the point of view of revolutionary progress, but also for the healthy growth and development of the union itself and the everyday struggle for better conditions.

In the arid desert of the American labor movement, where conventions as a rule are more reactionary than chambers of commerce or bourgeois clubs, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America brings a refreshing breeze of proletarian spirit. True enough, it has some of the poison of class collaboration in its veins, its 'progressive' administration is often sadly indecisive and yielding under pressure from the right-wing, and only by the con-

stant prodding of all the militant elements among the rank and file can it be kept steadily going forward. But, after all the necessary criticism has been made (and the sharpest criticism may be the most friendly act, when its good faith is recognized) the Amalgamated has again shown that it deserves its reputation as the leading labor union of America. May the left-wing militants combine more strongly, develop their programs more clearly, participate ever more actively in the left of their union, that the present healthy condition may be made the starting point for more radical, lasting, and profound achievements in the clothing industry.

Madmen Control the I. L. G. W. U.

THE seventeenth convention of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, meeting in Boston, May 5th to 17th, marked the 25th year of that organization's history. It might have been a great event in the forward march of the union, where the victories and defeats of the past should be reviewed, the structure and policies of the union remodeled and brought up to date to achieve more solidarity, effectiveness, and fighting spirit, and the whole organization renewed in its enthusiasm and hopefulness. Not so with this convention.

A grievous wound, striking into the very vitals of the I. L. G. W. U., was the outstanding result of the Boston convention, instead of the constructive progress that might have been achieved. Like mad dervishes of the Orient, the organization, under the control of a set of irresponsible ignoramuses, lacerated its own body, and cut into its most vital organ—the militant rank and file workers who for decades have struggled and sacrificed to make the I. L. G. W. U. a strong and powerful union. The expulsion of hundreds of the most loyal and active members was approved in Boston.

Blind fanaticism could go no further than the exclusion of such tried union fighters as those who were expelled from the union, victims of the insanity of the *Forwards* gang in control. All of these people are known throughout the industry, by the rank and file, for their services and sacrifices. Some of the expelled went to the convention to appeal their expulsion, leaving the direction of the strike work, which had been placed in their hands on demand of the workers involved in spite of their exclusion from the union. They are good enough to do the work for which no others so well-fitted were available, but they are not

allowed to hold membership and vote. It is hard to realize the enormity of the crime against the working class that is summed up in these expulsions confirmed at Boston. Words are pale and lifeless things. The disgust, contempt, resentment, anger, and indignation that is aroused in the breast of every thinking worker in the garment industry is beyond measure or expression.

How was such a monstrous crime possible? Does the membership of the I. L. G. W. U. sanction this self-mutilation of the union?

No, the rank and file is not guilty of this crime. It is possible only because a gang of cynical, small-minded, and ignorant men, tools of a private institution, the *Daily Forward* and Abe Cahan, which is determined to rule the Jewish workers for the benefit of its income from advertisers, found themselves temporarily in control. They became drunk with their power. They determined that they would never give it up. To preserve and perpetuate their control it was necessary to silence all opposition.

The result of such a determination was the expulsion policy launched last year. The fruit and flower of it is seen in the Boston Convention. Tens of thousands of members were disfranchised in the elections to the convention, by the expulsion or ruling off the ballot of all left-wingers. Then at the convention 16 delegates in opposition to the destructive policy, elected in spite of the terrorization of the membership against them, were unseated from the convention. Even then, the fifty-odd delegates who still remained and voted against the insane gang in control, represented more members than those who were in the pockets of Sigman & Co.

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 territory hitherto unorganized and 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 locals totalling 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 represent them—still the administration gang would have succeeded in disfranchising the majority, retaining their control by this contemptible gerrymander.

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 concerned with the every-day needs of the workers, than the "impractical" and "idealistic" left-wing. No, not at all. Their practicality is exhausted when they secure control of the treasury. For 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 not 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 concluding its sessions. Next month 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 and overcome.

The left-wing in the I. L. G. W. U. cannot know any defeat, in spite of all the obstacles

and set-backs 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 machinery that holds them. And second, it must go forward to victory because its program represents the only possible path for all the workers to protect themselves 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 workers' control; (2) unemployment insurance; (3) employment bureaus controlled by the union; (4) abolition 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 do 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) reinstatement 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 all local unions and joint boards, delivers every individual member to the mercy of each whim of the G. E. B., and 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 before they go into a shameful oblivion. While the present may be dark in the I. L. G. W. U., it is up to the courageous and intelligent militants to make it but the darkness that precedes dawn. On with the struggle for the vital needs of the working class! That is the slogan of the militant garment workers.

Socialist Reaction Rules Furriers

By S. C. Cohen

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 50 delegates from 18 local unions and five joint boards, was the most reactionary since the A. F. of L. Convention. But as it 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 robbed of any expression at Chicago. It follows that the only hope is that the rank and file learns to resist suppression by any and all means and make its voice heard and its rule effective.

The Kaufman-Cahan-Hillquit gang which rules by force over the Furriers today is a little picture of the German socialist-Fascist dictatorship with its arms elbow deep 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 late. 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.

Secure 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 assessments. It continued the present G. E. B. in office, adding one man to take the place left vacant by the impeachment of Tenth Vice President M. Suroff, the New York leftist, who dared write articles for the Freiheit.

T. U. E. L. Measures Carried!

Over 100 resolutions were suddenly jammed through in five hours. The resolution for Russian recognition proposed by Delegate Steinberg from Local 40, was at first opposed on the ground that "the facts were not right," but Meyer London opportunely spoke up for "self-government" and so another resolution favoring recognition was adopted.

In the face of a foreign-born membership even the Kaufman gang had to endorse 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 sidetrack the mass demand for a labor party. It rejected St. Paul and sent three delegates to the C. P. P. A. at Cleveland.

Charges of B. Gold against Sam Cohn, 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 tabled was Suroff's appeal. After these acts and Kaufman's threat last December against the New York members that "blood will run!"—the Convention blandly adopted a resolution condemning Fascism or any "dictatorship!" Likewise, a resolution demanding that the A. F. of L. sever friendship with the American Legion was 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. E. L. was introduced by Delegates Currie and Holsworth, who never heard of the League until they entered the convention, which accepted the motion by the same vote with which it had approved of the T. U. E. L. "propaganda" in protection of the foreign-born! Thus vital is the T. U. E. L. program!

The most indecent and despicable act of the Kaufman gang was the appropriation of \$100 for the "political prisoners" of Soviet Russia, while at the same time referring to the G. E. B. an appeal from Sigman for aid to Sacco and Vanzetti! After this, who can "slander" the officialdom of the Fur Workers? But the membership—that is different!