

Notebook Of An Agitator

The Mad Dog Of The Labor Movement

Among the whole gang of corrupt and contented labor fakers who infest the labor movement to its detriment — especially the AFL unions — and fatten on their crimes against the workers, one in particular is striving, not without success, to distinguish himself as the greatest scoundrel of them all. This is Daniel J. Tobin, the \$30,000 a year president of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, who has already won for himself the title of The Mad Dog of the Labor Movement and is demonstrating his right to hold it against all comers.

Tobin, a relic of the horse and buggy days of trade unionism, is a small-souled, grasping, selfish old reprobate who thinks the teamsters' union exists for his personal benefit. In addition to his huge salary he taps the union treasury for heavy expenses and pre-paid vacation trips for himself and family, and makes the union carry his son, whom he is grooming to become his successor, on the pay-roll at a fancy honorarium. A rich man himself, he fawns on the bosses and the capitalist politicians, but fights the rank and file workers with savage fury. In all his long and malodorous career he has never yet been caught in a generous impulse or a gesture of good will and solidarity toward the workers who pay his exorbitant salary.

A SKILLED OPERATOR

Tobin never knew anything about organizing workers and leading them in struggle to better their conditions. But he is an expert mechanic in the vile trade of breaking strikes, smashing democracy in local unions, working in cahoots with the bosses to keep rebellious workers from making a living at their trade, and spilling blood in gangster raids on the jurisdiction of other unions, and he is getting more proficient as he gets older.

Tobin disposes of a huge treasury — \$14,800,000 at the last report — accumulated from the dues payments of the hard-working and underpaid members of the union, and he utilizes a large part of it to maintain what amounts to a private army of murderous thugs, recruited in part from the underworld, many of whom have criminal records. These gangsters, under Tobin's direction, usually operating under the benevolent indifference of the authorities who are "taken care of" in various ways, wage war on the rank and file of the Teamsters Union, and are at present especially preoccupied with a jurisdictional war to force the brewery workers to quit the union of their choice — the Brewery Workers Union, one of the oldest industrial unions and one well-respected in the labor movement — and to compel them to pay dues into the Teamsters Union, whether they desire to or not.

In this campaign beating, maiming, incendiarism and dynamiting are routine procedures and murder is not excluded. Announcing a "knock down drag out fight" against the brewery workers, Tobin sent his private army of professional thugs into Pittsburgh. They moved in on Pittsburgh to convince the brewery workers that they should give up their own union, now affiliated with the CIO as a result of a free vote of the membership for that preference, and sign up in Tobin's union. And this "convincing" process did not take the form of ideological disquisition or logical elucidation. Tobin's mobsters relied on arguments of another kind learned in their own school, which honors Capone and Dillinger more than Plato and Aristotle.

USUAL PRACTICE

The usual practice of pulling drivers off their trucks and beating them within an inch of their lives was tried first but did not work very well. The Pittsburgh brewery drivers, with the help of other CIO fellow unionists,

The penalty of three other appellants was modified "in view of their expressions of repentance." Their sentence was commuted to one year of suspension with "probation for a period of two additional years." Whether these three suspended members who "repented" will be permitted to work and make a living at their trade during the suspension was not stated. Probably not.

MINNEAPOLIS RECORD

Tobin's criminal activities in Minneapolis have been rather widely advertised. It is known that he tried to break the great strikes in 1934. He didn't succeed then and could not prevent a strong union being built up without him and in spite of him. He then tried to get rid of the honest, fighting leaders of the union in 1941 by placing the union in "receivership." When the rank and file revolted against that, he called the federal cops through his friend President Roosevelt, and simply had the leaders thrown into prison. At the same time, a horde of Tobin's gangsters, armed with blackjacks and baseball bats, were turned loose on the trucking districts, with the open connivance of the city police, to force the truck drivers to wear the button of Tobin's "reorganized" local. The State Labor Board, under Governor Stassen, denied the workers the right of an election to register their preference. In return for that favor, the labor-hating Governor, author of the notorious Minnesota "Slave Labor Law," was introduced as the guest of honor and highly praised by Tobin at the subsequent international convention of the IBT.

Having tasted blood in Minneapolis, Tobin has been running wild ever since in his violent campaign against any sign of independence or militancy in the ranks of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. At the present time approximately 40% of the local unions are under "receivership" with appointed officers and no autonomous rights. This simple fact in itself is the most devastating testimony of the extent of the rank and file discontent and revolt against the tyranny and treachery of this mean-spirited, vicious old man and the whole gang of well-heeled labor snakes and common crooks who make up his unsavory machine.

REBEL TEAMSTERS

With this tide of rank and file revolt rising all around him, Tobin spits hydrophobic venom in the faces of the union membership and threatens to spend their own money — the money they paid into the treasury of the International Union — to fight them and beat them down. He warns "any foolish group in any district" that they "must get this into their heads now — that if they ever get so cocky and self-important that they think they can defeat this International Union they are making the mistake of their lives. We don't want trouble and disagreement, but when it is forced on us, we will never back down if it costs every dollar in the treasury. You fight me, and I'll hire more gangsters to fight you — that is Tobin's April message to the rebel teamsters. There is no doubt about it, one can buy a lot of professional thugs with \$14,800,000.

Daniel J. Tobin employs yet another murderous weapon in his war against the rank and file of the IBT. He reinforces his brutal dictatorship over the local unions of the Teamsters International by the device of first expelling dissident workers and then taking their bread and butter away from them by "taking them off the job." In the April number of The International Teamster, Tobin boasts about breaking up an opposition to the gangster-ridden union machine in St. Louis which culminated in a strike. "The International Un-

ion sent in a number of men," he says significantly, meaning a mob of strong-arm men whose assignment was to waylay the strikers and beat them up — "and every business agent and officer of our local unions in this city of St. Louis pledged his full and undivided help." It is known to Tobin that one of these local "business agents," in fact the boss of the whole Tobin set-up in St. Louis, is a gangster with a criminal record.

According to Tobin's account, the leading rank and file militants in the strike — truck drivers, not gangsters — also had the bad habit of "continuously finding fault with the union officers." Consequently, "the general president ordered that charges be preferred against them." And of course, "several of them were expelled from the union."

Next came the deal with the bosses. Says Tobin: "The employers were notified that these men were no longer members of the union and that our union shop agreement must be observed. The employers complied with the agreement, and those individuals were laid off by the employers." By this combination of anti-labor measures the strike was broken. The workers were beaten and forced into line. It was "a famous victory," and Tobin gloats over it. "In a few days," he writes, the men "begged to be allowed to go back to work." Maybe the poor devils had families to support. And maybe the families were hungry. The proudest men have been known to submit under such circumstances.

But proud men who beg through clenched teeth are dangerous animals to provoke. There are many of them in the International Brotherhood of Teamsters at the present time, and their number is steadily growing. One of these days they are going to count noses and come to the conclusion that they are strong enough, if they act together, to put a stop to the humiliations and defeats imposed upon them by brutal violence and treacherous collusion with the bosses. That will be a bad day for the Mad Dog of the Labor Movement. The dogcatchers will catch up with him.

UPWA Call For A New Party Represents Big Step Forward

By George Breitman

When the convention of the CIO United Packinghouse Workers voted last week to break with both capitalist parties, it took one of the most encouraging political steps made by any section of the union movement since the end of the war. It gave voice at the same time to the aspirations of millions of American workers who are fed up with capitalist politics and want to establish a party of their own that will represent their interests on the political field as their unions represent them on the economic field.

The UPWA is not the first international union to criticize both the Democratic and Republican parties; but it is the first in recent years to condemn them equally and to urge the workers not to support either. Such a stand — without any reservations, ifs, ands or buts — is absolutely necessary if labor is to be able to defend itself against the political attacks of Big Business. For this bold and wise declaration the UPWA deserves the gratitude and support of the whole labor movement.

Similarly welcome is the UPWA decision to help nomin-

ing an independent party "at the proper time"? The UPWA of course cannot create a new party by itself. Such a party can be formed only when it has sufficient union and mass support. No one can have any quarrel with the resolution's formulation if that is what it meant to say.

DIFFERENT MEANINGS

But on the other hand, "at the proper time" can have an entirely different meaning. It can mean, for example, that the present time is not the proper time, politically speaking, no matter how much support the new party movement may have. Such a position is taken by many union leaders. If that is what is meant, then it is dead wrong.

For in a political sense "the proper time" for a labor party is right now, or as soon as is humanly possible. The longer its formation is delayed, the longer the capitalist politicians will remain in power.

A resolution on labor political action should not be vague on this question, but should explicitly stress the need for independent political action at the

earliest possible time so as to educate and mobilize workers to the need for acting soon rather than late.

It must also be borne in mind that many union bureaucrats oppose formation of an independent party now on the ground that it will not be "the proper time" for such action until the Wallaces, Peppers and LaGuardias are ready to leave the capitalist parties and assume the leadership of a new party. It is necessary to clarify this question — and another one associated with it: What kind of independent party does the UPWA resolution advocate — a labor party or a third capitalist party?

From the entire tone and orientation of the UPWA resolution, we believe the majority of the convention delegates intended it to express their desire for a labor party and not for a new edition of the Democratic Party, which would be controlled by untrustworthy liberals whose only commitment is to the maintenance of capitalism. But the lack of exactness in the resolution makes it possible to read different interpretations into it.

To show how this is done, and how much confusion can deliberately be created as a result, attention should be directed to the May 8 Daily Worker editorial on the UPWA resolution. The Communist Party, it should be explained, is fiercely opposed to the creation of a labor party. Instead it favors a third (capitalist) party when Wallace and other capitalist party liberals give their approval to its creation. Yet, because the UPWA resolution is not sufficiently precise, the Daily Worker editors begin by saying:

"Hats off to the CIO Packinghouse Workers Union for giving a fresh push to the third party movement at its annual convention. . . . Then, in order to disorient its readers about what kind of

"third party" is needed, the editorial declares:

"Development of the third party movement should not, of course, mean abandonment by progressives of the fight against reaction inside the two major parties."

"On the contrary, through the building of independent political organization, labor and its friends must supply the leadership and the pressures for progressive struggle within these parties."

Here it can be plainly seen that the Stalinists, while giving lip-service applause to the UPWA resolution, are actually very worried about it. They are afraid that it goes "too far." And it certainly goes too far for the Stalinists who consistently refuse to adopt comparable resolutions in the unions they control and who are still spreading illusions about the possibility of "progressive struggle" inside both the Republican and Democratic parties — illusions which can only have the result of postponing the creation of a labor party.

Such illusions must be fought and exposed and rooted out, no matter who spreads them — union bureaucrats or Stalinists or capitalist liberals. A good place to have done it was the UPWA convention where the sentiment of the delegates was clearly for labor party action. The UPWA resolution — and the movement for independent labor political action — would have been strengthened by preciseness on this point.

But even with these shortcomings, that resolution is the most hopeful sign on the political horizon in a month of Sundays. It should serve to inspire similar action by militants in other unions and to set the ball rolling on a nation-wide scale. Properly utilized, it can be a starting point for labor's next big stride forward to a better world.

Fighting Program Adopted By CIO Packing Workers

(Continued from Page 1)

pendent party pledged to the cause and needs of labor.

So many delegates wanted to speak in favor of the political action resolution that it was necessary to adjournment time for the chairman, President Ralph Helstein, to entertain a motion to suspend the rules and permit the session to run overtime.

The Iowa delegation told in detail how the Democrats and Republicans in the Iowa Legislature handcuffed the labor movement by passing the Anti-Union Security Law which wipes out every closed shop, union shop and maintenance of membership contract in Iowa. The law permits the checkoff of union dues only in the event that there has been a written, notarized authorization signed by the individual employe and his wife, if married.

The Canadian delegates stated that they had learned more than 10 years ago that they could not place any trust in their two major parties, the

Tory and Liberal Parties. Back in the Thirties they began building the CCF as an independent workers' and farmers' party. The delegates from Saskatchewan, where the CCF is in power, read copies of their province's laws guaranteeing civil liberties and labor's right to organize, strike and picket.

In the discussion, it was noticeable that speakers from the strong Stalinist delegation limited their speeches on this question to exhorting the convention to "political action." They didn't say anything about the Democratic or Republican parties — they merely repeated over and over: "We've got to start earlier and ring more door bells, register the workers, get their dollars into the PAC, get them out to vote, etc., etc."

They kept shouting hysterical about "political action" without saying anything about independent candidates or a new party. They were very careful not to commit themselves and to steer clear of what kind of political action they stood for. Apparently their orders are to leave the door open so they can jump in any direction Stalin's foreign policy dictates.

Last December the union signed a two-year contract with the "Big Four" packers for a 7½ cents an hour increase and 8 paid holidays. The convention instructed its officers to reopen

the wage clauses in existing contracts and demand an increase of 15 cents an hour, retroactive to April 1, 1947, from the Big Four who employ about 80,000 workers. The officers were also directed to coordinate their efforts for the 15 cents wage increase with the AFL Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of America.

The convention also adopted a program calling for a 30-hour week without reduction in pay; a guaranteed annual wage; adequate medical, health and hospital program financed by the employers; severance pay; more liberal vacation clause; time-and-a-half for all work performed on Saturday, etc.

On the third day, the convention adopted a statement of policy calling for unity in its ranks "against the present wave of witch-hunt hysteria as the weapon of reaction and monopoly whose goal is to destroy the trade union movement." It also warned against "outsiders, individuals, organizations or groups who attempt to infiltrate, dictate, meddle or interfere in any way."

Earlier, the convention had decided with only one dissenting vote, to place the full resources of the union behind a campaign to obtain the reversal of an order to deport R. R. Martinez, UPWA organizer, because he had been a member of the Communist Party in 1931 or 1932. The resolution stated explicitly that this order for deportation "constitutes a denial of a man to freedom of political belief," and is part of the growing anti-labor and repressive drive now current in the U. S.

Meaning of Attack On Henry Wallace

The real meaning of the furious attack upon Henry Wallace by the capitalist press and Wall Street's representatives in Washington is explained in an article entitled "Wallace and the War Makers" by William F. Warde in the May issue of Fourth International, now on sale.

Wallace criticized U. S. foreign policy for speeding the drive toward war. But U. S. imperialism is determined to brook no opposition, no matter how mild, to its plans for world domination. Tremendous uneasiness was created among the American people by the Truman doctrine which was reflected in a growing pressure of mass opposition on Washington. The capitalist rulers feared that Wallace's warnings would "serve to expose their truly monstrous designs," and that Wallace himself would "become a rallying point for the vast anti-war sentiment within the country."

Wallace himself is appraised as a capitalist demagogue whose differences with the administration are not fundamental, and who diverts the people from the real anti-war fight. "The struggle against the war danger is inseparable from irreconcilable struggle to get rid of the imperialist power at Washington which breeds war and profits from it. People like Wallace . . . who preach confidence in capitalism and its agencies can only lead the anti-war struggle to disaster."

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Our Program:

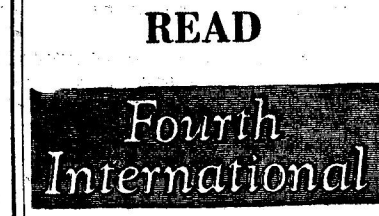
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No injunctions! No compulsory arbitration!
- Build an independent labor party!**
- Tax the rich, not the poor!**
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No taxes on incomes under \$5,000 a year!
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- A working class answer to capitalist militarism and war.**
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Full democratic rights in the armed forces!
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