
INTERNATIONAL LABOR MOVING TOWARD UNITY

BY ROSE WORTIS

INTERNATIONAL labor unity today is a condition for strengthening the unity of the United Nations. It is the labor core of the mass base for the anti-Hitler coalition of states and peoples.

International labor unity during this crucial period of the war would further release the energies and the enthusiasm of the masses, would be a great stimulant toward enhanced production; would strengthen the hand of the government leaders against the defeatists at home, would give greater impetus to the launching of the Second Front for hastening victory, and would guarantee labor's adequate participation in shaping the peace.

These are the problems of greatest concern not only to labor, but to the entire nation.

What Is the Status of International Labor Unity Today?

Some headway has been made in advancing international labor unity. The initial step was the formation of the Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee nearly two years ago, a most important step in the direction of healing the split in the international labor movement.

However, alongside this Committee, there is the makeshift Anglo-American Committee* established after the A. F. of L. rejected the proposal brought here in 1942 by Sir Walter Citrine for the affiliation of the American trade union movement to the Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee. Because the Anglo-American Committee excludes the C.I.O. with its millions of organized war workers, as well as the Railroad Brotherhoods; because it leaves out the labor movement of our most important ally, the Soviet Union, it has remained sterile. Little can be expected from this committee in its present form. It has become an obstacle to unity.

The action of the 1942 convention of the A. F. of L. engineered by Hutcheson, Woll and Dubinsky, in rejecting the proposal for Anglo-Soviet-American trade union unity, was a divisive act. It served as an encouragement to the anti-war elements in their anti-Soviet campaign.

A handful of defeatists, reactionaries and Social-Democrats, pre-

* Now the British Trades Union Congress and the American Federation of Labor Trade Union Committee.

suming to speak for the labor movement, spurned the hand of friendship extended to us by the great Soviet trade unions, representing 28,000,000 organized workers in that great country, who have made possible the miracles of production of the instruments with which their Red Army, on the decisive front, is dealing deadly blows to our common enemy, the fascists.

This action of the A. F. of L., reaffirmed at its recently held 63rd Convention, in Boston, has retarded international labor unity throughout the world. Conscious of the strong rank-and-file desire for international trade union unity, President William Green, in his opening speech, was compelled to make a gesture to this mass sentiment by speaking of close collaboration of the United Nations. Green expressed the hope that "procedures and consultations and cooperation" already developed by the United Nations would "be made permanent and broadened in practice to cover the needs of interdependent responsibilities of democratic peoples." If unity of the United Nations, as President Green stated, must be broadened and strengthened in the interests of the democratic peoples, he is indeed inconsistent when in the same breath, as labor leader, he turns down the proposal for unity with the 28,000,000 organized workers in the country of our most powerful ally.

But the labor movement of the United Nations will not allow itself to be blocked in its efforts toward unity by a small reactionary clique of the A. F. of L. Executive

Council. Decisive steps leading to international labor unity have been taken in recent months by the labor movement in many countries, including important sections of American labor.

In August of this year, the Havana Congress of the Confederation of Latin American Workers adopted the following resolution on international labor unity:

"The time has come to establish close ties with labor in the two great non-American countries that have contributed so much to the defeat of fascism—Britain and the Soviet Union. . . .

"Through such ties, we hope to make it possible for world labor to present its opinion on problems related to the fight against fascism and to the coming peace."

Similar action was taken at the July Congress of the Australian Council of Trade Unions. The resolution emphasized that international labor unity is as important today as domestic labor unity and called on the Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee to convene a World Labor Congress, "so that international labor may play its maximum part in winning the war and the peace." In line with this decision, Secretary Monk sent cablegrams to Sir Walter Citrine, Secretary of the British Trades Union Congress, and to Nikolai Shvernik, Secretary of the All-Union Council of Soviet Trade Unions, asking for affiliation and urging the extension of the Anglo-Soviet Committee to include all the United Nations.

The C.I.O. and its affiliated unions, since the organization of the

Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee, have declared their eagerness to affiliate with it. In the last few months the demand for such an extension of the Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee has come from every convention of the C.I.O. unions, such as the United Automobile Workers Union, representing 1,000,000 workers; the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers Union, representing 500,000 workers; the United Shipyard Workers Union; the United Maritime Workers Union; the United Rubber Workers Union; the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union—all engaged in basic war production; as well as the State, County and Municipal Workers Union; the United Office and Professional Workers Union; the United Transport Workers Union; the United Fur and Leather Workers Union; and other C.I.O. international unions. Every state convention of the C.I.O. has spoken out most emphatically in favor of international labor unity, as well as some of the most important state A.F. of L. conventions, in Pennsylvania, Illinois, Wisconsin, Ohio, New Hampshire, and other states.

As is known, Philip Murray vigorously protested Citrine's action of ignoring the C.I.O. and refusing to entertain its proposal to join the Anglo-Soviet Committee because of the A. F. of L. leadership's opposition and acceding to the proposal to form an Anglo-A. F. of L. Committee as a "liaison" with the Soviet trade unions.

The Railroad Brotherhoods likewise protested the presumption of

the A. F. of L. to speak for the whole labor movement, and urged the extension of the Anglo-Soviet Committee to include all sections of the American trade unions.

Throughout this year, hundreds of A. F. of L. local unions, city central bodies, state federations, and a number of international unions, have urged the Executive Council to reconsider its action on affiliation to the Anglo-Soviet Committee. It is a reflection on the democratic processes in the A. F. of L. that these voices found no expression at its 63rd Convention.

The main obstacle to unity of labor on an international scale was and remains the A. F. of L., led by the defeatist Hutcheson, the reactionary Matthew Woll and the professional anti-Sovieteer David Dubinsky, who place their narrow group interests above the best interests of the nation.

In once again rejecting international labor unity at the last Convention, they launched an attack on their own unions that are pressing for this unity. They resorted anew to a tirade of red-baiting and, *à la* Dies, denounced the hundreds of thousands of their members favoring unity as "foreign agents."

The report of the arch-Red-baiter Woll on international labor relations had the familiar sound of the McCormick-Patterson-Hearst defeatist press. Said Matthew Woll:

"Minority groupings within the A. F. of L. hostile to the democratic ideals, philosophy and practices of the Federation, have conducted a deliberately malicious campaign of misinformation on this question to

confuse and bewilder the American people. . . .

"No aspect of the Federation's international relations has been so wilfully misinterpreted. (Poor, misunderstood Mr. Woll!). . . . Abnormal pressure has been brought to bear on the affiliates of the American Federation to join the Anglo-American group."

Woll spoke with great indignation against the "pressure" designed to submerge the interests of free democratic labor organizations to the foreign policies of Soviet Russia, which "through its controlled agencies sought to promote disruption and disunity in the ranks of the American Federation of Labor."

The hysterical denunciation, the attempt to fall back on the old discredited story of "foreign agent," was indirect admission of the rank-and-file pressure for international labor unity, which reached the Convention itself through hundreds of telegrams (left unread) urging favorable action on international trade union unity.

Who are these "subversive elements," these "foreign agents," spoken of with such venom by Mr. Woll? Are they perhaps the important State Federations of Pennsylvania, Illinois, Ohio, Wisconsin, New Hampshire, which have gone on record for international labor unity? Are they the hundreds of city central bodies, throughout every state in the country? Are they the several international unions, such as the Culinary Workers International Alliance, the Building Service International

Union, the International Jewelry Workers Union and the hundreds of local unions throughout the country? Are these the foreign agents acting against the A. F. of L. in the interests of a foreign country? These are patriotic American workers, speaking as members of the A. F. of L., interested in the welfare of the labor movement and the nation. The very report submitted by Woll, with its denunciation of all those who favor unity, proves that the policy of slander against the Soviet Union, the refusal to collaborate with the unions of our Soviet ally, is in direct conflict with the sentiments of a large, if not the decisive, section of the A. F. of L. Were the real sentiments of these masses taken into account, the decision of the Convention would have been the reverse of the policies advanced by the Executive Council.

Nagler's "Contribution"

The pretext advanced by the Executive Council for blocking affiliation with the Anglo-Soviet Committee is the oft-exploded charge that the Soviet trade unions are "not free." Ironical, indeed, is this charge coming from such notorious trade union despots as Hutcheson and Co.

The most shameful exhibition of this divisive demagoguery was the speech made by the Dubinsky stooge Isidore Nagler, Vice-President of the I.L.G.W.U., and delegate of the A. F. of L. to the recent British Trades Union Congress. Nagler stated at the Congress that the A. F. of L. would not affiliate with the Anglo-Soviet Committee because the Soviet unions are not free trade

unions, and that any association with them would injure, rather than advance, unity with the Soviet Union.

This was the contribution to unity made by the Woll-Hutcheson-Dubinsky henchman in the name of the A. F. of L.! In the presence of authorized representatives and spokesmen of the 28,000,000 organized workers in the Soviet Union, this puny pseudo-Socialist had the impudence to repeat the propaganda of Hitler's agents in our country, attempting to place the Soviet trade union movement on a par with Hitler's "labor front."

Since the British unions are in the Anglo-Soviet Committee, this speech was a slap in the face, not only of the Soviet unions, but of the British unions as well. The fine distinction about the difference between the people and their organizations, about supporting the Red Army but not collaborating with the trade unions, is only a demagogic coating for anti-Sovietism.

Mr. Nagler, at the British Trades Union Congress, alleged that collaboration with the Soviet unions would injure the war effort, because of the differences in ideology between the Soviet and American trade unions. There are ideological differences; but if the governments of the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. can agree not to allow differences of ideology to stand in the way of collaboration for common victory, why should not the same policy be adopted by the trade union movements of the two allied countries? Surely, there is much more in common between the workers of both

countries than between a capitalist and a workers' government. Yet the American and Soviet nations are allied while the organizations of the workers remain divided.

Surely, no one will take seriously the argument that affiliation of the A. F. of L. to the Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee would sharpen the division in the American labor movement. On the contrary, it would be one important step in the direction of unity. Working together with the labor movement of Britain and the Soviet Union would undoubtedly bring the A. F. of L. and the C.I.O. closer together and help clear away the obstacles in the path of unity in the ranks of American labor.

Nagler's speech was worth millions to Hitler and his agents in our country in their efforts to keep labor divided and to weaken the support of the people for the policy of collaboration with the Soviet Union and to disrupt the unity of the United Nations. In making his slanderous anti-C.I.O., anti-Soviet, anti-United Nations speech, Nagler did not voice the sentiments of American labor but of the defeatist Hutcheson, of the Social-Democratic anti-Soviet conspirators of the *Jewish Daily Forward-New Leader* clique. This was the purpose for which he was chosen as delegate to the British Trades Union Congress by the reactionaries and defeatists of the A. F. of L. Executive Council. This anti-Soviet speech, coming from a delegate parading as a Socialist, they hoped, would carry more weight than that of a Hutcheson or a Matthew Woll.

*On the Status and Functions of
Soviet Trade Unions*

Since the very birth of the Soviet Union the camp of reactionary labor leaders has fought bitterly against the workers' state. The ranks of labor, however, evidenced an instinctively favorable reaction to the great, epoch-making changes in the Soviet Union. From the very first, labor opposed Allied intervention in the Soviet Union and fought for Soviet recognition. From 1921 on, repeated delegations representing American labor accepted invitations to visit the Soviet Union to investigate conditions and establish closer ties. One delegation of non-Communist American trade unionists consisted of: James H. Maurer, President of the Pennsylvania Federation of Labor; John Brophy, former President of District 2, United Mine Workers of America; Frank L. Palmer, Editor of the *Colorado Labor Advocate* and a member of the International Typographical Union; Albert F. Coyle, editor of the *Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers Journal*; James W. Fitzpatrick, President of the Actors and Artists of America; and several others. This delegation issued a report, "Russia After Ten Years," signed by four members of the delegation—Maurer, Brophy, Palmer and Coyle. A quotation from the findings of this delegation, as embodied in the report, follows:

"The unions have a very definite relationship to the state, but the government does not control the unions. It would be more accurate to say that the trade unions control

the government. Yet neither statement expresses the truth. . . .

"The workers look upon the unions as an independent aid to the government and upon the government as the instrument of the workers' power in the field of politics and international relations."

This report was written during the early period in the life of the Soviet Union, when the country and its trade unions were confronted with almost insurmountable difficulties, in an industrially backward country, devastated by years of civil war, with a new working class population just recruited from the countryside. Unfortunately, in later years, which recorded the greatest progress in building the country and its industries, in advancing the education of the working class, the close ties and the exchange of delegates were interrupted. The influence of Hitler's "anti-Comintern" propaganda was no small factor responsible for this.

The entry of the Soviet Union into the war side by side with Britain and our country has exploded the mass of slanders against the Soviet Union. Unfortunately, not enough has yet been done to bring to the mass of the American trade unionists the truth about the character and the functions of the Soviet trade unions and their role in the life of the nation. It is this lack of concrete knowledge of the facts that makes it possible for reactionary leaders to continue to mislead sections of the A. F. of L. workers and to place obstacles in the way of allied labor unity.

Soviet unions are "government-

controlled," states Woll's report on international relations. "They are not free voluntary associations of the workers in the sense that characterize American and British unions," says Woll. "They constitute a department of the state, so to speak, and enjoy no more autonomy than do the various agencies of any totalitarian government."

On what authority does Woll make these statements? How do we establish the legal status of trade unions in a particular country? Certainly, there is no more authoritative source than the law of the land. What does Soviet law say on this matter?

"In conformity with the interests of the working people and in order to develop the organizational and political activity of the mass of the people, citizens of the U.S.S.R. are insured the right to unite in public organizations, trade unions, cooperative organizations. . . ."

How do these unions function? What are the basic rules guiding them? Let me quote from a recent pamphlet written by Edwin Smith, former member of the National Labor Relations Board, who surely had occasion to acquaint himself with functions of free trade unions:

"That there is a different relationship between the Soviet unions and their government and that existing in our country, of this there can be no question. But whether it is less desirable, less to the interests of the workers, is open to differences of opinion which need not stand in the way of joint collaboration on issues of common in-

terest to both, such as to speed victory and a just people's peace."

In a speech at the 1942 A. F. of L. Convention, Jack Tanner, representing the British Trades Union Congress, who has an intimate knowledge of the character of the Soviet trade unions and their relation with the government on the basis of personal investigation, stated the following:

"To say that the trade unions of Russia are nothing but appendages to the State machinery is to leave out of account the nature of the State and whose interests its activities foster and serve. In our two countries (England and the United States), we cannot pretend that it is the workers' interests which will triumph in any issue, unless we put up a strong and organized fight. But there is no evidence to support the idea that, in the Soviet Union, such a fight is necessary if the matter is one which concerns the well-being of the workers; and, if it is not necessary, the organizations which, in other countries and conditions, would conduct such fights, naturally assume a different character and take on different activities."

Important trade unionists in our country have spoken up with equal clearness against the arguments advanced by the opponents of international labor unity. In speaking on this subject at the Congress of Soviet-American Friendship in November, 1942, Jacob Potofsky, Secretary of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, said:

"In our own country, the labor movement is rightfully demanding

a greater representation in government and a greater share of responsibility for its administration. In assuming office and shouldering responsibility, we surrender no freedom. Indeed, we gain greater freedom, through greater participation in self-government. So, too, the fact that trade unionists hold important posts in the Soviet Government and that trade unions themselves perform important governmental functions is no evidence that they are not free, but on the contrary is evidence of their strength and freedom."

Tanner shows the basis of this relationship between trade unions and the government in the Soviet Union, where the government is controlled by the workers, as compared with capitalist countries. He demonstrates that, far from weakening the working class character of the trade unions, it is strengthened, and that the Soviet trade unions play a much greater role in determining the vital problems of the masses, an objective toward which labor in the capitalist countries is only aspiring. Quoting his speech further:

"We are proud to be associated with that brave people through our trade union organization, and if we are told that the character and spirit of their trade unions are different from that of the British trade unions, I can only reply that the character and spirit of the Soviet trade unionists in the fight against Hitlerism are also somewhat different from what our own have been up to date. . . .

"In 1924, 1927 and again in 1933, delegations of trade unionists from Britain visited Soviet Russia; and

on returning, all reported that the workers were owners and controllers of their country.

"It is only by realizing the full weight of that fact—the ownership of the means of production by the workers—that we can understand the relations of the trade union movement to the Soviet State."

The meaning of Tanner's speech has become much more real to American workers in the past two and one-half years. As a result of the war economy, labor more and more has to solve its problems through government machinery. In our country, much of this machinery, with the exception of the War Labor Board, is in the control of businessmen, to the exclusion of labor, and the interests of labor and production are often subordinated to the interests of the profiteers. Have the labor unions in America today ceased to be free trade unions because the determination of the conditions of the workers in the final analysis must have approval of the government? The reactionary Republicans and the anti-Roosevelt Democrats hold that position today. The fact is that labor today occupies a more important position in the life of the nation and has become a more powerful instrument, not only in defense of the interests of the workers, but of our national interest as a whole.

If it is correct for labor in our country to fight for representation in the government and to develop campaigns for the election of labor men and women to the various legislative bodies so that the interests of labor will find expression in these

bodies, how can we slander the Soviet trade unions as "not free" because they have achieved these elementary demands and perhaps a little bit more, and are "owners and controllers of their country"? In the Soviet Union, the workers in the shops directly elect their legislators, beginning with the local Soviet up to the highest legislative bodies, the Soviet of the Union and the Soviet of Nationalities, which comprise the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. What true American trade unionist would object to having the basic laws of the country governing the conditions of the people made by a governmental body democratically elected and composed of a majority of labor representatives?

Another argument advanced by the A. F. of L. leadership against the Soviet trade unions is that they follow the policies of their government. This is quite correct, since the workers themselves control the government and make these policies.

That the Soviet trade unions are not functioning as instruments to defend the economic conditions of the workers is still another argument advanced. Only people ignorant of the facts or deliberately interested in misrepresenting the facts can make such statements.

What are the economic functions of trade unions? (1) To improve the economic conditions of the workers, through collective bargaining; (2) to improve working conditions; and (3) to provide for social needs, such as unemployment insurance, sickness benefits, education, recreation, etc.

How do the Soviet trade unions function in regard to these requirements?

Clifford McAvoy, Legislative Director of the C.I.O., who made a study of the Soviet trade unions, gives the following description of their functions, taken from the constitutions of the Soviet trade unions, the labor laws, and investigations of authorities on labor problems:

"The Soviet trade union has many and diverse functions. As in the United States, it negotiates and enforces collective bargaining agreements with management, establishing wages, hours and working conditions for the workers in each factory and enterprise under its jurisdiction. It represents its members, in taking up and adjusting grievances. . . .

"The Soviet trade unions have further important jobs which, in other countries, are the responsibility of government or of private industry. They enforce the labor laws and the safety and sanitary regulations. They administer the vast social insurance system of the Soviet state. They participate with management and government in drawing up, applying and seeing to the fulfillment of plans which lay out the basic production schedule for the nation as a whole.

"Soviet trade unions are democratically organized and controlled. All officials are elected by secret ballot for one year terms. An election is valid only if two-thirds of the entire membership votes. All officials and official bodies are subject to recall by majority vote at any time." (*The Trade Unions of Our Soviet Ally*, The American Council on Soviet Relations, New York, 1942, pp. 9-10.)

As to social and educational features, the Soviet trade unions have no comparison. In the past 25 years, they have developed a predominantly backward peasant people into a highly skilled, disciplined, and advanced working class. They have organized and are directing hundreds of technical, educational, and cultural organizations and institutions. They administer to the social needs of the workers and their families in every conceivable way, including insurance, medical aid, sickness pay, maternity care, nurseries, child care, vacations, amusements, youth activities, etc. The Soviet trade unions have grown from a skeleton organization in 1917 to 28,000,000, embracing all groups and nationalities on a complete basis of equality. Racial discrimination and anti-Semitism, still unfortunately existing in a number of A. F. of L. unions, as demonstrated at the 63rd Convention in the discussion on the Negro question, are inconceivable in Soviet trade unions.

The Struggle to Extend the Anglo-Soviet Committee

An outstanding feature of the Soviet trade unions is the active participation of women as members of the Executive Committee of the All-Union Council of Soviet Trade Unions and heads of unions, as representatives to the Soviets, and in every other capacity. Unfortunately, too few American women workers are familiar with these facts which, if widely known, would help break down the barriers to unity.

A most unsavory role is played by the Social-Democratic leaders both in the United States and in Britain in blocking international labor unity. Citrine came to the United States in 1942 as a representative of the Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee, to urge the affiliation of the American trade union movement to that Committee. During his visit, Citrine, under pressure of the Social-Democratic anti-Soviet clique led by the *Jewish Daily Forward* and the Social-Democratic emigrés, allowed himself to become a partisan of the most reactionary elements in the A. F. of L., the chief opponents of labor unity in our own country and of international labor unity. Instead of serving as a force for unifying labor, he accepted Woll, Hutcheson and Dubinsky as the authoritative voice of all American labor. Citrine accepted their slanderous characterization of the great C.I.O., as a rebel group, and the powerful Railroad Brotherhoods as insignificant groups of no account.

Instead of advancing international labor unity through his visit in our country, Citrine, strengthened by his reactionary Social-Democratic colleagues, became increasingly arrogant in his relations with the Soviet trade unions. At the July meeting of the Anglo-Soviet Committee in Moscow, Citrine refused to commit himself on the second front issue, giving the flimsy excuse that this would violate the Anglo-Soviet Trade Union agreement which pledged each trade union to support its own government. He argued that it would

constitute a censure of their own government, ignoring the fact that the same agreement provides for "joint war for the defeat of Hitler Germany."

Citrine would not agree to the extension of the Anglo-Soviet Committee to include the unions of North and South America as well as the occupied countries, despite the most urgent pleas of Soviet labor delegations and the movements of all other countries, with the exception of the Executive Council.

The first reports received here that the British Trades Union Congress, which followed shortly after the Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee meeting, had gone on record for convening a world congress of labor gave a more favorable version of the Congress action than was actually the fact. It had authorized the General Council to "give attention to the possibility of convening, as soon as *the war conditions permit*, a world conference of representatives of the workers of all countries" (emphasis mine—R.W.). However, this does not answer the immediate need of hastening the defeat of Hitler.*

The delegates who voted for the motion undoubtedly had in mind to bring together the representatives of labor from all countries in conference, and in this sense the action of the Congress was a repudiation of Citrine. However, the vague formulation "when the war permits" leaves the situation in the hands of the General Council,

leaves room for maneuvering and delay, at a time when action to unite labor brooks no delay.

It must be clear to all who see in international labor unity an imperative instrument toward advancing the war effort that, in this period when history is moving with such rapid strides, this decision of the British Congress is unfortunate, to say the least. The hopes that labor the world over placed on the British Trades Union Congress have not been realized. The situation can be changed only through the most energetic action of the unions in their respective countries. The progressive labor forces in Britain and America will not rest content with the action of the British Trades Union Congress or of the A. F. of L. They will not be discouraged by the failures of the Congress. The need for international labor unity is growing more urgent from day to day, as we are confronted with the concrete problems of the second front and the rising peoples' movements in the occupied countries as the labor movements of these countries, after years of fascist oppression, rise from the underground, looking for the hand of solidarity from labor of all the United Nations.

Woll, in his report to the A. F. of L. Convention, waxed indignant at the "impudence" of the Soviet trade unions in proposing the extension of the Anglo-Soviet Committee to include the labor movements of thirty-three nations. He questioned their motives and said:

"Walter Citrine, like ourselves,

* Since this article was written the General Council of the B.T.U. has issued a call for a world labor conference in May.

balked at this, undoubtedly out of knowledge of Communist skill in the manipulation of paper organizations."

One might ask Woll: How can the Soviet trade unions "pack" a committee in which Britain and the United States have equal representation? Further, is it not a fact that the British and Americans have better access to the labor movements of the conquered countries, since, in the first instance, the governments-in-exile are located in their countries; and certainly they have better access to Latin America? The very report of the A. F. of L. Executive Committee on international relations (pp. 124-25) submitted to the 63rd Convention states as much. Why this fear of the Soviet trade unions? Does it not rather show a lack of confidence in the A. F. of L.? Why should Woll and Co. fear that the Soviet representatives would exert greater influence on the trade unions of the conquered countries than the British and Americans? Surely, the Wolls cannot be serious in fearing "manipulations"; for they are no novices in this respect. When it comes to manipulations, surely, Woll and his colleagues have proved themselves past masters.

Does not this unfounded fear rather imply an admission on the part of the A. F. of L. top leaders that Soviet trade unions may have more to offer to the representatives of the conquered nations in the form of help and cooperation to free their countries from fascism and rebuilding their unions, than the Wolls are prepared to offer? The

mass of the workers in America and Britain do not fear and have no reason to doubt the motives of the Soviet trade unions. These unions have given ample proof in the factories and on the battle front that they have but one aim, common to all the United Nations—to defeat Hitlerism and liberate bleeding humanity from the clutches of fascism.

The struggle for affiliation of the entire American trade union movement to the Anglo-Soviet Committee, for a real congress of United Nations labor in the immediate future, must be taken up with renewed energy. A great responsibility rests on the progressive forces in the A. F. of L. to give expression to the true sentiments of the A. F. of L. membership. Too long have the win-the-war forces in the A. F. of L. allowed the Hutchesons, Wolls and Dubinskys to speak for labor on the basic issues affecting the destiny of our nation. Too long have the progressives underestimated their own strength and influence and overestimated the strength of the reactionaries, who are today losing ground among the advancing patriotic thousands of workers in the A. F. of L. It is necessary to expose the Wolls and Dubinskys before the masses and show how their opposition to international labor unity, their collaboration with the Soviet-baiters, endanger our country's relations with our strongest ally, endanger victory. The progressive forces must bring home to the masses the danger in the present situation of labor, which should be in advance of the other sections of the population in fighting for

unity of the United Nations, unity of the labor movement and the people, itself unwittingly becoming an instrument of disunity in the hands of reactionaries and defeatists.

The lessons of the past decade are too fresh to be forgotten. It was a split in the ranks of labor, for which these Social-Democrats are responsible, that opened the way for the rise of fascism in Germany, made possible the victory of fascism in Spain, the nullification of the Franco-Soviet Pact, the defeat of collective security, the perpetration of the Munich betrayal, and Hitler's onslaught against the civilized world.

International unions do not have to wait until the Executive Council has reversed its decision before they establish ties with the British and Soviet unions in their respective industries. Under the rules of the A. F. of L. where each union has autonomous rights, there are no obstacles toward international relations on the part of individual unions in the various industries. Surely, too, there are no obstacles to developing international relations between the Railroad Brotherhoods and the respective unions of the countries of our allies, since the Brotherhoods are in no way bound by the decisions of the A. F. of L. Developments in the direction of international relations on an industry basis are progressing. In the metal trades, already a number of unions in our country such as the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, the unions of shipyard workers, and the Mine, Mill and Smelter Work-

ers Union, have accepted the invitation of the British and Soviet metal workers' trade unions to meet in conference. It is to be hoped that some of the A. F. of L. metal trades unions will join. Last year a number of unions decided to exchange delegations with the British and Soviet trade unions for the purpose of establishing fraternal relations, exchange of experience, etc. Unfortunately, this decision has not yet been realized, through no fault of the Soviet or British unions. It is to be hoped that in the coming period such interchange of delegations will take place.

A new phase in the struggle for international labor unity has been opened with the historic speech of President Murray at the recent convention of the United Auto Workers Union, announcing the intention of the C.I.O. to issue a call for a world conference of labor. This call will resound through the world.

It will give added strength to our armed forces, especially the hundreds of thousands of union boys in uniform. It will stimulate the efforts of the soldiers on the home front to speed the production of armaments for the impending Western Front. It will be greeted with great enthusiasm by the valiant Red Army. It will give encouragement to the underground trade unions in the conquered countries which are fighting Hitler's murder gangs. It will influence our war leaders at the conference in Moscow and help to resolve the difficulties which stand in the way of the immediate opening of a second front. It will solidify the peoples' mass base of the United Nations.