

They Want the New Deal

Voters in the Northwest Back Liberal Democrats

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Tacoma, Wash.

BUSINESS and "civic" leaders, lumbermen, farmer-capitalists, and others described locally as dog-salmon aristocracy, who make up the anti-Roosevelt contingent in this region, have almost given up denying that the New Deal has been a truer-than-average friend to the Pacific Northwest.

Whatever else they have to say, and they are like all the rest who fume at Roosevelt-sponsored legislation and loathe the NLRB, they find their favorite battle cry choked in their throats. To hell with the sharecroppers in the South, they would like to say, and ditto child labor and reciprocity and the good-neighbor policy; what has he done for us way up here in the Northwest corner?

But on the border between Washington and Oregon stands Bonneville and in Eastern Washington Grand Coulee will soon be spilling waters of the Columbia River over the cliffside onto thousands of arid acres, and along comes the new national park on the Olympic Peninsula. This week, too, bids were called on construction of the giant Narrows Bridge across Puget Sound. This kind of munificence leaves booster-bourbons with very little to say.

To those whose main concern is keeping within hailing distance of that "American" standard of living, the New Deal has paid off in a more important way. Still vividly recalled by those middle-aged and over is the depression of the nineties when the one-industry region west of the Cascade Mountains saw the lumber market vanish in the midst of a building boom. That was the time when, as one politician put it, the people's diet consisted so exclusively of clams that their bellies rose and fell with the tide.

New Deal relief, and that alone, has carried the working class of Western Washington and Oregon through another depression in which employment in the lumber industry dwindled close to zero.

The New Deal has made itself good to a majority of voters here in the Northwest. It is this fact, responsible in Oregon for the defeat of reactionary Gov. Charles Martin by a New Dealer in the Democratic primaries, which promises in Washington a mid-term political struggle meriting the attention of the entire nation. For here in the state of Washington, as in Washington, D. C., the big story is what's happening and what's going to happen to the Democratic Party. The difference is that out here voters may not have to wait until 1940 to find the realignment virtually complete. New Dealers and Old

Dealers seem to agree that a reshuffling is both desirable and inevitable.

One reason why things move fast in Washington is the Washington Commonwealth Federation. Originally an offshoot of Upton Sinclair's End Poverty in California movement, the WCF long ago shed its Utopian trappings. Its greatest strength comes from the industrial areas bordering on Puget Sound (nearly two-thirds of the state's population lies within fifty miles of Seattle) but it has strong middle-class support and many friends among the farmers east of the mountains. It claims, with entire justification, that its widely circulated weekly newspaper is "the only large New Deal paper in Washington."

The WCF has written its progressive platform across the statute books at the state capitol in Olympia. Through two riotous state Democratic conventions it has rallied liberal forces to save the state party for the New Deal. Without the WCF, the split between AFL and CIO in the state would have been immeasurably greater and would have cut deeply into politics, threatening for Washington's liberal congressmen the disaster that befell Maury Maverick in Texas.

The federation has convinced such organizations as the Grange, and the most powerful units in the CIO and AFL that it is willing to cooperate and well worth cooperating with. Perhaps best of all, it has not for a moment lost touch with the large section of the state's population whose main interest is old-age pensions. Howard Costigan, vigorous and efficient executive of the federation, helped to organize the now influential Washington Old-Age Pension Union and candidates in the coming elections will endorse the pensioners' program if they want federation endorsement.

Gov. Clarence Martin, who wants to replace Sen. Lewis Schwellenbach in 1940, leads what the Republican press would have you believe is a powerful anti-New Deal wing of the Democratic Party. Because it is not powerful enough, Martin daily moves closer to open alignment with the Republicans. Evidently Martin and the Republicans hoped progressives would run a candidate against Sen. Homer T. Bone this year, Bone's record not having been simon-pure on the New Deal side. But the progressives were too smart.

A few months ago the biggest question mark in the Northwest political picture was union labor. Seattle is the home town and stronghold of Dave Beck, international vice-president of the Teamsters Union, who has, off

and on, been regarded as the most formidable enemy of the CIO in the labor movement. The late Mayor Dore of Seattle was Beck's grateful political henchman. Dore used to boast that Seattle was "the strongest AFL town in the country." "We've driven the CIO down to the waterfront," Dore announced after his police and Beck's strong-arm squad had dispersed Newspaper Guild pickets in the Seattle *Star* strike, "We're gonna drive 'em into the bay now."

Dore was defeated in last year's municipal primaries by the progressive Lieut. Gov. Vic Meyers, and the juicy "labor terrorism" trials (one of the Teamsters' leaders was this month sentenced for twelve years) have hurt Beck's prestige. The CIO hasn't been driven into Elliott Bay, and the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union has managed to make itself very much at home on the waterfront.

Oregon's publicity trials of Beck lieutenants have had mixed consequences. Governor Martin (no relation to Washington's Clarence) used them as a rostrum on which to state that Harry Bridges ought to be expelled from the country and the NLRB from public life. Martin was the leading spirit and publicity beneficiary of the roundup, but this could not have been a help to him politically, for he failed to survive his next encounter with the voters.

Another anti-labor petard that threatens to explode in its sponsors' faces is the unbelievable "Initiative 130," offered by the vigilante Associated Farmers of Washington and the equally dubious Women of Washington for the electorate's approval this fall. This proposal, which would virtually rob labor of its strike weapon, has done more to reunite the labor movement of Washington than any other single factor. This year's state AFL convention called for the formation of a committee to meet with the "CIO and all progressive forces" to fight the initiative. Out of the fight, declares the official AFL organ, "we are hopeful will come a more lasting and a more unified labor movement."

Fortunately, the state has a congressional delegation that it can be satisfied to reelect all down the line. Led by John Coffee of Tacoma and Knute Hill of Prosser the House group merits a strictly "A" rating. And with the exception of Hill, who faces a stiff struggle in the most conservative section of the state, the chances are that many or most of them will go back for another term.

In the September 13 primaries Coffee and Hill, together with Congressmen Magnuson, Wallgren, and Smith—New Dealers all—won handily. Their pluralities ranged from slightly under three-to-one to somewhat over seven-to-one. Congressman Charles H. Leavy was unopposed.

Senator Bone experienced no difficulty in gaining renomination. And a comparison of Democratic and Republican votes in the senatorial "race" would indicate that Bone can go fishing until after the November elections.

Perhaps one is indiscreet to say so—for the

papers are keeping it a secret—but it is nevertheless true that the state of Washington has given the New Deal a genuine vote of confidence.

At the party convention last month the right wing sought to discredit the liberal congressmen by way of a resounding anti-New Deal party platform. In order to do this it was necessary to take control of the convention away from the liberals, and to control the convention the old guard would have to

abolish the unit-voting system under which large county delegations had been committed to support the New Deal. The temporary chairman, being of the right-wing persuasion, was happy to entertain a motion "that this convention do not recognize unit voting by any group of delegates and that each delegate, or his proxy, must vote as an individual." Further than that, the temporary chairman was ready to call for a vote on the motion—by individuals!

That was the end of the right-winger's

chairmanship and of the right-wing plot to control the convention. When the conclave broke up the Democratic Party of the State of Washington was more than ever a party of the New Deal.

Right now a purge is being attempted, a purge of "Communists" and "no-good" Democrats who persist in championing the New Deal against the wishes of Governor Martin and his spokesman John T. (Curse You Jack) Dalton. Most of the state party leaders have publicly declined to participate.



One For All and All For One

A. Redfield

Labor Meets in Mexico

A Report on the Latin-American Conference

MARC FRANK

Mexico City

THE recent Latin-American Labor Congress in Mexico City and the formation of the Latin-American Labor Federation were events of major importance. To some extent, the federation is a triumph for the ideas held by President Cárdenas and by the president of the new body, Vicente Lombardo Toledano, of the Mexican Workers Federation. Mexico, Argentina, and Colombia hold key positions in the executive committee, and it is noteworthy that the Labor Congress was carried over to the almost equally important Congress Against War and Fascism. Many of the delegates are accredited to both, and the very important fraternal delegates to the Labor Congress, Léon Jouhaux, of the French Confederation of Labor, Ramon Gonzalez Peña of Spain, and others form the board of the second congress.

To the opening of the Congress Against War and Fascism, President Cárdenas made perhaps the most striking speech of his presidency, implicitly setting up a more progressive "bill of nation's rights" against Cordell Hull's reaffirmation of streamlined dollar-diplomacy in his last note to Mexico. In fact, as John L. Lewis suggested in so many words, the basic principles of Roosevelt's New Deal are being adopted, often in direct opposition to the reactionary Latin-American dictatorships, by the whole of Latin-American labor as the basis for national and international policy.

It would be an error to hold out too optimistic hopes for the immediate future of the new federation. It will have to struggle against divergencies within itself, against the varied sabotage of the reactionary leadership of the British Trades Union Congress, the Trotskyites, and such persons as William Green; against the frightened oil, mining, utilities, and exporting interests, mostly in foreign hands; and against the puppet dictatorships controlled by them and by the foreign bureaus of the international fascist network. It is notable that the key organizations, the organized workers of Mexico and Argentina, are working in countries where the British and American capitalists are most active and most militant.

On the other hand, the fact that the congress could be held at all, and in Mexico, where, according to reports in the United States press, either the Communists or the fascists have complete control—Lombardo Toledano pointed out this odd contradiction in a speech which delighted a packed Opera House—is of supreme significance. For the ideas crystallized by President Cárdenas and by Lewis, Jouhaux, and all the most important delegates simply stressed a profound un-

derstanding of the fundamentals of democracy very similar to those of Lincoln and of the French Revolution. To some observers, the congress resolutions seemed positively tame in their insistence on the mere bases of the Bill of Rights, but the reports showed in how few countries these existed and that where they exist, they are rarely unmenaced. Perez Leiros of Argentina, for example, seriously urged upon the delegates from the Geneva International Labor Office not to approve labor codes in Latin-America which look fine on paper but are actually never put into practice. If nothing else, the congress has done splendid work in exposing these frauds. John L. Lewis stated that "the revelations of the economic and social conditions in various countries made to this congress are in some respects astounding."

No less important than the congress sessions and resolutions were the contacts made by the delegates. At dinners, in hotel bedrooms, in the subdued hubbub in the hall, big questions were threshed out. Solidarity, essential to successful organization, was built. Paraguayans and Bolivians, Guatemalans and Mexicans discovered that their wrongs and the remedies for them coincided. Delegate after delegate discovered and stated publicly at the sessions that the nationalist divergencies which so often led to war were merely the result of the intrigues of the big foreign imperialist interests maintaining puppet dictatorships. Chile, for instance, revealed that it was almost certain that the *Nazista* putsch in Santiago was nothing more than a provocation in order to allow the present reactionary regime, faced by elections in which the Popular Front was certain of victory, to hold these elections under martial law and assure its reelection.

Fundamental, but raised sharply in public only once, by Ramon Gonzalez Peña, secretary of the United Labor Confederation of Spain, Minister of Justice in the Negrín Cabinet, and hero of the 1934 rising of the Asturian miners, was the question of political action by labor. The Spanish delegation, including Communists, Socialists, and Anarchists, was a visible proof, as Margarita Nelen pointed out, of the unity of republican Spain, and had come to bring the experience of the biggest *practical* fight against fascism yet known. The congress had adopted a resolution of mutual aid in union struggles throughout Latin-America. Peña raised the point that this was not sufficient. The war in Spain is not *only* a war to defend union rights, it is a war to the death against those who are attacking the fundamental human rights,

and war is a category of politics. In Latin-America, as Cuba and Puerto Rico stressed, one obstacle to union rights is the defensive terror of the imperialisms blocking national independence movements. As Lewis said, "The revelations made here show conclusively that foreign corporations in various countries are exercising an influence with settled governments to impose and maintain miserable wage standards and degraded working and social conditions."

In the commission entrusted with the drawing up of the federation's constitution, the question arose implicitly—it was always implicit—on a very interesting motion by Cuba, enforced by a speech by Lázaro Peña, which was one of the meeting's high spots. The Cuban delegation revealed how mass pressure was driving would-be dictator Batista towards a more democratic policy to preserve his position. They therefore suggested that the workers could reasonably support the present Cuban governmental tendency, just as they could in Mexico and the United States. The commission added a most significant rider that the "Cuban workers probably know local conditions better than the congress does," and therefore approved the resolution *in this particular case*. Upon which Cuba extended its theses to include the independence of Puerto Rico.

Extending into the Congress Against War and Fascism, this implicit struggle is of supreme importance. Alejandro Carrillo, secretary of the Labor Congress, who eloquently pleaded Mexico's case against the oil companies recently at the University of Virginia debates, maintained that any regime which attacked civil liberties and showed fascist tendencies would automatically abolish union rights. This was, to some extent, the feeling of the congress. Brazil was specifically not invited because an invitation would give Getulio Vargas the chance to affirm demagogically that there was no fascism in Brazil. The same was true of the refusal to allow Sir Walter Citrine, of the British Trades Union Congress, to be given the chance to refuse the invitation in terms similar to those used by the AFL, gleefully seized upon simultaneously by the Trotskyist Diego Rivera and the fascist Dr. Atl in Mexico. This showed conclusively that union action *alone* will not be able to cope with the fascist threat in Latin-America. John L. Lewis saw this when he said: "First the workers should join unions, and, as then they will be able to gain fair wages, the right to organize, and so on, they will become more effective in exercising political influence in support of justifiable governmental policies."

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Attention, Mr. Dies

DELEGATES to the Pan-American Trade-Union Congress in Mexico were hand-picked by the GPU.—DIEGO RIVERA, *Trotskyite and mural painter (when he has time), in the "Socialist Appeal."*