

WHAT HAPPENED AT BOSTON

The CIO pledged "to give everything, in fighting men, in production, in money, and in patriotism" to guarantee the second front. "The crying need for over-all, centralized planning."

Boston.

SOMEBODY here said the happenings at the CIO convention will be worth battles in the war. They will. The unity of all factions behind a victory program, and all that that connotes, will crystallize itself in more shells, more guns, more planes, more of everything that spells Hitler's doom.

The 500-odd delegates representing 5,000,000 members in forty-two international unions have good reason to be proud of their work. They were aware of the great responsibilities facing them in this, their first convention in wartime. They knew there were urgent problems confronting labor and the country that needed exploration, analysis, and solution. They tackled every important question in a constructive manner and came out with the right answers—right because, combined, they added up to a realistic win-the-war program.

The CIO sees the crying need of the moment as over-all, coordinated, centralized planning. That was a major theme in Pres. Philip Murray's report. It was the thesis of several important resolutions. It was the subject of Senator Pepper's magnificent address which brought a tremendous ovation.

The chief resolution on this subject calls for "total war mobilization." It states the need: "Victory in the war against the enemies of our American democracy requires the fullest use of all our national war production resources—our raw materials, our farmlands, our industrial facilities, and our human resources." The second part indicates how in each instance the full use of these resources has not been attained.

What must be done? The resolution states the remedy: "National mobilization demands a nationwide planning and utilization of all the material and manpower resources of the nation. Such a national mobilization requires a centralized administrative control of all of the resources and economic policies of the nation. . . . A single administrative body should be established incorporating the activities of war supply, war manpower, and of economic stabilization."

From the discussion on the resolution it was plain that the CIO was correct in incorporating a demand for "the participation of labor in all the administrative agencies which make and execute our war policies—and at every level." Reuther of auto, Ruttenberg of steel, Hillman of clothing, Zonarich of aluminum, Curran and Bridges of shipping, all cited specific instances of the appalling chaos resulting from the planless administration of the war effort by the dollar-a-year men who infest the agencies in charge.

Bridges' illustration was perhaps the most pointed: "Just two weeks ago in the port of San Francisco, CIO waterfront and warehouse workers had to unload and help store a large cargo of Australian wines, champagnes, and brandies that had just come in from Australia. Right across the dock, at the same docks, our men—and we are short of them—were engaged in loading practically a full load on another ship of California wines, champagnes, and brandies to go down to Australia.

"At the same time other ships, waiting to load and trans-

port weapons and materials to the United States Army, were being delayed because there was not sufficient manpower at that time to do the job."

Following such examples of chaos and confusion in the present setup, it was plain that President Murray was right in pointing out that labor's demand for full participation in the planning and administrative agencies was not prompted by selfish interest, but rather by a realization that labor's brains, vision, and initiative were essential to the solution of the problem of production.

The realization of the need for integrated over-all planning gave the delegates a key to the understanding of other problems. They were clear on the question of a compulsory drafting of labor. "If we have manpower chaos today due to a lack of planning and centralized total war mobilization, a job freeze merely freezes chaos and outrageous discriminatory practices. . . . We cannot afford to think of a manpower agency as a sort of fire department and emergency squad. We cannot afford to have other agencies proceed in a planless uncoordinated fashion and then rush the manpower agency's squad car to the area of the industry of manpower crisis. Intelligent consideration of manpower mobilization does not involve the issue of compulsory or voluntary operation but rather the formulation of a national mobilization plan."

THE convention opened just two days after American troops landed in Africa. Though one or two invited speakers hailed the attack as "the second front," the delegates made no such mistake. Their own analysis, expressed in a resolution which passed unanimously, was correct: "We hail with great pride the offensive of our American forces in Africa, which in combination with the attack of the Eighth British Army is delivering a mortal blow to the fascist forces of Rommel. This successful two-front attack on the Axis armies in Africa in the words of General Montgomery's Order of the Day ' . . . is only the beginning of our task,' and must lead to a speedy two-front attack and complete destruction of the main Nazi forces on the European continent by the combined and overwhelming concentration of the armed might of the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union."



Philip Murray

President Murray was empowered to telegraph the nation's Commander-in-Chief and the commander of the Allied forces in North Africa the acclaim of the CIO for the initiation of the offensive. The official declaration on the second front recognized that the "brunt of the military power of Nazi Germany has been borne by the peoples and armies of the Soviet Union." The epic stand of the Soviet peoples "in the battles of Sevastopol and Stalingrad cannot be measured by words." Honor, too, was paid the peoples of the oppressed countries.

Moved by the spirit of the offensive the convention called upon the Commander-in-Chief "to make any demand and any request of labor" for the fruition of the offensive to establish a second front in Europe. The CIO pledged "to give everything, in fighting men, in production, in money, and in patriotism" to ensure its success.

Every issue that had any bearing on the war was raised, and a forthright, firm stand was adopted. Thus, on the question of international labor unity it was recognized that full collaboration of the trade union movements of the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and other United Nations was essential to "secure maximum production to win the war, strengthen the war policies of the United Nations for the complete victory over fascism, and assure a just and democratic peace for all people." It was resolved that all necessary steps be taken to establish that labor cooperation; and, until that is accomplished, arrangements are to be made for the exchange of information, committees, delegations—anything and everything that will strengthen the war effort.

In this connection, the convention got off to a good start when it heard its own sentiments echoed by Bryn Roberts, president of the National Union of Public Employees of Great Britain. Another significant highlight was the exchange of greetings with Nikolai Shvernik, secretary of the All Union Central Council of Trade Unions of the USSR. Never before had a message from the Soviet trade unions been received at a CIO convention.

The people of India will find comfort in the strongly worded resolution supporting "the aspirations of the Indian people for the national independence needed to mobilize their energies and resources for a full part in the war against Axis aggression." The people who know how vital a part India can play in the war will find comfort in the request to the President of the United States that he exert his influence to secure freedom for the imprisoned Indian Congress leaders, and the resumption of negotiations between representatives of the British government and the Indian people.

THE difference in the discussion on Negro discrimination in this convention and that of the AFL was marked. There was no shadow-boxing here. No show of allowing an A. Philip Randolph to give his annual speech to an audience which promptly applauded a Dan Tobin who answered with a whitewashing of AFL discriminatory practices. Here the debate was not on the fight against any form of racial or religious discrimination, but rather on *how best to implement that fight immediately*.

Resolutions were adopted expressing opposition "to any form of racial or religious discrimination"; they urged the Department of Justice "to prosecute those responsible for recent lynchings and for attacks upon civil liberties," and urged cooperation in the congressional move to end the poll tax.

Compared to CIO conventions in past years this one was colorless. There was very little behind-the-scenes activity, and no factional disputes of any significance. John L. Lewis and his troublemaking henchmen were gone and the attack on him and his defeatist program was made in the open.

But what the convention lacked in excitement it made up in accomplishment. It was the best CIO convention in history. A strong, disciplined body, united in the single purpose of winning the war, wrote a victory program for the nation.

WILLIAM FORREST.

The Underground

THE main supply source for guerrillas is—the enemy army. This goes especially for the guerrilla detachments operating in what was formerly Slovenia and is now divided among Italy, Germany, and Hungary. The Slovene guerrillas had no large stocks of arms left over by the regular Yugoslav army. Guerrilla warfare started in Slovenia only a few months after it had flared up in other parts of Yugoslavia. The Slovenes had not the fighting tradition of the Serbs or the particularly favorable conditions which fostered the outbreak of guerrilla warfare in Dalmatia, Bosnia, and southern Croatia. Yet today the Slovene partisans constitute one of the most active parts of the Yugoslav guerrilla movement. Their bands are led and coordinated by the command of the Slovene Army of Liberation which is directed by the High Command of the Guerrilla and Volunteer Army of Yugoslavia.

Here is the story of how the Slovene guerrillas in the northern part of the country—now under Nazi domination—got their first big supply of automatic weapons and munitions from Austrian railroadmen.

Austrian railroadmen of the depot at Marburg (Maribor) learned of a train loaded with arms and munitions for the newly founded auxiliary corps of the German national group of Croatia called "*Einsatzstaffel*." This corps, composed of members of the German settlements in the "Independent State of Croatia," is supposed to function as a detachment of the Elite Guard forces of the Gestapo command at Zagreb, capital of Croatia. The railroadmen at Marburg got in touch with Slovenian guerrillas operating in the hilly region south of the city. They informed the guerrillas that the supply train would leave on such and such a day, at such and such an hour on the Marburg-Celje-Zagreb line, and that an accident could immobilize the locomotive at any point the partisans deemed favorable for an attack. A plan was worked out, and when the train left the locomotive engineer knew that his engine had to get into trouble at the watchman's lookout number 65. At the appointed spot the trouble developed and the train stopped. The commander of the Nazi escort got suspicious and came over to the locomotive. At that very moment the engineer caused the boiler to explode. The Nazi commander and the engineer perished in the blast. Nazi soldiers came running to the locomotive. Shots rang out of the bushes not far from the track, where guerrilla snipers were hidden. They killed the Nazi escort to the last man. Carts turned up, and men. The train was unloaded with the help of peasants from a nearby village, and then the railroad cars were set on fire.

The guerrillas retreated with their booty according to plan. The Gestapo and the German military command started a hunt for the lost weapons, but the guerrilla detachment had disappeared. Twenty railroadmen of the Marburg station were arrested and subjected to a savage grilling; one of them was killed. But the Gestapo was unable to learn anything from them. Finally it had to transfer all railroadmen of the Marburg-Celje line to service in inner Austria.

WANTED AT ONCE: A PLAN

Maximum war production, says Earl Browder, requires a central administration which will "plan, direct, guide, and control the entire economy of the nation." The disappearance of everyday market relations.

This is the first of two remarkable chapters on the economics of total war from Earl Browder's newly published book, Victory and After (International Publishers. \$2. Popular edition, 50 cents). These chapters were written during the summer, and since then the idea of centralized, planned organization of our war economy has received new impetus with the publication of the Sixth Interim Report of the Tolan committee. This proposes the establishment of an Office of War Mobilization and a Board for War Mobilization to plan and direct production, the allocation of manpower, and economic stabilization. The Tolan recommendations are embodied in the Kilgore-Pepper bills now before Congress. The recent CIO convention likewise adopted a resolution calling for "a centralized administrative control of all of the resources and economic policies of the nation." And the AFL convention in October urged the creation of an "overall board of military and civilian strategy" to direct our war economy. NEW MASSES invites comment from its readers on Mr. Browder's discussion of the problem.—The Editors.

THE bewilderment of successful businessmen struggling in Washington with the problems of transition to a war economy is something akin to that of Alice when she stepped through the looking-glass. Suddenly everything seems to be the opposite to what it was in the "natural" world, right is turned to left, and all the rules work in reverse. It is no wonder that many have retired with severe headaches. Nothing is quite so painful as a businessman being forced to think along new channels, unless it is a bureaucrat in a similar fix.

New channels of thought are inexorably demanded for the handling of a war economy. The chaos in Washington today is but the sign of that difficult change-over from one set of economic rules to another which is still imperfectly comprehended.

Our economic leaders learned their practice and theory in an economy in which abundance of money automatically commanded an abundance of goods, and the only visible limit to supply was the limit of effective demand, that is, a demand backed up by money.

The war is quickly changing all that. An absolute abundance of money for the war has been appropriated by Congress. It is announced as having passed the \$200,000,000,000-mark. Thereby Congress has fortified its conscience, "done its bit" for the war, and can pass on to politics-as-usual. Actually, however, the congressional appropriations mean only one thing—that Congress has handed over to the Executive the complete responsibility and authority for war production. The

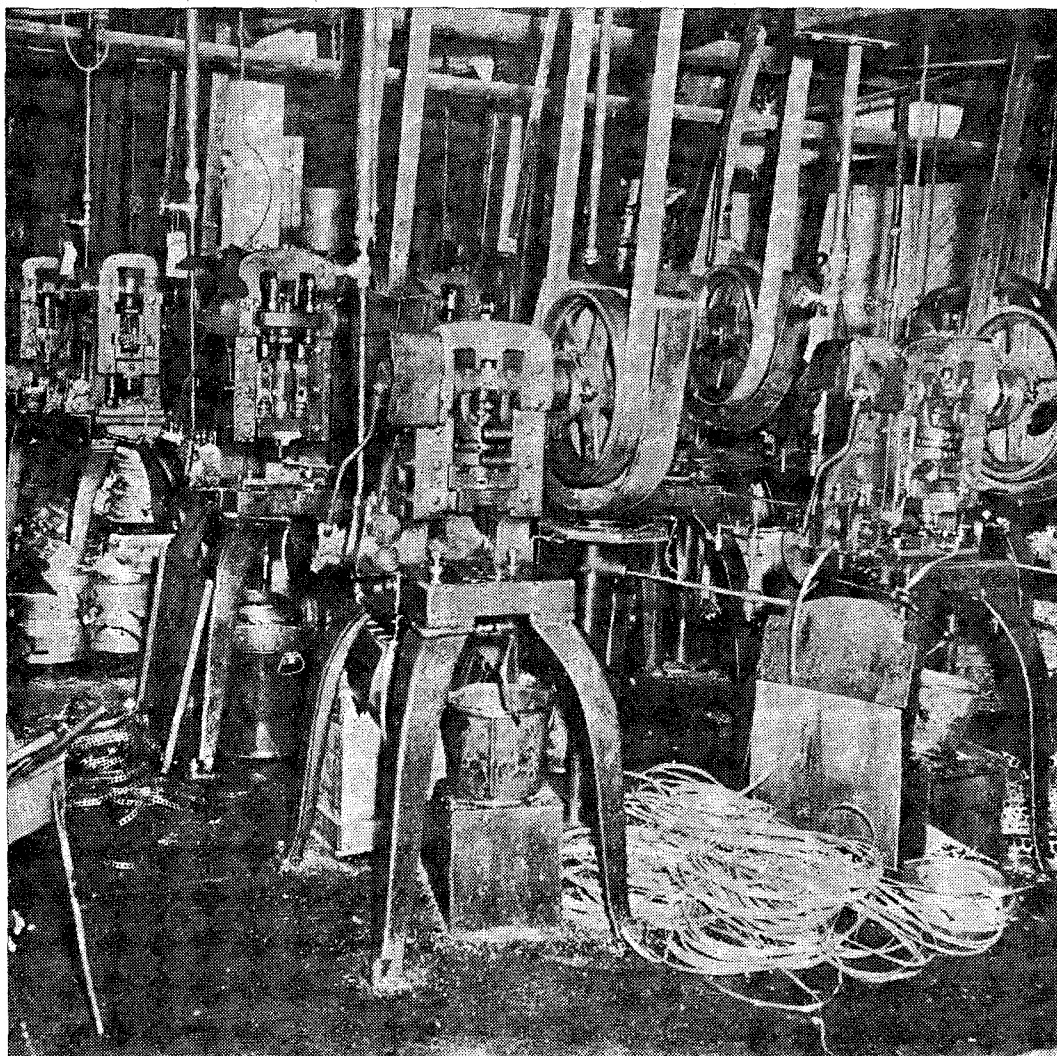
fetishism of the dollar sign, which sees in appropriations an act solving the economic problem of war, has already demonstrated its emptiness, and is on the way out. The war budget is merely an expression of the unlimited demand of the war for more and more production.

Now, according to the old rules, such an unlimited demand must immediately result in an unlimited supply. And United States' war plans were actually based upon such ideas. But the cold gray dawn of the morning after a period of such drunken thinking has already dawned. The old rules simply do not work. In fact, they often seem to work in reverse.

As our foremost economic thinkers wake up to this fact, they at once let out a howl about the danger of inflation. An unlimited demand, set over against a limited production, means the skyrocketing of prices and the beginning of the inflation spiral. Whereas previously the greater the demand the cheaper

the production, suddenly the rule is reversed and the enormous expansion of demand is steadily pushing up production costs and prices. The economic experts of the New York Times, and the National Manufacturers Association, *et al*, see the imminent danger of inflation and see its remedy at the same moment; the remedy is, of course, to suspend the traditional rules in handling wages, the reward of labor in production. They indignantly reject any tampering with the rules of rent, interest, and profit; these are holy, the main-spring of production, without which everything else would come to a halt. But wages do not come under the protection of those who insist on maintaining the rules of the game; that is the field they were always taught to turn to "to take up slack"; and it is out of wages they now propose to stave off inflation.

I have spent several weeks going over the current output of writings on the economic problems of the war. Nowhere have I found anything that begins to provide an over-all



Idle machinery. These punch presses, which could be highly useful in munitions production, gather dust because the plant they're in has received no war contracts. Hundreds of small plants throughout the country are in a similar situation.