INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM

The Vital Problem of Organized Labor

Committee for Industrial Organization
Washington, D.C.
COMMITTEE FOR INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATION

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FOREWORD

BECAUSE of the urgency of organizing the unorganized in the basic industries of America, the Committee for Industrial Organization has been formed. Its purpose is that outlined in the Minority Report of the Resolutions Committee submitted to the convention of the American Federation of Labor in Atlantic City. That is, it has been formed for the purpose of encouraging and promoting the organization of the unorganized workers in mass production and other industries upon an industrial basis. Its aim is to foster recognition and acceptance of collective bargaining in such basic industries; to counsel and advise unorganized and newly organized groups of workers; to bring them under the banner and in affiliation with the American Federation of Labor as industrial organizations.

The Committee for Industrial Organization is already serving as a clearing house for information and advice, and as a means of pooling the experience of different groups, through personal contacts, correspondence, and publications. Reports from interested organizations on their problems and experience are welcomed.

It is the desire of this Committee to further in every way the efforts of groups of workers in autos, aluminum, radio and many other mass production industries to find a place within the organized labor movement as represented by the American Federation of Labor. During the wave of unionism following the NIRA, hundreds of such groups received federal charters from the American Federation of Labor. But some of the old, established craft unions protested the granting of many of these charters, claiming that some of the workers included belonged rightfully to their crafts and should pay dues to their organizations. Charters were in many cases refused, even where the craft unions had no members. Such craft unions similarly blocked the granting of complete jurisdiction over their industries to newly-formed internationals in autos and rubber, and prevented the chartering of international unions in radios, aluminum, and other fields. The confusion and division thus caused seriously weakened these unions, causing in many cases their disappearance, and forcing others outside the American Federation of Labor.

This condition of affairs brought about the Minority Report at the convention of the American Federation of Labor in
October, 1935. The speeches of President Howard of the International Typographical Union and President Lewis of the United Mine Workers on the floor of the convention regarding these conditions, are not only very forceful and convincing statements of the vital necessity for industrial unionism caused by industrial development in many of the basic industries. These two statements of Howard and Lewis are in fact documents of historic importance.

Such a great proportion of the workers are outside of the American Federation of Labor or outside of the organized labor movement entirely, that a group of leaders of labor representing over a million workers allied with the American Federation of Labor thought that the most efficient thing to do at the present time was to place their experience at the service of these unorganized workers or those unaffiliated with the American Federation of Labor, with the purpose of bringing them, where organized, into the Federation, and, where unorganized, doing everything possible to further organization along lines that would best serve their interests as workers.

While it is true that the Majority Report of the Resolutions Committee, which did not favor industrial unionism, was reaffirmed as the existing policy of the Federation, it was only adopted by a vote of eight to seven in the committee. It was shown by the vote on the floor of the convention that the representatives of over a million workers in the American Federation of Labor clearly favored the policy expressed in the Minority Report.

This report, therefore, together with the speeches by Presidents Howard and Lewis, should be read by every member of the organized labor movement who, in self-protection of his own interests, is interested in the welfare of his union as well as the well-being of the mass of American wage-earners who cannot better their condition unless they organize their industrial power. Organizations that are sympathetic should assist in giving this pamphlet wide distribution.

JOHN BROPHY, Director.

Washington, D. C.,
November 21, 1935.
MINORITY REPORT OF
RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE ON ORGANIZATION POLICIES

During the fifty-five years the American Federation of Labor has existed its declared purpose has been to organize the unorganized industrial workers of the nation. The contributions from its numerous affiliates have been made in the belief that organization would be advanced for the purpose of adding economic strength to the various units and that the organization policies would at all times be molded to accomplish the main purpose of organizing the unorganized workers in the industrial field.

During the existence of the American Federation of Labor and since the date many of the charters were granted to National and International Unions upon craft lines, the changes in industrial methods have been such that the duties of millions of industrial workers are of a nature that did not exist at the time many National and International charters were issued. This makes it apparent that jurisdiction over these new classes of work could not have been anticipated and included in the jurisdictional outlines of charters issued to National and International Unions at a time when the work that is now performed by these millions of industrial workers did not exist.

We refuse to accept existing conditions as evidence that the organization policies of the American Federation of Labor have been successful. The fact that after fifty-five years of activity and effort we have enrolled under the banner of the American Federation of Labor approximately three and one-half millions of members of the thirty-nine millions of organizable workers is a condition that speaks for itself.

We declare the time has arrived when common sense demands the organization policies of the American Federation of Labor must be molded to meet present day needs. In the great mass production industries and those in which the workers are composite mechanics, specialized and engaged upon classes of work which do not fully qualify them for craft union membership, industrial organization is the only solution. Continuous employment, economic security and the ability to protect the individual worker depends upon organization upon industrial lines.

In those industries where the work performed by a majority of the workers is of such nature that it might fall within the
jurisdictional claim of more than one craft union, or no established craft union, it is declared that industrial organization is the only form that will be acceptable to the workers or adequately meet their needs. Jurisdictional claims over small groups of workers in these industries prevent organization by breeding a fear that when once organized the workers in these plants will be separated, unity of action and their economic power destroyed by requiring various groups to transfer to National and International Unions organized upon craft lines.

To successfully organize the workers in industrial establishments where conditions outlined herein obtain there must be a clear declaration by the American Federation of Labor. It must recognize the right of these workers to organize into industrial unions and be granted unrestricted charters which guarantee the right to accept into membership all workers employed in the industry or establishment without fear of being compelled to destroy unity of action through recognition of jurisdictional claims made by National or International Unions.

It is not the intention of this declaration of policy to permit the taking away from National or International craft unions of any part of their present membership, or potential membership in establishments where the dominant factor is skilled craftsmen coming under a proper definition of the jurisdiction of such National or International Unions. However, it is the declared purpose to provide for the organization of workers in mass production and other industries upon industrial and plant lines, regardless of claims based upon the question of jurisdiction.

The Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor is expressly directed and instructed to issue unrestricted charters to organizations formed in accordance with the policy herein enunciated. The Executive Council is also instructed to enter upon an aggressive organization campaign in those industries in which the great mass of the workers are not now organized, issue unrestricted charters to workers organized into independent unions, company-dominated unions and those organizations now affiliated with associations not recognized by the American Federation of Labor as bona-fide labor organizations.

Submitted by:

CHARLES P. HOWARD,
DAVID DUBINSKY,
FRANK B. POWERS,
JOHN L. LEWIS,
A. A. MYRUP,
J. C. LEWIS.
SPEECH BY

CHARLES P. HOWARD

President of the International Typographical Union

For the information of the delegates, permit me to say that the question you are called upon to consider is of far too great importance to your welfare and the welfare of millions of workers in this country to resort to quibbling or sharp practice in attempting to deal with a question of this kind. There are those who believe that in a labor organization any policy should be adopted to have your own way and your own belief prevail. I am not one of those. I believe that if there is any group of people on God's green earth where you can expect fairness in debating questions that affect the workers of this country it should be in a labor union in a convention of this kind.

I stated to this convention that there were seven members of the committee that voted in the committee against the majority report, and I stated that there were eight members of the committee that voted in favor of the majority report, and I did not say that seven members of the committee signed the minority report, but I will say that six members signed it, and it is my opinion, it is my opinion—I accept the personal responsibility for it—that the only reason the seventh member did not sign it is because of the pressure that was put upon him by well known methods in this convention.

This convention has been in session for more than a week. You have had an opportunity of hearing some interesting and informative addresses. You have also been called upon to consider and discuss a number of resolutions and proposals which were of more or less importance. I trust that now the time has arrived when there comes before the convention the most important question to be considered that the delegates will not be impatient but that they will be prepared to permit the fullest discussion on this question.

A Program for Organization

The reason for submitting a minority report upon the question of organization policies is because a minority of the committee who joined with the other members last year at San Francisco in presenting a report to the convention upon this subject, which was adopted, do not believe that that action has been interpreted and applied as was intended by some of those who subscribed to that report. The minority is not recommending to this conven-
tion that any of the resolutions presented dealing with this subject should be adopted by the convention. **The minority is submitting to you a program for organization which we believe will permit of the organization of the unorganized worker in those industries which are now completely or almost completely unorganized.** And if there is an unworthy purpose, if that is not a subject that demands your attention and consideration, then I say to you that if the minority that presents this report is imposing upon the convention, it is in a case of the head and not of the heart, because we are sincere in our efforts to make the organization activities of the American Federation of Labor more effective.

Conditions as they exist at this time make it more necessary, in my opinion, for effective organization activity than at any time during the life of the American Federation of Labor. In response to the demands of labor there has been adopted by the Federal Congress what is known as the Wagner Act. Many of us understand that the Wagner Act does not give the workers of this country any right or privilege that could not have been exercised under the Constitution of the United States. The one particular difference is that it makes it the duty of the Government to protect the rights of workers engaged in industries devoted to interstate commerce, to bargain collectively, choose their own representatives and form an organization of their own choice.

Now, let me say to you that the workers of this country are going to organize, and if they are not permitted to organize under the banners of the American Federation of Labor they are going to organize under some other leadership or they are going to organize without leadership. And if either of those conditions should eventuate, I submit to you that it would be a far more serious problem for our Government, for the people of this country and for the American Federation of Labor itself than if our organization policies should be so molded that we can organize them and bring them under the leadership of this organization.

*I contend that the success of an organization campaign depends upon molding the policies of the American Federation of Labor to meet the desires of those whom we decide to organize, rather than to attempt to mold the desires of the millions of workers who are unorganized to accept the policies that we would impose upon them.*
Workers Fear Jurisdictional Troubles

That is one of the principal, fundamental reasons that I am presenting to this convention in a minority report an organization policy which I believe will accomplish that result. I represent in this convention what is usually referred to as strictly a craft union. I cannot be charged with having a personal or organizational interest in this matter other than the general welfare of the workers of my country. I understand, because of contact during the past three or four years, the reasons why we have failed to organize the workers in these mass production industries. First, there is involved the question of continuous employment. Any one who is familiar with the situation knows that under the system for the operation of these industries the workers are required, perhaps within the limit of one day, to perform work that would come under the jurisdiction of more than one national or international craft union. Now these workers are sufficiently intelligent to know that immediately they are directed to step across jurisdictional lines by their supervisors that there is the possibility of a jurisdictional controversy which will affect their opportunity for continuous employment. I am told by some of those who are employed in the type of craft that we seek to organize that there are times when a worker will be engaged upon work that would come under the jurisdiction of three or four craft unions within a single day. I submit to you that it is not possible to induce those men, with their inexperience, to organize upon craft lines.

I am one of those who are willing, first to organize them, and to organize them with the assurance that their continuous employment is not going to be affected by jurisdictional controversies. And I am willing to believe that their experience in organization in the future will indicate the class of organization that will most effectively protect and advance their interests.

Unity of Action Destroyed

Now there is another condition that interferes with the organization of workers in these plants. And it is not a theoretical fear, it is one that has been experienced in many places and it is one that is real in the minds of these workers. They believe—and not without cause—that if they be organized in a Federal Union without the drawing of jurisdictional lines, that as soon as some national or international union makes a jurisdictional claim for a small block of these workers, that the unity of action
will be destroyed and that this group will be forcibly removed from the Federal organization on industrial lines and set over into a craft organization that cannot protect them under the existing conditions.

I was told since I came into this hall where there is a plant that employs about 2000 workers. Those interested in organization work in that particular city set out upon an organization campaign for the purpose of organizing those employed by this plant. They succeeded to a marked degree and they secured from the American Federation of Labor a charter. And after they secured that charter jurisdictional claims were made by national and international unions for some of those in the group who were organized, with the result that the charter was recalled and in that plant today there is no semblance of an organization. Now that story can be repeated as applying to numerous places in this country.

I ask you if it be the policy of the American Federation of Labor to organize the unorganized workers, where is there common sense in making requirements that cannot and will not be met? And where is there common sense in continuing to make organizational lines which defeat the very purpose of this organization?

Issuance of Charters Prevented

When we go into the practical application of our present organizational policies, what is the condition with which we are confronted? Here is a plant in which there may be 600 or 6,000 workers. Nobody outside of those who have access to the payroll are fully informed as to the nature of the duties the workers perform, but for some reason or other, because they have read in the public press that the workers have a right to organize, or because they have heard an inspirational address upon the subject of organization, or because they have read something that the President may have said, there is inspired in some of those workers a desire to organize.

Of course they are inexperienced, they know nothing about the process of forming an organization, and perhaps through inquiry they learn that the information could be secured from the American Federation of Labor and they endeavor to seek information as to whether or not a charter could be secured. I say to you that nobody this side of Heaven could answer that question under the present conditions. You have got to know the classification of work, you have got to know the duties these workers
are performing, you have got to be able to judge how many of
the national and international craft unions might claim juris-
diction, and after you have secured that information any one of
the national or international craft unions that is inclined to
object to the issuance of a charter to that group can prevent
the issuance of a charter. I submit to you that is not a common
sense policy if we desire or intend to organize the unorganized
workers in this country.

Situation Promotes Rival Unions

I don't know, there is no one in this convention knows, and I
don't know that there is a man in the United States who knows,
how many workers have been organized into independent unions,
company unions, unions and associations that may have some
affiliation with subversive influences during the past few years.
However, I am inclined to believe that the number of members
in these classes of organization is far greater than any of us
would grant. If that be true, I submit to you that there is a
menace rapidly growing, a menace to the American Federation
of Labor, because if some one or some agency is interested in
creating a movement that is dual to the American Federation
of Labor, they have a fertile field and a very fine basis upon
which to work, and I am sure that is a condition that no delegate
in this convention desires should arise or a condition with which
the American Federation of Labor should be confronted at any
time in the future.

Will Protect Craft Unions

In discussing the question of organization policies I have been
asked many times as to how they were to be applied. The
minority report says it is not the purpose to take from any
national or international union any part of their present mem-
bership, or any part of their potential membership employed in
certain types and plants of industry. Certainly that should be
accepted as protecting their craft and national or international
unions. I do not believe there should be such a degree of selfish-
ness or organization interest that would inspire an objection to
the issuance of a charter to a large number of workers in a plant
simply because one or more organizations might have workers
employed in there who would be eligible to membership in our
craft unions.

I believe the organization of these workers is far too important
to permit objections of that kind to prevent the issuance of
charters to industrial and plant unions in the types of industries which we have referred to.

It has also been said to me by some of those in the building trades that the adoption of an organization policy such as is proposed would adversely affect the industry in which they are engaged. I say to you that my interpretation of this report is such it would not adversely affect your interests. It is my opinion that it would assist you generally. Let us say that here is a plant that employs 6,000 workers, organized in an industrial union, and that the owners of that plant are going to do some construction work. Does it not occur to you that the organized building trades would receive greater consideration if the workers of that plant were organized rather than if they were not organized? Does not it occur to you that the owners of that plant would pay far more attention to having that construction work done by members of the building trades unions than if they had an entirely unorganized plant? It seems to me that the answer is logical, it is plain, and it would be of great assistance to the building trades unions rather than to take from them any of their present or potential membership.

For Industrial Peace

I heard an address from this platform this morning upon the subject of industrial peace. I bow to no delegate in this convention in the matter of industrial peace. I do not believe that the workers in any line of industry profit as a result of industrial warfare. I submit to you that the only way we can have industrial peace in the industries of this nation is to organize the workers to a sufficient extent that those who manage and operate and own the industries and the tools of production of the country will not dare to invite a conflict of that kind. My interest in this matter is to provide an organization policy that will bring about that condition.

I think no truer words have been said than the statement of Mr. Rosenblatt this morning that it has been the policy of the industrial kings of this country to divide and conquer, and so long as they are permitted to continue that policy they will continue to divide and conquer, and it is my belief that the American Federation of Labor cannot stand still upon a question of this kind, that it should not be wedded to the policies that were made a half a century ago, or even a year ago, but that we must go ahead and perform our full duty in organizing the unorganized workers of this country. I thank you.
SPEECH BY

JOHN L. LEWIS

President of the United Mine Workers

Mr. Chairman and delegates of the convention—I rise to support the minority report as presented to this convention by Delegate Howard. I do not speak without some background and some knowledge on this subject acquired in the field of actual experience. I have not gained that knowledge through delving into academic treatises or in sitting in a swivel chair pondering upon the manner in which those upon the firing line should meet their daily problems. I have had perhaps as much experience in organizing workers in the various industries as any member of the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor or any officer thereof. I served an apprenticeship of five and one-half years as a general organizer for the American Federation of Labor before I became an officer of the United Mine Workers of America. During that period of time I worked in the steel industry, the rubber industry, the glass industry, the lumber industry, the copper industry and other industries in most of the states of this Union.

25 Years of Failure

Then, as now, the American Federation of Labor offered to the workers in these industries a plan of organization into Federal labor unions or local trade unions with the understanding that when organized they would be segregated into the various organizations of their respective crafts. Then, as now, practically every attempt to organize those workers broke upon the same rock that it breaks upon today—the rock of utter futility, the lack of reasonableness in a policy that failed to take into consideration the dreams and requirements of the workers themselves, and failed to take into consideration the recognized power of the adversaries of labor to destroy these feeble organizations in the great modern industries set up in the form of Federal labor unions or craft organizations functioning in a limited sphere.

For twenty-five years or more the American Federation of Labor has been following this precise policy, and surely in the absence of any other understanding of the question, a record of twenty-five years of constant, unbroken failure should be convincing to those who actually have a desire to increase the pres-
tige of our great labor movement by expanding its membership to permit it to occupy its natural place in the sun.

Where Are 25 Million?

What is the record? Delegate Howard expressed it when he said that we laid claim to a membership of approximately three and a half million, out of an organizable number of approximately thirty-nine million. There is the answer. If we know nothing else on the question we can at least read the results, and in reading the results we surely understand that our influence is less great, that our activities are more circumscribed, and that our power is more limited to achieve our natural and desirable and virtuous objective than it would be if we had those twenty-five million workers that President Green, in his public address in 1934, talked of organizing. Where are they? Where are those twenty-five million that in a moment of exuberance, we were going to organize? Perhaps President Green's arithmetic was wrong and he meant twenty-five thousand, because the total results are nearer the twenty-five thousand than the twenty-five million.

What is our record during that period in organizing—the record of the American Federation of Labor? Quoting from page 73 of the report of the Executive Council, under the subheading, “Progress of Organization in Mass Production Industries,” the following appears:

“One thousand, eight hundred and four Federal labor unions were organized during the past two years.”

This report, although made for the year's period, does not state in that paragraph the number of Federal unions organized in the year preceding the report, but it adds the preceding year and then says there were 1,804 Federal labor unions organized during that period.

On page 7 of the same report, however, it shows that during the past year there were seventy-three disbanded local trade unions and three hundred and eighty-four suspended from membership in the American Federation of Labor; that of Federal labor unions thirty-seven were disbanded and one hundred and twenty-six were suspended; reinstated local trade unions, twenty-seven; reinstated Federal labor unions, seven, making a total of thirty-four Federal and local trade unions that 1,650 organizers of the American Federation of Labor succeeded in
adding in one year—not an amazing number of reinstatements over those suspended or disbanded. Subtracting the thirty-four reinstatements from the six hundred and twenty suspended and disbanded, you have five hundred and eighty six of those 1,804 that have permanently gone out of existence.

Net Loss Last Year

On page 6 of the Executive Council’s report we find that 226 local trade unions were organized during the year and forty-six Federal labor unions were organized during the same period, making a total of 272—272 new unions against 586 that died gives you a mortality, net, of 314 Federal labor unions. So the 1,650 organizers of the American Federation of Labor in all classifications during that year lacked 314 unions of holding their own.

There is the organizing record of the American Federation of Labor on those classifications for that year, and those figures do not take into consideration those unions that were transferred or merged into national or international unions.

On that basis I submit it to be a reasonable statement that it will be a long time before the American Federation of Labor organizes those 25,000,000 workers that we are all so anxious to organize. There are others among us who believe that the record indicates a need for a change in policy. This convention floor is teeming with delegates from those industries where those local unions have been established and where they are now dying like the grass withering before the Autumn sun, who are ready to tell this convention of the need for that change in policy.

Those of us who have had experience in these mass production industries are ready to state our professional judgment for what it may be worth and say that it is an absolute fact that America’s great modern industries cannot be successfully organized and those organizations maintained against the power of the adversaries of labor in this country under the policy which has been followed for the last quarter of a century in dealing with that subject.

Must Meet Industrial Changes

There has been a change in industry, a constant daily change in its processes, a constant change in its employment conditions, a great concentration of opposition to the extension and the logical expansion of the trade union movement. Great combi-
nations of capital have assembled great industrial plants, and they are strung across the borders of our several states from the north to the south and from the east to the west in such a manner that they have assembled to themselves tremendous power and influence, and they are almost 100 per cent effective in opposing organization of the workers under the policies of the American Federation of Labor.

Crafts Already Jeopardized

What are we going to do about it? There are some of us who say, let us take counsel, one with the other, let us put into effect a policy in these certain specified mass production industries that will enable the workers to stand together as a unit against these great commercial units that are exploiting industry at the present time. And the great voice of the workers in those industries, as articulate as their own circumstances will permit, comes to the American Federation of Labor in the form of messages and communications and resolutions to this convention and articles in the press, and in the liberal press, encouraging attention to that subject. Why do we hesitate? We hesitate, perhaps, because there are men here representing great organizations that have rendered a splendid service to their membership, formed on craft lines, who fear that such a policy would jeopardize the interests of their members and jeopardize the interests of their own positions. Their unions are already jeopardized and their membership is already jeopardized because unless the American Federation of Labor may be successful in organizing these unorganized workers, it is extremely doubtful whether many of these organizations now so perfect, now so efficient, will long be permitted to endure and to function in a manner that is conducive to the well-being of their membership.

There are great influences abroad in the land, and the minds of men in all walks of life are disturbed. We are all disturbed by reason of the changes and the hazards in our economic situation and as regards our own political security. There are forces at work in this country that would wipe out, if they could, the labor movement of America, just as it was wiped out in Germany or just as it was wiped out in Italy.

More Powerful Movement Essential

There are those of us who believe that the best security against that menace and against that trend and against that
tendency is a more comprehensive and more powerful labor movement. We believe that the way should be paved so that those millions of workers who are clamoring for admission into our councils might be made welcome upon a basis that they understand and that they believe is suited to their requirements. And in consequence of that we are assembled in this convention with the eyes of these millions of workers upon the convention to decide this momentous question. Methinks that upon this decision of this convention may rest the future of the American Federation of Labor, because upon this decision will rest the question of whether the American Federation of Labor may be forged into an instrumentality that will render service to all of the workers or whether the American Federation of Labor and its leaders will rest content in that comfortable situation that has prevailed through the years, where they are only required to render service to a paltry three or four or five million of the forty odd million wage workers of this country who, after all, want to be union men.

Workers Want to Join

The average worker, however circumscribed, does not need to be told that a trade union or labor organization is of advantage to him if he is given the privilege of being a member of it under circumstances that he can accept. The average man who does not belong to a union but who works for a corporation in this country understands the contribution that the American labor movement makes toward the improvement of his standards and the well being of his dear ones, and down in the recesses of his heart, no matter how much he may be compelled by circumstances to conceal it, there burns the feeling of warm appreciation for those forward souls, for those daring spirits who comprise the membership of organized labor in this country and who stand upon their feet four square to the world, asking for their rights as men and asking for the rights of all men.

And so out of my small experience, be it what it may, there is a profound belief on my part that there is a great reservoir of workers here numbering millions and millions of men and women, and back of them stand great numbers of millions of dependents, who want the American Federation of Labor to adopt a policy that will be sufficiently flexible and sufficiently modern that it will permit them to join with us in this great fight for the maintenance of the rights of workers and for the upholding of the standards of modern democracy.
Industrial Charters Denied

I was one who came from the San Francisco convention last year under the assumption that the American Federation of Labor, in the councils of its leaders, had reached a practical compromise upon this question that would enable us to organize these workers without impairment of those organizations already established in certain industries on a craft basis and functioning with great efficiency. For six days and almost six nights the Committee on Resolutions at San Francisco wrestled with this problem, and earnest men, in equity and in good conscience, applied themselves to the proposition and the problem of compromising what had seemed before to be two extreme viewpoints. There came from that convention a committee report which has been read here, which provided for the issuance of charters in mass production industries and, as we understood, upon a basis that would permit men in those organizations to have jurisdiction over the workers in that industry. If that was not the understanding at that time, then it is inconceivable that the committee could have worked for six days on the question, because there would have been no question. The convention, adopting the committee's report, gave express direction to the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor to issue those kinds of charters in at least three named industries.

Breach of Faith

What happened? When those questions came before the enlarged Council at a meeting held, I think, three months after the convention adjourned, we found that there was a difference there in interpreting the resolution of the convention as to the type and character and scope of the charters and jurisdictions which should be granted those industries. There were those upon the Council who contended that under no circumstances should charters be issued that in any way deprived the right of certain organizations to come into those industries and to have those men in membership and to make contracts for them. After extended consideration and general debate, that idea prevailed on the Executive Council, and a charter was issued in the automobile industry that practically limited the membership of that organization to the men employed only in the assembling processes of the plant operations.

I was one of those on the Executive Council who thought the action was a breach of faith. I still believe that it was a breach
of faith and a travesty upon good conscience. And in consequence of that action the automobile industry is filled with turmoil and caviling and confusion reigns, and these young men are in this convention asking for the granting of the kind of charter that they thought was going to be granted after the San Francisco convention had taken the above-named action.

A. F. of L. Caused Dual Union

So the question still haunts us as respects that industry, and we find that elements not friendly to the American Federation of Labor and its ideals and its objectives are exploiting that situation. We find also that the American Federation of Labor in this convention has adopted or will adopt a resolution criticizing a clergyman because he dares to organize an independent union, contrary to the procedure recommended by the American Federation of Labor in the form of organization that it recommends for that industry. Rather should the American Federation of Labor condemn itself for its own short-sighted policy and for creating gratuitously a situation that permits an enemy to come over its walls and wage destruction in its internal affairs.

We find that the Executive Council took similar action as affecting the rubber industry. We find that the same situation will substantially prevail there, perhaps of lesser magnitude only because the industry itself is secondary in importance to the automobile industry.

I happen to know that in the rubber industry there are literally thousands of men employed who either were former members of the United Mine Workers of America or are the sons of former members of the United Mine Workers of America and who believe in the industrial form of organization because they were reared in that atmosphere. They know and understand that form of organization. They have tasted of its fruits and having tasted of its fruits they are not content in the rubber industry to be further exploited in these feeble attempts to establish collective bargaining in the haunts of the rubber barons in the same way we have been trying to establish it for twenty-five years.

Tinkering in Rubber

I was in their rubber strike at Akron years and years and years ago—and the years pass faster than I should like them to pass—when this question was up, the same question of organization and the same question of collective bargaining that
we have had out there during the past two years, and when President Green, who sits here upon my left, was the chairman of an investigating committee sent in to that rubber industry by the Senate of Ohio to investigate conditions and to make recommendations there that might allay the confusion, restore order in the community, and yield to citizens an equality of rights under the law.

And after the lapse of all these years we find that the American Federation is still tinkering with this job in the great rubber stronghold of America in the same inefficient manner as was the case some twenty years or more ago, with no more result and no more hope. The men employed in these rubber plants write me gratuitously and say that the kind of organization they want in the rubber industry is the kind of organization that the United Mine Workers of America have in the mining industry. That is what they want. Why not give it to them? Theirs is the problem of opposing those corporations so firmly entrenched in the rubber industry who have never yielded to the rights of collective bargaining. If they are going to fight voluntarily for their rights and are willing to do so and are willing to assimilate the punishment that may be inflicted upon them by these corporations in that industry, why not let the rest of us, who perhaps will not shed any blood personally, let them make their rules, so that they may have a chance to win?

Craft organization? You say, "Well, I will not yield my jurisdiction in that industry." They do not have it anyhow. They have got nothing there. A dues-paying member is almost an unknown quantity in the rubber industry as far as craft organizations are concerned. They may have one or more sometimes, but they are harried hither and yon and they are compelled to live a life of secrecy and exclusion, just the same as the men in the other mass production industries and in my own industry are harried from pillar to post and make eternal human sacrifices day after day and year after year, while the great American Federation of Labor ponders and ponders and wonders whether or not it really will be best to give these workers the kind of an organization that they want, that they hope for and that they pray for.

Council Renounced Accepted Policy

So we find that the San Francisco convention policy has not been administered by the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor. We find that Chairman Woll, of this com-
mittee, mildly lectures Delegate Lewis and quotes at length from a speech made in San Francisco, asking the convention to accept the report of the committee on the ground that Delegate Lewis now, after the lapse of one year, is not satisfied with the San Francisco action.

Well, a year ago at San Francisco I was a year younger and naturally I had more faith in the Executive Council. I was beguiled into believing that an enlarged Executive Council would honestly interpret and administer this policy—the policy we talked about for six days in committee, the policy of issuing charters for industrial unions in the mass production industries. But surely Delegate Woll would not hold it against me that I was so trusting at that time. I know better now. At San Francisco they seduced me with fair words. Now, of course, having learned that I was seduced, I am enraged and I am ready to rend my seducers limb from limb, including Delegate Woll. In that sense, of course, I speak figuratively. At San Francisco, as I say, I was younger and more gullible, and I did not realize how much influence the National Civic Federation had with the American Federation of Labor Executive Council—but I know now—perhaps not so much now, since the National Civic Federation is without a president, so I am informed.

I put in some time in the past year attending some meetings of the Executive Council. I am convinced that the Executive Council is not going to issue any charters for industrial unions in any industry. The majority members of that Council say that that is their understanding and interpretation of the resolution passed at San Francisco. They had the vote on the Council to make me believe it, and I believed it, and believing it, I am now against the policy of the San Francisco convention as interpreted and administered by the Executive Council. My assurance to the convention last year that I believed the Executive Council would fairly exercise its authority as between the lines of demarcation of these unions is now withdrawn. I do not believe it will.

Want Issue Clarified

Consequently, the members of the Resolutions Committee who present to you this minority report are presenting this report in the hope that there will be a clarification of this issue, so that all and sundry may know the answer to the burning question in industry in America—the question of whether or not the American Federation of Labor is going to organize industrial unions in
the mass production industries. I want an answer from a convention of the American Federation of Labor. I represent a group that are not satisfied with an answer from the Executive Council. When I get the answer in the form of a decision from this convention, then I will know that the question is settled, that then this controversy and caviling on that question will cease and that the American Federation of Labor is not going to attempt to serve in any modern, practical way the needs and the requirements of the men in the steel industry and other industries similarly situated.

Failure in Steel

The organization I represent has an interest in this question. Our people work in a great base industry, basic in its service to the American people and the economic and commercial processes of the nation. They struggle against great odds and against great influence, and the intensity of their struggle and the weight of their burden is greatly increased by reason of the fact that the American Federation of Labor has not organized the steel industry and a few industries similarly situated.

We are anxious to have collective bargaining established in the steel industry, and our interest in that is, to that degree, selfish because our people know that if the workers were organized in the steel industry and collective bargaining there was an actuality, it would remove the incentive of the great captains of the steel industry to destroy and punish and harass our people who work in the captive coal mines throughout this country, owned by the steel industry.

As I talk to you now, 21,000 of our members are on strike in the State of Alabama—not on strike, they are locked out, and the operators will not accept wage increases negotiated in the Appalachian Joint Wage Conference, which they are obligated to do. They are locked out because the Tennessee Coal & Iron Company, owned by the United States Steel Corporation, the Schloss-Sheffield Steel Company and others there are encouraging the poor, defenseless commercial coal operators of Alabama to fight the United Mine Workers of America and refuse to apply these wage agreements. And the Youngstown Sheet & Tube in Western Pennsylvania has our people locked out. The steel industry is anxious to eliminate the United Mine Workers of America from its captive mines, so that they will constantly have that buffer between the coal mining industry and collective bargaining in the steel industry.
I know that to be true, because I have conferred with the officers of the United States Steel Corporation in relation to our contracts at their captive properties, and they frankly admit that they oppose making collective bargaining contracts in the coal mining industry because they do not want that power to follow them and annoy them in the iron and steel industry—and they have no more fear of the iron and steel workers annoying them than they have that the League of Nations will come over and impose a mandate or sanctions upon them.

Can’t Organize by Crafts

The American Federation of Labor has not done anything with the problem. The Executive Council report says that it has done so because there has been turmoil in the Amalgamated Association, an organization of six or eight thousand men. Well, there are four or five hundred thousand outside of it clamoring to join an industrial form of union. We are assured the way is now open for an aggressive campaign of organization in the steel industry. What kind of a campaign—a campaign to organize them in fifty-seven varieties of organizations? You ought to know without my telling you how effective that kind of campaign will be, and with several hundred thousands of members of the United Mine Workers of America who understand the position of interests of that character and who also understand the practical problems of organization in these big industries, they know that the officers of the American Federation of Labor might as well sit down in their easy chairs and twiddle their thumbs and take a nap as to conclude that any results will come from that kind of organization in the iron and steel industry.

I am telling you facts and I am telling you what is in the heart of my people, and my people down in Alabama tonight are hungry as I stand talking here, because the Tennessee Coal & Iron Co. is daring enough and bold enough to close their mines to them. And I might say to you that because of circumstances in Alabama prevailing in several counties, there is no adequate system of public relief there or Government relief, and our people are suffering; and they are suffering, in its final essence, because the American Federation of Labor, for some reason or other, has failed after all these years of experimentation to organize the iron and steel workers and establish collective bargaining in that industry.
How long does any one think the United Mine Workers of America will be satisfied with that policy? In Pennsylvania now, where the Youngstown Sheet and Tube is trying to starve my people to death, there is liable to be an extension of that conflict to take in other companies, and the United Mine Workers of America are calling now, and have been calling upon the American Federation of Labor, to put men and organizers and money into the iron and steel industry and to tell these arrogant steel barons to yield to the principles of collective bargaining in that industry.

**Barons Will Laugh**

If you go in there with your craft union they will mow you down like the Italian machine guns mow down the Ethiopians in the war now going on in that country; they will mow down, and laugh while they are doing it, and ridicule your lack of business acumen, ridicule your lack of ordinary business sagacity in running your own affairs, because of the caviling in your own councils and the feebleness of your methods.

There is more in this proposition than a mere academic discussion of the modus operandi of organization; there is more to this proposition than revolves around the mere acceptance or rejection of the resolution. **The economic well-being and the dream of the future of millions of Americans are involved in the question of whether the American Federation of Labor will be able to devise policies that will permit it to function in a manner that will achieve its own objectives, not the objectives of some one else, but the declared objectives of the American Federation of Labor since the first day it was organized—the objectives of organizing the unorganized.**

**Numbers Give Power**

Surely I don’t need to portray to the convention of the American Federation of Labor, composed as it is of its great leaders, the advantages that will come to labor and to America through the organization of the unorganized.

President Green goes down to the White House sometimes to call upon the President of this Republic to discuss the affairs of labor, and the interests of labor and the common people of this country. And sometimes he goes over to the Congressional halls, and he appears there before great committees of the two Houses to make articulate in a public way the things for which labor stands. Now, when he goes down there he goes as the representative of perhaps three and one-half million American work-
ing men. How much more powerful and influential would be the silver-tongued President Green if he were able to appear before the Congress of the United States or the President of this Republic speaking, not for three and one-half million specialized craftsmen organized in the American Federation of Labor, but speaking for five million, or ten million, or twenty million of workers in American industry who have joined the American Federation of Labor when you have given them a chance and made them welcome.

Our orators stand upon this platform and they say the American Federation of Labor will do this and will not do that, and will stand for this policy and oppose that policy, and we hope that these utterances are effective and we hope that those policies when initiated are effective; but we know that if we really embrace in our membership those workers who want to be members of these organizations of ours, their words would be given more attention and would result in material consideration for the men back on the firing line and for the dependents and families behind them in a degree that the mind of man can scarcely encompass.

**Must Meet Menace**

What of the future of our country? Who among us that does not know the hazards of the present moment? The teachings of false prophets falling upon the ears of a population that is frightened and disturbed and depressed and discouraged, the nocturnal and surreptitious attempts of interests to form a philosophy, the philosophy of the Communists on the one hand and the philosophy of the Nazis on the other hand, equally repugnant and distasteful to the men of labor. And yet it is constituting a serious, deadly menace for the future.

Not one man here but knows that American labor in its declared policies stands for a course that provides for the acceptance of neither the one philosophy nor the other, but a course that will protect our form of government and our established institutions, and a form of government that will take into consideration the needs and requirements of every-day Americans, the common people, if you please, and the common people of this country are the people who work for a living. The American Federation of Labor stands for that. How much more security we would have in this country for the future for our form of government if we had a virile labor movement that represented, not merely a cross-section of skilled workers, but that repre-
sent the men who work with their hands in our great industries, regardless of their trade and calling.

You may say that we are willing to give them that right, we are willing to have them come in, if they will only accept our rules. That evades the question, because they have had that right all these years and they have not profited thereby, and they have found themselves unable to accept the invitation on that basis. I stand here and plead for a policy that I think will do more to perpetuate the American labor movement as an aggressive, fighting movement in our country, and a policy that will protect our form of government against the isms and the philosophies of foreign lands that now seem to be rampant in high and low places throughout the country.

We Seek Your Cooperation

I ask the consideration of the American Federation of Labor, and in so doing I protest to the convention that upon the part of those who presented this minority report there is no attempt or even thought to take advantage of or destroy any satisfactorily existing form of craft organization wherever they have been able to establish themselves in accordance with their policy. The building trades organizations—and I know this has been discussed in the Council—need have no fear of this policy, because there is no logical proponent of this philosophy or an opponent of it who would attempt to apply such a policy where the craft organizations have demonstrated their efficiency for decades of time.

Why not make a contribution toward the well being of those who are not fortunate enough to be members of your organization? The United Mine Workers of America want to make a contribution and want to do no man and no union ill. We are willing to make a contribution in men and in money to the success of a policy of organizing these industries upon an industrial basis. We are willing to take our young men and send them into these industries to organize them. We have demonstrated that before and we are demonstrating it again. We want to work in co-operation with you if you can be led to co-operate. If you hold aloof merely because you suspect the intentions of those who promote this policy to the convention, then I can only say that you do yourselves more of an injustice than you do those of whom you think ill.

What are we going to do about it? Admittedly, men and women of labor, we haven't been successful. Admittedly, our
non-success has increased our burden, it has encouraged our adversaries, it has brought us into deep trouble. Then why not each make a contribution? The labor movement is organized upon a principle that the strong shall help the weak. That principle of the organizations of America is American, that the strong shall help the weak. The strong man in many industries perhaps can get along comfortably without a labor organization to protect him, but for every privilege he arrogates to himself because of his strength or stature he deprives some individual less strong than he of that privilege, and he profits only at the expense of some one more weak than he is.

Build Future Allies!

Is it right, after all, that because some of us are capable of forging great and powerful organizations of skilled craftsmen in this country that we should lock ourselves up in our own domain and say, “I am merely working for those who pay me”? Isn’t it right that we should contribute something of our own strength, our own virtues, our own knowledge, our own influence toward those less fortunately situated, in the knowledge that if we help them and they grow strong, in turn that we will be beneficiary of their changed status and their strength? The strength of a strong man is a prideful thing, but the unfortunate thing in life is that strong men do not remain strong. And that is just as true of unions and labor organizations as it is true of men and individuals.

And, whereas, today the craft unions of this country may be able to stand upon their own feet and like mighty oaks stand before the gale, defy the lightning, yet the day may come when this changed scheme of things and things are changing rapidly now—the day may come when those organizations will not be able to withstand the lightning and the gale. Now, prepare yourselves by making a contribution to your less fortunate brethren, heed this cry from Macedonia that comes from the hearts of men. Organize the unorganized and in so doing you make the American Federation of Labor the greatest instrumentality that has ever been forged in the history of modern civilization to befriend the cause of humanity and champion human rights.

We Are Too Weak Now

We meet here and we pass resolutions in convention after convention, we decide to do this and that and we charge our officers
and our Council members with an obligation to go out and do this and that. We are just as efficient as our strength lets us be. How strong is that? I have had prepared for me an analysis of the actions of the San Francisco convention upon all matters upon which they took action. I have this analysis before me. I will not read it, but merely submit it for the record for such advantage as it may be to you. There were 102 propositions on which the convention took action. In those referring to legislation and I will only read the summary on the first page—two were enacted largely through American Federation of Labor action; twelve had success due to the work of the international unions; no action was taken by the American Federation of Labor on legislative action submitted in 46 in number; studies ordered but not made: 24 studies on different subjects which the convention ordered, none of them were made. There is a perfect answer why none of these things were done. The answer is that an overburdened and limited legislative agency could not do all the work, that their abilities were taxed to the utmost and funds were not available to make the studies necessary, and therefore our efficiency was limited by our income and our income was limited by our membership.

Take in more members, build up the American Federation of Labor to make it an efficient instrumentality so that the officers of the Federation may carry out the mandates of the convention in making contributions to union welfare. I ask that this document may be incorporated in the proceedings of the convention. You will find it most striking in its implications. It portrays the weakness of this Federation of Labor, and of course the fundamental weakness of the American Federation of Labor is the fact that it encompasses within its ranks only three and one-half million of the forty odd million of the workers of the country. How many times has that taunt been thrown in the faces of the legislative agencies of the American Federation of Labor and its officers and the officers of international unions? Constantly in the editorial columns of the hostile press we are taunted, taunted, taunted, with our own inadequacy and our weakness.

Let Us Be Modern

The proponents of this minority report are asking that the convention adopt a policy designed to meet modern requirements under modern conditions in this industrial nation of ours. If we fail to have this convention adopt this policy, then, of course,
the responsibility falls upon the American Federation of Labor, and the world and the workers will believe now and for the future that the American Federation of Labor cannot and will not make a contribution toward the obvious need of our present economic condition in this country of ours.

For myself I will accept your judgment, if you make it, as an evidence of the fact that your minds are closed on this question and that my people whom I represent can expect no help or no assistance from the American Federation of Labor in the organization of the steel industry, and we will be compelled to carry on as best we can in the mining industry, knowing that our terrible adversary, the steel industry in this country, having tasted blood, may at any time open up and attempt to destroy the union which I have the honor to represent.

We will accept that decision sadly, and I cannot imagine any more discouraging contribution that the American Federation of Labor can make to the cause of labor or to the cause of liberal thought in America than to take that action, for despair will prevail where hope now exists. The enemies of labor in this country will be encouraged and high wassail will prevail at the banquet tables of the mighty throughout the country if the American Federation of Labor refuses to grant the petition of these industries that are fighting for the objectives of labor and to defend the rights of mankind.