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WILSON AND GOMPERS IN WAR-LABOR PACT?

(By Basil M. Manly)

Have President Wilson and Samuel Gompers reached an understanding covering all the great problems of labor in war time? Have these two American leaders formed a coalition which insures their economic and political co-operation, at least for the duration of the war?

Most of the delegates to the A. F. of L. convention answer "Yes" to both questions, but when you inquire farther you find that their opinions as to the nature of the understanding and coalition are as far apart as the poles.

The greater number believe Gompers has brought the president to accept the labor movement's war program, including preservation of the right to strike, no labor conscription, labor representation in all war activities, recognition of right to organize, and maintenance of labor laws and essential trade union standards. This group believes the president is ready to go a long way with Gompers, not only to preserve all labor has gained in the past, but to extend industrial democracy into new fields, so that when war ends it will find the labor movement in the United States stronger than it has ever been. These men believe Gompers will secure far more for labor by working with the president than he could ever gain by acting independently or in opposition.

The other group, not all Socialists, declares Gompers has surrendered to Wilson and is ready to turn over the labor movement, "lock, stock and barrel," whenever he is asked. Gompers, they say, has thrown away the greatest opportunity in history for the advancement of labor, and has gained nothing but a few kind words and minor concessions in return.

These men predict that by the time the war is over the labor movement will have surrendered so completely to the government that trade unions will be merely debating societies.

These extremists — "denatured American Bolsheviks," I have heard them called — overlook two vital points. First, they cannot realize that Gompers and a majority of the A. F. of L. believe so strongly that this war itself is in labor's interests that they are unwilling to secure any advantages for labor which are not contingent on the main objective of winning the war. In Gompers' view the crushing of the central powers, the last autocracies of the western world, would give such an impetus to the spread of democracy and the progress of the labor movement that all incidental sacrifices for that end are insignificant in comparison. Gompers is using his influence to prevent strikes, because he knows that strikes are hampering war progress; but he is ready to fight anti-strike legislation not only as a matter of traditional trade union policy, but because he is sure abolition by law of the right to strike would hinder war preparations by creating a spirit of disaffection, if not disloyalty, throughout the labor movement.

SECOND, in his plans for labor's advancement, Gompers is playing for long-time results, not for the advantages of the day.

Gompers does not consider that he has done much more than lay the foundations upon which American labor's wartime relations with the government and private employers are to be built.

How far the understanding, between Wilson and Gompers extends, no one, of course, knows. But there is one big fact that cannot fail to impress both the conservative and the radical. There is no private citizen in the United States with whom the president so frequently consults as Gompers, or whom he has so strongly endorsed publicly. It is worthy of some note that there is no capitalist with whom the president is known to consult or to whom he has given any degree of public recognition.

Gompers, on his side, says: "Labor is with the president, because the president is with labor." And by those who know Gompers this is interpreted to mean: "I am with the president, because he is with me."

The American Federation of Labor will hold its convention in June instead of November as heretofore. This will give Labor a chance to formulate its political views before the meeting of State Legislatures and Congress.

Millers exact a dollar a barrel for making flour and fine their employees for attempting to organize. The millers' are a "patriotic" bunch of profiteers.

All kinds of gifts in leather goods at Everett Trunk Factory, 2815 Rockefeller Ave.

SOLDIERS FOR LOGGING CAMPS

It is announced that on January 1 troops from the signal corps will be available for employment in logging camps where airplane spruce is being cut.

Application for troop labor will be addressed to the adjutant, spruce production division, Yeon building, Portland, Ore.

Following are the working conditions:

"All troops working in logging camps" will work on the same terms as civilian labor employed therein and receive the same pay for the different classes of work. The government pay of each soldier will be certified to the management of the camp in which he is working, on a prescribed form, once each month, and this amount will be deducted from the soldier's wages by the logging camp management and transmitted to the disbursing officer of this office.

"There will be, ordinarily, one to four enlisted men in each detachment who are required for military reasons and who will draw no pay from the logging company. For service which they will render, their board will be furnished free.

"Every soldier employed at logging operations will board with the company and pay regular charges as in the case of civilians. Officers will make their own messing arrangements."

There doesn't seem to be a necessity for this dangerous experiment, Secretary Wilson points out, and we all believe, that if the lumberman ever become patriotic enough and industrially fair enough to establish an eight-hour work-day with decent working conditions there will be no need for the conscription of soldiers for the lumber industry. Nor, indeed, will it be necessary in any other industry.

This scheme to work soldiers in logging camps, whether they are willing or not to accept such employment, will be a breeder of discontent and a trouble maker.

JURY GIVES \$200,000 AS STRIKE DAMAGES

FORT SMITH, Ark., Dec. 1.—A federal jury has awarded \$200,000 to the Bache-Denman syndicate, which sued the United Mine Workers for alleged damages, charged that their properties had been injured to the extent of \$2,250,000 as the result of a strike in Sebastian county in 1914. Suit was started under the Sherman anti-trust act. Under this law the syndicate is entitled to three times the award. The strike was caused by the syndicate's attempt to establish non-unionism.

The decision, it is said, is the first time a judgment has been obtained against a labor union, and affects the funds of the United Mine Workers as an organization. This case differs from the Danbury hatters' case in that there the judgment was obtained against the individual members and not against the union as such.

Miners' officials announce they will carry the case to the United States supreme court, if necessary.

The miners charge that the verdict was influenced by Judge Elliott, who called the jury before him after they had been deadlocked and declare that conspiracy charges against the miners had been fully proven and that it had existed since 1898.

PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 1.—In a local newspaper Louis W. McKernan, attorney for the Bache-Denman syndicate, which has been awarded damages against the United Mine Workers, in an Arkansas federal court, gave this naive description of a non-union shop:

"In the early part of 1914, on account of the cheaper cost of production on a non-union basis, the companies decided to operate on the open-shop basis, which means that all miners applying should be employed regardless of whether or not they are members of the union."

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HEALTH INSURANCE VICTORY IS WON

Wage-Earners' Sickness Benefit Bill a Big Issue in the Campaign

BOSTON, Mass., Nov. 30.—(Special)—Early enactment of workmen's health insurance legislation in Massachusetts is being freely predicted as the result of the re-election of Gov. Samuel W. McCall.

In the campaign Gov. McCall laid particular stress upon health insurance "to relieve our working men of the loss of pay and of anxiety resulting from sickness" as the chief measure in his immediate legislative program. In his address to the Republican State Convention recently he said, "Similar measures have been adopted by the greatest nations in the world and have proven their beneficent results." First importance was given to this proposal in the Governor's appeal for the support of progressives and of labor.

"These are critical times," voters were reminded. Emphasis was given to the need of protection for wage-earning men and women not only to aid in the war but also to "augment the vitality of the state's industrial and social order."

The special legislative commission appointed by Gov. McCall two years ago to investigate health insurance reported favorably. This legislation was strongly recommended by the Governor at the beginning of the last session. But the entrance of the United States into the world war made it appear to some members of the legislature advisable to postpone action. The Governor, however, urges that this measure be dealt with "in the near future."

His re-election on this issue is being taken as an assurance that Massachusetts will be one of the first states to protect her wage earners in this way against the poverty and destitution caused by sickness.

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have you written

—that Christmas letter, to your old time friend, or some loved relative, whom you've rather neglected, the past few months?

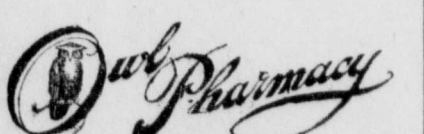
—better do it now.

—get a box of stationery, at the Owl and get busy.

—if you lack inspiration, see our full line of holiday greetings, which say the things you would say, couched in graceful prose, of metrical verse.

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