

Teachers Defend Use of Fifth Amendment at Convention

Use of the fifth amendment to the U. S. Constitution by witnesses before hostile congressional committees was defended by delegates to the 36th annual convention of the American Federation of Teachers (AFL) here Aug. 20.

In a session marked by vigorous defense of civil liberties on several fronts, the teachers adopted a resolution stating:

"While we oppose the employment of Communists in our schools, we deny the dismissal of competent employees solely on the grounds that they availed themselves of their legal constitutional rights as guaranteed in our Bill of Rights."

The "legal and constitutional rights" referred to concerned in particular the fifth amendment, which makes several guarantees of rights to American citizens, specifying among other things that no one "shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself."

The fifth amendment has been used by witnesses who resented congressional prying into personal beliefs and associations. Most often it has been used to turn aside the question, "Are you now or have you ever been a Communist?" It has also been used frequently by witnesses to avoid informing on others without having to go to jail.

The AFT action was seen as an answer to some public schools and universities which have fired staff members simply for using the fifth amendment before congressional committees, no matter what the other facts in the case might have been.

U.E. Local 1114 On Strike

750 members of U.E. Local 1114 employed in the American Gear Company in Chicago are on strike against a wage cut.

The strike is now in its 9th week. The local is leading a fight against the Gear Industry in the Chicago area, who are determined to cut wages. The local is appealing for funds to help defray the strike expenses. The matter will come before the Executive Board of Local 301 on Monday.

WASHINGTON—As his ways and means committee neared the end of hearings on revision of the federal tax structure, Rep. Daniel A. Reed (R. N.Y.) tried to make the impending changes appear good to the average taxpayer, but the grim danger of a general sales tax remains a major target of labor's legislative representatives.

Injunction Petitions Hit Alltime High

NLRB general counsel George J. Bott announced the number of petitions presented by him for injunctions against unions reached an alltime high in the second quarter of 1953.

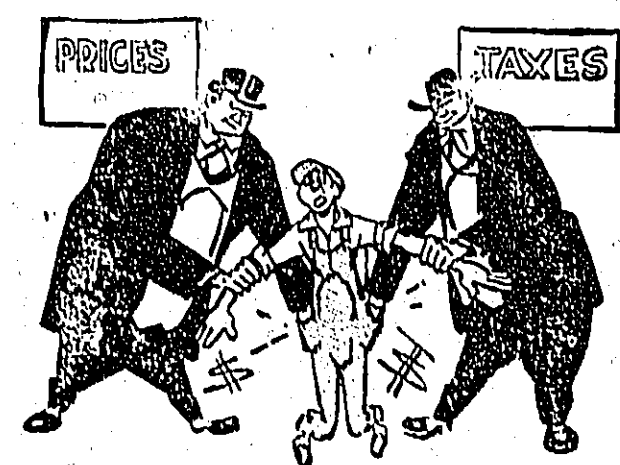
The petitions were based on charges that the unions engaged in unfair labor practices. They totaled 23 and were all filed under the mandatory injunction provisions of the Taft-Hartley law.

Bott also reported a record number of unfair labor practice charges were filed during the period. They totaled 244. Of these, 183 were based on charges against employers, 32 against unions and 29 against both employers and unions.

During the second quarter the board issued 143 decisions in unfair labor practice cases and 571 decisions in representation cases. It also conducted 1,675 elections among employees. The workers chose a collective bargaining agent in 1,130, or 69% of the elections. Bargaining representatives were favored by 75% of the valid ballots.

Who Gets the Food Dollar?

Further proof that the middleman is getting the big "rakeoff" in the food business is shown by the latest government figures. While the price of groceries that the housewife buys increased 1.4% between May 15 and June 15, the farmer's share of each dollar that she spent for food in June plunged to 44c. Consumers pay more, farmers get less—and the middleman takes a bigger bite than ever out of both. The economic threat in this situation is obvious. . . . A decrease in the purchasing power of farm families has preceded every depression and recession America has had.



THE COMPANY HAS ADOPTED THE SINGLE-RATE WAGE STRUCTURE...
...YOU'RE FIRED AND HIS RATE IS REDUCED TO YOURS...

Serious Accident In Bldg. 273

The accident causing the loss of a leg for a crane operator last week in Bldg. 273, Turbine Division, brought about immediate demands from the crane men for safer working conditions. The Union filed a complaint requesting an investigation and a demand for facilities that will eliminate a recurrence of such an accident. Regardless of the outcome of this investigation by the Union, the outlook for the victim of this accident is not very bright.

Most accidents result from speed and hurry-up policies on the job. Too little heed is given to "Make sure it's safe." The Union has always considered the elimination of safety hazards the most important type of grievance that we process. Too little importance is placed on safety by supervision and sometimes management. For example, the Union complained about the conditions of cables used in Bldg. 60 just last week. Representatives of management agreed to replace cables by Sept. 1st. How about the period between now and the first? It may cost another accident.

Peterson Still In Hospital

Andy Peterson, former President of U. E. Local 301, is still at Ellis Hospital recuperating from his illness.

He is expected to remain there at least several more days according to the latest report. Rumor has it that there is considerable Union discussion going on among those on the mend in Andy's area.

Well, if anybody can talk Union, it's Andy. He is in Room 101; if you're up that way, drop in.

Mailers on Strike At Union-Star

The employees of the Mailing Dept. at the Schenectady Union-Star have now been on strike since July 6th. These employees are members of Local 120 International Mailers Union. They won an N.L.R.B. election in December of 1952 and have been trying to negotiate their first contract with the Union-Star. They have used the New York State Mediation Service without success.

The Mailers have appealed to U. E. Local 301 for assistance. The issues of the strike will be referred to the Executive Board on Monday and to the membership for action on Sept. 14th.

Injured Worker Finds No Job

James Harrington, 32 years of age, who met with an accident last February while operating a punch press which cost him his right hand returned to work this week and found there was no job.

The Employment Office said they would call him in a few days; a few weeks have gone by with no call.

Union has taken the case up with management.

New Gouge on Gas Rates Ushered In

Utility rate experts Aug. 11 saw a new era of high gas rates being ushered in by a recent decision of the Federal Power Commission.

By a 2 to 1 vote the FPC granted new rates to the United Gas Co. based on a calculated turn of 1 1/4% on investment. It was the policy of the FPC under the Truman administration to keep the rate of return between 5 1/2% and 6%.

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Few Bake Tickets As Deadline Nears Schenectady G.E. Workers Take Stock On 17th Labor Day As Members of UE 301

With the deadline for ticket purchases in the big UE Local 301 clambake set for Tuesday, indications are that the event a week from Sunday will be a sellout.

The clambake is to be held on September 13 at the Republican Park on Princetown Road. Tickets are selling at \$4.00 each, with the price including all of the solid and liquid refreshments that the purchaser can down.

Ticket sales are being handled by the shop stewards. Each buyer gets a receipt when he pays for the ticket, and the stewards are supposed to bring the money down to the union hall as soon as possible to make the necessary reservations.

Since it is likely that more tickets than the 1,000 capacity of the park will be sold, arrangements have been made for full refunds to anyone whose money is turned in after the first thousand reservations have been made. In such cases, notification will be sent directly to the members before the clambake.

On the menu for the clambake will be all the clams that can be eaten, roast chicken, corn, hot dogs and drinks. The activities committee, which is managing the event, guarantees that no one will leave the park either hungry or thirsty.

"The Shirker's Psalm"

(With apologies to King David's 23rd)

The DUES-PAYING MEMBER is my shepherd. I shall not want. He provideth me with rest days, and vacations, so that I may lie down in green pastures, beside the still waters.

He restoreth my back pay. He guideth my welfare, without cost to me.

Yea, though I alibi, and pay no dues from generation to generation, I fear no evil, for he pays my way, and protects me.

The working conditions, which he provides—they comfort me.

He hath anointed my head with the oil of seniority, the eight hour day, the 40-hour week, and my cup runneth over—with ingratitude.

Surely, his goodness, and loving kindness shall follow me all the days of my life—without cost to me.

I shall dwell in his house forever, and allow him to pay the costs.



PETER J. MCGUIRE

Union Leader Peter McGuire Proposed Original Labor Day

Millions of Americans enjoying Labor Day 1953 can thank Peter J. McGuire for their extra day off. Most of the holiday crowds probably never heard of McGuire, but in his time he

was among the most popular labor leaders in the U. S. Thinking up Labor Day was only one of his many contributions to working people.

Born in New York July 6, 1852, McGuire joined his first union at 15. He quickly became an ardent believer in labor organizations and in 1881 became the founder of the carpenters union. He was elected secretary-treasurer at the union's first convention and held that office for a quarter century.

As the union idea took hold among workers, McGuire decided there should be a special day of tribute to wage earners. In 1882 he introduced a resolution at a New York Central Labor Union meeting proposing that "a day should be set aside as a festive day

down the first Monday in September. Until 1947 we were short one day's pay every time it happened. U.E. straightened that out when the contract was changed to pay for this and six other holidays when they fall in a regular work week. This is one of the many examples that can be given to show the benefits that G.E. workers in Schenectady have derived from their Union.

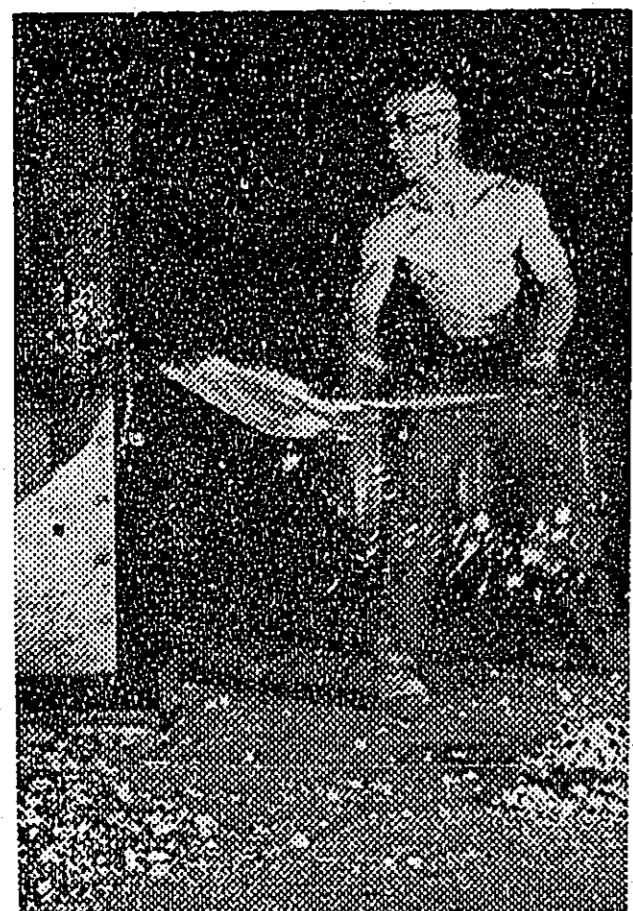
The contract and wage gains that we made for 1953 were relatively minor in light of the needs of the G.E. workers. This, of course, was mainly due to the split caused by the I.U.E., which gave the Company a better bargaining position. U.E. has tried to overcome this handicap by offering a unity program for joint action on the contract demands, which the I.U.E. has refused to accept. The principal gains in working conditions and wages were made during the 12 year period from 1937 through 1948 when all G.E. workers were members of the U.E.

One of the most important jobs our Union does for G.E. workers is that we have managed to keep our gains from year to year. That in itself makes the Union the best job insurance a G.E. worker can have. Again some of the new people do not realize that before U.E. there have been general wage cuts for all G.E. workers, and vacation plans were discontinued.

For the skeptic who may have some doubt about this, we refer to 1938 during a recession of business in G.E. The salaried workers and supervisors who were unorganized received a general cut in wages. The Company tried to cut the factory workers at that time, but they were not successful because of their resistance through our Union.

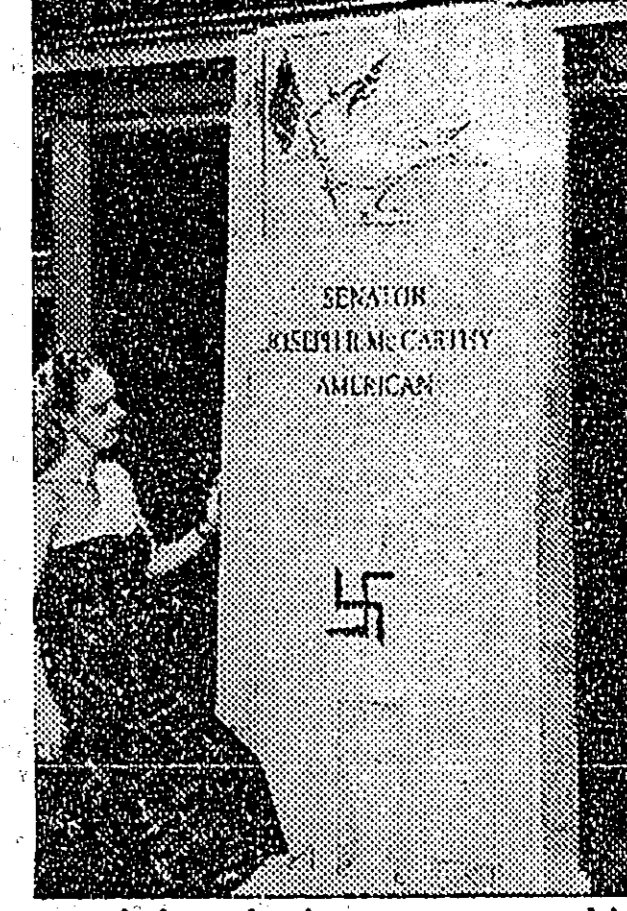
(Continued on page 4)

Thanks to U.E.
Next Monday You
Will be Paid for
Not Working.
Won 1947



LABOR'S YEAR IN PICTURES—Left to right: Quick settlement won by steelworkers was typical of comparatively quiet industrial scene in first eight months of '53. This CIO woman picketer, run down by company executive, found bosses as tough as ever. Taft-Hartley act was very

much alive, but Sen. Robert A. Taft, top GOP strategist in Congress, died a victim of cancer. As bloody 3-year Korean war came to end, labor was wondering if unemployment would again mushroom like atom bombs over Nevada desert.



MORE PICTURE HIGHLIGHTS—Left to right: November 1952 was a fateful month for American labor as the end of 20-years of Democratic rule was swiftly followed by deaths of CIO Pres. Philip Murray and AFL Pres. William Green. Under still vigorous leadership of John L. Lewis, coal miners broke through wage freeze to win \$1.90 daily pay

raise. Wage and price controls were ended early in new year, which saw inauguration of Dwight D. Eisenhower and his "Cadillac cabinet," symbolized by General Motors boss Charles E. Wilson, defense secretary. Joe McCarthy dominated witchhunt scene, but swastika secretly painted on monument expressed hatred of millions for McCarthyism.



WASHINGTON—In a few days school bells will be ringing again and the kids aren't the only ones who will be reluctant to answer their call. A lot of teachers won't show up this September. In fact, when classrooms open again this year, the nation will be short 200 thousand qualified teachers.

This startling fact was revealed last week by Carl J. Megel, President of the American Federation of Teachers. The AF of L Teachers Union held its 36th Annual Convention in Peoria, Illinois last week.

Revision Of Taft-Hartley

During the Presidential election campaign, Gen. Eisenhower promised he would support amendments to the Taft-Hartley law to make it a fairer statute. This promise somewhat begged the question, since nothing but repeal of the law can make it fair. Nevertheless, some labor groups saw hope in Eisenhower's pledge.

Congress has now adjourned for the year, and as yet the President has not asked for any changes in Taft-Hartley. However, shortly before adjournment, the administration sent up a trial balloon to test reaction to a proposed Presidential message on Taft-Hartley.

Contents of the proposed message were leaked to a few newspapers. The message itself was never sent to Congress. Two explanations were offered by the press: (1) that it was deferred out

of respect to the memory of Sen. Robert A. Taft, who had just died; (2) that it was greeted by too big a howl from certain employer interests.

The latter explanation is probably correct. But if so, it just illustrates that some employers are so benighted they don't know a good thing when they see it. For the Eisenhower proposals were a bad pill for labor. The pill, however, had a thick sugar coating and apparently some industrialists were fooled by or resented the coating. It seems a sure bet now that

barring effective opposition by organized labor, the President will seek to get his amendments pushed through the next session of Congress but with some of the more palatable ones removed.

What was the sugar? Such things, good in themselves, as removing some of T-H's fantastic restrictions on picketing and providing that T-H would supersede stricter provisions in state law on subjects dealt with by Taft-Hartley.

What was the core? A proposal that the non-Communist affidavit provision be dropped in favor of more general legislation on "the problem of Communists in the U. S." The kind of legislation the administration has in mind has already been disclosed by Sen. John M. Butler (R, Md.), who has introduced a bill under which the Subversive Activities Control Board would be permitted to outlaw unions it found were Communist-dominated.

This provision would give the government the power of life or death over unions. Any time the government, or big business interests running the government, decided that a union was too militant, it could seek to outlaw it on the above grounds.

Would rightwing unions be exempt from such a possibility? Of course not. If they become too much of an irritation to employers by seeking to raise living standards, we may be sure that, as has often happened in the past, they too will be accused of being Communist-dominated.

Unity Moves Made Labor News

Labor unity, or at least talk about labor unity, was busting out all over in the past year, ranging from top-level negotiations by AFL and CIO leaders for merger of their organizations to united action in the shops and mines by workers under attack from employers heady with the GOP return to power.

The unity idea got an unexpected boost at the 71st AFL convention in New York last September when Pres. William Green's routine annual invitation to the CIO and miners to "come back to the house of labor" drew an immediate telegraphed reply from Pres. John L. Lewis of United Mine Workers.

Lewis proposed a conference of all national and international unions to unite them into one body under the AFL by October 15. "Time was of utmost importance," he stressed, "in view of the necessity of labor exercising its strength in the forthcoming national election and of the necessity of insuring the repeal of the infamous Taft-Hartley slave law."

The Lewis plan was cold-shouldered by the AFL, but two months later the defeat of Democratic Presidential candidate Adlai E. Stevenson and the prospect of a Republican administration directly under control of the toughest union-busters in the country forced labor to do some

new thinking about unity. The deaths of CIO Pres. Philip Murray and Green in the same month that the 20-year Democratic rule came to an end lent a symbolic touch to the feeling that labor must set out on a new course independent of the White House.

This was most important to the CIO, born under the New Deal and in later years heavily reliant on government intervention. The AFL was in a stronger position. Compared to the CIO's four million members, it had close to 10 million and, despite its almost unprecedented endorsement of Stevenson, it had kept lines open to the Republicans, shown by the surprising choice of plumbers' union leader Martin P. Durkin as President Eisenhower's secretary of labor.

But one of George Meany's first actions in taking over the AFL leadership from Green was to make a renewed unity bid to the CIO. He made it clear, however, that the younger organization was not expected to "come back" as a penitent prodigal son but to discuss a merger on equal terms. CIO Pres. Walter P. Reuther, presiding over an organization in which dangerous schisms were appearing, accepted. The talks were held and finally produced agreement on a no-raiding pact that was to come before the 1953 AFL and CIO conventions for approval.

Most Top Court Acts in Year Anti-Labor Signs of Depression Appear In Spite of Full Employment

During its past term spanning the Truman and Eisenhower administrations, the U. S. Supreme Court, with one notable exception, continued in its tradition of anti-labor decisions, nullifying the effects of the New Deal period of the court which did so much to affirm and strengthen organized labor's rights.

The most damaging decisions handed down by the court were those sustaining the Virginia "right-to-work" law, affirming the power of state courts to enjoin peaceful picketing even where interstate commerce was concerned, and denying NLRB protection to an employe who refused to cross a picket line.

In the Virginia case, an AFL plumbers union was peacefully picketing a partially non-union construction job. The state court enjoined this peaceful picketing on grounds that it was intended to bring about the discharge of non-union men in violation of the state's "right-to-work" law. The Supreme Court, over the dissents of Justice Hugo L. Black and William O. Douglas, sustained the power of the Virginia courts to do this.

The Supreme Court majority opinion pointed out that its ruling flowed logically from its previous opinions that, although peaceful picketing was theoretically protected by the Constitution as a form of free speech, state courts could nevertheless enjoin such picketing whenever they dispensed of its purpose.

In another case, an Alabama court had granted a temporary injunction prohibiting peaceful picketing. The union involved argued that since the picketed enterprise was engaged in interstate commerce, the state court lacked jurisdiction and the controversy

was one exclusively within the jurisdiction of the NLRB. The conduct of the union in this case was clearly sanctioned by the Taft-Hartley act, so that if the union's contention had prevailed, the picketing could have continued without being enjoined by any government body.

The court, again over the dissents of Black and Douglas, found against the union. It did so by making a distinction between temporary and permanent injunctions, and holding that the court would review only permanent injunctions granted by state courts.

In a third case, the dissenting Black and Douglas were joined by Justice Sherman Minton in disagreeing with another anti-labor decision by the majority. In this case the NLRB had held that an employe's refusal to cross a picket line maintained by another union was a protected activity under the Taft-Hartley act and that the discharge of an employe who had exercised this right was unlawful. The court majority disagreed with the board and upheld the discharge as legal.

In its single notably pro-labor action, the court upheld the NLRB ruling that certain practices of the International Typographical Union and American Federation of Musicians (both AFL) did not fall within the so-called featherbedding ban of Taft-Hartley.

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The American economy in the summer of 1953 was a puzzle for experts. The postwar boom apparently continued. Yet there were signs of fear and uneasiness. Government officials, labor leaders and some corporation spokesmen joined in issuing sobering warnings. The language used varies. But it all added up to the same worrying fact, pressure on the worker's paycheck.

Prices no longer soared upward. Rather, they inched their way higher, even though shortages caused by war seemed past. The price leaders were the industrial giants which, like steel and oil in the spring of 1953, boosted prices by monopoly decision. The consumer price index—of vital concern to labor since union contracts began to contain escalator clauses with wages tied to the index—creaked upward from 112.9 in the spring of 1952 to 113.7 in the corresponding period this year. Overall there was a cost-of-living increase of nearly 20% since 1947.

Another example of middlemen soaking up gains at the expense of consumers was seen in the index for food alone. Farm income was off markedly. Yet the consumer food index went down only slightly, from 113.9 in April 1952 to 111.5 in April 1953 (index numbers taken from BLS, 1947-49 equals 100).

Overall there was no relief from high prices in sight. The pressure of prices on the family budget remained as strong as ever. But other pressures on family incomes could be seen. There was the big bite taken out of income

by taxes, although this item did not figure in most estimates of the cost of living. There was no measurement at all of the cost of quality deterioration or the tendency of manufacturers of consumer goods to offer the same package at the same price but with less contents.

And finally, most important of all, there was the cost of higher interest rates and the swelling volume of installment buying and other forms of consumer credit. The Eisenhower administration, with bankers in public office setting the policies, raised interest rates. This meant that small businesses found it hard to get credit to operate. It also meant that consumers who paid on time had to pay more. This was another cost item which did not appear in official cost-of-living figures.

Labor had warned for several years that working families must have income to spend it. High production of anything but armaments, union economists pointed out, depends on what is technically known as "effective demand," which means not only wanting but having the money in hand to buy something.

As labor has demonstrated, wage increases have not kept pace with gains in productivity. This means a grave danger that buying capacity would drop behind the quantities of goods being produced and that surpluses might appear, to be followed in due course by layoffs and another 1929.