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Break Up World Union

C.I.O. and British and Dutch unions accept the inevitable, admit it's impossible to work with Communists, withdraw from World Federation of Trade Unions. Fight over ERP was last straw.

The "cold war" in the world labor movement is headed toward a showdown. This is the inevitable result of the clean break this week between anti-Communist and pro-Communist labor forces in Europe. It will have quick and important effects in all countries in the European Recovery Program.

• Split in W.F.T.U.—The first step toward the showdown came in the World Federation of Trade Unions. Representatives of C.I.O., including its "secretary of state," James B. Carey, announced in Paris that C.I.O. was withdrawing from the world labor body. So did spokesmen for the British Trades Union Congress and the Dutch Federation of Labor.

Their reasoning: Further participation in the Communist-dominated W.F.T.U. would be useless.

C.I.O. and T.U.C. were charter members of W.F.T.U., which was founded in 1945 to be "the spokesman and the friend of workers everywhere." Its original goal was to "support measures looking toward postwar rehabilitation and economic recovery." It was to do this along nonpolitical, trade-union lines. But, complain C.I.O. and T.U.C., it has failed completely in this; it has been transformed into a political body—with strong bias against democratic countries.

• A Marshall Plan Fight—Fundamentally, the fight over—and within—W.F.T.U. has been a part of the whole East-West controversy over the Mar-

shall Plan. Although cracks had begun to show in W.F.T.U. before the start of ERP, they weren't serious.

W.F.T.U. publications came out, in May, 1948, in flat opposition to ERP; they described it as "imperialistic" and a product of Wall Street. C.I.O. was on record in favor of ERP. Britain's T.U.C. and the Dutch Federation also were supporting it. All lodged a strong protest against the stand taken officially by W.F.T.U.

Pro-Communists had gained almost total control over the 70-million-member W.F.T.U. in its three controversial years. They could easily have vetoed the C.I.O.-T.U.C. protest. Instead, they withdrew statements opposing ERP, and agreed to give the outvoted right-wing unions the right to censor W.F.T.U. policy statements. They did this mainly because they needed the presence of C.I.O. and T.U.C. (representing about 13-million workers) to disguise the real, pro-Communist nature of W.F.T.U.

• Only a Gesture—The withdrawal of the anti-ERP statement didn't fool the men in the top diplomatic ranks of C.I.O. and T.U.C. They interpreted it correctly as no more than a strategic retreat by the leftists—rather than a surrender to demands for "a working program for W.F.T.U. which would serve the trade union interests of all of its members."

Whether officially or not, W.F.T.U.

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continued to oppose ERP in every country. C.I.O. representatives; in Europe to back ERP, were constantly jarred by anti-ERP statements released by W.F.T.U.—statements which warned workers that “American members of W.F.T.U. oppose the recovery program.”

• **Showdown**—Finally, late last summer, T.U.C. urged that W.F.T.U. recess all activities for one year. At the end of that period—when presumably the East-West tension over ERP would be lessened—T.U.C. said further discussions should be held on whether W.F.T.U. would be revived.

C.I.O. also favored putting W.F.T.U. away in mothballs for at least a year. But the Communist and satellite unions, with support from French, Italian, and Chinese labor groups, refused to go along with any such proposal, even if refusal meant splitting W.F.T.U.

C.I.O., T.U.C., and followers among the democratic unions had either to get out or to accept another one-sided compromise. They chose withdrawal.

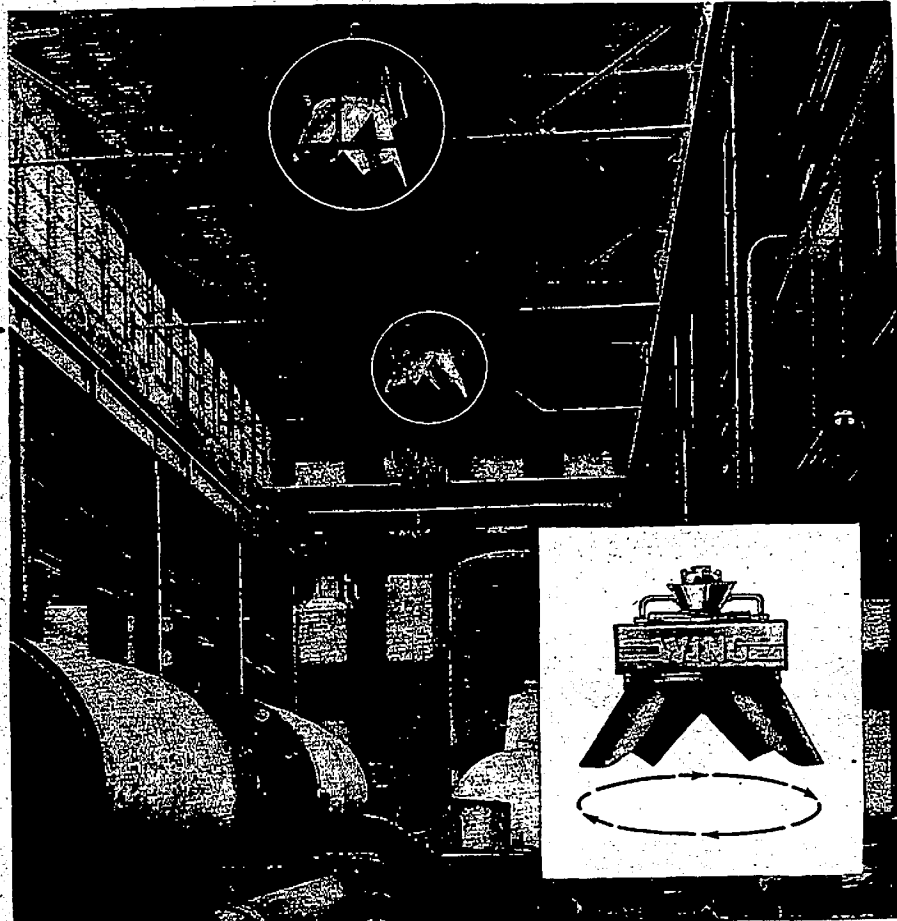
• **New World Group?**—W.F.T.U. will stay in business, with about 50-million claimed members. But it isn't expected to have the world labor field to itself for long.

C.I.O., T.U.C., A.F.L., other American unions, and Europe's “free trade unions” in Marshall Plan countries already are tied together loosely, as an advisory body on ERP. A meeting in Berne, Switzerland, later this month may take the first steps toward creating a new, democratic, world labor congress.

Moreover, A.F.L. has invited T.U.C. and the other European and Western Hemisphere unions—except C.I.O.—to meet in Miami either this month or next for the same purpose. A.F.L. was an important factor in the pre-W.F.T.U. International Federation of Trade Unions, which excluded Russian trade unions. I.F.T.U. argued they weren't really trade unions, but branches of the Communist government. A.F.L. refused to join W.F.T.U., after I.F.T.U. collapsed, because Russian unions were admitted to the new world body.

• **The Large Hook**—The broad aspects of the struggles between the East and West in the labor movement are plain: Just as W.F.T.U. has been an effective arm of Soviet foreign policy, Communist control of unions in France, Italy, and other Marshall Plan countries has been useful in keeping production below ERP goals.

European workers are on the front line in the “cold war.” How effective they are in behalf of ERP—or against it—may go a long way toward determining the success of America's foreign policy. And the attitude of Europe's workers may, in turn, be determined by the international diplomacy of American and British unions.



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