

The Election Campaign

ONE of the most significant steps in the mobilization of the win-the-war forces in the national elections was the local AFL conference in Chicago, reported in the Daily Worker of July 15. In this conference, held under the auspices of the local AFL committee for the reelection of Roosevelt, "400 top-flight AFL leaders in Chicago, consisting of international presidents, business agents and representatives of the Chicago Federation of Labor, unanimously adopted a resolution for the reelection of President Roosevelt." The conference furthermore decided to circulate all AFL unions throughout Illinois to induce them to pursue a similar course.



In this action of the Chicago AFL, which is in line with the endorsement of Roosevelt by many state federations, city central bodies and local unions, we have the general pattern that AFL bodies should go by. The AFL Executive Council, by failing to endorse President Roosevelt for another term in office, is derelict in its duty. It is thus refusing to give political leadership to the labor movement in one of the most serious crises in our whole national history. It devolves upon the lower organs of the labor movement, therefore, to display initiative in helping defeat the effort of organized reaction, headed by the Dewey-

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Bricker ticket, to grab control of our government in the November elections.

The Executive Council's refusal to endorse President Roosevelt, based on the argument that to do so would make the AFL a tail to the kite of a political party, looks doubly silly when one sees local AFL unions all over the country freely endorsing candidates for Congress and for state and city officials. John Fitzpatrick, veteran president of the Chicago Federation of Labor, in backing the present political move of the unions in Chicago, declared that any worker who fails to support President Roosevelt is an "ingrate." The term "ingrate" is a big understatement when it is directed against the reactionaries in the AFL Executive Council who are preventing that body from giving Roosevelt the political support it is duty-bound to do.

EVERY progressive worker who knows the history of the AFL in the past three decades will particularly rejoice in the aggressive political stand now being taken by the AFL unions in the great industrial center of Chicago. For this action is quite in accord with the best traditions of the Chicago Federation of Labor. The time was, during the first World War period, when the Chicago AFL was the most progressive central labor body in the United States—some of its out-

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standing achievements being its launching of the great organizing campaigns that unionized the meat-packing and steel industries, its active championship of the labor party, its struggle for amalgamation of the craft unions into industrial unions, its nation-wide fight to free Tom Mooney and its energetic campaign for recognition of the USSR.

It is encouraging to see the Chicago Federation displaying its present political activity in the face of the passivity or outright political sabotage of the AFL Council.

AFL bodies of all kinds—national, state and local—should follow the path of organized political action to reelect Roosevelt, as blazed by the Chicago Federation and other alert unions and local federations. The urgent things these unions should do are (a) to mobilize their own forces thoroughly; (b) to work in close contact with the CIO; (c) to join in common action with organizations of farmers, women, Negroes, veterans and all other groups interested in winning the war and establishing a durable peace.

The activity, or lack of activity, of AFL unions may be vital in determining where the decisive electoral votes will go in the November elections. The Chicago Federation of Labor is giving a good example of how to make those votes count against reaction and for the realization of the great goals to which our nation is committed in this war.